

The Influence of Vocabulary Knowledge, Teachers' Instructional Practices and Parental Involvement on Grade 7 Students' Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension was a foundational skill that was key to academic success, however many students in Grade 7 had difficulty as texts became more challenging. Grounded in the Simple View of Reading and Scaffolding Theory, the study investigated the relationship between vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, parental involvement and reading comprehension of Grade 7 students from one district of Cagayan de Oro City. It specifically examined vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, parental involvement and reading comprehension in four subskills: extracting significant information, distinguishing fact from opinion, drawing inferences and analyzing real-world issues. The study used a descriptive–correlational design with 214 students who were selected using simple random sampling. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that vocabulary knowledge, teacher's instructional practices and parental involvement were all at high levels. The regression model was significant; however, vocabulary knowledge was the only significant predictor of reading comprehension. Students performed relatively well in drawing inferences and analyzing real-world issues but experienced difficulty in distinguishing fact from opinion. These findings underscore the role of vocabulary knowledge in enhancing reading comprehension and the need for supportive teaching and home environments. Overall, this underscores that while external support is valuable, building strong vocabulary remains the foundational factor for effective reading comprehension. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional factors influencing reading comprehension, such as reading motivation, metacognitive strategies, and digital literacy, to extend the generalizability of the findings across diverse contexts.

Keywords: Influence, Parental Involvement, Reading Comprehension, Teachers' Instructional Practices, Vocabulary Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is crucial for academic success and lifelong learning, yet many learners, particularly in the Philippines, continue to struggle. The 2022 PISA results revealed that only a small proportion of Filipino students achieved proficiency, highlighting gaps in interpreting texts, constructing meaning, and applying reading skills across contexts. These challenges are especially evident in junior high school, where learners must move from basic decoding to higher-order comprehension.

Comprehension involves more than word recognition; it requires vocabulary knowledge and higher-order thinking such as inference, evaluation, and analysis (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990). Strong vocabulary supports understanding complex texts and connecting new information to prior knowledge, while limited vocabulary constrains comprehension even with adequate decoding skills (Dong et al., 2020; Park & Waxman, 2023).

Instructional practices and parental involvement further influence reading development. Effective teaching strategies—explicit instruction, scaffolding, differentiation, and guided practice—help learners navigate texts and develop comprehension strategies (Wood et al., 1976; Wright et al., 2024). Scaffolding, based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, allows learners to perform beyond independent capabilities.

Similarly, parental support through reading, discussion, and academic monitoring fosters comprehension, motivation, and positive reading habits (Ando et al., 2024; Arcilla, 2024).

Critical comprehension skills, such as distinguishing fact from opinion, drawing inferences, and analyzing real-world issues, are essential for meaningful engagement with texts (Cabuyao & Velasco, 2025). However, most studies examine cognitive and environmental factors separately, with limited insight on their combined influence, particularly for Grade 7 students.

This study addressed the identified gap by examining the interplay of vocabulary knowledge, instructional practices, and parental involvement in relation to Grade 7 students' reading comprehension. Grounded in the Simple View of Reading and Scaffolding Theory, it aimed to generate insights for improving instructional practice, strengthening home–school collaboration, and informing targeted interventions to enhance literacy outcomes, ultimately fostering competent, critical, and independent readers.

Research Questions

This study examined the influence of vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, and parental involvement in Grade 7 students' reading comprehension. It also aimed to investigate how these three factors interacted and how their combined influence impacted students' reading comprehension. The following research questions were specifically addressed in this study:

1. What is the participants' level of vocabulary knowledge?
2. What is the teachers' instructional practices as assessed by Grade 7 students?
3. What is the parents' level of involvement in the reading development as assessed by the Grade 7 students?
4. What is the level of Grade 7 students' reading comprehension in terms of:
 - 4.1 extracting significant information;
 - 4.2 distinguishing fact from opinion;
 - 4.3 drawing inferences; and
 - 4.4 analyzing real-world issues?
5. Do the Grade 7 students' vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, and parental involvement significantly influence their reading comprehension?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational design to examine the relationships among vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, parental involvement, and reading comprehension of Grade 7 students in selected public secondary and integrated schools in one district of Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. The locale represents typical public-school settings where learners exhibit varied reading proficiency, providing a relevant context for investigating these factors.

The respondents were 214 Grade 7 students randomly selected from an estimated population of 480 using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. A simple random sampling technique ensured equal representation across different sections and minimized selection bias, reflecting the diverse academic abilities and backgrounds typical of public-school learners.

Data were collected using a researcher-modified 50-item questionnaire divided into four sections. Vocabulary Knowledge (10 items), adapted from Tran et al. (2020), assessed students' understanding of word meanings and usage in context. Teachers' Instructional Practices (10 items), modified from De Ocampo and Tosino

(2024), measured students’ perceptions of scaffolding, explicit teaching, and comprehension monitoring using a 5-point Likert scale. Parental Involvement (10 items), based on Yopo (2024), evaluated home reading support and academic monitoring. Reading Comprehension (20 items), developed by the researcher and guided by Freed and Cain (2021), assessed subskills such as extracting significant information, distinguishing fact from opinion, drawing inferences, and analyzing real-world issues.

The instruments underwent content validation by an expert panel to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with study objectives, with revisions made accordingly. A pilot test with 30 Grade 7 students from a different school established reliability, with all sections demonstrating acceptable to good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha \geq 0.70$), confirming their suitability for measuring the intended variables.

Ethical procedures were strictly followed. Permission from school authorities was secured, and participants provided informed assent while parents gave consent. Questionnaires were administered in printed form during regular school hours and completed within 45 minutes. The study adhered to the Belmont Principles and the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and secure handling of data.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe the levels of vocabulary knowledge, instructional practices, parental involvement, and reading comprehension. Multiple regression analysis examined the individual and combined effects of the predictor variables, with assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity tested to ensure the validity of the results.

This study focused on the influence of vocabulary knowledge, teachers’ instructional practices, and parental involvement on the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students in integrated and public schools within the district. Findings were limited to the selected participants and may not generalize to private schools, other grade levels, or contexts. Additionally, other factors such as motivation, socioeconomic status, and cognitive abilities were not examined, which may also influence reading comprehension.

RESULTS

1. Participants’ Vocabulary Knowledge

The vocabulary knowledge of Grade 7 students, measured using a 10-item test, yielded an overall mean of 6.60 (SD = 2.28), interpreted as “Very Good.” As shown in Table 1, nearly half of the participants performed within the “Very Good” (24.30%) to “Outstanding” (24.77%) categories, indicating generally strong vocabulary proficiency. However, a substantial proportion of students (36.44%) fell within the “Fair” (28.04%) to “Poor” (8.40%) ranges, revealing notable gaps in lexical knowledge. This pattern reflects uneven vocabulary development among learners, underscoring the need for targeted, differentiated, and sustained vocabulary instruction to address varying proficiency levels.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Participants’ Vocabulary Knowledge

Score Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
8.01 – 10.00	Outstanding	53	24.77
6.01 – 8.00	Very Good	52	24.30
5.01 – 6.00	Average	31	14.49
3.01 – 5.00	Fair	60	28.04
1.00 – 3.00	Poor	18	8.40
Total		214	100
Mean		6.60	

SD	2.28
Interpretation	Very Good

Teachers’ Instructional Practices

Students rated teachers’ instructional practices using a 10-item Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = Never, 5 = Always). As shown in Table 2, the overall mean (M = 4.01, SD = 0.71) indicates a “High” level of instructional practices, reflecting consistent implementation of learner-centered strategies in supporting students’ reading development. This is evidenced by frequent use of vocabulary explanation, guided reading strategies, and small-group activities, although variations in responses suggest some inconsistency in the application of these practices across instructional settings.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Teachers’ Instructional Practices

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very High	60	28.04
3.51 – 4.50	Often	High	100	46.73
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Moderate	51	23.83
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Low	3	1.40
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Low	0	0.00
	Total		214	100
	Mean		4.01	
	SD		0.71	
	Interpretation		High	

Parental Involvement in Reading

Parental involvement was measured using a 10-item Likert-scale questionnaire. As shown in Table 3, the overall mean (M = 4.00, SD = 0.73) indicates a “High” level of parental involvement, reflecting active engagement in supporting learners’ reading development. This is evidenced by regular practices such as providing reading materials, monitoring assignments, and participating in reading-related discussions, although the presence of moderate and low responses suggests variability in the consistency of involvement across households.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Parental Involvement

Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very High	52.00	24.30
3.51 – 4.50	Often	High	101.00	47.20
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Moderate	55.00	25.70
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Low	6.00	2.80
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Low	0.00	0.00
	Total		214	100

	Mean	4.00
	SD	0.73
	Interpretation	High

Students' Reading Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension was assessed across four subskills, all of which yielded a “Developing” level, indicating that while students demonstrate foundational understanding, they have yet to attain consistent proficiency in higher-order comprehension skills. Among the subskills, drawing inferences emerged as a relative strength (M = 3.64), whereas distinguishing fact from opinion was the most challenging (M = 3.22), suggesting difficulty in critical evaluation of textual information. Despite comparatively strong vocabulary knowledge and high levels of instructional and parental support, the overall reading comprehension performance remained at a developing level (M = 13.58, SD = 4.55), highlighting a gap between supportive learning conditions and students’ actual comprehension outcomes.

Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Participants’ Overall Reading Comprehension Skills

Subskill	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Extracting significant information	3.30	1.49	Developing
Distinguishing fact from opinion	3.22	1.23	Developing
Drawing inferences	3.64	1.66	Developing
Analyzing real-world issues	3.43	1.60	Developing
Overall reading comprehension	13.58	4.55	Developing

Influence of Vocabulary Knowledge, Teachers’ Instructional Practices, and Parental Involvement on Reading Comprehension

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify predictors of students’ reading comprehension. The model was significant, $F(3, 210) = 29.0, p < .001$, explaining 29.3% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.293$). Among the variables, only vocabulary knowledge significantly predicted reading comprehension ($\beta = 0.487, t = 8.137, p < .001$), confirming its central role in comprehension development. In contrast, teachers’ instructional practices ($p = 0.391$) and parental involvement ($p = 0.090$) were not significant predictors when controlling for vocabulary knowledge. These findings indicate that reading comprehension is primarily driven by learners’ vocabulary knowledge, with instructional and home factors serving a supportive rather than direct predictive role.

Table 5 Regression Analysis of Vocabulary Knowledge, Teachers’ Instructional Practices, and Parental Involvement on Reading Comprehension

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		β	95% CI		t	p
	B	SE		Lower	Upper		
Constant	2.52	1.72		-0.88	5.91	1.460	0.146
Vocabulary Knowledge	0.97**	0.12	0.487	0.74	1.21	8.137	<.001
Teachers’ Instructional	0.40	0.47	0.063	-0.52	1.33	0.859	0.391

Practices							
Parental Involvement	0.76	0.44	0.122	-0.12	1.63	1.702	0.090
Model Summary							
R = 0.541 R² = 0.293 Adjusted R² = 0.283 F(3,210) = 29.0** p<.001							
Note. B = unstandardized beta coefficient, SE = standard error, β = standardized beta coefficient, 95% CI = 95% confidence interval, t = t statistic, p = probability value. **Significant at 0.01 two-tailed alpha level.							

DISCUSSIONS

Research Question 1. What is the participants’ level of vocabulary knowledge?

Grade 7 students demonstrated a “Very Good” level of vocabulary knowledge (M = 6.60, SD = 2.28), indicating that, generally, learners possess a strong command of both academic and contextually embedded vocabulary essential for effective text comprehension; however, the relatively high standard deviation reveals considerable variability in performance, suggesting uneven vocabulary development within the group. While nearly half of the students achieved “Outstanding” or “Very Good” ratings, a notable proportion (36.44%) fell within the “Fair” or “Poor” categories, pointing to existing gaps in lexical knowledge that may limit their ability to fully comprehend and critically engage with texts. This disparity highlights that, despite the overall positive performance, a significant number of learners remain at risk of comprehension difficulties due to insufficient vocabulary. As emphasized by Dong et al. (2020), vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental component of reading comprehension as it enables learners to construct meaning from texts, while Zeng et al. (2025) further assert that strong lexical knowledge significantly enhances students’ ability to make inferences and interpret information. Consequently, there is a clear need for more deliberate, differentiated, and research-informed vocabulary instruction that not only supports struggling learners in building foundational word knowledge but also extends the lexical proficiency of higher-performing students to ensure more equitable and sustained reading comprehension development.

Research Question 2. What is the teachers’ instructional practices as assessed by Grade 7 students?

Students perceived their teachers’ instructional practices as generally “High” (M = 4.01, SD = 0.71), indicating the consistent implementation of learner-centered strategies that support reading comprehension; however, variations in the frequency of specific practices suggest areas for further enhancement. Strategies such as explaining difficult vocabulary and guiding students to identify the author’s purpose were reported as most frequently employed, reflecting teachers’ emphasis on meaning-making and text analysis. In contrast, essential scaffolding techniques—including the use of pre-reading activities, modeling of think-aloud processes, and the provision of immediate feedback—were less consistently practiced, potentially limiting opportunities for deeper comprehension and metacognitive development. This pattern implies that while teachers demonstrate competence in applying effective instructional approaches, a more balanced and sustained integration of these less frequently utilized strategies could strengthen overall instructional impact. As noted by Gallagher et al. (2023), explicit modeling and guided practice are crucial in developing students’ comprehension skills, while Alzahrani and Almalki (2025) highlight the importance of timely feedback and structured pre-reading activities in enhancing learners’ engagement and understanding. Therefore, reinforcing these instructional dimensions through deliberate and research-informed practices may further optimize students’ reading outcomes.

Research Question 3. What is the parents’ level of involvement in the reading development as assessed by the Grade 7 students?

Parental involvement was rated “High” (M = 4.00, SD = 0.73), indicating that parents are actively engaged in supporting their children’s academic responsibilities, particularly through monitoring assignments and overseeing reading-related tasks. However, less frequent practices such as reading aloud with their children

and encouraging regular library use suggest variability in the depth and quality of engagement, which may be influenced by constraints such as limited time, access to resources, or parental literacy confidence. While this level of involvement generally contributes to the development of literacy habits and learner motivation, its influence on reading comprehension may be more indirect when not consistently reinforced through structured support at home and in school. As emphasized by Pada (2024) and Caban et al. (2024), parental involvement plays a significant role in fostering reading attitudes and engagement; however, its impact on comprehension outcomes is strengthened when it is aligned and complemented by effective classroom-based instructional practices.

Research Question 4. What is the level of Grade 7 students' reading comprehension in terms of:

4.1 extracting significant information;

4.2 distinguishing fact from opinion;

4.3 drawing inferences; and

4.4 analyzing real-world issues?

Overall, students' reading comprehension was at a "Developing" level ($M = 13.58$), indicating that while learners demonstrate foundational understanding of texts, their ability to engage in higher-order comprehension processes remains limited, with notable variability in performance across the group. Subskill analysis further revealed uneven proficiency across specific domains: extracting significant information ($M = 3.30$), distinguishing fact from opinion ($M = 3.22$), drawing inferences ($M = 3.64$), and analyzing real-world issues ($M = 3.43$). Although a portion of students demonstrated emerging proficiency in these areas, a considerable number still performed at beginning or developing levels, particularly in tasks requiring critical evaluation and inferential reasoning. This pattern suggests that learners are more confident in surface-level comprehension skills but continue to struggle with deeper analytical and evaluative reading tasks. These findings highlight the need for sustained scaffolded instruction, explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, and structured guided practice to progressively develop students' critical reading abilities. As emphasized by Cabuyao and Velasco (2025) and Paige et al. (2024), effective reading comprehension development is strengthened through intentional instructional support that systematically builds learners' inferential and analytical skills over time.

Research Question 5. Do the Grade 7 students' vocabulary knowledge, teachers' instructional practices, and parental involvement significantly influence their reading comprehension?

Multiple regression analysis revealed that the combined model significantly predicted students' reading comprehension, $F(3, 210) = 29.0$, $p < .001$, accounting for approximately 29.3% of the variance in comprehension scores ($R^2 = 0.293$). Among the three predictor variables, vocabulary knowledge emerged as the only statistically significant predictor ($t = 8.137$, $p < .001$), underscoring its dominant and indispensable role in facilitating learners' ability to construct meaning, make inferences, and integrate information across texts. This finding reinforces the view that lexical competence serves as the foundational cognitive resource for comprehension processes, as it directly influences how readers decode, interpret, and synthesize textual information (Dagnaw, 2023; Dong et al., 2020). In contrast, teachers' instructional practices and parental involvement did not emerge as significant predictors when vocabulary knowledge was controlled for, suggesting that while these factors contribute meaningfully to the learning environment, their effects on reading comprehension are largely indirect and supportive rather than primary determinants (Masrul & Wicaksono, 2023; Boonk et al., 2024). Collectively, these results highlight the necessity of prioritizing systematic vocabulary development as a central instructional focus, while still leveraging targeted classroom strategies and home-based support to reinforce and sustain learners' comprehension growth.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicate that vocabulary knowledge is the most influential determinant of Grade 7

students' reading comprehension. It provides the essential foundation for constructing meaning, identifying key ideas, distinguishing fact from opinion, making inferences, and relating textual information to real-world contexts. Although teachers' instructional practices and parental involvement contribute positively to the learning environment, their effects appear to be largely supportive and indirect, becoming more effective only when students possess sufficient lexical knowledge to access and process text meaning. In this sense, instructional guidance and home-based support are constrained by learners' vocabulary limitations. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge emerges as the core driver of comprehension, enabling students to fully utilize instructional inputs and parental support, and ultimately engage in deeper and more meaningful text understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, English teachers are encouraged to strengthen the integration of evidence-based instructional strategies such as pre-reading activities, comprehension modeling, collaborative learning, and timely feedback, with particular emphasis on developing challenging subskills like distinguishing fact from opinion and synthesizing information. Given the central role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension, instruction may likewise prioritize explicit and contextualized vocabulary development alongside guided and scaffolded reading activities to progressively enhance learners' independent comprehension skills. Parents are encouraged to sustain active engagement in their children's literacy development by consistently supporting reading tasks and fostering a home environment that reinforces classroom instruction. Students may take greater responsibility for their learning by expanding their vocabulary through independent reading and dictionary use, and by regularly practicing comprehension strategies such as summarizing, predicting, inferring, and analyzing texts. Future research may further explore related variables such as reading motivation, metacognitive strategies, and digital literacy, and may consider employing experimental or mixed-methods designs to examine the effectiveness of targeted interventions and strengthen the generalizability of findings.

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