Learners' Innovative Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy, Reading Proficiency, and Academic Performance: A Correlational Study

Joyce Ethel L. Sienes
Department of Education, Philippines

Dr. Claire A. Madrazo
Western Mindanao State University, Philippines

Dr. Arnel R. Madrazo
Western Mindanao State University, Philippines

Dr. Mark L. Flores
Western Mindanao State University, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study investigated vocabulary enhancement strategies, reading proficiency, and academic performance among Grade 10 learners, with a focus on differences based on gender and socio-economic status. Conducted at School A in Isabela City, Basilan, Philippines, the research involved 309 learners and employed a descriptive correlational design, utilizing stratified random sampling and various statistical tools for analysis. Key findings revealed that common vocabulary enhancement strategies included metacognition, inferencing, and using dictionaries. Learners demonstrated reading proficiency at an instructional level, indicating effective comprehension. Academic performance was commendable, with evidence of consistent high scores. The study found no significant correlation between most vocabulary strategies and reading proficiency, except for rehearsing and encoding, which showed a weak negative correlation. A significant relationship was noted between vocabulary strategies and academic performance, while a moderate positive correlation existed between reading proficiency and academic success. The research aimed to inform educational practices to enhance vocabulary acquisition and academic performance in this learner demographic.

Keywords: innovative vocabulary enhancement strategies, reading proficiency, Junior High School, basic education.

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of the Philippine education system, the acquisition of vocabulary and strong reading proficiency is widely acknowledged as beneficial factors for academic achievement. The ability to comprehend and effectively communicate through written language plays a pivotal role in various subject areas that shape learners' overall academic performance. This holds particularly congruent for Grade 10 learners who find themselves at a critical stage of their educational journey, where foundational skills are essential for future academic pursuits and where they have to prepare themselves as they step on the next phase of their lives, which is Senior High School (SHS).

As we examine Grade 10 learners' vocabulary enhancement strategies through vocabulary acquisition and their reading proficiency, it becomes clear that these skills are not just academic requirements, but are fundamental for their future education. This study aims to untangle the intricate relationship between vocabulary improvement, reading proficiency, and academic performance, shedding light on their essential roles within the Philippine education system. By

understanding the connections between language proficiency and academic success, our goal is to identify how specific interventions in vocabulary development and reading skills can empower learners during their crucial transition to Senior High School (SHS) and beyond.

Vocabulary acquisition through various vocabulary enhancement strategies involves learning lexical terms sufficiently well to be able to use them productively and receptively over the course of numerous incidental and intentional interactions with these items in varied contexts [1]. This comprehensive understanding of language is crucial for effective communication, both in written and spoken forms.

Reading proficiency also plays a crucial role in academic success across all subject areas. It is essential for accessing and understanding textbooks, scientific articles, historical documents, literary works, and other educational resources. Proficient readers are better equipped to comprehend complex concepts, engage in critical analysis, and effectively communicate their ideas in both written and spoken form. It is known that learners start developing their reading skills at a very early age, but the skills do not have an end. The learners should continuously nurture their skills for them to become better and proficient readers.

In the study of Narad and Abdullah [2], in achieving the academic performance of the learners, it is based on the skills and knowledge of the learners where they are given a specific period of time to attain all the lesson discussed in the classroom, and there has to be the learning objectives achieved by the learners as well as the teachers. In addition, this does not only pertain to a single component of the educational grading system but it refers to the holistic attainment and success of the learners. This is in a form of gauging their scholastic standing and earned grade by the learners. Nowadays, there is a need to take a look into the skills to be developed for the learners for them to be prepared in the future and become the hope of the nation with effective learning skills. Though reading, vocabulary, and academic skills are not new to everyone, it is also essential to extract and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and be able to see their best practices or even give them proper intervention.

Hence, this study aimed to ensure that learners were prepared for senior high schools and effectively provided insights for proper intervention. This was done by assessing vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency skills of Grade 10 Learners of Basilan National High School through their academic performance.

Literature Review
On Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies

Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies (VES) refer to techniques that improve learners' vocabulary knowledge and usage, a key factor in language learning and academic success [3]. These strategies enable learners to learn new words, grasp their meanings, and use them effectively in context.

Cruz and Bautista [4] found that learners who applied VES achieved higher reading proficiency scores than those who did not. Similarly, Santillan and Daenos [3] highlighted that vocabulary proficiency and active word usage strongly relate to academic success, emphasizing the integration of VES within reading activities. Their research showed that learners with richer vocabularies tend to perform better academically.

Magcamit [5] supported this by revealing that limited vocabulary hampers text comprehension, underscoring vocabulary proficiency as vital to academic competence. Various VES include using context clues, graphic organizers, flashcards, word lists, and online tools. Gonzales [6] noted that digital platforms like Quizlet and Kahoot make vocabulary learning more engaging.

Learners' choice of strategies is shaped by learning styles, motivation, and prior knowledge. Bautista and Cruz [4] stressed that teachers should provide explicit instruction, model effective strategies, and encourage reflection. Finally, Solitana and Generoso [7] found that higher reading proficiency correlates with stronger cognitive skills such as vocabulary knowledge and inferencing ability.

On Reading Proficiency

Reading proficiency refers to the ability to comprehend written text beyond mere word recognition. It involves deriving meaning, interpreting ideas, and applying comprehension strategies such as predicting, connecting prior knowledge, visualizing, and summarizing to enhance understanding [8]. Proficient readers use prior knowledge and critical thinking to interpret unfamiliar words, evaluate text reliability, and apply learned information to real-life situations.

Reading proficiency not only supports problem-solving and communication but also fosters a love for reading as comprehension deepens engagement. It is a foundational skill essential for academic, professional, and intellectual growth.

Buraga [9] emphasized that reading proficiency is central to academic achievement, as learners with strong reading skills tend to perform better academically. It also benefits those struggling with vocabulary, improving both comprehension and language development.

Cabardo [10] assessed reading proficiency among learners using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and found most students were at the instructional level in oral reading but at the frustration level in silent reading. Female learners outperformed males in both areas. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to strengthen reading skills, address gender disparities, and promote holistic academic development.

On Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to learners' measurable progress in school, often evaluated through classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized tests. It reflects how effectively learners acquire and apply knowledge in various subject areas. Almerino et al. [11] noted that the Philippine K–12 curriculum emphasizes preparation for higher education and employability.

Garcia [12] described academic performance as a multifaceted construct influenced by cognitive ability, motivation, and study habits—factors strongly linked to higher achievement. Learners with strong motivation, effective study habits, and better cognitive skills tend to perform more successfully in academics.

The National Research Council [13] emphasized the use of active learning and metacognitive strategies to enhance academic performance. Activities such as group discussions, problem-solving, and self-evaluation help learners develop deeper understanding and regulate their learning processes.

Gebray [14] identified academic performance as a benchmark of achievement across subjects, essential to evaluating learners' overall success. Similarly, Sarmiento [15] found a positive relationship between reading proficiency and academic performance, while Gacutan [16] confirmed the effectiveness of the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) as a reliable measure of learners' academic achievement.

2.1 Related Studies

The following are studies that show the relationship between the three variables that are relevant to the study: vocabulary enhancement strategies, reading proficiency, and academic performance.

On Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies

Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies (VES) are essential in language learning as they help learners comprehend and use words effectively. Santillan and Daenos [3] emphasized their importance in academic settings, showing that strong vocabulary knowledge contributes significantly to academic success. These strategies involve deliberate efforts to learn new words, grasp their meanings, and apply them in various contexts.

Cruz and Bautista [4] found that learners using VES achieved higher reading proficiency than those who did not. Similarly, Santillan and Daenos [3] observed that learners with richer vocabularies tend to perform better academically. Common strategies include using context clues, graphic organizers, flashcards, word lists, and online tools. Gonzales [6] noted that digital platforms such as Quizlet and Kahoot enhance vocabulary learning through interactive activities.

Learners' use of VES is shaped by factors like motivation, learning style, and prior knowledge. Bautista and Cruz [4] suggested that teachers support learners by modeling and providing explicit

instruction on strategy use. Solitana and Generoso [7] further emphasized that reading proficiency involves cognitive skills—such as vocabulary knowledge and inferencing—that are strengthened through effective vocabulary learning.

On Reading Proficiency

Reading proficiency refers to the ability to comprehend written text beyond simple word recognition. It involves deriving meaning, inferring implied information, and understanding the author's intent through comprehension strategies such as predicting, connecting prior knowledge, visualizing, and summarizing [8]. Proficient readers apply critical thinking to assess text reliability, interpret complex ideas, and use prior knowledge to understand unfamiliar words.

Reading proficiency enhances enjoyment and motivation to read, sharpening comprehension and broadening intellectual growth. It is a fundamental skill that supports academic, professional, and lifelong success.

Buraga [9] highlighted reading proficiency as a major factor in academic achievement, noting that strong readers perform better academically and can overcome vocabulary difficulties. Cabardo [10] further observed gender differences in reading proficiency among learners, where females outperformed males and most students reached only the instructional level in oral reading.

On Academic Performance

Academic performance reflects how well learners engage with their studies and demonstrate understanding across different subjects. It is commonly measured through classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized tests. In the Philippines, the K–12 curriculum aims to prepare learners for higher education, employment, and global competitiveness [11].

Academic performance remains a key indicator of educational success and institutional quality [24], [2]. It serves as the foundation for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and socio-economic progress [21], [20]. Farooq et al. [20] noted that educators prioritize learners' performance as a measure of effective learning.

Many factors influence academic performance, including study habits, motivation, cognitive ability, and family background. Research shows that socio-economic status, parental education, and encouragement significantly affect achievement levels [19], [21], [22], [23]. Garcia [12] further emphasized that learners with stronger motivation, higher cognitive ability, and effective study habits—like time management and note-taking—tend to perform better in school.

To improve performance, learners can adopt active learning techniques such as group discussions and hands-on projects, which foster deeper understanding. Metacognitive strategies, like self-reflection and self-evaluation, also help students monitor and enhance their learning [12]. Gebray [14] described academic performance as a benchmark for assessing achievement, while Sarmiento [15] confirmed its close relationship with reading proficiency. Gacutan [16] validated the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) as an effective tool for evaluating learners' performance.

Across different regions, factors affecting performance vary. Studies in Singapore linked academic success to learners' interests, co-curricular involvement, and gender [17], while research in South Africa identified self-motivation, regular study habits, and punctuality as key determinants [18]. Ali et al. [19] similarly found that study hours, parental support, and socio-economic background greatly influence academic outcomes.

On Academic Performance and Reading Proficiency

Academic performance reflects learners' achievements in education and is shaped by their attitudes, the learning environment, and available resources [38]. Research consistently shows that reading proficiency is closely linked to academic success.

Bastug [25] found a strong positive relationship between reading attitude, reading proficiency, and academic accomplishment. Learners who enjoy reading tend to develop better comprehension skills, which in turn enhance their academic performance. This connection is bidirectional—strong reading skills improve academic outcomes, while positive reading experiences further strengthen proficiency.

Similarly, Cadiz-Gabejan [26] reported a significant positive correlation between learners' reading proficiency and academic performance among public school students in the Philippines. The study demonstrated that higher reading proficiency scores are associated with higher academic achievement, emphasizing how reading comprehension directly supports learning across subjects.

On Academic Performance and Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy
A growing body of research highlights the strong link between vocabulary knowledge and academic success. Alsahafi [27] found that learners with a richer academic vocabulary tend to perform better in their studies, as vocabulary mastery supports comprehension of complex materials and directly contributes to higher academic achievement. The study also revealed that many learners underutilize direct strategies such as flashcards and word lists. To address this, educators are encouraged to promote intentional vocabulary learning and help students develop autonomy in expanding their academic vocabulary—especially crucial for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.
In the Philippine context, Santillan and Daenos [3] reported that weak lexical knowledge among senior high school learners leads to lower performance across language skills. Similarly, Blas and Alfonso [28] noted that limited vocabulary hinders reading comprehension, emphasizing how vocabulary gaps affect overall academic proficiency.
Johnson [29] advocated cultivating academic vocabulary to narrow achievement gaps, while Finley [30] suggested using summary frames to engage learners in purposeful language practice. Nagy and Townsend [31] further confirmed through their review that well-designed vocabulary interventions effectively help learners acquire and apply academic words.

On Reading Proficiency and Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies Across Demographics
Tibus and Pobadora [32] examined how demographic factors influence reading proficiency and found that gender and age play notable roles. Female learners generally outperformed males in higher-level comprehension, possibly due to greater exposure to reading. Older students also showed stronger literal comprehension, though age had little effect on deeper interpretive skills. The study further revealed that parental education, family income, and access to reading materials affect comprehension at varying degrees. Importantly, the amount of time spent reading positively correlated with all levels of comprehension, emphasizing that consistent reading exposure enhances critical thinking and understanding.
Macale et al. [33] explored the relationship between vocabulary acquisition strategies and socio-demographic factors among first-year learners. Their findings showed no significant relationship between vocabulary strategies and variables such as age, gender, mother tongue, or school type. This suggests that modern learners, exposed to diverse media, develop their vocabulary through varied approaches regardless of background. The study also cautioned against excessive code-switching, urging educators to foster language competence through structured instruction and intentional vocabulary practice.
Overall, these studies reveal that while demographic factors such as gender and age may influence reading proficiency, they have minimal impact on vocabulary learning strategies. Reading exposure remains a key factor in developing comprehension skills, while deliberate classroom practices and reduced code-switching can enhance vocabulary growth and overall language proficiency.

Statement of the Problem
This study aimed to determine the vocabulary enhancement strategies, reading proficiency, and academic performance of the Grade 10 learners.
Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:
1. What are the common vocabulary enhancement strategies used by Grade 10 learners?
2. What is the reading proficiency level of the Grade 10 learners?
3. What is the overall academic performance of the Grade 10 learners?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' vocabulary enhancement strategies and academic performance?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' reading proficiency and academic performance?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study aimed to determine the vocabulary enhancement strategies, reading proficiency, and academic performance of the Grade 10 learners in Basilan National High School. That being said, the study also aimed to determine the relationship between these variables and its relation when the sample is grouped according to gender and socio-economic status. Descriptive Quantitative Correlational Research Design will be used in this study.

In the work of Creswell and Creswell [34] in "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches," Descriptive quantitative correlational research design is a methodological approach that involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to explore and understand the relationships between variables without intervening or manipulating them. This design aims to describe the existing relationships, patterns, or trends among variables in a specific population. It employs statistical measures to quantify the degree and direction of correlations between variables, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the observed phenomena.

Population and Sampling Procedure

This study was conducted in School A, one of the secondary high schools in Isabela, Basilan, Academic Year 2023–2024.

The respondents of the study were bona fide Grade 10 learners of School A in the academic year 2023 - 2024, with a total population of 1352 and 22 different sections.

Stratified random sampling was used in the selection of samples. Gender served as the strata of the study. From there, a representative sample was acquired based on Male and Female learners in each section. Survey questionnaires and evaluation forms from previous studies were adapted in the Data Gathering process.

Participants for this study were randomly selected to ensure a fair and unbiased representation. The selection process involved an online name picker tool, which was used to draw names from the master list. By employing this method, each learner in the population had an equal opportunity to be included in the study. This approach contributed to the generalizability of the findings to the broader Grade 10 learner population. This was to ensure a structured and unbiased representation of the entire group.

Slovin's formula for Sample (*n*) Computation

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{(1352)}{1 + (1352)(0.05)^2} = 308.676 \sim 309$$

(where N is the Population, n is the sample size, and e is the margin of error)

On the next page is a table that shows the number of respondents distributed across the 22 different sections of Grade 10 learners of School A.

Ethical Consideration

In adherence to ethical standards, respondents in this study received an advanced notification regarding the responsible use of their personal information, as outlined by Republic Act No. 10173, commonly known as the Data Privacy Act [35]. By transparently communicating these privacy safeguards to respondents, the study aimed to foster a sense of trust and cooperation. To reinforce this commitment to data privacy, a comprehensive waiver was provided for respondents to sign, explicitly acknowledging their understanding and consent to the ethical principles governing the

study.

Moreover, the waiver presented to respondents served as a crucial document in highlighting the purpose and procedures of the study. It outlined the specific ways in which their personal information was handled, emphasizing the confidentiality measures in place to safeguard their privacy. This explicit communication is fundamental in ensuring that respondents are well-informed and feel secure in their decision to participate. The study recognized the importance of obtaining informed consent as a cornerstone of ethical research practices, and the waiver was structured to reflect this commitment, providing respondents with the necessary information to make informed decisions about their involvement.

It was also noted that there was monetary involvement between the respondents and the researcher and that this would not affect their grades in any subject. Respondents were informed that their participation is voluntary and that they can opt out from the study anytime.

Beyond legal compliance and informed consent, the ethical considerations extended to the broader impact of the research on the respondents. Special attention was given to mitigating any potential psychological or emotional risks associated with participation. A debriefing process was implemented at the conclusion of the study, offering respondents the opportunity to discuss their experiences and address any concerns that may have arisen during their involvement. This multifaceted approach to ethical considerations showed the study's dedication to upholding the well-being, privacy, and rights of the respondents throughout the research journey.

Research Instruments

Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies

The Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ), which was established by Gu and Johnson [38], was utilized to gather data on how the respondents utilize their vocabulary learning strategies. It was noted that the Vocabulary Questionnaire (VLQ) used was the updated and validated version made by Gu [37]

In Mokhtar et al[36], the VLQ enabled the researchers to look at the clusters of various strategies that their respondents used in learning English vocabulary.

The VLQ made use of a 62 item, 5-point Likert scale ranging from "extremely untrue of me" (1) to "extremely true of me" (5). Throughout the study, the VLQ was termed as the Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy Questionnaire (VESQ), which is adapted from Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ), established by Gu and Johnson [38].

Reading Proficiency

Respondents were given a standardized Phil IRI Reading Test for Grade 10. After working on the reading test, respondents were asked to fill out the Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy Questionnaire (VESQ) from Gu and Johnson [38] to determine their vocabulary enhancement strategies.

The reading test was checked independently by the researcher following an answer key. For every correct answer, respondents were given one point. (see Appendix I for the standardized PHIL IRI Reading Test for Grade 10).

Academic Performance

The respondents, who successfully completed the questionnaires and the assessment, had their school records looked up for their first and second quarter grade point average (GPA).

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the commencement of any interactions, the researcher adhered to the minimum health protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force to guarantee the safety and well-being of all participants. Prior to administering the test, the respondents were given an assent form to be signed by their parents or guardians, allowing them to take part in the study. Upon reaching the participants through systematic sampling, the researcher introduced herself, providing a detailed explanation of the study's purpose. Subsequently, respondents were presented with a consent form and filled out a personal information form. This initial step aimed not only to establish

a foundation of informed consent but also to streamline the subsequent phases of the study.
Following the initial data input, respondents filled out the two questionnaires. The standardized Phil IRI Reading Test tailored for Grade 10 was taken first by the respondents. In adherence to ethical considerations, the researcher meticulously read out the instructions, ensuring clarity and understanding among the participants. Once completed, respondents transitioned to the Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy Questionnaire (VESQ) from Gu and Johnson [38], designed to uncover their vocabulary enhancement strategies. The reading test underwent an independent verification by the researcher, utilizing a predefined answer key to maintain consistency. Correct answers were tallied, contributing to a comprehensive evaluation of participants' reading proficiency.

The respondents were given two hours to answer the two questionnaires which took 60 minutes for Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy Questionnaire (VESQ) and 60 minutes for PHIL IRI reading test.

Moreover, respondents who successfully completed both questionnaires had their school records to retrieve their first and second quarter grade point average (GPA).

Furthermore, there was no conflict of interest between the respondents and the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedure
After collecting the data from the 309 respondents, the data from both the VESQ and PHIL IRI Reading Test were subjected to the Scoring Procedure for Reading Proficiency and the Rating Procedure for Vocabulary Enhancement Strategy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Common Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies Used by Grade 10 Learners
On the respondents' common vocabulary enhancement strategies, all lexical refinement strategies: beliefs , metacognition, inferencing , using dictionary, taking information , rehearsing , encoding and activation are true to the learners in general as evidenced by their respective   mean values (3.86, 3.49, 3.68, 3.90, 3.55, 3.51, 3.52, & 3.66) and their corresponding standard deviation values (.57, .55, .84114, .89, .89, .86, .88, & .96). All standard deviation values are considered statistically as big values. It means that the learners are heterogeneously grouped in terms of their vocabulary enhancement strategies.

The data reveals that Grade 10 learners employ a wide range of vocabulary enhancement strategies. However, the high standard deviation values in Table 7.0 indicate a significant spread in how learners utilize these strategies. This suggests that despite the prevalence of these practices, learners may be at varying levels of proficiency or have individual preferences in their approach to vocabulary acquisition. This finding aligns with research by Santillan and Daenos [3] who emphasize the role of learning styles and individual differences in shaping learners' vocabulary learning strategies. This highlights a potential need for differentiated instruction that caters to these variations to optimize vocabulary development for all learners. The results here were supported by the study of Solitana and Generoso [7]. In their research, they also emphasized that when a learner reads, he or she takes a complex process of integrating a variety of cognitive skills such as inferencing, and metacognition, along with their beliefs about vocabulary learning.

In addition, these results support the study of Santillan and Daenos [3]. Learners do not only focus on their vocabulary knowledge but also focus on the active usage of words. This means that learners engage themselves by using the words in real-life situations.

This gives a positive implication that using the vocabulary enhancement strategies aid the learners in the acquisition of words and phrases that lead them in expanding their vocabulary knowledge and at the same time, these can deepen their understanding of the meaning of words usage within context thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency. Moreover, this gives an idea that there is a developed reading comprehension which helps them extract meaning more effectively from reading materials. In relation to that, the learners can transfer those skills to other learning areas which can be applied even beyond language acquisition.

Furthermore, the results imply that learners have their own varied ways of understanding a word, phrase, or text using the different vocabulary enhancement strategies since they are grouped

heterogeneously.

The Reading Proficiency Level of the Grade 10 Learners

The learners obtain the *instructional level* suggesting that they have gained from the teachers' instruction, have adequate background knowledge for the topic and access text quickly with few or no errors. This is proven in the mean obtained of 48.31 and its standard deviation of 7.27 which is taken statistically as a small value. It means that the learners are homogeneously grouped in terms of their ability in reading. The study's focus on assessing reading proficiency among Grade 10 learners reflects the broader understanding of reading proficiency as more than just word recognition but rather as the ability to comprehend written text and derive meaning from it. This notion is supported by Brandon [8], who emphasizes the importance of active engagement with comprehension strategies such as predicting, connecting to prior knowledge, and summarizing, all of which contribute to enhanced understanding.

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that Grade 10 learners have reached an instructional level in reading proficiency, indicating that they possess adequate background knowledge for the topic and can access text with few or no errors. This resonates with the idea that proficient readers utilize critical thinking and analysis to assess text reliability and make sense of unfamiliar words. The homogeneity of reading proficiency levels among the learners, as indicated by the small standard deviation, underscores the importance of effective instruction and support by School A in developing reading skills.

This gives the idea that the learners feel that the items are challenging but manageable text. This implies that the learners still need the scaffold of the teacher wherein they are still developing the skills in reading. This is the time when the learners are trying to bridge the gap, and teachers help those lower readers accelerate to another level of understanding a text.
N=309

The Overall Academic Performance of the Grade 10 Learners

The learners elicit a very satisfactory academic performance as proven by the mean of 87.48 and their standard deviation of 6.02 which is considered as a small value. It entails that the learners are homogeneously grouped in terms of their academic performance.

The literature review on academic performance highlights various factors influencing academic performance [19], [20], [21]. While the current study doesn't delve into these factors, the strong overall performance suggests that the Grade 10 learners might be benefiting from positive influences such as effective study habits, parental support, and access to learning resources – factors identified as crucial in other studies [19], [2], [21.

Further research would be needed to explore the specific factors contributing to the Grade 10 learners' success. This could involve surveying learners and parents to understand study habits, parental involvement, and perceived challenges. Analyzing performance across different subjects could also reveal areas where targeted interventions might be beneficial.

The findings support the established importance of academic performance. The high mean score suggests the effectiveness of the educational system in some aspects.

This would suggest that the educational system in School A is effectively equipping learners with the necessary knowledge and skills, leading to a consistent level of academic success. This aligns with the perspective of the Philippine K-12 system preparing learners for higher education and future careers [11]. However, another interpretation is that the homogeneity might indicate a lack of differentiation or challenge for high-performing learners.

Relationship between the Respondents' Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies and Reading Proficiency

There is generally no significant correlation between most vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency, as evidenced by r values near zero and nonsignificant p-values for beliefs, metacognition, inferencing, using dictionary, taking information, and activation. However, a low negative correlation exists between rehearsing (r = –0.185, p = 0.001) and encoding (r = –0.178, p = 0.002) with reading proficiency. This suggests that increased use of rehearsing and encoding

strategies is slightly associated with lower reading proficiency among Grade 10 learners, though the relationship is weak. Hence, it implies that most strategies do not directly predict reading proficiency, but in some cases, frequent rehearsal and encoding may not be as beneficial to performance, possibly due to over-reliance or ineffective application. The findings are considered significant at an alpha of 0.05 for these two strategies only.

Related studies shed further light on the intricacies of reading proficiency and vocabulary enhancement strategies across various demographic factors. For instance, Tibus & Pobadora's [32] research delves into the relationship between reading proficiency and demographic variables, highlighting the influence of gender, age, parental education, and access to reading materials on comprehension levels. Similarly, Macale et al. [33] explore vocabulary acquisition strategies among first-year learners, revealing that socio-demographic factors like age, gender, and school type do not significantly impact these strategies. These studies collectively underscore the complex interplay between individual characteristics and language abilities, emphasizing the importance of addressing these dynamics within educational contexts.

Studies such as those by Brandon [8] and Buraga [9] emphasize the critical role of reading proficiency in comprehension, critical thinking, and academic achievement. Additionally, research by Cruz and Bautista [4] and Santillan and Daenos [3] shows the significance of vocabulary enhancement strategies in increasing reading proficiency and academic performance.

While Santillan and Daenos' findings suggest a direct and positive association between vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency, the current study's results suggest a possibly indirect relationship with certain vocabulary enhancement strategies showing only minimal correlation with reading proficiency.

Relationship between the Respondents' Vocabulary Enhancement Strategies and Academic Performance

There is a low positive correlation between most vocabulary enhancement strategies and academic performance (r ranging from .113 to .261), significant at alpha 0.05. Strategies showing a significant relationship include beliefs, metacognition, inferencing, using dictionary, taking information, encoding, and activation. However, rehearsing demonstrates no correlation with academic performance (r = 0.071, p = 0.211), indicating that this specific strategy does not impact learners' grades or achievement. Hence, it can be inferred that learners who more frequently use various vocabulary improvement strategies tend to have slightly higher academic performance, highlighting the beneficial, but limited, influence of these learning strategies on overall achievement. These relationships, although weak, are statistically meaningful at the alpha 0.05 level.

This implication aligns with a growing body of literature that presents the critical role of vocabulary knowledge in academic success. Alsahafi's [27] study among Saudi university learners highlighted a strong correlation between academic achievement and familiarity with academic vocabulary, emphasizing its predictive value for overall GPA. Notably, the research identified a gap in direct vocabulary learning strategies among learners.

Moreover, insights from studies such as Santillan and Daenos [3] in the Philippines further emphasize the detrimental impact of poor lexical knowledge on academic proficiency, affecting various macro skills among senior high school learners. Building upon this understanding, Blas & Alfonso [28] highlighted the hindrance posed by limited vocabulary in text comprehension. These findings collectively underscore the significance of addressing vocabulary deficiencies to improve overall academic achievement.

Relationship between the Respondents' Reading Proficiency and Academic Performance

There is a correspondence between reading proficiency and academic proficiency (r=.418, p .000), significant at alpha .05 with a moderate strength of correlation. Thus, it can be deduced that the learners' reading ability can influence their academic performance.

In line with this research problem, previous studies have explored the intricate relationship between academic performance and reading proficiency, providing valuable insights into this dynamic. Bastug [25] conducted a study focusing on the structural relationship between reading attitude,

reading proficiency, and academic accomplishment. Their findings underscored a strong and positive association between academic achievement and reading proficiency, emphasizing the bidirectional nature of this relationship. The study also emphasized the pivotal role of reading attitude in fostering proficient reading skills, which in turn contribute to enhanced academic performance—a notion that resonates with the current research problem.

Similarly, Cadiz-Gabejan [26] delved into the correlation between learners' reading proficiency and their academic performance, employing survey questionnaires to gather data from a sample of learners in a public school setting. Their study revealed a significant positive correlation between reading proficiency and academic performance, affirming the findings of previous research. Through the utilization of statistical analysis methods such as descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient, the study provided empirical evidence supporting the notion that higher reading proficiency levels are conducive to improved academic outcomes. These studies collectively highlight the importance of reading proficiency as a determinant of academic success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is safe to state that the learners' satisfactory performance in both reading proficiency and their academics is a welcome development in DepEd schools such as the ones included in this study, albeit, much has to be done for the male learners who appear to be underperforming compared to females. More lexical enhancement strategies have to be designed and tested to be aligned to the DepEd target competencies. Also, teachers need to provide practical learning interventions for the low income learners, as they seem to lag behind the higher income learners in both the reading proficiency test and academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the findings of common vocabulary enhancement strategies, secondary school teachers must provide more drills and activities which will help the learners enrich their vocabulary skills by allowing the learners to apply those strategies for their practice, building, and enrichment of vocabulary. This could be a possible way to enhance their understanding of a text or passage. In addition, teachers should create collaborative learning opportunities to deal and communicate with other learners. This is one possible way to help them engage in learning words.

On reading proficiency level of the Grade 10 learners, teachers should take note of the multiple intelligences of the learners which can be a way to look into the strengths and edge of the learners in terms of understanding a text or passage. In addition, as what is always stated in the indicator during classroom observation, teachers should integrate literacy instruction across all subject areas. Teachers serve as the support system of the learners that continuously guide and facilitate learning and development. Gradually, the learners will be able to show the essence of responsibility and being able to work independently in terms of reading tasks.

On the overall academic performance of the Grade 10 learners, it is still the responsibility of the teachers to provide diagnostic tests prior to the first meeting of the class and conduct a *needs analysis* to see which among the lessons or topics will require more focus in class discussion. Through this, the teachers will be guided in preparing instructional materials and interactive classroom activities that are suitable for the level of the learners. Motivation and encouragement are some of the ways to help learners promote higher levels of thinking. This will serve as a practice for them to also transfer their learning in a more complex situation. In addition, proper intervention must be given to the learners. Enrichment activities are also applicable in aiding the learners toward an outstanding performance.

On the significant relationship between the respondents' vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency, teachers must develop teaching strategies that focus on improving their vocabulary enhancement strategies, specifically rehearsing and encoding, among individuals with lower reading proficiency levels. In addition, developing proper feedback mechanisms can ensure that the learners are able to strengthen and improve those strategies. This will absolutely help them in comprehending a text, for they will know how to strategize in getting the main idea of a text.

REFERENCES

[1] S. Loewen and M. Sato, *The Routledge Handbook of Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.

[2] A. Narad and B. Abdullah, "Academic performance of senior secondary school learners: influence of parental encouragement and school environment," *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, vol. 8, pp. 12–19, 2016.

[3] J. Santillan and R. Daenos, "Vocabulary knowledge and learning strategies of senior high school learners," *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 8, pp. 2474–2482, 2020.

[4] R. M. Bautista and A. C. Cruz, "Assessing vocabulary enhancement strategies and reading proficiency skills of grade 10 learners through academic performance," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 10, no. 5, pp. 1037–1044, 2019.

[5] M. Magcamit, *The English Language Communicative Competence of Senior High School Learners in the Schools Division of Calapan City: The Problem and Its Setting*, Master's thesis, Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology, Calapan City, Philippines, 2019.

[6] J. Gonzales, "Enhancing vocabulary acquisition through technology," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, vol. 13, no. 10, pp. 4–14, 2018.

[7] J. E. A. Solitana and J. C. Generoso, "Relationship between Filipino ESL learners' vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary ability," *Silliman Journal*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2022.

[8] D. Brandon, "The importance of reading comprehension," *Alabama Cooperative Extension System*, Mar. 26, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/home-family-urban/the-importance-of-reading-comprehension

[9] C. Buraga, *The Relationship of Academic Performance to Reading Ability Among Grade 7 Learners in the City Division of Makati Towards a Comprehensive Intervention Program*, Master's thesis, Makati High School, 2021.

[10] J. R. Cabardo, *Reading Proficiency Level of Learners: Basis for Reading Intervention Program*, Master's thesis, DepEd-Hagonoy National High School, 2015.

[11] P. M. Almerino, L. A. Abellana, D. P. M. Almerino, I. O. Mamites, et al., "Evaluating the academic performance of K–12 learners in the Philippines: A standardized evaluation approach," *Education Research International*, vol. 2020, pp. 1–8, 2020.

[12] J. Garcia, *The Relationship Between Reading Comprehension and Cognitive Skills of Grade 10 Learners*, Master's thesis, Univ. of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, 2019.

[13] National Research Council, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000.

[14] G. Gebray, "Academic performance as benchmark for learners' achievements," *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 2019.

[15] J. Sarmiento, "Reading proficiency and academic performance of senior high school learners," 2018.

[16] R. Gacutan, "Academic performance of Grade 10 learners evaluated through the Philippine Educational Placement Test," 2017.

[17] S. Jayanthi, S. Balakrishnan, A. Lim, N. Latiff, and A. M. A. Nasirudeen, "Factors contributing to academic performance of learners in a tertiary institution in Singapore," *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 2, pp. 752–758, 2014.

[18] S. Sibanda, C. Iwu, and F. Olumide, "Key determining factors for learners' academic performance in South Africa," *African Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 89–104, 2015.

[19] S. Ali, Z. Haider, F. Munir, H. Khan, and A. Ahmed, "Factors contributing to the learner's academic performance: A case study of Islamia University sub-campus," *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 1, pp. 283–289, 2013.

[20] M. Farooq, A. H. Chaudhry, M. Shafiq, and G. Berhanu, "Factors affecting learners' quality of academic performance: A case of secondary school level," *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, vol. 7, pp. 1–14, 2011.

[21] S. Singh, S. Malik, and P. Singh, "Factors affecting academic performance of learners," *Indian Journal of Research Paripex*, 2016.

[22] R. M. A. Khan, N. Iqbal, and S. Tasneem, "The influence of parents' educational level on secondary school learners' academic achievements in District Rajanpur," *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 6, no. 16, pp. 76–79, 2015.

[23] A. A. Eshetu, "Parental socio-economic status as a determinant factor on academic performance of learners in regional examination: Case of Dessie town; Ethiopia," *Int. J. Acad. Res. Educ.*, vol. 3, no. 9, pp. 247–256, 2015.

[24] R. Rono, *Factors Affecting Pupils' Performance in Public Primary Schools at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination (KCPE) in Emgwen Division, Nandi District, Kenya*, Master's thesis, Univ. of Nairobi, 2013.

[25] M. Bastug, "The structural relationship of reading attitude, reading comprehension and academic achievement," *Int. J. Soc. Sci. & Educ.*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 931–946, 2014.

[26] A. M. Cadiz-Gabejan, "Learners' reading proficiency and academic performance," *Int. J. Research Studies in Education*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 1–11, 2021.

[27] M. Alsahafi, "The relationship between depth of academic English vocabulary knowledge and academic success of second language university learners," *SAGE Open*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2023.

[28] A. M. Blas and M. L. Alfonso, "Vocabulary and reading comprehension: A review of literature," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 1147–1153, 2018.

[39] B. Johnson, "Developing learners' academic vocabulary helps beat achievement gap," *Edutopia*, 2011.

[30] T. Finley, "Summary frames as strategies for engaging learners in academic language," *Edutopia*, n.d.

[31] W. E. Nagy and D. Townsend, "Words as tools: learning academic vocabulary as language acquisition," *Reading Research Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 91–108, 2012.

[32] E. D. Tibus and R. Pobadora, "Reading comprehension ability vis-a-vis demographics, reading materials, and time spent in reading," *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, vol. 5, no. 9, pp. 66–74, 2016.

[33] R. G. M. Macale, A. A. Parmis, and L. Casinillo, "Relationship between socio-demographic, classroom code-switching and vocabulary acquisition strategies among first-year learners," *Rangsit Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 8, pp. 66–82, 2021.

[34] J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018.

[35] Republic Act No. 10173, "Data Privacy Act of 2012," *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, 2012.

[36] A. A. Mokhtar, R. Z. M. Rawian, M. F. Yahaya, A. Abdullah, and A. R. Mohamed, "Vocabulary learning strategies of adult ESL learners," *The English Teacher*, vol. 37, pp. 133–145, 2017.

[37] P. Y. Gu, "Validation of an online questionnaire of vocabulary learning strategies for ESL learners," *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 325–350, 2018.

[38] P. Y. Gu and R. K. Johnson, "Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes," *Language Learning*, 1996.