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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT, COGNITIVE FOCUS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL SCAFFOLDING IN DEVELOPING READING SKILLS OF GRADE ONE LEARNERS

Catherine V. Sayongan [1], Maria Alona A. Galendez [2]

Graduate School, Lourdes College, Inc.
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Reading skills are fundamental to early academic success, providing the foundation for comprehension and subsequent learning. However, the extent to which home literacy environment, pupils' ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding predict early reading performance requires further investigation. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, this study conducted from July to October 2026, examined the relationships among home literacy environment, ability to focus, teachers' instructional scaffolding, and the reading skills of Grade One pupils in public elementary schools in one of the districts of the Division of Bukidnon. Using a quantitative, nonexperimental, descriptive-correlational design, the study involved 235 Grade One pupils and their parents, together with 24 Grade One teachers. Data were gathered through validated research instruments and literacy assessment records and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings revealed good levels of home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding. Pupils demonstrated proficiency in phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge, while sentence reading remained an area for improvement. Overall, their reading skills were classified as proficient. Home Literacy Environment, Ability to Focus, and Teachers' Instructional Scaffolding, when considered collectively, significantly predict pupils' reading skills. Ability to focus emerged as the strongest significant positive predictor, while teachers' instructional scaffolding was a significant negative predictor. Home literacy environment was not a significant independent predictor. These findings highlight the importance of supporting pupils' attention and providing responsive, needs-based reading instruction. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional learner, family, and instructional factors influencing pupils' reading skills and investigate

how teachers' instructional scaffolding relates to reading performance across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: *ability to focus, home literacy environment, instructional scaffolding, reading skills, Grade One pupils*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a critical skill that underpins children's academic success and lifelong learning. During the early grades, children transition from learning basic literacy skills to using reading as a tool for acquiring knowledge across subject areas. Developing strong reading skills during this stage is therefore essential for later academic achievement.

Reading development is shaped by several interconnected factors within children's home and school environments. One important factor is the home literacy environment, which provides opportunities for literacy exposure through shared reading activities, access to books and other reading materials, writing experiences, and parental involvement in learning. Adams et al. (2021) emphasized that a supportive home literacy environment, particularly one that promotes writing, alphabet knowledge, and early word-reading activities, contributes to children's subsequent handwriting fluency and word-spelling skills.

Another factor associated with reading development is cognitive focus, which enables learners to sustain their attention, process information, and remain engaged during reading activities. Benitez and Robison (2022) described sustained attention as an important contributor to cognition and academic success. Thus, Grade One learners' ability to focus may help them recognize letters and words, understand sentences, follow instructions, and complete reading tasks more effectively.

Within the classroom, instructional scaffolding also plays an essential role in literacy development. Through modeling, guided practice, questioning, feedback, and other forms of structured assistance, teachers help learners perform reading tasks that they may not yet be able to accomplish independently. As learners develop their reading competence, this assistance is gradually reduced to encourage independence. Yawiloeng (2022) explained that instructional scaffolding promotes learner engagement, comprehension, and gradual autonomy in academic tasks, particularly in early literacy instruction.

Despite the implementation of educational reforms and literacy initiatives, many Filipino learners continue to experience difficulties in reading. Although recent international assessments have indicated some improvement in reading achievement, a substantial proportion of learners remain below the expected proficiency level. These continuing challenges highlight the need to examine the home-, learner-, and school-related factors that may support or hinder the development of reading skills during the critical early years of formal education.

Anchored in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, Epstein's (1995) Framework of Parental Involvement, and Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, this study explores the roles of the home literacy environment, cognitive focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding in developing the reading skills of Grade One learners. Specifically, it seeks to determine how these factors, individually and collectively, are associated with learners' early reading development. The findings may provide a basis for strengthening collaboration among teachers, parents, and schools and for designing appropriate interventions that respond to the literacy needs of beginning readers.

Research Questions

This study sought to investigate the home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding in developing reading skills of Grade One learners in public elementary schools in one of the districts of Bukidnon. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the parent-participants' assessment of their home literacy environment?
2. What is the Grade one pupils' ability to focus?
3. What is the Grade one teachers' level of instructional scaffolding?
4. What is the Grade one pupils' reading skills in terms of:
    - 4.1. phonological awareness;
    - 4.2. letter-sound knowledge; and
    - 4.3. sentence reading?
5. Do the Grade 1 pupils home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teacher's level of instructional scaffolding significantly predict their reading skills?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive-correlational design with a predictive approach to examine the influence of home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding on the reading skills of Grade One learners.

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in one of the districts of the Division of Bukidnon during the school year 2026–2027. The respondents included 235 Grade One learners, their parents or guardians, and 24 Grade One teachers. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select learner-parent respondents, while total enumeration was employed for all Grade One teacher respondents.

Data were gathered using four research instruments: the Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire, the Child Cognitive Focus Assessment, the Teachers' Instructional Scaffolding Questionnaire, and a Reading Skills Assessment covering phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and sentence reading. The questionnaires utilized a five-point Likert scale and underwent expert validation and pilot

testing. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .878 to .920, indicating acceptable to excellent reliability.

After securing the necessary permissions, questionnaires were distributed to parents and teachers, while literacy assessment records were obtained from the schools. The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using statistical procedures.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to determine the levels of the variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive influence of home literacy environment, ability to focus, and instructional scaffolding on learners' reading skills at a 0.05 level of significance.

The study was limited to Grade One learners in Sumilao District and focused only on three predictor variables. Reading skills were measured through phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and sentence reading. Since the study employed a cross-sectional design, the findings describe relationships among variables but do not establish causal effects. Additionally, other factors not included in the study may also influence reading achievement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1. *What is the parents' assessment of the extent of their use of technology?*

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Home Literacy Environment

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very Good	18	7.66
3.51 – 4.50	Often	Good	113	48.09
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Fair	89	37.87
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Poor	15	6.38
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Poor	0	0.00
		Total	235	100.00
		Mean	**3.54**	
		SD	**0.68**	
		Interpretation	**Good**	

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the home literacy environment for the 235 parent-participants. The results show an overall mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.68, interpreted as *good*. The results indicate that most homes provide a generally supportive literacy environment, as more than half of the participants were rated as good. These findings are consistent with the study of Adams et al. (2021), emphasizing that the pupils generally experience a favorable home literacy environment, particularly in activities that support writing, alphabet knowledge, and early word-reading skills

contributes to children's subsequent handwriting fluency and word-spelling skills. Similarly, Girard et al. (2021) underscored that regular exposure to alphabet activities, writing experiences, and printed words at home may strengthen the foundational competencies necessary for children's early reading and writing development.

Parents reported a generally favorable home literacy environment (M = 3.54, SD = 0.68), indicating that literacy-supportive practices were commonly present at home. Parents frequently provided writing materials and assisted children in learning letters and sounds. However, activities involving shared reading, story discussions, and access to reading materials were practiced less consistently. These findings suggest opportunities to strengthen interactive literacy experiences at home.

Research Question 2. *What is the Grade one pupils' ability to focus?*

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Ability to Focus

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very Good	26	11.06
3.51 – 4.50	Agree	Good	122	51.91
2.51 – 3.50	Uncertain	Moderate	74	31.49
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Poor	10	4.26
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Poor	3	1.28
	Total		235	100.00
	Mean		**3.74**	
	SD		**0.69**	
	Interpretation		**Good**	

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics describing the ability to focus of the 235 pupils, as assessed through behaviors demonstrated during reading activities. The results yielded an overall mean of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 0.69, verbally interpreted as *good focus*. The results show that most pupils can generally direct and maintain their attention during reading activities. The relatively high ratings for listening attentively, focusing at the beginning of an activity, and following the appropriate sequence in a text indicate that the pupils perform particularly well when reading expectations and directions are clearly established. Benitez and Robison (2022) described attention as an important contributor to cognition and academic success. Additionally, ability to focus attention is a significant strength to learners and may contribute positively to their reading development. These findings are also consistent with the study of Holliday (2025) which highlighted that elementary pupil remain engaged during whole-group instruction and guided reading but experience decreased focus and productivity during independent literacy work. Similarly, DiCarlo and Ota (2025) emphasized that adult-guided choices and age-appropriate scaffolding can support sustained attention, self-regulation, and engagement among young learners.

Research Question 3. *What is the Grade one teachers' level of instructional scaffolding?*

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Instructional Scaffolding

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very Good	10	41.67
3.51 – 4.50	Often	Good	14	58.33
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Moderate	0	0.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Poor	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Poor	0	0.00
		Total	**24**	**100.00**
		Mean	**4.36**	
		SD	**0.19**	
		Interpretation	**Good**	

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of teachers' instructional scaffolding during reading instruction. The results revealed an overall mean of 4.36 with a standard deviation of 0.19, interpreted as *good*, indicating that the teachers frequently employ scaffolding strategies to support learners' reading development. The low standard deviation suggests a high degree of consistency in teachers' responses, implying that instructional scaffolding practices are regularly and uniformly implemented across the participants. This finding suggests that teachers provide structured support, guidance, and learning opportunities that help pupils develop foundational reading skills, gradually enabling them to perform reading tasks with greater independence. The result aligns with the concept of scaffolding proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the importance of teacher support in helping learners accomplish tasks within their Zone of Proximal Development. Recent studies likewise affirm that scaffolded instruction enhances literacy learning by providing temporary support that facilitates skill acquisition and independent performance. According to Mihai and Classen (2023), effective scaffolding enables learners to engage successfully in complex literacy tasks by offering appropriate guidance based on learners' needs. Similarly, Yawiloeng (2022) emphasized that instructional scaffolding promotes learner engagement, comprehension, and gradual autonomy in academic tasks, particularly in early literacy instruction. Teachers exhibited a good level of instructional scaffolding (M = 4.36, SD = 0.19). Frequently utilized strategies included visual aids, guided practice, differentiated instruction, peer discussion, and retelling activities. The findings indicate that teachers consistently provided structured support to facilitate learners' reading development.

Research Question 4. *What is the Grade One Pupils' Reading Skills in terms of:*

4.1. phonological awareness;
4.2. letter-sound knowledge; and
4.3. sentence reading?

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of the Learners' Reading Skills (Phonological Awareness)

Score Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
8.00 – 10.00	Advanced	108	45.96
6.00 – 7.99	Proficient	122	51.91
4.00 – 5.99	Approaching Proficiency	4	1.70
2.00 – 3.99	Developing	1	0.43
0.00 – 1.99	Beginning	0	0.00
	Total	**235**	**100.00**
	Mean	**7.31**	
	SD	**0.87**	
	Interpretation	**Proficient**	

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics concerning the phonological awareness of 235 pupils. The results show an overall mean of 7.31 with a standard deviation of 0.87, verbally interpreted as *proficient* which means that learners have satisfactorily mastered the knowledge and skills. The findings suggest that the pupils have developed the ability to recognize, discriminate, and manipulate the sound structures of language, which are essential skills for beginning reading. The findings are consistent with the study of Siregar et al. (2023), who identified phonological awareness as a significant predictor of early literacy development. They emphasized that learners with strong phonological awareness demonstrate better decoding, word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension skills. Martínez-Figueira et al. (2023) noted that phonological awareness plays a crucial role in literacy acquisition and contributes significantly to the development of reading and writing skills among young learners.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of the Learners' Reading Skills (Letter-Sound Knowledge)

Score Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
8.00 – 10.00	Advanced	82	34.89
6.00 – 7.99	Proficient	148	62.98
4.00 – 5.99	Approaching Proficiency	4	1.70
2.00 – 3.99	Developing	1	0.43
0.00 – 1.99	Beginning	0	0.00
	Total	**235**	**100.00**
	Mean	**7.19**	
	SD	**0.91**	
	Interpretation	**Proficient**	

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the letter-sound knowledge of the 235 learners. The overall mean score of 7.19, interpreted as *proficient,* suggests that the learners can generally recognize letters and accurately associate them with their corresponding sounds. The standard deviation of 0.91 indicates that the scores were relatively clustered around the mean, suggesting limited variation in the learners' performance. Thus, the group generally exhibited a consistent level of letter-sound knowledge. However, the five learners who remained below the proficient level may still require targeted instruction, additional practice, and regular progress monitoring to strengthen their mastery of letter-sound relationships.

The findings are supported by Piasta et al. (2022), who described alphabet knowledge, including knowledge of letter names and corresponding sounds, as a critical emergent literacy skill and an important indicator of children's readiness for formal reading instruction. Their longitudinal study further identified different developmental patterns in children's alphabet knowledge, emphasizing the importance of identifying learners whose growth may be delayed so that appropriate instruction can be provided. Similarly, Karipidis et al. (2021) explained that reading acquisition in alphabetic languages begins with learning the associations between written letters and speech sounds. Their findings showed that the effective integration of letters and sounds is associated with the development of reading fluency.

Furthermore, Piasta et al. (2025) found that learners' developmental trajectories in letter-name and letter-sound knowledge were related to their later reading and spelling performance. Learners who demonstrated continued growth in alphabet knowledge tended to perform better than those with delayed growth, highlighting the importance of sustained classroom learning opportunities and early monitoring. Hertz (2024) likewise emphasized that alphabet knowledge is a predictor of future reading success because understanding the relationship between letters and sounds supports learners' transition toward accurate word recognition and proficient reading. Accordingly, the proficient performance reflected in Table 5 indicates that most learners possess a strong foundation for decoding, word reading, spelling, and the later development of reading comprehension. Nevertheless, differentiated support remains necessary for learners in the approaching-proficiency and developing categories.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of the Learners' Reading Skills (Sentence Reading)

Score Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
8.00 – 10.00	Advanced	55	23.40
6.00 – 7.99	Proficient	139	59.15
4.00 – 5.99	Approaching Proficiency	0	0.00
2.00 – 3.99	Developing	0	0.00
0.00 – 1.99	Beginning	41	17.45
	Total	**235**	**100.00**
	Mean	**5.90**	

Score Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
	SD	**2.82**	
	Interpretation	**Approaching Proficiency**	

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics describing the sentence-reading performance of the 235 pupils. The results yielded an overall mean score of 5.90 and a standard deviation of 2.82, verbally interpreted as *approaching proficiency*. This finding indicates that the pupils have begun to develop the ability to read and understand simple connected text; however, many have not yet attained a consistently proficient level of sentence reading. The relatively high standard deviation further indicates substantial variability in performance, suggesting that while some pupils can read sentences with ease, others continue to encounter difficulties in decoding and comprehending connected text. This finding is supported by Crawford et al. (2025), who found that inadequate mastery of letter sounds and fluent word decoding limits the development of reading comprehension among early-grade pupils. The researchers emphasized that systematic phonics instruction and appropriate reading assessments are necessary to strengthen the foundational decoding skills required for accurate and fluent sentence reading. Similarly, Denton et al. (2021), whose meta-analysis found that foundational reading skills, including decoding and word recognition, significantly influence reading comprehension among primary-grade learners. Their findings suggest that learners who are still consolidating these foundational skills may demonstrate only emerging proficiency in connected-text reading. Moreover, Crosson and Silverman (2022) emphasized that reading comprehension and sentence-level understanding require the integration of multiple literacy skills, including vocabulary knowledge, language comprehension, and decoding abilities. The approaching proficiency level observed in the present study, therefore, suggests that although many pupils have developed essential pre-reading and word-level skills, continued instruction and practice in reading connected text are necessary to strengthen fluency, comprehension, and overall reading performance.

This finding is consistent with research suggesting that the transition from decoding isolated sounds and words to reading meaningful text requires the integration of multiple literacy processes. Kim (2023) explained that sentence reading demands not only decoding skills but also vocabulary knowledge, working memory, language comprehension, and attentional control. Similarly, Cervetti et al. (2020) noted that reading connected text presents greater cognitive demands than recognizing individual letters or words

Overall, the learners achieved a proficient level of reading skills, suggesting that most pupils had successfully acquired foundational literacy competencies expected at Grade One. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower performance in sentence reading indicates a need for continued instructional support aimed at improving reading fluency and comprehension.

These findings are consistent with the Simple View of Reading proposed by Hoover and Tunmer (1986), which highlights the importance of both decoding and language comprehension in successful reading performance.

Table 7
Summary Table of the Learners' Reading Skills

Reading Skills	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Phonological Awareness	7.31	0.87	Proficient
Letter-Sound Knowledge	7.19	0.91	Proficient
Sentence Reading	5.90	2.82	Approaching Proficiency
Overall Mean	6.80	1.53	Proficient

The findings demonstrate that pupils performed more strongly in foundational sound-based reading skills than in their application to connected text. The higher mean for phonological awareness indicates that pupils generally demonstrate the ability to recognize and manipulate the sound structures of spoken language. Their similarly high performance in letter-sound knowledge suggests that they can associate printed letters with their corresponding speech sounds. However, the lower mean for sentence reading reveals that pupils experience greater difficulty when required to integrate these foundational skills while reading sequences of words in meaningful text. The standard deviations further illustrate this pattern. The relatively low standard deviations for phonological awareness (SD = 0.87) and letter-sound knowledge (SD = 0.91) show that pupils' scores in these dimensions were closely clustered, whereas the substantially higher standard deviation for sentence reading (SD = 2.82) indicates considerable differences in pupils' ability to read connected text. Thus, although pupils demonstrated generally consistent foundational skills, their ability to apply those skills to sentence-level reading varied considerably.

The overall *proficient* rating indicates that the pupils have generally developed the foundational competencies required for beginning reading. Nevertheless, their *approaching proficiency* performance in sentence reading points to a gap between possessing isolated foundational knowledge and applying that knowledge accurately, automatically, and meaningfully in connected text. Reading sentences requires pupils to coordinate several processes simultaneously, including decoding individual words, recognizing familiar words automatically, maintaining the correct sequence, observing punctuation and phrasing, sustaining attention, and constructing meaning from the complete sentence. Therefore, pupils may demonstrate adequate phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge but still encounter difficulty integrating these abilities during sentence reading. The substantially greater variability in sentence-reading scores also suggests that some pupils may already read connected text successfully while others require targeted support. Consequently, the overall proficient rating should not be interpreted as uniform mastery across all reading dimensions. Rather, it reflects strong foundational skills alongside a clear need to strengthen the transfer of these abilities to fluent and meaningful sentence reading.

The findings are consistent with recent literature on the developmental progression of early reading. Piasta and Hudson (2022) described phonological awareness and phonics as necessary components of beginning reading instruction because pupils must understand spoken-language structures and connect speech sounds with printed letters to decode words. Their discussion supports the strong results obtained in phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge and reinforces the importance of explicit instruction in both areas. Likewise, Crawford et.al (2025) found that insufficient mastery of letter sounds and fluent word decoding limits pupils' capacity to develop successful reading comprehension. Their findings underscore the need for systematic instruction that enables pupils to progress from foundational sound-symbol knowledge toward accurate and fluent reading of connected text.

The lower performance in sentence reading is further supported by Kargın et.al (2024), who found that weaknesses in word-decoding fluency, particularly phonological decoding, contributed substantially to poor readers' difficulties in reading comprehension. This indicates that successful sentence reading depends not only on knowing letter sounds but also on retrieving and combining them efficiently during actual reading. Similarly, Yeatman et al. (2024) emphasized that the ability to read connected text accurately, rapidly, and with understanding is central to reading development. Their study further demonstrated the value of sentence-reading efficiency measures for identifying pupils who experience difficulty with foundational reading skills and for regularly monitoring their progress.

Thus, the findings establish that the pupils demonstrate a proficient level of reading skills, particularly in phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge. However, their approaching proficiency performance and greater score variability in sentence reading indicate that some pupils have not yet fully transferred their foundational knowledge to connected-text reading. Instruction should therefore continue reinforcing phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondences while providing greater opportunities for pupils to apply these skills through teacher modeling, guided oral reading, echo and choral reading, repeated sentence reading, carefully sequenced texts, immediate corrective feedback, and regular progress monitoring. These practices may help pupils advance from accurate sound and letter recognition toward fluent, automatic, and meaningful sentence reading.

Research Question 5: *Do the Grade 1 pupils' home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' level of instructional scaffolding significantly predict their reading skills?*

> *H_{o1}: The Grade 1 pupils' home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' level of instructional scaffolding do not significantly predict their reading skills.*
> *H_{o2}: The Grade 1 pupils' home literacy environment does not significantly predict their reading skills.*
> *H_{o3}: The Grade 1 pupils' ability to focus does not significantly predict their reading skills.*
> *H_{o4}: The Grade 1 teachers' level of instructional scaffolding does not significantly predict their reading skills.*

Table 8
Regression Analysis of Home Literacy Environment, Ability to Focus and Teacher's Instructional Scaffolding on Pupils' Reading Skills

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		β	95% CI		t	p
	B	SE		Lower	Upper		
Constant	21.78	4.40		13.11	30.44	4.952*	<.001
Home Literacy Environment	0.37	0.34	0.065	-0.31	1.04	1.075	0.283
Ability To Focus	2.08	0.34	0.368	1.41	2.76	6.073	<.001
Teacher's Instructional Scaffolding	-2.41	0.91	-0.162	-4.21	-0.61	-2.642	0.009

Model Summary

$R=0.430 \quad R^2=0.185 \quad \text{Adj } R^2=0.174 \quad F(3,231)=17.468^* \quad p<.001$

Note. B = unstandardized beta coefficient, SE = standard error, β = standardized beta coefficient, 95% CI = 95% confidence interval, t = t statistic, p = probability value.

Model Equation: PRS = 2.08ATF - 2.41TIS + 21.78

Legend: PRS = Pupil's Reading Skills, ATF = Ability to Focus, TIS = Teacher's Instructional Scaffolding

Table 8 shows that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 231) = 17.468$, $p < .001$, indicating that the home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding collectively predicted pupils' reading skills. The model obtained an R^2 of .185 and an adjusted R^2 of .174, meaning that the three predictors explained 18.5% of the variance in pupils' reading skills. The remaining 81.5% may be attributed with factors not included in the model, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, decoding ability, motivation, prior instruction, and other individual or contextual variables.

Among the predictors, ability to focus was the strongest positive predictor of reading skills ($B = 2.08$, $\beta = .368$, $t = 6.073$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.41, 2.76]). Holding the other variables constant, every one-unit increase in ability to focus corresponded to a 2.08-unit increase in the predicted reading score. This suggests that pupils who sustain attention are more capable of processing and integrating literacy-related information. Peng et al. (2022) found that attention and other executive functions uniquely contribute to reading performance, while learners with reading difficulties commonly demonstrate weaknesses in attention, working memory, inhibition, and processing speed.

In contrast, teachers' instructional scaffolding was a significant negative predictor ($B = -2.41$, $\beta = -.162$, $t = -2.642$, $p = .009$, 95% CI [−4.21, −0.61]). This means that every one-unit increase in reported scaffolding corresponded to a 2.41-unit decrease in the predicted reading score, controlling for the other predictors. However, this result does not necessarily mean that scaffolding harms reading development. It may reflect responsive instruction, wherein teachers give more intensive support to pupils who are already

experiencing reading difficulties. Zhang and Smolen (2022) explained that scaffolding provides structured support to prepare struggling readers for increasingly complex and grade-appropriate texts. Therefore, the negative coefficient should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence that scaffolding causes lower reading performance.

Meanwhile, the home literacy environment was not a significant predictor of reading skills when ability to focus and instructional scaffolding were controlled (B = 0.37, β = .065, t = 1.075, p = .283, 95% CI [−0.31, 1.04]). Although its coefficient was positive, the confidence interval included zero, indicating insufficient evidence of a unique contribution in the present model. This does not suggest that the home literacy environment is unimportant. Rather, its influence may overlap with other variables or depend on the specific quality of parental literacy involvement. Dong et al. (2020) found a moderate overall relationship between the home literacy environment and reading comprehension, but parental involvement and literacy expectations were more strongly related to comprehension than the availability of literacy resources alone. Similarly, Dong and Chow (2022) found that home literacy factors had small-to-moderate associations with children's language outcomes, with parental teaching practices showing stronger effects than parental beliefs or the mere availability of learning resources.

Overall, the findings indicate that ability to focus is the most important positive predictor of pupils' reading skills in the model. The negative association of instructional scaffolding may reflect teachers' greater provision of support to struggling readers, while the home literacy environment did not independently predict reading performance after the other factors were considered.

Conclusions

This study examined the influence of home literacy environment, ability to focus, and teachers' instructional scaffolding on the reading skills of Grade One learners in Sumilao District. The findings revealed that learners generally experienced a supportive home literacy environment, demonstrated a good ability to focus, and received a high level of instructional scaffolding from their teachers. Likewise, the pupils exhibited proficient reading skills, particularly in phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge, although sentence reading remained an area requiring further improvement.

The regression analysis showed that home literacy environment, ability to focus, and instructional scaffolding collectively contributed to the prediction of reading skills. Among these variables, ability to focus emerged as the strongest positive predictor of reading performance, emphasizing the crucial role of attention and concentration in successful reading development. Teachers' instructional scaffolding was also found to be a significant predictor, suggesting that instructional support plays an important role in addressing learners' reading needs. In contrast, home literacy environment did not independently predict reading skills when cognitive and instructional factors were considered simultaneously.

Overall, the study highlights that reading development among beginning readers is shaped by both cognitive and educational influences. While supportive literacy experiences at home remain important, learners' ability to sustain attention and the quality of instructional support provided in the classroom appear to have a more direct influence on reading achievement. These findings underscore the need for educational interventions that strengthen learners' focus and provide responsive, differentiated reading instruction to support early literacy development.

Recommendations

1. Grade One Teachers: Intensify the use of differentiated, evidence-based reading instruction and attention-support strategies to improve learners' reading skills, particularly in sentence reading.
2. School Administrators and Reading Coordinators: Strengthen reading intervention programs, teacher training, and access to literacy resources to support learners' reading development.
3. Parents and Guardians: Foster a literacy-rich home environment through regular reading activities, consistent routines, and active collaboration with teachers.
4. Future Researchers: Explore additional factors influencing reading achievement and conduct broader, longitudinal, or intervention-based studies to validate and extend the findings.

Compliance With Ethical Standards

The study adhered to ethical research standards by obtaining approval from the appropriate authorities, including the Schools Division Office, district supervisors, and school heads before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents, who were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using codes instead of names, and all data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. Guided by the Belmont principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, the researcher ensured fairness, protected participants' well-being, avoided plagiarism and conflicts of interest, and interpreted findings objectively and with integrity. Transparency was maintained throughout the research process, including disclosure of any AI-assisted tools used in the study.

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catherine.sayongan@lccdo.edu.ph
alona.galendez@lccdo.edu.ph