

# Reading Competency and Academic Performance of Learners Under Distance Learning Modalities

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**Abstract**— Global pandemic brought changes in many aspects of humans' lives, and education was not spared on it. Despite that teaching-learning process was limited to distance learning modalities for almost two years, Department of Education Secretary Leonor S. Briones stood firm that education must continue. Reading skills and academic performance were two of great concerns of all stakeholders if learners could develop these in spite of the situation. Thus, this study aimed to measure the reading competency and academic performance of the learners from two different modalities, their differences and relationship. The researchers used quantitative research designs particularly the comparative and correlative designs. They gathered data from existing records and subjected these in statistical treatments. It was found out that learners from Printed Modular Distance Learning Modality were instructional readers while the learners under Online Distance Learning Modality were independent readers in Filipino; but both groups were classified as instructional readers in English. This means that they still needed assistance in reading and comprehending in English. The latter group also performed better in silent reading both in Filipino and in English, in overall reading competency in English, and in all subject areas in terms of quarterly grades. However, the study revealed that there was no sufficient evidence of significant relationship between the learners' reading competency and academic performance in some subjects under the circumstances of distance learning, except in Araling Panlipunan, Mathematics, and Technology and Livelihood Education. The researchers recommend that the school and teachers might come up with different programs and strategies to improve the learners' reading competency and academic performance despite of distance learning with improved and continued assessment mechanism.

**Keywords**— academic performance, distance learning modalities, education, pandemic, reading competency.

## INTRODUCTION

The world faced a global pandemic as declared by World Health Organization starting on March 11, 2020 (Cennimo, 2021). This was brought by a deadly virus called Covid-19. The said organization published in their website that Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The pandemic caused by this virus affected millions of lives in terms economy, livelihood, and physical and mental well-being of people worldwide (Wang, et al, 2021).

Philippines is one of the nations that is tremendously affected with its many positive cases as reported by Department of Health. The government does everything to prevent the virus from spreading. The Inter Agency Task Force for the Management of Infectious Diseases (IATF) made the guidelines to the health protocols and implemented different types of quarantine restrictions jut to stop the spread of this disease as stated in Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines (2020).

Covid-19 greatly affected the Philippines' health care system and even its other aspects. It pressed the

government down as the country's economy suffered a deep recession in 2020 (Biswas, 2021) and put a tremendous challenge to education (Daniel, 2020).

According to the statement published in the official website of Department of Education in June 19, 2020, Secretary Leonor Briones stood for the continuation of education despite of the pandemic. According to her, this would teach the learners to be firm amidst the unfortunate situation. Department of Education also considered the welfare of the learners, teaching, and non-teaching school personnel. It was advised that there would be no physical class in places with high cases of Covid-19 and would resort to alternative ways of teaching-learning process. The department utilized different distance learning modalities such as printed modular and online class.

Since one of the modalities was Printed Modular Distance Learning, reading skills and comprehension of the students were brought on the center of discussion because teachers wondered how could these children learn their lessons if they had low level of reading skills. Reading is a slow but continuous experience of people with printed materials in which they understand these by

interpreting the printed symbols (Johnson, 2017). As stated in one published article of Nord Anglia International School (n.d.), reading skills of a children can lead them to be successful in school. It was also found out that reading proficiency can positively affect the learners' achievement academically (Nyarko, et al. 2018).

Therefore, this study aimed to contribute vital information that could help the school's reading program named S.P.A.R.K. (Sustainable and Practical Approach to Reading for Kids) by determining the level of reading competency of Grade 7 learners under Printed Modular Distance Learning (PMDL) and Online Distance Learning (ODL) Modalities. This also intended to find the academic performance of these learners and its correlation to their reading competency. In this way, this might help the school administrators and teachers to retool their program and class assessment and evaluation, and for them to craft necessary intervention for reading and learning process.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used quantitative research design According to Babbie (2010), quantitative research will help to generalize a certain phenomenon among people based on the collected and treated numerical data. This can also be utilized for searching patterns, crafting predictions, testing correlations (Bhandari, 2020). The researchers gathered numerical data from the existing records of learners' level of reading competency and their quarterly grades in all subjects from their advisers.

This study specifically used comparative and correlative research designs. Comparative research is done to make a conclusion between two sets by comparing the data about them (Richardson, 2018). The researchers tested the significant difference between the mean scores in reading competency of the two groups of learners (under PMDL and ODL) and between the two groups' mean grades in all subject areas. Furthermore, correlative research design is used to determine the relationship and strength of correlations between two variables without manipulating them (Bhandari, 2021). This study tested if there was significant relationship between the learners' reading competency and their academic performance knowing that they were in distance learning modalities.

### *Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)*

The instrument used to measure the reading competency level of the students came from Philippine Informal

Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). This is an assessment tool that uses rated passages to measure the students' level of reading comprehension. The teachers used the texts entitled "Buhayin ang Kabundukan" for Filipino and "A Little About Photography" for English

The teachers contacted the learners either through phone calls or video chats. They asked the learners to read some Filipino and English texts out loud and the teachers gave scores to the learners based on their performance. This became their oral reading scores. Next, the learners were given Filipino and English text materials for them to read silently. Afterwards they answered some multiple-choice type of questions and their points here became their silent reading scores. The two scores were averaged and this became their overall reading competency scores.

The Phil-IRI helps the teachers to identify the reading level or reading capacity of each student. It is a helpful tool for language teachers and of course for all the reading teachers. In identifying the student reading level, there are two category that needs to focus on, the silent reading and the oral reading. In oral reading, what the reading teacher needs to measure if the reader can already read every word properly and fluently. While in silent reading, the reading teacher measures the student comprehension. Phil IRI is an important tool that identifies every readers capacity, at the same time, it also helps to enhance students reading.

For the start of every school year, re-reading test in reading is a must, both oral reading and silent reading. Each result must be recorded and eventually monitored by the reading teacher or the assigned teacher. The improvement of student in reading, even it is small ones must also be recorded for the tracking of each student, especially those who needs help and is under frustration level. If the student is already categorized as instructional, constant tracking of reader achievement in reading needs also to be observed. And if the student-reader is already considered as independent reader, enhancement must be done. So that, at the end of every school year, the school can identify the ones who improved and those who stayed in their reading level.

The researcher also gathered the quarterly grades of the learners by requesting the advisers to give them the summary grading sheets.

The researcher sought the permission from the authorities before the conduct of the study. Upon approval and after identifying the respondents, the series

of test was conducted. The results were recorded. Moreover, the researcher requested the advisers to give them the copies of the participants' grades in second quarter. All the data gathered were encoded, and processed using the data analysis in Excel. Then the resulting data will be organized, analyzed, and interpreted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the mean scores, standard deviation and level of learners under the two modalities in reading competency in Filipino.

**Table 1: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and Description of the Learners' Reading Competency in Filipino**

Dimensions	Printed MDL			Online DL		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
Oral Reading	2.59	0.50	Independent	2.52	0.51	Independent
Silent Reading	7.02	2.71	Instructional	8.50	1.67	Independent
Overall Reading Competency	4.80	1.43	Instructional	5.51	0.93	Independent

This shows that in Filipino, learners under Printed MDL got the mean scores of 2.59 in Oral Reading, 7.02 in Silent Reading, and 4.80 in Overall Reading Competency. PMDL learners were found to be independent in Oral Reading. Nevertheless, they were under instructional category when it came to the other two dimensions. This implies that they still needed guidance in reading Filipino. While the Online DL

learners got the mean scores of 2.52, 8.50, and 5.51, respectively. These learners were described to be independent in all dimensions of reading. This tells that they could read and comprehend Filipino texts and literature even without much intervention from others. Table 2 shows the mean scores, standard deviation and level of learners under the two modalities in reading competency in English.

**Table 2: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and Description of Learners' Reading Competency in English**

Dimensions	Printed MDL			Online DL		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
Oral Reading	2.39	0.49	Instructional	2.41	0.50	Instructional
Silent Reading	6.15	1.70	Instructional	7.49	1.33	Instructional
Overall Reading Competency	4.27	0.92	Instructional	4.95	0.72	Instructional

This tells that in English, PMDL learners had the mean score of 2.39 while ODL learners had 2.41 in Oral Reading. The mean scores in Silent Reading of the PMDL and ODL groups were 6.15 and 7.49, respectively. While in Overall Reading Competency mean scores, PMDL group got 4.27 and ODL group got 4.95. Both groups were described as instructional

readers in all the indicated dimensions of reading. This means that the students from both groups still needed assistance in reading and comprehending in English.

Table 3 shows the mean scores, standard deviation and description of learners' academic performance based on quarterly grades in all subjects under the two modalities.

**Table 3: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and Description of the Learners' Quarterly Grades in All Subject Areas**

Subjects	Printed MDL			Online DL		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
Filipino	85.28	6.33	Very Satisfactory	89.89	6.08	Very Satisfactory
English	78.15	4.13	Fairly Satisfactory	86.09	6.45	Very Satisfactory
Mathematics	78.52	4.64	Fairly Satisfactory	83.96	5.58	Satisfactory
Science	78.89	4.86	Fairly Satisfactory	85.78	5.37	Very Satisfactory
AP	82.52	5.67	Satisfactory	88.24	5.84	Very Satisfactory
EsP	81.57	6.56	Satisfactory	91.30	6.18	Outstanding
TLE	81.33	3.88	Satisfactory	87.20	4.40	Very Satisfactory
MAPEH	80.72	4.59	Satisfactory	85.00	4.97	Very Satisfactory

This reveals that students under Printed Modular Distance Learning (PMDL) Modality got a "Very Satisfactory" mean grade in Filipino ( $x = 85.28$ ); while they got "Satisfactory" mean grades in Araling Panlipunan ( $x = 82.52$ ), Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao ( $x = 81.57$ ), Technology and Livelihood Education ( $x = 81.33$ ), and Music, Arts, and Physical Education ( $x = 80.72$ ). However, they had "Fairly Satisfactory" mean grades in English ( $x = 78.15$ ), Mathematics ( $x = 78.52$ ), and Science ( $x = 78.89$ ). On the other hand, students under Online Distance Learning (ODL) Modality had an "Outstanding" mean grade in EsP ( $x = 91.30$ ). They got

"Very Satisfactory" mean grades in six subjects namely: Filipino ( $x = 89.89$ ), English ( $x = 86.09$ ), Science (85.78), AP ( $x = 88.24$ ), TLE ( $x = 87.20$ ), and MAPEH (85.00). Their lowest mean grade of 83.96 in Math was still classified as "Satisfactory". It is noticeable that the ODL students got higher mean grades in all subjects than the PMDL students.

Table 4 shows the results of the test of significance difference between the mean scores of both groups based on their reading competency in Filipino.

**Table 4: Results of Chi-square - Test of Homogeneity of the Reading Competency Level in Filipino of the Learners Under the Two Distance Learning Modalities**

Components	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	df	$\chi^2$	Decision	Conclusion
Oral Reading	0.53	1	0.40	fail to reject $H_0$	not significant
Silent Reading	**<0.00	2	1.00	reject $H_0$	significant
Overall Reading Competency	0.17	2	0.92	fail to reject $H_0$	not significant

This shows that in Filipino, Oral Reading got a p-value of 0.53 and Overall Reading Competency got a p-value of 0.17. These two p-values are greater than the alpha of 0.05; thus, the null hypotheses are accepted. There is no significant difference between the PMDL and ODL students mean scores in terms of Oral Reading and Overall Reading Competency. This tells that both groups have the same level of competencies in the aforementioned aspects. Meanwhile, the p-value of Silent Reading is <0.00 which is lower than the alpha

(0.05); hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in terms of Silent Reading in which the ODL students got a higher mean score. This shows that the ODL students were better in Silent Reading in Filipino compared to the PMDL students.

Table 5 shows the results of the test of significance difference between the mean scores of both groups based on their reading competency in English.

**Table 5: Results of Chi-square - Test of Homogeneity of the Reading Competency Level in English of the Learners Under the Two Distance Learning Modalities**

Components	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	df	$\chi^2$	Decision	Conclusion
Oral Reading	0.83	1	0.05	fail to reject $H_0$	not significant
Silent Reading	**<0.00	2	1.00	reject $H_0$	significant
Overall Reading Competency	**0.03	2	0.99	reject $H_0$	significant

This presents that in English, Oral Reading had a 0.83 p-value which is higher than the 0.05 alpha; therefore, the null hypothesis is failed to reject. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two group on the said aspect.

Meanwhile, both Silent Reading ( $p = <.00$ ) and Overall Reading Competency ( $p = 0.03$ ) got the p-values lower than the alpha of 0.05. There is significant

difference between the mean scores of PMDL and ODL students when it comes to these two dimensions in which the ODL students got higher mean scores on both. This means that the ODL students performed better in Silent Reading and Overall Reading Competency.

Table 6 shows the results of the test of significance difference between the mean scores of both groups based on their quarterly grades in all subjects.

**Table 6:** Results of t-Test of Independent Means of the Academic Performance of the Learners Under the Two Distance Learning Modalities

Subjects	Printed MDL		Online DL		p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	Decision	Conclusion
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Filipino	85.28	6.33	89.89	6.08	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
English	78.15	4.13	86.09	6.45	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
Mathematics	78.52	4.64	83.96	5.58	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
Science	78.89	4.86	85.78	5.37	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
AP	82.52	5.67	88.24	5.84	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
EsP	81.57	6.56	91.30	6.18	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
TLE	81.33	3.88	87.20	4.40	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant
MAPEH	80.72	4.59	85.00	4.97	**<0.00	reject $H_0$	significant

This shows that when the mean grades of both groups were compared, all of the subjects got a p-value of <0.00 which is less than the alpha of 0.05; thus, the null hypotheses are rejected. There is significant difference between the mean grades of PMDL and ODL students in all subject in which the ODL students had higher mean grades. This proves that the students under ODL

Modality performed better in all subjects compared to the other group.

Table 7 shows the results of the test of relationship between the scores of reading competency in Filipino of PMDL learners and their grades in subjects that use Filipino as medium of instructions.

**Table 7:** Results of Test of Relationship of the PMDL Learners' Reading Competency in Filipino and their Academic Performance

Subjects	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	r-value	Interpretation
Filipino	0.20	0.19	Negligible Correlation
AP	**0.02	0.34	Low Positive Correlation
EsP	0.34	0.14	Negligible Correlation

This reveals that Filipino and EsP got the p-values of 0.20 and 0.34, respectively. These are both greater than the alpha of 0.05; thus, the null hypotheses are failed to reject. There is no significant relationship between the Overall Reading Competency scores in Filipino of the students and their grades in Filipino and EsP which also show negligible correlation. While Araling Panlipunan got a p-value of 0.02 which is less than 0.05 alpha. There is significant relationship between the Overall Reading Competency scores in Filipino and grades in AP which

has a low positive correlation. This tell that reading competency in Filipino somehow affects the academic achievement of the PMDL students in Araling Panlipunan.

Table 8 shows the results of the test of relationship between the scores of reading competency in English of PMDL learners and their grades in subjects that use English as medium of instructions.

**Table 8:** Results of Test of Relationship of the PMDL Learners' Reading Competency in English and their Academic Performance

Subjects	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	r-value	Interpretation
English	0.90	0.02	Negligible Correlation
Mathematics	0.42	0.12	Negligible Correlation
Science	0.66	0.07	Negligible Correlation
TLE	0.47	0.11	Negligible Correlation
MAPEH	0.99	<0.00	Negligible Correlation

This reveals that English (p = 0.90), Math (p = 0.42), Science (0.66), TLE (0.47), and MAPEH (0.99) had p-values that exceed the alpha (0.05); hence, the null hypotheses are failed to reject. There is no significant relationship between Overall Reading Competency

scores in English and the grades on the said five subjects with negligible correlation. This means that reading competency in English is not a predictor of achievement of students under printed modular distance learning modality.

Table 9 shows the results of the test of relationship between the scores of reading competency in Filipino of

ODL learners and their grades in subjects that use Filipino as medium of instructions.

**Table 9: Results of Test of Relationship of the ODL Learners' Reading Competency Scores in Filipino and their Academic Performance**

Subjects	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	r-value	Interpretation
Filipino	0.86	0.03	Negligible Correlation
AP	>0.05	0.28	Negligible Correlation
EsP	0.07	0.27	Negligible Correlation

This indicates that Filipino had a p-value of 0.86, AP had >0.05, and EsP had 0.07. These are greater than the 0.05 alpha; therefore, the null hypotheses are accepted. There is no significant relationship between the Overall Reading Competency scores in Filipino of the ODL students and their grades on the three subjects which had negligible correlation. This indicates that reading

competency in Filipino does not contribute much on the learning of ODL students on the said three subjects.

Table 10 shows the results of the test of relationship between the scores of reading competency in English of ODL learners and their grades in subjects that use English as medium of instructions.

**Table 10: Results of Test of Relationship of the ODL Learners' Reading Competency Scores in English and their Academic Performance**

Subjects	p-values ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )	r-value	Interpretation
English	0.29	0.16	Negligible Correlation
Mathematics	**0.02	0.34	Low Positive Correlation
Science	0.16	0.21	Negligible Correlation
TLE	**0.01	0.39	Low Positive Correlation
MAPEH	0.09	0.25	Negligible Correlation

This tells that English ( $p = 0.29$ ), Mathematics (0.16), and MAPEH (0.09) got the p-values higher than alpha (0.05). The null hypotheses are accepted. There is no significant relationship between Overall Reading Competency scores in English and grades in the three aforementioned subjects which show negligible correlation. On the other hand, English got a p-value of 0.02 and TLE got 0.01. These are lower than 0.05 alpha; hence, the null hypotheses are rejected. There is significant relationship between Overall Reading Competency scores in English and grades in Mathematics and TLE with low positive correlation. These imply that reading competency in English can affect the online learners' performance positively in Mathematics and TLE but not on English, Science, and MAPEH.

Reading in Filipino compared to the PMDL group but they had the same level in Oral Reading and Overall Reading Competency. Despite that the both groups were found to be instructional readers in English, the study showed that the learners under ODL Modality is better in Silent Reading and Overall Reading Competency. These tells that the PMDL learners needed much more assistance in reading and comprehension than the online learners.

It was remarkable that the ODL learners performed better academically in all subject areas compared to the other group as the data were compared statistically. However, there was no enough evidence that would show that reading competency in Filipino and English could affect the academic performance of the PMDL students aside from Araling Panlipunan only. The same case was true with the ODL students. There was no solid proof that reading competency in Filipino and English could affect their academic performance, except Mathematics and TLE.

The result of this study had similar results with other researchers when it comes to Araling Panlipunan, Mathematics, and TLE only. The studies of Nyarko, et al. (2018), Chege (2021), Akbaşlı (2016), and Hijazi

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers arrived formed the following conclusions.

The study revealed that the learners under Printed Modular Distance Learning Modality were instructional readers in Filipino while the learners in Online Distance Learning Modality were independent readers. Data also revealed that the latter group were better in Silent

(2018) all asserted that reading comprehension had positive correlation with the learners' academic performance. Nonetheless, their conclusion was not similar for Filipino, English, Science, EsP, and MAPEH.

From the results of this study, it can be inferred that learners' reading competency can affect the academic performance of the students under distance learning in some subjects but not all.

It is worth noting the news about the parents who do their children's school tasks (smartick.com, n.d.) and the growing online cheating among students via social media such as Facebook (Bautista, 2021); if these two affect learners' achievements. A similar study can also be done by exploring the other variables.

Furthermore, based on the findings and conclusions, the researchers recommend the following.

1. Aside from contacting through cellphones, high school teachers may also conduct home visitations to measure the reading competency level of the learners. They may also perform reading sessions once a week in the houses of the learners who need intervention.
2. Teachers may also recommend videos that might help the learners in improving their reading skills.
3. School may provide more reading materials for all the learners that suit to their level and capability.
4. Teachers may develop assessment tools that would gauge the learners' true learning.
5. Teachers may also include an "Honesty Indicator Survey" in the assessment tool where in the learners would rate their honesty and integrity in answering their activities and tests. A reflection section may also be added; thus, the learners may write their perceptions and feelings about the lesson.
6. Parents are encouraged to have an open communication with the teacher regarding the learners' progress and the attitude in studying.
7. School administrators may provide seminars, focused group discussions, and learning action cells that will retool and equip the teachers in teaching and assessment.
8. Future researchers may use this study as a reference. They may replicate the study in other setting and bigger sample. They may also consider gender, economic status, parental engagement, and others as variables.

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