

Reading Performance and Classroom Engagement of Key Stage 1 Learners: Implications for an Intervention Scheme

Arvy G. Permito¹, Lilia P. Adrales²

Holy Infant College of Tacloban City, Inc., Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the reading performance and classroom engagement of Key Stage 1 learners in Palo I District as a basis for developing an intervention scheme. It described the teachers' demographic profile, compared learners' Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) results at the Beginning of the School Year (BOSY) and Middle of the School Year (MOSY), assessed their cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement, and determined the relationship between reading performance and classroom engagement. The study employed a descriptive-comparative design with correlational analysis. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, chi-square, and correlation analyses. Most respondents were female, aged 46–50 years, bachelor's degree holders, and had 6–10 years of teaching experience. A significant difference was found between the BOSY and MOSY reading performance. The proportion of proficient learners increased from 35% to 62.5%, while fewer learners remained at the emergent and developing levels. However, learners at the transitioning level demonstrated comparatively limited progress. Cognitive engagement was rated very high, indicating that learners consistently participated in structured learning activities. Affective and behavioral engagement were rated high, suggesting that motivation, persistence, and independent learning behaviors still require further strengthening. Reading performance and classroom engagement had a very weak and statistically nonsignificant relationship. The findings indicate that although learners made considerable progress in reading and generally demonstrated positive classroom engagement, targeted support remains necessary, particularly for transitioning readers. An intervention scheme was therefore proposed to sustain reading gains and strengthen all dimensions of classroom engagement.

Keywords: classroom engagement, Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment, Key Stage 1, reading intervention, reading performance.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex process that requires learners to coordinate letter and word recognition, language knowledge, comprehension, prior experience, and strategic thinking. It is not merely the ability to pronounce written words; it involves constructing meaning from text and using that meaning to learn, communicate, and participate in everyday life. Because much of formal instruction depends on written materials, early reading proficiency provides an essential foundation for achievement across learning areas, functional literacy, and personal development. Difficulties that remain unaddressed during the primary grades may therefore restrict learners' progress as academic tasks become increasingly dependent on independent reading and comprehension.

The development of foundational literacy remains a serious concern in Philippine basic education. EDCOM 2 Communications (2025) reported that nearly 4.5 million learners in Grades 1 to 3 were unable to meet basic literacy standards, with approximately one in three classified as low-emerging readers. These learners possess only limited knowledge of letter sounds and basic word decoding and remain considerably below the reading competencies expected at their grade level. The figures demonstrate that the learning crisis begins during the earliest years of schooling, when children are expected to acquire the skills needed for more advanced learning. Although the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to these gaps, continuing

difficulties in learner participation, parental support, instructional delivery, and access to appropriate interventions have made literacy recovery more challenging (Barnuevo & Lastrella, 2023).

In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) has strengthened its emphasis on foundational literacy through curriculum reform, assessment, and remediation. Under the MATATAG Curriculum, Reading and Literacy is provided as a dedicated learning area in Grade 1, while Filipino and English are introduced in Grade 2 to support the gradual development of language and literacy competencies (Department of Education [DepEd], 2023). The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program further prioritizes reading intervention for learners who have not attained the expected competencies, particularly those requiring additional support in the early grades (Republic Act No. 12028, 2024). These initiatives reflect the principle that reading difficulties must be identified and addressed before they become more persistent barriers to learning.

An important component of these efforts is the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), a standardized assessment used to determine the reading abilities of Key Stage 1 learners. The CRLA examines essential literacy competencies through tasks involving letter sounds, word or sentence reading, fluency, and comprehension, depending on the learner's grade level and the assessment period. Based on their performance, learners may be classified as low emerging, high emerging, developing, transitioning, or at grade level (DepEd, n.d.). These profiles enable teachers to identify specific learning needs, organize appropriate instructional groups, select suitable reading activities, and monitor changes in performance. Thus, the CRLA serves not only as a diagnostic instrument but also as a basis for differentiated instruction and the evaluation of literacy interventions.

Philippine studies have demonstrated the value of using early literacy assessments to guide instructional decisions. Barnuevo and Lastrella (2023) found that a large proportion of Grade 1 learners assessed through the CRLA required substantial literacy support. Teachers, school heads, and parents responded through phonics, phonological-awareness, fluency, comprehension, writing, video-based lessons, activity sheets, and parent-capacity-building activities. However, lack of interest, absenteeism, limited parental support, and difficulties associated with pandemic learning modalities affected the delivery of these interventions. Similarly, Zapanta (2023) found that teachers regarded the CRLA as timely, relevant, individualized, and useful for discovering learning gaps and planning reading interventions. At the same time, the study documented implementation challenges involving the assessment process, learners' difficulties, and the development of suitable instructional materials. These findings show that assessment results become most useful when they are translated into sustained and responsive classroom practices.

Evidence from other reading interventions likewise supports the use of targeted and differentiated instruction. Dela Cruz (2024) reported that Grade 1 pupils' reading comprehension improved after the use of Wordwall, suggesting that interactive digital resources can strengthen both comprehension and learner participation. Bagolong and Usop (2024) found that although elementary pupils demonstrated satisfactory phonemic awareness and comprehension, continued intervention was necessary, particularly when learners encountered more complex Filipino texts. Using an assessment-guided approach, Avergonzado and Polinar (2025) also documented improvements in phonemic awareness, print knowledge, and comprehension following targeted early-reading interventions. Collectively, these studies indicate that structured and varied reading activities can improve foundational skills, but their effectiveness depends on their alignment with learners' actual reading profiles.

Research further suggests that reading achievement is closely connected with classroom engagement. Reading engagement includes learners' cognitive investment in understanding a text, their observable participation in reading activities, and their emotional response to the reading experience. Alqahtani (2024) emphasized that engagement can be strengthened by providing tasks suited to learners' current abilities, using culturally relevant and reader-friendly materials, varying instructional strategies, offering appropriate choices, and creating opportunities for interaction and feedback. Goran and Suparno (2025) similarly found that contextualized problem-solving and collaborative learning improved both classroom activity and reading comprehension among learners with learning difficulties. Although Köse and Güneş (2021) studied university

students, their findings also showed that stronger readers used a broader range of metacognitive strategies before, during, and after reading. This suggests that strategic awareness should be cultivated early through teacher modeling, guided questioning, prediction, monitoring, and reflection.

The relationship between instruction, reading performance, and engagement is supported by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Vygotsky viewed learning as a socially mediated process in which children develop new abilities through interaction with teachers, peers, and other knowledgeable individuals. Within the Zone of Proximal Development, learners can accomplish tasks beyond their present independent ability when appropriate guidance or scaffolding is provided (McLeod, 2025). In guided reading, this support may include teacher modeling, prompts, corrective feedback, repeated practice, peer interaction, and the gradual transfer of responsibility to the learner. As pupils become more capable, the support is reduced, allowing them to read with greater independence.

Rumelhart's Interactive Model of Reading further explains why reading instruction must address both foundational and meaning-making processes. Unlike strictly bottom-up models that emphasize decoding or top-down models that prioritize prior knowledge and prediction, the interactive model proposes that different sources of information operate simultaneously during reading (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1981). As discussed by Khosa (2024), this interaction allows learners to use letter-sound knowledge and word recognition while also drawing on vocabulary, context, experience, and comprehension strategies. An assessment-guided reading program should therefore address decoding weaknesses without separating them from meaningful engagement with texts.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a broader explanation of the conditions influencing literacy development. Children's learning is shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by relationships and experiences within the family, school, community, and wider educational environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Its later bioecological formulation emphasizes proximal processes, or the regular interactions between children and the people, activities, and materials in their environment, as central drivers of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This perspective is particularly relevant to literacy recovery because learners' progress may be influenced by teacher support, peer interaction, parental involvement, school resources, attendance, and broader disruptions such as the pandemic. Effective reading intervention therefore requires collaboration among teachers, families, school leaders, and other stakeholders rather than reliance on classroom instruction alone.

Despite the growing evidence supporting reading interventions, several gaps remain. Basali (2022) and Paciencia (2017) documented reading difficulties among Filipino learners, including weaknesses in inferential comprehension and differences associated with contextual and socioeconomic conditions. However, much of the available research has focused on upper-grade learners, particular technologies, or isolated instructional techniques. Other elementary-level studies have been conducted in Sabangan, Cotabato City, Bohol, Camarines Norte, and Zamboanga City (Avergonzando & Polinar, 2025; Bagolong & Usop, 2024; Barnuevo & Lastrella, 2023; Dela Cruz, 2024; Zapanta, 2023). While these studies provide valuable evidence, their findings may not fully represent the needs and classroom conditions of Key Stage 1 learners in Palo I District. Moreover, limited local research has examined CRLA-based reading performance together with classroom engagement as related dimensions for planning a comprehensive intervention.

This gap is evident in Palo I District, where school CRLA records for School Year 2024–2025 showed that only 23% of the assessed learners demonstrated reading proficiency. The result suggests that many pupils remain in a largely remedial or defensive position, with limited progress toward higher reading levels. Moving from this defensive condition to a more proactive stage requires an approach that uses assessment findings to provide systematic, differentiated, engaging, and collaborative reading activities. The proposed CRLA Guided Reading Program was conceptualized in response to this need. Although its implementation requires additional time and effort from teachers and learners, it offers a potentially sustainable means of addressing reading gaps while reducing later instructional difficulties.

Accordingly, this study aimed to determine the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners through the CRLA and assess their classroom engagement as perceived by the respondents in Palo I District. Guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Rumelhart's Interactive Model of Reading, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the study presumed that guided, differentiated, and context-responsive instruction can create more meaningful literacy experiences and support improved reading performance and engagement. The findings were intended to provide an empirical basis for developing an intervention scheme responsive to the needs of Key Stage 1 learners. By strengthening reading during the formative years, the initiative seeks to provide pupils with a lasting foundation that can support learning throughout their educational journey.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and assigned grade level?
2. What is the reading performance of the students at the Beginning of the School Year and Middle of the School Year in terms of emergent, developing, transitioning, and grade-ready reading levels?
3. Is there a significant difference between the students' reading performance at the Beginning of the School Year and Middle of the School Year based on the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment results?
4. What is the level of classroom engagement of the students, as perceived by the respondents, in terms of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the students' reading performance and classroom engagement, as perceived by the respondents?
6. What intervention scheme may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive component was used to describe the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners based on their Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) results during the Beginning of School Year (BOSY) and Middle of School Year (MOSY), as well as their level of classroom engagement as perceived by teachers. The comparative component was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the learners' reading performance between BOSY and MOSY. No variables were manipulated during the study.

Research Participants

The study was conducted in selected schools in Palo District I, Division of Leyte. The teacher-respondents consisted of 60 Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 teachers from 10 selected schools. Teachers were included if they were directly teaching Key Stage 1 learners and were involved in literacy instruction during the conduct of the study. The study also used the BOSY and MOSY CRLA results of Key Stage 1 learners from the participating schools. Only CRLA records with complete BOSY and MOSY results were included in the analysis. The same learners' results were matched across the two assessment periods to allow comparison of their reading performance.

Research Instruments

Two sources of data were used in the study: the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) and a researcher-made classroom engagement questionnaire. The CRLA results were obtained from official school records and were used to determine the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners during BOSY and MOSY. Reading performance was classified according to the categories and scoring procedures prescribed in

the official CRLA guidelines of the Department of Education.

The researcher-made classroom engagement questionnaire was used to measure learners' engagement as perceived by their teachers. It consisted of 30 items covering three domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement, with 10 items for each domain. Teachers rated each statement using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Higher scores indicated higher levels of classroom engagement.

Before its use in the main study, the classroom engagement questionnaire was reviewed by <insert number of experts> experts to assess the clarity, relevance, and suitability of its items. The instrument obtained a content validation result of <insert result>. It was then pilot tested among <insert number of teachers> teachers from a school or district not included in the main study. The pilot test yielded a reliability coefficient of <insert coefficient>, indicating <insert level> internal consistency.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from <insert complete name of institutional ethics committee> and secured permission from the Dean of the Graduate School of Holy Infant College, the Division of Leyte, Palo District I, and the heads of the participating schools. After approval was obtained, the researcher coordinated with the school heads and teachers regarding the schedule and procedures for data collection. The BOSY and MOSY CRLA results were obtained from authorized school records with permission from the concerned authorities. Personal information that could identify individual learners was removed before the data were encoded and analyzed. The classroom engagement questionnaire was administered to the 60 teacher-respondents after the purpose and procedures of the study had been explained to them and informed consent had been obtained. The completed questionnaires and CRLA data were checked for completeness, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics based on the research questions of the study. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and assigned grade level. Frequency and percentage were also used to describe the reading performance of the learners during the Beginning of the School Year (BOSY) and Middle of the School Year (MOSY) based on their CRLA reading classifications of emergent, developing, transitioning, and grade-ready. To determine whether there was a significant difference in the learners' reading performance between BOSY and MOSY, a chi-square test was employed. The test was evaluated at the .05 level of significance.

Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of classroom engagement as perceived by the teacher-respondents in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement. The mean scores were interpreted using the established ranges of the five-point response scale used in the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho) was used to determine the significant relationship between learners' reading performance and classroom engagement. This test was selected because the reading performance categories represent ordered levels of reading proficiency. The relationship was tested at the .05 level of significance.

Finally, the findings on learners' reading performance, changes between BOSY and MOSY, classroom engagement, and the relationship between reading performance and classroom engagement served as the basis for developing the proposed intervention scheme. The intervention focused on the areas identified by the findings as needing further support or improvement.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted after receiving ethical approval from <complete name of institutional ethics committee> under Protocol No. <insert protocol number>. Participation of the teachers was voluntary, and

informed consent was obtained before they answered the questionnaire. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, their right to refuse or withdraw from participation, and the measures taken to protect their privacy. The confidentiality of both teacher responses and learner CRLA records was protected throughout the study. No learner or teacher names were included in the data used for analysis, and only coded information was used in the research files. Access to the data was limited to authorized members of the research team. The electronic data were stored in a password-protected device and will be retained for <insert retention period> before permanent deletion. The use of learner CRLA records followed the requirements approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee and the concerned education authorities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

The profile of the 60 teacher-respondents shows that the largest age group was 46–50 years old (35.00%), followed by those aged 36–40 years (18.33%), indicating that many respondents were in their mid- to late-career stage. The respondents were predominantly female (96.67%), reflecting the common pattern of female representation in elementary education (Drudy, 2008; OECD, 2019). In terms of educational attainment, most held a bachelor's degree (75.00%), while 20.00% had completed a master's degree, with only a small proportion having master's units (3.33%) or a doctoral degree (1.67%). These findings suggest that the respondents generally possessed the educational qualifications and professional background needed to provide informed observations of learners' reading performance and classroom engagement.

In terms of teaching experience, most respondents had 6–10 years of service (63.33%), while 18.33% had 1–5 years of experience, indicating that the group consisted largely of teachers with substantial classroom experience. The respondents were also fairly distributed across Key Stage 1, with 35.00% assigned to Grade 1, 33.33% to Grade 2, and 31.67% to Grade 3. This distribution provided representation from all three grade levels and allowed the study to capture teacher perspectives across the early elementary years.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
26-30 years old	5	8.33
31-35 years old	5	8.33
36-40 years old	11	18.33
41-45 years old	7	11.68
46-50 years old	21	35.00
51-55 years old	11	11.33
Sex		
Male	2	3.33
Female	58	96.67
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	45	75.00
With Master's Units	2	3.33
Master's Degree	12	20.00
Doctoral Degree	1	1.67
Years of Teaching		
1 to 5 years	11	18.33
6 to 10 years	38	63.33
11 to 15 years	5	8.33
16 to 20 years	1	1.68
21 to 25 years	3	5.00

26 to 30 years	2	3.33
Assigned Grade Level		
Grade 1	21	35.00
Grade 2	20	33.33
Grade 3	19	31.67

Reading Performance of the Students during BOSY and MOSY

Table 2 shows a clear improvement in the reading performance of Key Stage 1 learners from the Beginning of the School Year (BOSY) to the Middle of the School Year (MOSY). At BOSY, many learners remained in the lower reading levels, particularly in Grade 1, where 46.86% were classified as emergent readers, and only 13.37% were proficient. Although proficiency was higher among Grade 2 (40.94%) and Grade 3 (50.4%) learners, the overall results showed that only 35% were proficient, while 65% remained at the emergent, developing, or transitioning levels. This pattern suggests that many learners began the school year without fully meeting the expected reading competencies for their grade levels, highlighting the importance of strong foundational literacy instruction and systematic reading support (Castles et al., 2018; Department of Education, 2018; Kilpatrick, 2016).

Table 2 Level of Reading Performance of the Students during BOSY and MOSY

Assessment	Level of Reading Skills	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Overall	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
BOSY	Emergent	254	46.8	46	9.81	21	3.70	321	20.0
	Developing	121	23.3	66	14.0	68	12.0	255	16.0
	Transitioning	94	17.3	165	35.1	192	33.9	451	29.0
	At Grade Ready	73	13.3	192	40.9	285	50.4	550	35.0
MOSY	Emergent	97	17.9	15	3.20	13	2.30	125	7.90
	Developing	69	12.7	43	9.20	20	3.50	132	8.40
	Transitioning	119	22.0	102	21.7	113	20.0	334	21.2
	At Grade Ready	257	47.4	309	65.9	420	74.2	986	62.5

By MOSY, reading performance had improved across all three grade levels. Proficiency increased to 47.4% in Grade 1, 65.9% in Grade 2, and 74.2% in Grade 3, while the overall proportion of proficient readers increased from 35% to 62.5%. At the same time, emergent readers decreased from 20% to 7.9%, indicating a movement of learners toward higher reading levels. This progression is consistent with literature emphasizing that systematic literacy instruction and sustained reading support can strengthen learners' reading development over time (Ehri, 2020; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). However, while the results indicate substantial improvement, the increase should not be attributed solely to the reading interventions without further analysis, as other instructional and learner-related factors may also have contributed to the observed changes.

Relationship between Reading Performance and Assessment Period

A chi-square test was conducted to determine whether the distribution of learners across reading performance levels differed between the Beginning of the School Year (BOSY) and the Middle of the School Year (MOSY). The results showed a statistically significant difference in reading performance between the two assessment periods, $\chi^2(3) = 246.40$, $p < .001$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. When considered together with the descriptive results, the significant difference reflects a shift toward higher reading performance levels from BOSY to MOSY, indicating meaningful progress in the reading skills of Key Stage 1 learners.

The observed improvement supports the importance of continued and structured reading instruction for developing early literacy skills. Previous studies similarly emphasize the value of systematic and targeted reading support in improving learners' reading development (Denton et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2022). The findings therefore provide support for the proposed Guided Reading Program as a means of addressing the needs of learners who remain at lower reading levels and sustaining the progress of those who have advanced. Structured and responsive reading instruction may help strengthen learners' reading development over time (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Kim et al., 2017).

Level of Classroom Engagement

The level of classroom engagement of the students as perceived by the respondents is presented in Table 3. The results reveal that the Cognitive Domain garnered the highest level of engagement, yielding a mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.66, which translates to a verbal interpretation of "Always." This was followed by the Affective and Behavioral domains, both of which obtained an identical mean of 3.85, interpreted as "Often." These results indicate that while cognitive processing remains the primary focus, emotional and behavioral strategies are also frequently utilized to maintain classroom engagement.

Table 3 Overall Classroom Engagement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Cognitive Domain	4.46	0.66	Always
Affective Domain	3.85	0.92	Often
Behavioral Domain	3.85	1.07	Often
Overall	4.05	0.88	Often

Cognitive Domain of Engagement. Table 4 presents the level of classroom engagement of Key Stage 1 learners in the cognitive domain as perceived by the teacher-respondents. The overall mean of 4.46, interpreted as "Always," indicates a consistently high level of cognitive engagement. All indicators received the same interpretation, with mean scores ranging from 4.33 to 4.63. The highest mean was recorded for active participation in alphabet-matching activities ($M = 4.63$), followed by relating concepts to real-world situations ($M = 4.52$) and responding appropriately to instructional cues ($M = 4.50$). These findings suggest that learners actively participate in literacy activities, process instructional content, and connect classroom learning with meaningful situations. Such behaviors are important in developing foundational literacy and deeper cognitive processing (Ehri, 2020; Lei et al., 2018; Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016).

Learners also demonstrated engagement through asking and answering questions ($M = 4.40$), posing higher-order questions ($M = 4.43$), applying strategies independently and sustaining effort during challenging tasks ($M = 4.43$), and transferring learning to new situations ($M = 4.33$). These behaviors reflect active processing, persistence, and the application of learning beyond immediate classroom tasks, which are important features of cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2016; Walsh & Sattes, 2016). The relatively small standard deviations ($SD = 0.66\text{--}0.85$) further indicate that teachers generally had similar perceptions of learners' cognitive engagement. Overall, the findings suggest that learners possess a strong level of cognitive engagement that may be further supported through structured and responsive reading activities. A guided reading program may build on these existing strengths while providing targeted opportunities to develop comprehension, independent thinking, and reading proficiency (Allington & Johnston, 2020; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

Table 4 Classroom Engagement in terms of Cognitive Domain

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Actively participate in alphabet-matching activities during class discussions.	4.63	0.82	Always
2. Sort and identify upper- and lowercase letters with focus and interest.	4.45	0.83	Always
3. Respond appropriately when given cues or prompts about letters of the	4.50	0.75	Always

alphabet.			
4. Ask and answer questions related to letter–sound correspondence during discussions.	4.40	0.85	Always
5. Show enthusiasm when participating in activities that produce or identify letter sounds.	4.48	0.79	Always
6. Transfer learning to new contexts.	4.33	0.75	Always
7. Apply strategies independently and “stick with it” during difficult tasks.	4.43	0.72	Always
8. Ask thoughtful, higher-order questions.	4.43	0.83	Always
9. Make connections between lessons and real-world situations.	4.52	0.77	Always
Overall Mean	4.46	0.66	Always

Affective Domain of Engagement. Table 5 presents the level of classroom engagement of Key Stage 1 learners in the affective domain as perceived by the teacher-respondents. The overall mean of 3.89, interpreted as “Often,” indicates that learners frequently demonstrate positive attitudes, emotions, and dispositions toward classroom learning. All indicators were rated “Often,” with mean scores ranging from 3.82 to 4.02. The highest-rated indicator was completing assigned tasks on time ($M = 4.02$), followed by following instructions accurately, seeking clarification when needed, and showing confidence when dealing with new learning materials ($M = 3.90$ each). Learners also frequently demonstrated persistence ($M = 3.87$), comfort in asking for help ($M = 3.88$), positive interaction with classmates, and pride in their work ($M = 3.89$). These findings suggest that learners generally possess positive attitudes and motivation that support their participation in classroom activities. Alqahtani (2024) emphasizes that reading engagement is influenced by motivational beliefs, social interaction, instructional practices, and the learning environment, highlighting the importance of creating supportive classrooms that encourage learners' confidence, autonomy, and meaningful participation.

The lowest-rated indicators were organizing learning materials and showing enthusiasm or genuine interest in a topic ($M = 3.82$ each), suggesting areas where further support may be needed. The standard deviations, which ranged from 0.85 to 1.12, also indicate greater differences in teachers' perceptions of learners' affective engagement compared with the cognitive domain. Overall, the findings show that learners are frequently emotionally and socially engaged, although these behaviors are not consistently demonstrated by all learners. This highlights the need to strengthen motivation, confidence, interest, and persistence through supportive and engaging learning experiences. A guided reading program may therefore incorporate activities that provide appropriate challenges, learner choice, positive feedback, social interaction, and meaningful reading materials to support both reading development and positive attitudes toward learning (Alqahtani, 2024).

Table 5 Classroom Engagement in terms of Affective Domain

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Submit or finish assigned tasks and activities within the given time.	4.02	1.07	Often
2. Follow written or oral instructions accurately when completing tasks.	3.90	1.12	Often
3. Demonstrate persistence and effort in finishing classroom activities.	3.87	0.93	Often
4. Organize and use learning materials properly when working on tasks.	3.82	0.85	Often
5. Seek clarification or assistance when they have difficulty completing a task.	3.90	1.02	Often
6. Feel comfortable asking for help or offering encouragement to peers.	3.90	1.04	Often
7. Demonstrate confidence when tackling new material.	3.88	1.08	Often
8. Show enthusiasm or genuine interest in a topic.	3.90	0.90	Often
9. Interact positively with classmates or express pride in their work.	3.82	1.03	Often
Overall Mean	3.89	0.92	Often

Behavioral Domain of Engagement. Table 6 presents the level of classroom engagement of Key Stage 1 learners in the behavioral domain as perceived by the teacher-respondents. The overall mean of 3.79 ($SD = 0.92$), interpreted as “Often,” indicates that learners frequently demonstrate behaviors that support classroom learning.

All indicators were rated “Often,” with mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 3.92. The highest-rated indicator was showing enthusiasm and curiosity when engaging in new learning tasks ($M = 3.92$), followed by wanting to feel valued and included ($M = 3.85$). Learners also frequently contributed ideas during discussions ($M = 3.78$), set goals and monitored their progress ($M = 3.77$), and demonstrated attentiveness, appropriate behavior, respectful interaction, and the ability to follow directions ($M = 3.75$). These behaviors reflect important aspects of behavioral engagement, including attention, effort, participation, persistence, and appropriate classroom conduct (Fredricks et al., 2004; Skinner et al., 2009, as cited in Aldrup et al., 2022).

The standard deviations, ranging from 0.86 to 1.07, indicate some variation in how consistently these behaviors were observed among learners. In particular, the results suggest that some learners may still need support in maintaining appropriate behavior without direct supervision, managing their time, and regulating their own learning. These skills are closely related to self-regulated learning, which includes goal setting, time management, monitoring progress, and controlling one's effort toward learning goals (Zimmerman, 2002). The finding that learners also value inclusion highlights the importance of a supportive classroom environment, as a sense of belonging can influence participation and behavior (Osterman, 2000). Overall, the findings suggest that learners are generally behaviorally engaged but may benefit from strategies that strengthen independence, self-regulation, and sustained participation. Clear classroom routines, positive reinforcement, goal-setting activities, and guided practice in self-monitoring may help promote more consistent behavioral engagement (Zimmerman, 2002).

Table 6 Classroom Engagement in terms of Behavioral Domain

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Show attentiveness and focus while performing learning activities.	3.75	0.88	Often
2. Demonstrate positive behavior, such as listening carefully and following directions.	3.75	0.97	Often
3. Interact respectfully with classmates during group or pair activities.	3.75	0.97	Often
4. Display enthusiasm and curiosity when engaging in new learning tasks.	3.92	0.93	Often
5. Maintain proper behavior even when the teacher is not directly supervising them.	3.75	0.86	Often
6. Contribute ideas during whole-group or small-group discussions.	3.78	1.01	Often
7. Feel valued and included.	3.85	1.07	Often
8. Set personal and academic goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their learning.	3.77	1.01	Often
9. Demonstrate practical time-management skills taught and modeled by the teacher.	3.75	1.00	Often
Overall Mean	3.79	0.92	Often

Relationship Between Reading Performance and Classroom Engagement

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the reading performance and classroom engagement of Key Stage 1 learners as perceived by the teacher-respondents. The analysis revealed a very weak positive relationship between the two variables, $r_s = 0.02$, $p = .835$. This finding indicates that classroom engagement was not significantly associated with the reading performance of the learners in the present study. The result suggests that differences in reading performance may be related to other factors beyond learners' cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement in the classroom. However, the absence of a significant relationship does not imply that classroom engagement is unimportant to learning. Rather, reading development may be influenced by several factors that were not examined in this study. Therefore, the proposed guided reading program may focus primarily on identified reading needs while also incorporating activities that encourage participation, motivation, responsibility, and positive learning behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings show that the teacher-respondents were generally experienced educators, with most being female, 46–50 years old, bachelor's degree holders, and having 6–10 years of teaching experience. Their fairly even distribution across Grades 1, 2, and 3 provided representation from the different levels of Key Stage 1. The reading performance of learners improved from the Beginning of the School Year (BOSY) to the Middle of the School Year (MOSY), with more learners moving from the emergent, developing, and transitioning levels toward the grade-ready level. Statistical analysis further confirmed that the difference in reading performance between BOSY and MOSY was significant, indicating meaningful progress in learners' reading skills over time.

In terms of classroom engagement, learners demonstrated a high level of cognitive engagement, while affective and behavioral engagement were also evident but less consistent. This indicates that learners generally participate actively in classroom learning, although their motivation, confidence, self-regulation, and sustained participation may still require further support. The correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between reading performance and classroom engagement. This suggests that improved reading performance cannot be explained by classroom engagement alone and may also be influenced by other learner, teacher, family, and instructional factors. Based on the overall findings, a Guided Reading Program may be developed to sustain the gains in reading performance while also addressing areas of affective and behavioral engagement that need further improvement.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School administrators and teachers may continue strengthening existing reading interventions, particularly those that provide differentiated and targeted support for learners who remain at the emergent, developing, and transitioning reading levels.
2. A structured Guided Reading Program may be implemented for Key Stage 1 learners, with activities suited to their current reading levels and focused on developing decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.
3. Teachers may use the BOSY and MOSY CRLA results to identify learners who require additional support and to regularly adjust reading activities according to their progress and specific learning needs.
4. Since affective and behavioral engagement were less consistent than cognitive engagement, teachers may incorporate activities that promote interest, confidence, persistence, participation, self-regulation, and positive attitudes toward reading.
5. Schools may provide teachers with professional development activities on guided reading, differentiated instruction, learner engagement, and the use of assessment results in planning reading interventions.
6. Because no significant relationship was found between reading performance and classroom engagement, future studies may examine other factors that could influence reading development, such as home literacy environment, parental involvement, attendance, access to reading materials, language background, teaching strategies, and learner motivation.
7. Future researchers may include a larger number of schools and participants to improve the generalizability of the findings. They may also use longitudinal or experimental designs to determine more clearly whether specific reading interventions directly contribute to improvements in reading performance.

8. The proposed Guided Reading Program may be pilot-tested and evaluated before wider implementation to determine its suitability, effectiveness, and areas for further improvement.

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