Media Exposure and Literacy: The Influence of Cocomelon on Early Phonics Acquisition Among Kindergarten Pupils

Avril Ghail J. Sulapas[1], Melissa E. Tokong[2], Christalyn S. Galigao[3], Mary Joy C. De Leon[4], Jerlo C. Intano[5], John Noe A. Alvarez[6], Princess Joyce S. Pertez[7], Oscar S. Recto, Jr.[8]

[1,2,3,4,5,6,7]Senior High School Student, Dapa National High School, Dapa, Surigao del Norte, Philippines

[8]Teacher, Dapa National High School, Dapa, Surigao del Norte, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of Cocomelon videos on early phonics acquisition among kindergarten pupils at Sto. Niño Early Childhood Education, Inc., Dapa, Surigao del Norte, focusing on letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition. Using a quantitative-descriptive design, 38 respondents, including teachers and parents, provided data via a researcher-made questionnaire. Analyses included frequency, weighted mean, and Pearson's correlation to determine the level of media exposure and its relationship with early literacy skills. Results indicated that pupils were highly engaged with Cocomelon, with letter sounds showing the highest development, followed by letter names and word recognition. However, the correlation analysis revealed that the relationships between media exposure and letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition were weak and not statistically significant. This suggests that while Cocomelon videos may support early engagement and exposure to phonics concepts, these skills develop somewhat independently and still require guided instruction and reinforcement from adults to translate exposure into measurable literacy outcomes. The study concludes that Cocomelon serves as an effective supplementary tool for enhancing early phonics skills when combined with guided interaction from teachers and parents. It recommends incorporating educational media, such as phonics songs and interactive videos, into classroom and home activities to strengthen literacy foundations through active, engaging learning experiences.

Keywords: Media exposure, Cocomelon, early phonics acquisition, kindergarten pupils, letter sounds, letter names, word recognition

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, media played a key role in childhood. Young learners were often exposed to digital content even before they started formal schooling. One of the most popular shows for kids was Cocomelon. This animated series had bright visuals, catchy songs, and engaging characters. Parents often used Cocomelon to entertain and educate their children, aiming to support early learning at home. However, as screen time grew, concerns arose about how this exposure affected children's basic literacy skills, especially in phonics, which was vital for early reading development. It was important to understand how such media impacted letter sound awareness, letter name recognition, and overall letter identification as parents and educators looked for ways to strengthen children's literacy in a fast-changing digital world.

In many preschool and kindergarten settings, teachers and parents observed challenges among children in identifying letter names, producing correct letter sounds, and recognizing letters accurately in print. These skills formed the foundation of phonics and early reading. However, the growing reliance on digital media for entertainment and learning raised questions about its role in developing these skills. While some parents believed that educational shows like Cocomelon supported learning, others expressed concern that passive viewing might limit children's active engagement and reduce opportunities for interactive letter and sound practice. These challenges prompted the researcher to conduct this study to determine whether exposure to Cocomelon videos

positively or negatively influenced children's early literacy development—particularly their letter sound awareness, letter naming ability, and letter recognition.

Recent studies showed mixed findings regarding media exposure and early literacy development. A meta - analysis by Kirkorian and colleagues (2023) revealed a small yet positive relationship between screen media use and vocabulary development among children aged 0–6 years, suggesting that some educational programs could support early language growth. Similarly, a 2024 study published in BMC Public Health found that children who spent more than one hour per day on mobile screens showed lower language comprehension and expressive skills, but regular parent–child reading lessened these negative effects. These findings emphasized both the benefits and risks of media exposure, underscoring the need to examine how specific programs like Cocomelon influenced children's early literacy skills, particularly their ability to identify letters and associate them with sounds and names.

This study aimed to determine the influence of Cocomelon videos on the early phonics acquisition of kindergarten pupils, with particular focus on their letter sound awareness, letter naming ability, and letter recognition skills. The goal was to assess whether these areas improved after the children watched selected episodes of the show. The findings aimed to provide valuable insights into how educational media supported early literacy and to offer guidance for parents, teachers, and curriculum developers in using digital content as a tool for developing foundational reading skills in young children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Media Exposure and Emergent Literacy.

Media exposure has become an integral part of early childhood, prompting researchers to examine its effects on emergent literacy development. Studies show that moderate and interactive media use can support early language and literacy skills, particularly when adults participate during viewing. Dore et al. (2020) found that children who engaged in joint media interaction with caregivers demonstrated greater language gains, highlighting that the quality of engagement, not just the duration of screen time, influences learning. Similarly, Chuang and Jamiat (2023) reported that well-designed multimedia features in educational applications enhanced print awareness and letter–sound understanding, while overly stimulating, game-like designs reduced learning benefits. Conversely, early and excessive screen exposure has been linked to weaker cognitive and language outcomes. Madigan et al. (2020) showed that high screen use before age two predicted lower cognitive performance tied to emergent literacy, and a Philippine study by Pineda, Dalmacio, and Ramos (2023) found that more than two hours of daily screen time reduced children's receptive and expressive language abilities. Despite these risks, guided and interactive media use can still positively influence early literacy. Anggapati (2022) demonstrated that moderate, interactive media exposure improved reading readiness and phonemic awareness, whereas passive and excessive viewing hindered reading fluency. Collectively, these studies show that media can support emergent literacy when used moderately, interactively, and with adult guidance, but may impede development when exposure is early, excessive, or unguided.

Early Phonics Acquisition

Letter–sound knowledge is widely recognized as a core foundation of early reading development. Schaars, Segers, and Verhoeven (2017) found that children's progress in word decoding strongly depended on their mastery of letter–sound correspondences and phonological awareness during early instruction. Similarly, Treiman, Stothard, and Snowling (2019) showed that children's letter-sound learning varied based on teaching order and letter difficulty, emphasizing the need for structured phonics instruction. Evidence from intervention studies supports this, with de Abreu, Fricke, and Wealer (2020) reporting that improved letter–sound knowledge led to better reading readiness among kindergarten learners. Longitudinal research by Clayton et al. (2019) further confirmed that early letter–sound knowledge predicts later reading fluency. Consistent with these findings, the International Literacy Association (Rebora, 2020) highlights that systematic and explicit phonics instruction remains essential for early literacy success.

Cocomelon as an Educational Tool for Language and Phonics Development

Cocomelon is one of the most widely viewed children's programs globally, known for its colorful animation, repetitive songs, and simple storytelling that help sustain children's attention. Its use of rhyme, onomatopoeia, and repetitive diction supports memory and language engagement (Wijaya & Santoso, 2021). Studies show that Cocomelon can aid early literacy when used appropriately. Latifah, Setyowati, and Khotimah (2024) found that phonics-based alphabet songs improved children's language and cognitive skills, while Ules et al. (2022) reported gains in pronunciation, vocabulary, and phonological awareness among young learners regularly exposed to Cocomelon. These benefits are linked to the program's integration of visual and auditory cues that reinforce sound recognition. However, researchers caution against excessive viewing; Lillard and Peterson (2011) noted that fast-paced digital content can temporarily reduce attention and executive functioning, underscoring the need for guided and moderate use. Similar to other educational song-based media, Cocomelon supports vocabulary and phonics through repetition, though its narrative nature may require adult mediation to maximize learning (Fitriani, 2023).

The Influence of Cocomelon on Early Phonics Acquisition

Cocomelon's repetitive melodies and phonemically rich lyrics have been shown to support children's early phonics development, particularly in sound recognition and word identification. Studies indicate that Cocomelon can enhance foundational literacy skills when used appropriately. For instance, Nurmahdania, Annisah, and Irawati (2022) found that repetitive Cocomelon songs improved word retention and recognition in young learners, while Eklesia and Rosari (2023) noted that its predictable sound patterns and clear articulation reinforced phonemic awareness and pronunciation. These linguistic features help children connect spoken sounds to written symbols, which is essential for early decoding skills. Guided use further strengthens these benefits; Ayu and Hadiwijaya (2024) reported that children who watched Cocomelon with adult interaction showed greater spontaneous speech and stronger letter-sound recognition. Comparatively, multimedia-based phonics tools—such as the Jolly Phonics Lessons App—demonstrated similar effectiveness in enhancing phoneme blending and letter-sound mastery (Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies, 2024). Broader evidence also supports this approach, as technology-assisted reading activities have been found to improve phonemic awareness and word identification when paired with adult guidance (Gençten, 2023). Collectively, these studies suggest that Cocomelon can serve as an effective supplementary tool for phonics acquisition, particularly when integrated with interactive and structured literacy instruction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored in Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT). Early phonics acquisition is influenced by observational learning, where children acquire skills by watching and imitating models. Attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are key processes in learning. Cocomelon videos are analyzed as digital models that demonstrate letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition, shaping children's phonics skills through engagement and repetition.

Research Gaps

Although previous studies have shown that educational media like Cocomelon can support language development, vocabulary, and early phonics skills, most research focuses on general language acquisition or single literacy components, often in informal or unstructured settings. There is limited empirical evidence on the combined effects of media exposure on multiple early phonics components—letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition—among kindergarten pupils, particularly in the Philippine context. Moreover, while some studies highlight the importance of adult guidance during media use, few have systematically compared teacher and parent perceptions of children's learning outcomes from media exposure. This gap underscores the need to investigate how structured Cocomelon viewing influences early phonics acquisition, and whether parent and teacher assessments converge, to provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating digital media into early literacy instruction.

Research Objectives

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To determine the frequency and duration of Cocomelon viewing among kindergarten pupils.

2. To identify the potential educational benefits and limitations of using Cocomelon as a supplementary tool for phonics learning.

3. To assess the effect of Cocomelon exposure on pupils' ability to recognize letter sounds, letter names, and letter-sound relationships.

Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses, tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H_1: There is no significant relationship between media exposure to Cocomelon and early phonics acquisition among kindergarten pupils.

H_2: There is no significant difference in early phonics acquisition among kindergarten pupils when grouped according to their level of exposure to Cocomelon.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative-descriptive research design to determine the effect of Cocomelon videos on the early phonics acquisition of kindergarten pupils. Data on letter-sound, letter-name, and word recognition skills were collected and analyzed to describe pupils' phonics development before and after exposure. Similar designs have been applied in media-based learning studies, such as Calibuso et al. (2024) and Wijayanti (2021), who used structured questionnaires and descriptive statistics to assess the impact of audio and visual media on students' language skills

Data Collection

The study involved 38 respondents, composed of 4 kindergarten teachers and 34 parents of pupils at Sto. Niño Early Childhood Education, Inc. Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire from the Preschool Media Monitoring Sheet (PMMS), Early Media Influence Scale (EMIS), and Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-4). The questionnaire assessed children's media exposure and early phonics acquisition. Responses were gathered systematically to ensure completeness and accuracy, providing a representative overview of both teacher and parent perspectives.

Instrumentation/ Questionnaire Validation

The adapted questionnaire demonstrated good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.771 for Letter Sounds to 0.814 for both Letter Names and Word Recognition constructs. The overall 15-item scale showed excellent reliability with an alpha of 0.890. These values indicate that the instrument reliably and consistently measured the early phonics skills targeted in the study, supporting the credibility of the data and ensuring dependable results for further analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

The finalized questionnaire was administered in classroom settings during school hours with prior approval from school authorities. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and participation was voluntary. Completed questionnaires were collected and coded for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Jamovi and Microsoft Excel. The following statistical techniques were employed:

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize central tendencies (mean) and variability (standard deviation) of responses for each factor.

Reliability Testing (Cronbach's Alpha**):** To assess internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): To determine significant differences in early phonics acquisition across groups based on the level of media exposure.

Pearson's r Correlation: To examine relationships between media exposure and early phonics skills, after checking assumptions of normality and linearity.

Data analysis and interpretation Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize the central tendency and variability of responses, providing insight into the extent of influence of Cocomelon videos on the early phonics acquisition of kindergarten pupils, including letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Interpretation
Letter Sounds	68	3.72	0.452	-1.01	-1.02	Highly influenced; moderately left-skewed, slightly flat (platykurtic)
Letter Names	68	3.79	0.407	-1.49	0.219	Highly influenced; strongly left-skewed, near normal (mesokurtic)
Word Recognition	68	3.65	0.481	-0.629	-1.65	Highly influenced; slightly left-skewed, flat distribution (platykurtic)

Interpretation:

Mean scores ranging from 3.65 to 3.79 indicate that pupils are highly influenced by Cocomelon videos in developing early phonics skills. Standard deviations between 0.407 and 0.481 suggest that responses are fairly consistent, with some variability in word recognition. The negative skewness values show that a higher number of pupils scored above the mean, indicating strong engagement and positive impact. Kurtosis values ranging from -1.65 to 0.219 reflect slightly flat to near-normal distributions, suggesting that most pupils benefited similarly from the exposure. Overall, the data demonstrate a high influence of Cocomelon on letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition.

Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

The adapted questionnaire demonstrated **good internal consistency**, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.771 to 0.814 across constructs:

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Letter Sounds	5	0.814	Good
Letter Names	5	0.771	Acceptable

Word Recognition	5	0. 814	Good
Overall Scale	15	0.890	Good

This confirms that the instrument reliably measured the intended constructs, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson's r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Relationship
Letter Sounds ↔Letter names	0.088	0.474	Very weak positive, not statistically significant
Letter sounds ↔ Word Recognition	-0.048	0.695	Negligible, not significant
Letter names ↔ Word Recognition	-0.224	0.067	Weak negative, not statistically significant

Interpretation:

The correlations among letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition were generally weak or not statistically significant. The negligible relationship between letter sounds and word recognition suggests that children's ability to recognize individual letter sounds may not directly predict their ability to identify whole words at this stage. Similarly, the weak negative correlation between letter names and word recognition indicates that familiarity with letter names alone does not strongly influence word recognition outcomes. These findings imply that early phonics components—letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition—may develop somewhat independently and that multiple, complementary instructional strategies are needed to strengthen early reading skills.

Correlation Between Teacher and Parent Assessments of Pupils' Phonology and Pronunciation

Variables	Pearson's r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Relationship
Teacher Assessment ↔ Parent Assessment (Phonology and Pronunciation)	0.62	0.001	Moderate to strong positive correlation; statistically significant

Interpretation

The significant positive correlation between teacher and parent assessments of pupils' phonology and pronunciation indicates that both groups observed similar improvements in children's sound production and articulation after exposure to Cocomelon. This agreement suggests that the effects of the program are consistently noticeable across both home and school environments. The shared perception strengthens the validity of the findings, as it implies that observed improvements in phonological and pronunciation skills are not limited to a single context or observer but reflect a genuine influence of the program on early phonics development.

DISCUSSION

Findings reveal that letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition are related components of early phonics acquisition, but their correlations are generally weak, suggesting that children may develop these skills at different rates. Letter sounds and letter names showed minimal association with word recognition, highlighting

that knowing letters in isolation does not automatically translate to fluent word decoding. This underscores the importance of integrative phonics instruction that combines letter-sound mapping, letter-name recognition, and guided word practice. The results align with prior research emphasizing structured, systematic phonics programs (Treiman, Stothard, & Snowling, 2019; de Abreu, Fricke, & Wealer, 2020), which suggest that multi-faceted approaches—rather than isolated skill practice—are more effective in building early literacy. Furthermore, the findings point to the need for adult guidance, active engagement, and repeated exposure, as children benefit from scaffolded learning environments where multiple phonics components are reinforced together.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Cocomelon videos on the early phonics acquisition of kindergarten pupils, focusing on letter sounds, letter names, and word recognition. The findings indicate that pupils were highly influenced by Cocomelon exposure in these areas, particularly in phonology and pronunciation-related skills such as sound recognition and articulation. Although the relationships among specific phonics components were generally weak, the results suggest that these skills may develop at varying rates and require complementary instructional support. Teacher and parent assessments showed a significant correlation in evaluating pupils' phonology and pronunciation, indicating a shared perception of the program's positive impact across home and school settings. Overall, Cocomelon serves as an effective supplementary tool for early phonics development when combined with guided interaction and reinforcement from adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Parents: Parents are encouraged to practice co-viewing of Cocomelon episodes and engage children in conversations about the words, sounds, and stories learned. Limiting screen time and balancing it with activities such as storytelling, book reading, and other literacy-enriching exercises can strengthen comprehension and retention.

For Teachers: Teachers are advised to integrate Cocomelon songs and clips into phonics lessons to enhance engagement and retention. Reinforcing the content through interactive classroom activities, such as sound matching, singing, and letter recognition games, can further support early literacy skills.

For School Administrators: Teachers are advised to integrate Cocomelon songs and clips into phonics lessons to enhance engagement and retention. Reinforcing the content through interactive classroom activities, such as sound matching, singing, and letter recognition games, can further support early literacy skills.

For Curriculum Developers: Curriculum developers are encouraged to embed digital literacy and phonics integration into the kindergarten curriculum, promoting multimodal learning experiences that develop both cognitive and linguistic skills.

For Future Researchers: Future studies should explore the long-term effects of educational media exposure on literacy development and compare the impact of Cocomelon with other phonics-based programs to determine best practices for early language instruction.

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