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UTILIZATION OF WIKAHON LITERACY TOOLKIT IN READING IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE SIX PUPILS AT CUENCA CENTRAL SCHOOL: BASIS FOR DEVELOPING A READING INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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Abstract

Reading comprehension difficulties can persist among upper elementary pupils even when decoding skills are adequate. This action research examined the effectiveness of the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit in improving the reading performance, including fluency and comprehension, of Grade Six pupils at Cuenca Central School. A quantitative descriptive design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach was used. Participants were 108 Grade Six pupils (62 male, 46 female) from three sections (Gumamela, Daisy, and Sunflower), selected through purposive sampling. Pupils were classified as Non-Reader, Struggling, Slow, Average, or Fast readers using a Phil-IRI–patterned checklist before and after a six-week intervention delivered three times weekly through teacher-led small reading groups. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and the paired-sample *t*-test. The proportion of Fast Readers rose from 65.74% (n = 71) to 72.22% (n = 78), while the combined proportion of Struggling and Slow Readers fell from 9.26% (n = 10) to 5.56% (n = 6). No pupil was classified as Struggling after the intervention. The overall improvement in reading performance was statistically significant, $t(107) = 2.90$, $p = .005$. The WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit was associated with improved reading performance among Grade Six pupils, particularly in the lower and upper reading categories. Continued use of the toolkit, its extension to other grade levels, and a controlled follow-up study are recommended.

Keywords: *WiKAHON, reading comprehension, literacy toolkit, quantitative research, reading intervention*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Reading is more than recognizing words on a page; it is the bridge that connects learners to understanding, imagination, and lifelong learning. At Cuenca Central School, teachers regard reading as the heart of every learner's academic journey. Despite ongoing literacy efforts, recent reading assessments indicated that some Grade Six pupils continued to have difficulty grasping meaning and sustaining comprehension, even where word decoding was adequate. Such difficulties often carry over to other learning areas and may affect overall academic performance and confidence.

Fluency and comprehension are closely linked, since fluent reading frees a reader's attention for meaning (Rasinski, 2019). Teachers at Cuenca Central School therefore expressed the need for tools that improve fluency while also nurturing comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking, which are essential components of functional literacy. This need is consistent with national efforts to strengthen reading, such as the Every Child a Reader Program (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016) and the use of WiKAHON in remediation reading packages (Department of Education, Schools Division Office of Dasmariñas City, 2025).

Related Studies

Several Philippine studies show that localized and level-appropriate reading materials can improve learners' reading outcomes. Espina et al. (2019) assessed Big Book–style materials built on localized stories among Grade One learners and reported significant improvements in reading levels after the intervention. Saquido and Velasco (2024), using a pre-test and post-test design, found that aligned local reading materials significantly enhanced the literal, inferential, and critical comprehension of Grade 7 students. Mangrobang et al. (2025) examined systematic Filipino sight word instruction from Grades 1 to 3 and found notable gains in the reading fluency and comprehension of young readers.

These studies concern localized stories, aligned local materials, and early-grade sight word instruction. The present study extends this line of work to a leveled Filipino-language toolkit, WiKAHON, used with pupils in the upper elementary grades.

Objectives and Research Questions

This action research determined the effectiveness of the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit in improving the reading performance of Grade Six pupils of Cuenca Central School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the reading level of Grade Six pupils before utilization of WiKAHON?
2. What is the reading level of Grade Six pupils after utilization of WiKAHON?
3. Is there a significant improvement in pupils' reading performance?

The findings are intended to guide teachers and school leaders in designing and sustaining evidence-based reading programs that respond to the needs of Filipino learners.

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METHODS

Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive design within an action research framework. Pupils' reading levels were measured before and after the intervention in a single group, and the two sets of results were compared.

Participants and Setting

The participants were 108 Grade Six pupils (62 male and 46 female) of Cuenca Central School, Cuenca Sub-Office, Batangas Province. They came from three sections, Gumamela, Daisy, and Sunflower, and were selected through purposive sampling. The group represented diverse reading abilities, which provided a balanced basis for evaluating the toolkit as a reading intervention.

The Intervention: WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit

The WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit, developed by Adarna House, Inc. (n.d.), is a leveled reading program designed to strengthen Filipino language and literacy skills. Its name combines *wika* (language) and *kahon* (box), a box filled with learning tools. Each set contains reading cards, comprehension exercises, and teacher guides (WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit, 2024) that support vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and understanding of Filipino texts. The materials are matched to learners' reading levels using the Filipino Text Readability Index (FiTRI), and the program aims to promote love for the Filipino language and cultural identity.

The implementation followed three phases:

1. **Pre-assessment.** Baseline reading levels were identified using DepEd's standardized assessment tools. The results served as the basis for differentiated instruction.

2. **Intervention.** For six consecutive weeks, the toolkit was used in reading sessions held three times weekly. Teachers delivered sessions in small reading groups focused on guided reading, vocabulary building, and comprehension questioning. Teachers used differentiated strategies so that each pupil was appropriately challenged and supported.

3. **Post-assessment.** After the intervention, pupils' reading levels were reassessed using the same assessment tools, and the results were compared with the pre-assessment results.

Throughout the intervention, the researchers, as Filipino teachers and school heads, served as facilitators and motivators, providing continuous feedback and encouragement.

Data Gathering Tools

Two tools were used. The first was a reading assessment checklist patterned after the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) categories prescribed by DepEd (2020): Non-Reader, Struggling, Slow, Average, and Fast. It was used to determine pupils' reading levels before and after the intervention. Pre-intervention levels were taken from the Second Quarter reading assessment, and post-intervention levels from the Third Quarter assessment. The second tool was a pre-test and post-test reading evaluation adapted from the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit, which measured progress in reading fluency and comprehension.

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Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage distributions described pupils' reading levels before and after the intervention. A paired-sample *t*-test determined whether the change in reading performance was statistically significant. Results were interpreted at the .05 level of significance ($p < .05$ significant; $p < .01$ highly significant).

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical research standards consistent with DepEd research management guidelines (DepEd, 2019). Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, and respondents were informed of their rights, including the right to withdraw without penalty. The researchers maintained confidentiality and anonymity, used all data solely for academic purposes, and stored it securely, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researchers obtained permission from Adarna House, Inc. to use the WiKAHON toolkit, and they properly cited all sources.

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RESULTS

Reading Levels Before the Intervention (Research Question 1)

Table 1. Pre-Intervention Reading Levels (Second Quarter Reading Assessment), N = 108

Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Reader	0	0.00%
Struggling	1	0.93%
Slow	9	8.33%
Average	27	25.00%
Fast	71	65.74%
Total	**108**	**100.00%**

Table 1 shows that most pupils were already reading at satisfactory levels before the intervention. Seventy-one pupils (65.74%) were Fast Readers, and 27 (25.00%) were Average Readers. A small group remained in the lower categories: 9 pupils (8.33%) were Slow Readers, and 1 pupil (0.93%) was a Struggling Reader. No pupil was classified as a Non-Reader.

Reading Levels After the Intervention (Research Question 2)

Table 2. Post-Intervention Reading Levels (Third Quarter Reading Assessment), N = 108

Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Reader	0	0.00%
Struggling	0	0.00%
Slow	6	5.56%
Average	24	22.22%
Fast	78	72.22%

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Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage
Total	**108**	**100.00%**

After the six-week intervention (Table 2), the number of Fast Readers increased from 71 to 78 (65.74% to 72.22%), and the number of Slow Readers decreased from 9 to 6 (8.33% to 5.56%). The single Struggling Reader in the pre-intervention group was no longer classified in that category, and no pupil was classified as a Non-Reader. The number of Average Readers decreased from 27 to 24 (25.00% to 22.22%).

Significance of the Change in Reading Performance (Research Question 3)

Table 3. Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Reading Performance

Reading Level	Pre (%)	Post (%)	Difference (pp)	*t*(107)	*p*	Interpretation
Non-Reader	0.00	0.00	0.00	—	—	No change
Struggling	0.93	0.00	−0.93	2.15	.034*	Significant
Slow	8.33	5.56	−2.77	2.48	.015*	Significant
Average	25.00	22.22	−2.78	1.92	.058	Not significant
Fast	65.74	72.22	+6.48	3.05	.003**	Highly significant
Overall Reading Performance	**—**	**—**	**—**	**2.90**	**.005****	**Significant improvement**

Note. pp = percentage points. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. Degrees of freedom ($n - 1 = 107$) are those consistent with the reported *p*-values.

As shown in Table 3, the overall difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention performance was statistically significant, $t(107) = 2.90$, $p = .005$. The increase in Fast Readers was highly significant ($t = 3.05$, $p = .003$). The decreases in the Slow category ($t = 2.48$, $p = .015$) and the Struggling category ($t = 2.15$, $p = .034$) were also significant. The decrease in the Average category ($t = 1.92$, $p = .058$) was not statistically significant.

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DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The results indicate that pupils' reading performance improved after six weeks of using the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit. The gains appeared at both ends of the distribution: more pupils reached the Fast category (71 to 78), and fewer pupils remained in the Struggling and Slow categories combined (10 to 6). This pattern suggests that the toolkit's emphasis on fluency building, vocabulary enrichment, and comprehension questioning helped lift lower-level readers toward functional reading while allowing stronger readers to advance.

The non-significant change in the Average category is consistent with pupils moving out of it in both directions, with some likely advancing to Fast. Because we did not track individual pupil transitions between categories, this explanation remains tentative.

Baseline performance was already high, with about two-thirds of pupils classified as Fast Readers, so the room for improvement was concentrated in a relatively small group. The absolute changes are therefore modest, and the toolkit's strongest practical value may lie in supporting the remaining Slow and Average Readers.

Comparison with Related Studies

The findings agree with earlier work on localized and level-appropriate reading materials. Espina et al. (2019) reported that localized Big Book interventions improved reading levels among Grade One learners, and the present results suggest similar benefits for a Filipino-language leveled toolkit at Grade Six. Saquido and Velasco (2024) found that aligned local reading materials improved comprehension across literal, inferential, and critical levels, which is consistent with the toolkit's combined use of guided reading, vocabulary tasks, and comprehension questioning. Mangrobang et al. (2025) showed that structured literacy instruction improves the fluency and comprehension of young readers, and the present findings indicate that a structured approach can also benefit upper elementary pupils.

Implications for a Reading Intervention Program

Consistent with the title of this study, the findings offer a basis for a school reading intervention program built around the following components:

1. Regular small-group sessions using WiKAHON, at the same frequency used in this study (three sessions per week), with teacher facilitation and differentiated support.
2. Targeted support for pupils who remain in the Slow category and for Average Readers with potential to advance.
3. Fluency-building activities alongside comprehension questioning, reflecting the link between fluency and comprehension (Rasinski, 2019).
4. Quarterly reading assessments using Phil-IRI categories to monitor progress and adjust grouping.
5. Extension of the program to other grade levels, with teacher orientation on the toolkit.

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Limitations

Several limitations should be considered. First, the study used a single group without a comparison group, so the gains cannot be attributed to the toolkit alone; regular classroom instruction and maturation between the Second and Third Quarters may have contributed. Second, the intervention lasted only six weeks, and the durability of the gains was not examined. Third, the high baseline reduced the room for improvement. Fourth, results are reported as reading-level classifications; raw pre-test and post-test scores for fluency and comprehension were not reported separately, and the category-level *t*-tests should be interpreted with caution. Pupil-level scores (means and standard deviations) would allow stronger inference. Finally, the sample came from one school and was purposively selected, which limits generalization.

Conclusion

Grade Six pupils at Cuenca Central School showed statistically significant improvement in reading performance after six weeks of using the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit. The number of Fast Readers increased, no pupil remained in the Struggling category, and the number of Slow Readers decreased. Within the limits of a single-group design, the evidence supports WiKAHON as a promising literacy intervention for improving reading fluency and comprehension.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that (1) the school continue using the WiKAHON Literacy Toolkit as part of its reading program; (2) the toolkit be extended to other grade levels, with teacher orientation and regular progress monitoring; (3) additional support be provided to remaining Slow and Average Readers; and (4) future studies use a comparison group, longer implementation periods, and pupil-level fluency and comprehension scores to strengthen causal claims.

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