

Effectiveness of Localized Reading Activity Sheets in Enhancing the Reading Skills of Grade 1 Learners: A Quasi-Experimental Research Design

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Abstract

Covid19 pandemic has brought fears, challenges, and great changes to all sectors, not only in the Philippines but the entire world. The most affected sector would be education since the learning must continue despite the pandemic. It is a great challenge to pursue education and deliver a quality one, especially since the strategies to be used are novel, and teachers should be trained well before their implementation. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of localized Reading Materials among Grade 1 learners through a quasi-experimental research design. The two groups of participants serve as the comparison and experimental groups. A match-pairing technique was used to identify the 30 participants for each group. Weighted average mean, standard deviation, t-test, and independent t-test were utilized to analyze the data. Likewise, Cohen's D was used to determine the effect size or the size of the difference between the two test results. The findings revealed that most of the respondents in the experimental group obtained a higher mean score, while the comparison group was on average. The composite mean score and standard deviation obtained in the experimental and comparison group with a mean score and standard in the descriptive interpretation of experimental and comparison were average. The t-value yielded in the comparative analysis of formative scores of the experimental and comparison groups. The formative mean score of the Effect Size of Large implies the large statistical formative mean score of experimental and comparison groups.

Keywords: *Reading; intervention; pedagogy; localized; instructional materials*



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INTRODUCTION

The Covid19 pandemic has brought fears, challenges, and great changes to all sectors, not only in the Philippines but the entire world. The most affected sector would be the education system since the learning must continue despite the pandemic. It is a great challenge to pursue education and deliver quality, especially since the strategies to be used are novel, and teachers should be trained well before their implementation.

Learning in this new environment presents significant difficulty for teachers and students, particularly in the modular method, because teachers cannot see their students and vice versa. Teaching kids in a face-to-face or traditional setting is difficult enough; imagine how difficult it will be under the new regular education system. Teachers should be more imaginative and smarter in delivering successful teaching and learning experiences to each learner's home, considering this predicament.

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As to the background of the study, the study was supported by the report of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results revealed that the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension among 79 participating nations PISA is a global survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that assesses pupils' reading, math, and science skills. In the conducted 2018 PISA, reading was the primary subject assessed among 15-year-old students. The Philippines earned a reading score of 340, which was about 200 points lower than China (555) and over 100 points worse than the OECD average (487) (San Juan, 2019).

Similar to this, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) in 2019 revealed that Filipino students in Grade 5 performed significantly poorer than students in Vietnam and Malaysia in terms of reading, writing, and math proficiency. Comparable to Cambodian students, these students performed similarly or occasionally even worse but marginally better than students from Myanmar and Laos. Hence, there is a need to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and high-quality primary and secondary education that results in relevant and effective learning outcomes by the year 2030, as stated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 4. As a result, the call for the low performance of these learners should be mitigated.

Correspondingly, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority's (PSA) Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), the country's functional literacy among Filipinos aged 10 to 64 improved in 2019, reaching 91.6 %. An estimate for "basic literacy" was defined as reading and writing "with the understanding of simple messages in any language or dialect," which corresponds to approximately 90.8 million Filipinos out of 96.8 million who are literate on a basic level, or approximately six million above the age of five who are illiterate.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the ADDIE Model was used in this study, which is a generic technique that instructional designers and training developers have historically used. The five phases represent a dynamic and adaptable framework for developing successful training and performance support systems: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. While the ADDIE model is likely the most popular, it has several flaws that have resulted in a number of spin-offs or variants (Culatta, 2021).

In the same way, this research was based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding Theory. Vygotsky defines the zone of proximal development as the difference between the current level of cognitive development and the prospective level of cognitive development. He believes that working with their teacher on problem-solving projects or interacting with more capable peers can help a student achieve their learning goals. Working alone, according to Vygotsky, would not allow a student to achieve the same level of learning. A learner passes through the zone of proximal development as he progresses from his current development zone to his learning goal. The potential development of the student, as well as the importance of interaction with others, are both important components of the zone of proximal development. Learning occurs in the zone of proximal development after identifying current knowledge. The potential development of a student simply refers to what he or she is capable of learning (Kurt 2020).

Furthermore, this study was founded on Piaget's (2004) constructivism theory. Constructivism theory has an impact on learning because teachers should provide a curriculum plan that supports their students' logical and conceptual progress. Teachers must emphasize the value of experiences—or connections to the surrounding environment—in student education. Teachers, for example, must

remember the significance of fundamental concepts such as object permanence in the formation of cognitive structures (Piaget n.d.)

With this predicament, there is a need for a reading intervention that will enhance reading skills. Hence, this study developed the Localized Instructional Reading Activity Sheets (LIRAS) that were used in enhancing the reading skills of Grade 1 learners. This study determined the effectiveness of the developed Localized Instructional Reading Activity Sheets (LIRAS) in enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Grade 1 learners in English. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the mean scores of the two groups in the formative and post-test?
2. Is there a significant difference between the formative and post-test mean scores of the comparison group?
3. Is there a significant difference between the formative and post-test mean scores of the experimental group?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the two groups?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study filled the gap by applying strategies used in teaching reading and enhancing the reading skills of the learners. The study determined the effectiveness of the developed localized reading activity sheets in enhancing the reading skills of Grade 1 struggling readers. This also offers answers on what would be programs that can help a teacher to address the needs of her learner. Additionally, this can also be an avenue for the technical assistance that can be provided by the school heads with regard to conceptualizing and constructing intervention learning materials.

Reading is a necessary ability and a necessary component of all learning. As pupils go through school, language development builds the groundwork for reading and writing abilities. Language development is critical for every child's future success since it is closely linked to academic and professional achievement in the long run. Early reading treatments in elementary school have received a lot of attention in the last decade to develop fundamental reading abilities. Several studies have shown that early reading intervention can influence how kids think, learn, and perform. Early elementary grades are crucial since pupils are building their reading skills and competency throughout this time. Reading treatments delivered in the early elementary grades had a greater average influence on reading outcomes than interventions delivered in the upper elementary. Students who do not acquire reading abilities in line with grade-level expectations in primary school are more likely to struggle with reading throughout their school careers (Bajaj, 2022). The role of the teacher is not just to deliver information but also to facilitate the acquisition and application of that information. Teachers, in the new teaching and learning structure, serve as learning catalysts, directing and facilitating classroom activities that can spark and increase students' ideas (Blair, 2012). The teacher's position has been strengthened to accommodate the new usual set-up.

Mahabadi (2012) asserted that the concept of localization assumes that learners learn best when classroom experiences have meaning and importance in their life. The learning that lasts is the learning that pupils do and are identified with. To carry out the strategy in education, the learning-by-doing, applied learning, and manipulative learning rules must be followed. Deep learning will be assured and accomplished if students are put in a real-world learning environment that allows them to control, relate to, and adapt to a variety of learning opportunities and resources available in the neighborhood or community.

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Schools must compel curriculum developers to give Filipino students locally generated learning materials in their native language/s, as recommended, to retain students' interest in the program. Furthermore, considerations should be made in the creation and production of instructional materials for the intended learners, including but not limited to skill enrichment based on their desires and benefits, and the materials should display cultural, linguistic, and contextual clues that the learners are familiar with. As a result, cultural and linguistic values are considered first and foremost. Locals are also encouraged to write original stories or even stories (Lear, 2020).

Tinong (2018) believes that teachers should be adaptable and creative in their use of localization and contextualization in the classroom. Such ideas were established and adopted in academia to ensure that the curriculum responds, adapts, reflects, and is flexible to the needs of students, particularly 21st-century students who require holistic and skillful development. Learners gain a better understanding of concepts by connecting them to concepts that are simple to learn, appreciate, and relate to in their daily lives. Quality and relevant education standards, on the other hand, should always be considered and should not be compromised merely for the purpose of a localized and contextualized lesson.

Thus, Levitas (2021) states that students that might have difficulties reading can benefit from reading interventions, which involve activities that help them improve their reading skills. Reading issues commonly start in kindergarten. Without the correct treatments, children who have not mastered reading skills by third grade will continue to fall behind their peers and will likely never catch up. Reading interventions are activities and tactics designed to assist struggling readers in improving their reading skills. Students that struggle to decode words into syllables are considered struggling readers. Students use decoding to sound out unusual words they come across while reading. Reading intervention programs, methods, and exercises will help children get back on track in all circumstances.

Dimacali (2018) cited that there are numerous benefits to having localized materials implemented or adopted in our educational system: First, it provides awareness of what is really going on or the current status of a particular topic being discussed; second because it is more specific and closely related to us, it will motivate students to learn more about it because it has become familiar to them. As a result, if the topic is about a problem, they can readily connect, and it may be a terrific opportunity for kids to become involved in fixing national problems. Every student will be strongly encouraged to join in the topic, and each student will have a meaningful discussion.

In the study conducted by Garin et al. (2017), it was discovered that students who received contextualized and localized education fared better on the pretest and posttest than students who received contextualized but not localized education on empirical tests but worse on theoretical tests. In general, pupils exposed to contextualized and localized instruction outperformed students exposed to contextualized but not localized instruction. It was also suggested that teachers employ localized examples, exercises, and illustrations when teaching Statistics to increase student performance in mathematics. The use of indigenous data in teaching statistics might be included as a prominent teaching-learning technique by curriculum authors. To be effective, a teacher's activities, illustrations, and examples of instructional material must be authentic and indigenous.

As Nilsson (2021) points out, intervention to assist struggling readers as they progress through the upper elementary years is critical to their academic achievement (Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011). Following a thorough investigation of effective reading interventions and a lengthy effort to identify student motivation, attitude, and specific gaps, a strategy was developed and implemented. When children struggle to read in fourth grade, their sense of urgency grows, and the

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curriculum becomes increasingly difficult to access, making it impossible to bridge gaps and maintain a natural upward trajectory.

Pardilla (2020) proposed in a similar study that teachers in charge of designing localized teaching materials attend seminars and training programs on the procedures involved in creating successful learning resources. In their study on the influence of improvised instructional materials on academic success, Obi and Obi (2019) proposed that instructors be taught how to improvise alternatives to actual things to increase teaching and learning. Prioritize a teacher education program that emphasizes the teacher as the curriculum creator (Patankar and Jadhav 2013). Because of their knowledge, experiences, and abilities, teachers are essential to any curriculum creation endeavor. The greater instructors' influence on curriculum development, the better the learning outcomes for students.

Khazani and Mowlaie (2017) confirmed that the use of localized materials on the English language has an impact on the achievement of undergraduate Political Science students. The employment of localized materials improved the scores of the experimental group's participants. On the other hand, Garin, et al. (2017) proposed that teachers employ examples, exercises, and illustrations in teaching numeracy to improve students' arithmetic performance. One of the primary teaching-learning tactics that curriculum developers might include is the use of indigenous data in teaching statistics. To be more effective, the activities, illustrations, and examples of educational material that a teacher should utilize must be valid and indigenous.

Localization and contextualization both conform to making the lesson adaptable, fit, inventive, relevant, meaningful, and adaptive to students' level of comprehension and instructional needs. However, due to concepts and materials that were blatantly localized and contextualized, these approaches negate the goals of the lessons, resulting in misleading and late learning. Educators, on the other hand, should be flexible and creative in their use of localization and contextualization in the classroom (Pecson, 2014).

Garin, Reyes, Domantay, and Rosals (2017) studied contextualized and localized education and found that the intervention influenced the learners' performance. The study used a single-blind experimental research design with a pretest-posttest control group. Two intact classes were employed, and they were assigned at random. The participants were divided into two groups, with the first serving as the experimental group and the second serving as the control or comparative group. There are thirty-four students in each group.

According to the mentioned studies, employing localized resources may make it easier for students to master the subject. It is also stated that instructors' creativity has a significant impact on developing creative resources that may be employed in teaching and learning reading. Moreover, the Department of Education (DepEd) capacitates teachers through seminars and in-service training to improve their skills and abilities in creating instructional materials. Teachers' capacity to localize and contextualize will be strengthened if they have suitable technical aid. Based on the cited literature, crafting localized material in reading that contains familiar places, icons, tourist spots, and delicacies, among others, in a learner's locale was not yet explored. Hence, the conduct of such was deemed necessary and will greatly contribute to the body of knowledge.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The researcher utilized the quantitative method of research, particularly the quasi-experimental research design. The quantitative method, according to Babbie (2012), accentuates objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data acquired through polls, questionnaires, and surveys or by changing pre-existing statistical data with computing tools. This research method focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or describing a specific occurrence.

Likewise, Quasi-experimental research is comparable to experimental research wherein an independent variable is manipulated; however, it varies from experimental research in terms of its application of either no control group, no random selection, no random assignment, and/or no active manipulation (Abraham & MacDonald, 2011).

Hence, Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) assert that the between-subjects approach also referred to as the multiple-group approach, allows a researcher to compare the effects of two or more groups on one or more dependent variables (outcome variables). If there are at least two groups, participants in each group will only be exposed to one condition (one level of the independent variable), with no crossover across conditions.

The pretest-posttest design was used for this study's administration. The basic premise of the pretest-posttest design is to obtain a pretest measure of the outcome of interest prior to administering some treatment, followed by a posttest on the same measure after the treatment is administered (Salkind, 2013).

Participants of the Study

The study had two groups of participants, and they were identified as the Experimental and Comparison groups. After the pretest was completed, the match-pairing technique was used based on the pretest scores of the two groups. The participants with the same scores in the pretest were identified, selected, and grouped as experimental and comparison groups, with 15 participants per group for a total of 30 participants. The Pretest has a Mean Score of 14.00 and a Standard Deviation of 1.07 for both the Experimental and Comparison Groups.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was employed in this study through a Match-Pairing Technique to classify the 30 participants who were identified as the experimental and comparison groups. This design is a subset of the randomized block design. It may be employed when there are only two treatment conditions in the experiment, and individuals can be sorted into pairs based on some blocking variable. The subjects are then randomized to various treatments at random within each pair. The researcher determined the participants based on the results of the pretests. The remaining participants with no matching scores were grouped as the blind participants of the study.

Research Instrument

The research focused on the development, validation, and testing of the effectiveness of the localized activity sheets in reading that enhanced the reading skills of the Grade 1 learners. The researcher's primary instrument was the developed localized materials. The contents of the developed

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localized activity sheets were based in Bay, Laguna, the research locale of the study in terms of its known icons, native products, and tourist spots.

Prior to the conduct of the research, the research instruments (developed localized activity sheets and survey questionnaires) were validated by experts in the field composed of a Primary Teacher, Master Teacher, School Principal, Curricularist, and Head Teacher. The said validation was conducted via online means. The comments and suggestions of the validators were incorporated.

Validation of the Research Instrument

Establishing the validity of the research instrument was done by thoroughly examining, analyzing, and revising the questionnaire by research adviser. Modifications and editing were made to eliminate the unnecessary and irrelevant context of the research instrument, as agreed by the adviser and researcher. Evaluation of the instrument meant a more relevant and efficient tool for gathering useful data; thus, the room for error would be reduced.

Further, prior to the actual conduct of the research experiment, a pilot testing of the research instrument was conducted by the researcher. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the dependent t-test (or paired sample t-test) was used. The result of the evaluation was 5.0, interpreted as strongly agree. Thus, it revealed that the instruments utilized in the study passed and met the competencies needed for the intervention.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the principal of Puyupuy Elementary School in the district of Bay, Laguna Division. After the approval, the pre-test was conducted to classify the groups of the participants of the study. Validation of the localized materials was held before it was used in the actual experiment phase of the study. Then, a pilot study was used to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments.

Afterward, an orientation with the parents was held so that they would be informed about the materials to be used in the said study. They were also advised that the results of the study would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used only for the purpose of the study. All of the parents agreed that the developed localized activity sheets in reading would be used by their learners.

Then, the formal conduct of the quasi-experiment was administered to the participants. The experimental group used the localized activity sheets, while the comparison group used the DepEd reading materials. The experiment was done during the second quarter. After the intervention, the posttest was held.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to assess the performance of the participants in the pre-test, post-test, and formative tests. Similarly, an independent t-test was employed to determine the significance of the difference in pretest and posttest scores between the two groups, while the effect size was analyzed using Cohen's *d* or the size of the difference between the two test scores.

In addition, the dependent t-test (or paired sample t-test) was used in this research to analyze the means of two closely related groups to see if there is a statistically significant difference.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group obtained a higher mean score of 23.53 (SD=1.81), while the comparison group had 20.67 (SD=2.72).

Table 1. Formative Mean Scores

Group	Mean	SD	MPS	Interpretation
Experimental	23.53	1.81		
Comparison	20.67	2.72		

As shown in Table 2, the experimental group obtained a higher mean score of 14.87 (SD=0.35), while the comparison group had 14.33 (SD=0.72).

Table 2. Posttest Mean Scores

Group	Mean	SD	MPS	Interpretation
Experimental	14.87	0.35		
Comparison	14.33	0.72		

As shown in Table 3, the result of the Independent sample t-test employed determined the significant difference in the Formative Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group. There was a significant difference between the Formative Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group condition [$t(28)=3.402$, Mean-Diff=2.867, $p\text{-value}<0.01$]. Since the test showed a significant difference, Cohen's D was calculated and resulted in 1.124 with the Effect Size of 'Large'. This implies that there was a 'Large' statistical difference between the Formative Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group.

Table 3. Test of Difference on Formative Mean Scores

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean-Diff	df	Cohen's d	Effect Size
Experimental	23.53	1.81	3.402 **	2.867	2	1.124	Large
Comparison	20.67	2.72					

*** Test is Significant @ $p\text{-value} < 0.01$; Cohen's $d > 0.80$: Large.*

The results, therefore, support the study of Garin et al. (2017) that when the students were exposed to contextualized and localized education performed better on the pretest and post-test than students subjected to contextualized but not localized teaching on the empirical kind of test but performed worse on the theoretical type of test. In general, pupils exposed to contextualized and localized instruction outperformed students exposed to contextualized but not localized instruction. It is also suggested that teachers employ localized examples, exercises, and illustrations when teaching Statistics to increase student performance in mathematics. The use of indigenous data in teaching statistics might be included as a prominent teaching-learning technique by curriculum authors. To be effective, a teacher's activities, illustrations, and examples of instructional material must be authentic and indigenous.

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Table 4. Test of Difference on Posttest Mean Scores

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean-Diff	df	Cohen's d	Effect Size
Experimental	14.87	0.35	2.567 *	0.533	20	0.954	Large
Comparison	14.33	0.72					

* Test is Significant @ $p\text{-value} < 0.05$; Cohen's $d > 0.80$: Large.

As seen in Table 4, the result of the independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the significant difference in the Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group. There was a significant difference between the Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group condition [$t(20)=2.567$, Mean-Diff=0.533, $p\text{-value}<0.05$]. Since the test showed significance, Cohen's d was calculated and resulted in 0.954 with the Effect Size of 'Large'. This implies that there was a 'Large' statistical difference between the Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental and Comparison group.

Table 5. Test of Difference on Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores

Group	Test	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean-Diff	df	Cohen's d	Effect Size
Experimental	Posttest	14.87	0.35	3.666 **	0.867	14	1.092	Large
	Pretest	14.00	1.07					
Comparison	Posttest	14.33	0.72	2.092	0.333	14		
	Pretest	14.00	1.07					

* Test is Significant @ $p\text{-value} < 0.01$; Cohen's $d > 0.80$: Large.

Table 5 revealed that there was a significant difference between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental group condition [$t(14)=3.666$, Mean-Diff=0.867, $p\text{-value}<0.01$]. Since the test showed a significant difference, Cohen's d was calculated and resulted in 1.092 with the Effect Size of 'Large'. This implies that there was a 'Large' statistical difference between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental group.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings suggest that the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and comparison groups was rejected. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in formative test mean scores between the experimental and comparison groups was rejected. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in posttest mean scores between the experimental and comparison groups was rejected. As a result, the findings suggest that using localized reading resources to teach reading is an effective technique that may aid students in improving their reading skills. Hence, the developed localized material may be utilized by teachers in teaching reading to the beginning and struggling readers as per the results of the study is concerned.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study is limited to the effectiveness of the developed localized activity sheets in reading to enhance the reading skills of Grade 1 learners. The study was conducted during the second quarter of the School Year 2021-2022. The contents of the developed materials were based on the research locale of the study in terms of its town icons, native products, and tourist spots. There were 30 participants

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involved in the study, and they were classified as experimental and comparison groups through the match-pairing technique. The participants that were not matched were considered blind participants of the study.

As to further research, future researchers may conduct a similar study in improving reading skills, such as localizing the reading materials in their respective locality.

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