



## ASSESSING PROJECT SPARE FOR AN ENHANCED READING INSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK

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**Abstract:** *The study delved into the efficacy of Project SPARE (Strengthening Community Partnership to Achieve Reading Enhancement) at Olongapo City National High School, targeting students facing challenges in reading. Aligned with the Bawat Bata Bumabasa (Every Child a Reader) initiative, the program bolstered six fundamental reading components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension. Employing a mixed-method research approach with a sequential explanatory design, the study assessed the program's impact comprehensively. Quantitative data collection involved a survey questionnaire to analyze reading strategies, respondents' demographic profiles, and levels of parental involvement during program implementation. Qualitative data, including observations and interviews, provided insights into parent and struggling reader profiles, reading interests, and the application of reading strategies. The study aimed to establish a correlation between enhanced reading performance and parental engagement, evaluate the program's effect on reading skills, and contribute to refining an improved instructional framework. While the findings revealed a weak positive correlation between parental involvement and reading performance among struggling readers, significant correlations were not found. Despite observed improvements, these results highlighted the necessity for continued exploration and refinement of strategies to support struggling readers effectively.*

**Keywords:** *education, parental involvement, mixed-methods, sequential explanatory method reading assessments, parental involvement, Olongapo City, Philippines*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is also characterized as a complex and multifaceted process. As articulated by (Bogaert et al., 2023), it involves creating meaning from texts, which influences not only academic achievement but also skills relevant to future careers. When a learner has poor reading comprehension, instruction within a range of academic areas will be difficult to understand. Even people who excel in other subjects may not reach their full potential if they cannot read and write. According to Smith (2019), poor reading comprehension skills can be associated with lower academic achievement. It is revealed that difficulties in reading comprehension potentially led to challenges in subsequent grades and subjects.

In many Asian countries, the multifaceted nature of reading skills is well-recognized, and education systems emphasize comprehensive approaches to literacy development. For instance, in Singapore, the Ministry of Education has implemented the STELLAR (Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading) program, which integrates various components of reading such as phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension to enhance students' literacy skills (Tan & Rao, 2017). Similarly, Japan places significant emphasis on phonemic awareness and vocabulary development in its early childhood education, recognizing these as critical for later reading success (Miyamoto et al., 2015). In China, the national curriculum prioritizes phonics and vocabulary instruction alongside reading fluency and comprehension to build a robust foundation for young learners (Chen & Ke, 2019). Further emphasizing the systematic instruction of phonics, Vousden et al. (2021) discuss how early reading interventions that incorporate both decoding and comprehension strategies can mediate the relationship between reading programs and literacy assessments. These examples illustrate that a



holistic approach to reading instruction, addressing phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and motivation, is essential for fostering proficient readers across diverse educational contexts in Asia (Ahmad et al., 2022; Baker, 2020).

Despite extensive research on reading difficulties and interventions, there remains a significant gap in understanding the effectiveness of community-driven reading programs in specific cultural and educational contexts, such as the Philippines. Previous studies have identified widespread reading issues across different countries and educational systems, such as functional illiteracy in Albania (D'Angelo, 2021) and difficulties in academic reading comprehension in Malaysia (Singh, 2014). Additionally, the explorations of Wang & Lee (2025) extend to the intersection of psychological resilience and academic success among international students. An intervention study by Salibay (2024) highlights the effectiveness of targeted programs, such as PROJECT B.E.A.R and ARANGKADA PAGBASA, in substantially improving reading proficiency among struggling readers at Claver National High School. Existing literature does not sufficiently address the role of community and parental involvement in enhancing reading skills, particularly within the context of Filipino educational practices. This study seeks to fill this gap by assessing the impact of Project SPARE (Strengthening Community Partnership to Achieve Reading Enhancement) at Olongapo City National High School. Unlike previous studies, this research focuses on a holistic, community-based approach, integrating parental and local community involvement in the reading development process. By evaluating the effectiveness of this model, the study aims to provide insights into how such collaborative efforts can be optimized to improve reading outcomes, crucial for developing sustainable, culturally relevant strategies for reading literacy in the Philippines and similar contexts.

## FRAMEWORK

The research aimed to examine the extent and nature of parental involvement in improving the reading abilities of identified struggling readers at Olongapo City National High School during the school year 2023-2024. Grounded in Vygotsky's (1934) Child Development Theory, which posited that learning to read is a social process heavily influenced by interactions with parents, caregivers, peers, and society, the study explored how environmental conditions and resources impacted learners' reading levels and the role of parental participation in reading achievement. The variables of the study included the profiles of parents and guardians, encompassing age, gender, educational background, employment status, family size, the average number of hours spent teaching a child to read, and monthly income. It also considered the profiles of learner-respondents, such as age, available reading materials, reading interests, genre preferences, time spent reading, and reading strategies. Additionally, the study assessed the level of parental involvement, differentiating between school-based activities (e.g., parent-teacher meetings, reading workshops) and home-based activities (e.g., reading with the child, discussing books). The learners' reading performance was measured through pre-test and post-test assessments to evaluate the impact of the interventions. The process involved distributing survey questionnaires, gathering and tabulating data, and applying statistical treatments to analyze the results. The expected output was an enhancement program for a reading initiative that emphasized the role of parental involvement in enhancing the reading abilities of struggling readers. This program included strategies for increasing both school-based and home-based parental engagement, providing training for parents on effective reading strategies, and ensuring access to appropriate reading materials. By integrating Vygotsky's theory, which emphasized the importance of social interaction in learning, the study highlighted the critical role of parents and the community in children's reading development. This framework illustrated the interconnection between parental involvement, environmental factors,





and student reading performance, aiming to develop an effective enhancement program to boost reading abilities through community and parental support.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study were to analyze the demographic profiles of parents and guardians, considering their age, gender, educational background, employment status, family size, time spent teaching their child to read, and monthly income. It aimed to identify the demographic profiles of the struggling readers, focusing on their age, available reading materials, preferred genres, reading interests, time spent reading, and reading strategies. The study sought to describe the level of parental involvement both at school and at home. It evaluated the reading performance of students through pre-test and post-test assessments before and after the implementation of Project SPARE to determine if there was a significant improvement. Additionally, it examined the correlation between the increase in students' reading scores and parental involvement. The study also investigated whether there were significant differences in parental involvement based on the parents' demographic profiles. Lastly, it aimed to propose an instructional framework to enhance parental involvement and improve students' reading levels.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research questions (Cresswell, 2022). This approach was chosen to combine the strengths of both methods, utilizing appropriate samples for each component to ensure relevance and integration (Bueno, 2020). Data collection involved surveys, interviews, and observations, with quantitative data analyzed using SPSS (Clark, 2020).

Specifically, a sequential explanatory mixed-method strategy was employed, where qualitative findings were used to explain and interpret unexpected quantitative results (Abdulai & Owusu-Ansah, 2014). This sequence allowed for a deeper exploration of participant experiences, contextual factors, and underlying mechanisms that quantitative measures alone might not fully capture.

The initial quantitative phase utilized survey questionnaires to gather demographic profiles, reading strategy utilization, and levels of parental involvement during Project SPARE implementation, aimed at testing hypotheses through statistical analysis (Darling, 2019).

Subsequently, qualitative data from observations and interviews in the second phase complemented and explained the quantitative findings, providing insights into unexpected patterns and enriching the overall interpretation of the study (David, 2022).

### **Research Site**

The study was conducted at Olongapo City National High School (OCNHS) during the academic year 2023-2024. Located at Rizal Avenue, corner 14th Street, East Tapinac, Olongapo City, it was the largest school in the city. Under the leadership of Dr. Roderick A. Tadeo, the school administrator at that time, OCNHS aimed for the holistic development of every Filipino learner. To recognize students' skills and potential, the school expanded its curricular programs to meet the needs and talents of its students.

In addition to the Basic Education Program (BEP), OCNHS operated seven other special programs: the Special Program in Technology and Engineering (STE), Special Program in Sports (SPS), Special Program in Journalism (SPJ), Information, Communications and Technology (ICT),



Special Program in Social Sciences (SPSS), Arabic Language and Islamic Values (ALIVE), Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL), and Special Program in the Arts (SPA). These programs experienced a consistent increase in enrollment each year.

During the academic year 2023-2024, OCNHS had more than four thousand students enrolled across various programs. The school remained committed to serving its students and maintaining good governance, continuously striving to provide quality education and foster the development of well-rounded individuals.

## Participants

The respondents of the study were 226 identified struggling readers along with their parents from Olongapo City National High School. This group included 144 male and 82 female struggling readers from grades 7 to 10. In Grade 7, there were 69 struggling readers (45 male and 24 female), with 28 male and 41 female parent respondents. Grade 8 had 125 struggling readers (79 male and 46 female), with 49 male and 76 female parent respondents. In Grade 9, there were 30 struggling readers (18 male and 12 female), with 10 male and 20 female parent respondents. Finally, Grade 10 had 2 male struggling readers, with no female struggling readers, and 2 female parent respondents. Overall, the study included 144 male and 82 female struggling readers, with 87 male and 139 female parent respondents for the School Year 2023-2024.

## Instrumentation

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire designed to gather comprehensive data relevant to the research objectives. The questionnaire encompassed four distinct parts: (1) profiling of the parent-respondents, (2) profile of the learner-respondents, (3) level of parental involvement at home and in school, and (4) evaluation of the learners' reading performance in pre-test and post-test assessments.

The first part of the questionnaire explored into pertinent details about the parents, including their age, gender, educational background, employment status, family size, average hours spent teaching a child to read, and monthly income. This information was collected through numerical or descriptive responses to provide a demographic profile of the parents. In examining the role of parental involvement in the enhancement of reading abilities, the study drew on detailed demographic profiles of participants, highlighting the importance of various family and educational backgrounds (Smith, 2020). The second part focused on the learner-respondents, capturing information such as age, available reading materials, reading interests, time spent reading, and employed reading strategies. The third segment evaluated parental involvement, divided into school-based and home-based aspects, utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 for respondents to indicate their agreement levels. The final part assessed the learners' reading performance through pre-test and post-test evaluations, providing a measure of improvement over the study period.

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing with a group of 30 parents of struggling readers to ensure its clarity, relevance, and effectiveness. The pilot testing focused on evaluating the questionnaire's comprehensibility, appropriateness of questions, and ease of completion. Feedback from the pilot group revealed that 90% of respondents found the questions clear and easily understandable, with 10% suggesting minor revisions for better clarity. Regarding relevance, 85% perceived the questions as pertinent to enhancing reading abilities through parental engagement, while 10% recommended adding more specific inquiries. In terms of capturing insights, 80% believed the questionnaire effectively captured their experiences and perspectives, with 15% advocating for more detailed responses through open-ended questions. The ease of completion was



also noted, with 95% finding the questionnaire easy to complete within a reasonable time frame, although 5% faced challenges in providing detailed responses. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire was refined to enhance its effectiveness.

The questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process involving several specialists in research, English, grammar, and curriculum implementation to ensure its reliability and relevance. The validation ensured that the questionnaire's statements aligned with the study's aims and were free of grammatical errors. The validation process involved multiple iterations, with feedback incorporated until the mean validity score reached an acceptable range. Additionally, the questionnaire's reliability was tested by administering it to four master teachers, department heads, and the thesis adviser. The reliability test ensured that the instrument consistently measured what it was intended to measure.

All necessary permissions from Columban College and the Schools Division of Olongapo City were secured before proceeding with data collection and analysis. The study adhered to the Data Protection Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173) to ensure ethical considerations were met. Participants were informed of the study's aims, advantages, and any potential risks before deciding to participate. They were given the freedom to join or opt out of the study at any time. The data collected were kept strictly confidential and used solely for educational purposes. Any potential harm—physical, social, psychological, or otherwise—was minimized. The study followed the ethical guidelines provided by Columban College, ensuring it was free from any form of research misconduct or plagiarism.

## Data Collection

The data collection process began with the researcher drafting a letter of consent requesting permission to conduct the study. Following the Dean's clearance to collect the necessary data, a letter of authorization was submitted to the Superintendent of Schools' Division in Olongapo City. Upon securing permission, the questionnaire was revised based on the feedback from validators and testers. The researcher then coordinated with the Department Heads and the School Principal of Olongapo City National High School to administer the data gathering. The aim of the study was clearly explained to the learners and parent-respondents who participated in the survey. To minimize any disruption to classes, data collection was conducted virtually using Google Forms and through traditional paper and pencil tests. Upon completion of data collection, the gathered data were organized using Microsoft Excel for initial structuring. The data were then prepared for further analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 28 (SPSS). The following statistical techniques were applied to address the specific research questions: Percentage and Frequency Distribution were used to profile the respondents, providing a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The Mean was used to analyze the role of parental involvement in enhancing the reading abilities of struggling readers. A T-Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between samples, particularly focusing on the students' reading abilities and the role of parental involvement. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to evaluate whether the means of two or more groups were significantly different from each other, including analyzing the influence of parental involvement on the students' reading levels. By utilizing these statistical techniques, the study aimed to transform the collected data into meaningful findings, which were then thoroughly explained along with the entire process and its significance to the study participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



The demographic profile of parent-respondents revealed that the majority of respondents (50%) belonged to the 35-44 age group, with 34.51% in the 25-34 age bracket. Females constituted 61.50% of the sample, and most parents were high school graduates (60.18%) and employed (36.28%). Additionally, 55.75% of parents did not allocate time weekly to teach their children to read. These findings highlighted that the parents of struggling readers were predominantly middle-aged females with high school education and employment, indicating potential constraints in providing direct reading support due to time limitations.

The demographic profile of struggling readers indicated that the majority were 13 years old (42.92%), followed by 14-year-olds (24.78%). Notably, 60.62% of struggling readers did not express an interest in reading, and only 37.61% had access to reading materials at home, with a notable preference for romance as a genre (25.22%). This demographic profile suggested that younger struggling readers faced significant challenges in reading engagement and access to preferred reading materials, influencing their reading habits and interests.

Parental involvement in school-based and home-based activities was minimal. School-based involvement among parents was rare, with activities such as volunteering (2.09) and discussing reading progress with teachers (1.74) being infrequent. Similarly, home-based involvement was limited, with activities like reading aloud (1.84) and introducing diverse reading materials (1.85) rarely practiced. The study revealed a lack of consistent parental engagement both in school-based reading programs and home-based reading activities, potentially hindering the development of reading skills among struggling readers.

Despite these challenges, the reading performance of struggling readers showed improvement. The pretest-post-test comparison indicated that students moved from frustration levels (scores 1-4) to instructional levels (scores 5-7). This improvement demonstrated positive outcomes in reading performance among struggling readers, suggesting the potential impact of targeted interventions and support programs.

Additionally, there were significant variations in parents' involvement when grouped by their profile. Specifically, there were significant variations in school-based and home-based involvement of parents in the reading of struggling readers when grouped by educational background and employment status. The computed F-values for educational background were 5.603 and 4.022, respectively, and for employment status were 5.125 and 6.034, respectively. These were significant at the 5% level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Similarly, significant variations in home-based involvement were noted when grouped by the number of hours spent teaching reading, with an F-value of 4.174 at the 5% alpha level. However, age, gender, and family size did not demonstrate significant differences in either school-based or home-based involvement.

These findings indicated that educational level, employment status, and the number of hours spent teaching reading to the child significantly impacted parental involvement in reading activities. The qualitative analysis further emphasized that parental involvement played a crucial role in the reading development and academic achievement of struggling readers, aligning with previous research findings (Castro et al., 2019; Dayle, 2019).

In conclusion, while parental involvement in reading activities among struggling readers was limited, targeted interventions and awareness programs could have enhanced parental engagement. Such efforts were crucial for fostering a conducive reading environment both at home and in school, thereby supporting the development of reading skills among children facing challenges. This summary encapsulated the key findings and implications of the study on parental involvement in improving reading skills among struggling readers, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for enhancing educational outcomes through collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and stakeholders.



## CONCLUSION

The study aimed to assess Project SPARE's effectiveness in enhancing the reading abilities of struggling readers and to use the results to develop an action plan for a seminar and reading program, which would be presented to the Schools Division of Olongapo as part of the learning recovery continuity plan. The findings revealed that despite minimal parental participation, the program had a weak positive significant impact on learners' reading abilities. Most parents rarely participated in reading activities both at home and in school, indicating that the level of involvement was a concern rather than a benefit. The lack of parental knowledge and communication about their children's reading progress posed additional challenges, as teachers alone planned and implemented reading programs with limited opportunities for learners to practice at home.

The demographic profile of the struggling readers showed that a significant portion were teenagers with limited interest in reading, despite having access to reading materials at home. Notably, the study discovered new insights that were not extensively explored in previous literature: variations in parental involvement were significantly influenced by educational background, employment status, and the number of hours spent teaching reading. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions considering parents' educational and employment contexts to enhance their involvement.

Additionally, the study found a significant weak positive correlation between increased reading performance and parental involvement, suggesting that while there was an improvement, it was not as significant as expected. The analysis also revealed significant variations in parental involvement based on educational background and employment status, with more educated and self-employed parents showing greater engagement. Furthermore, family size was identified as a crucial factor in determining educational quality and academic performance, with smaller families better able to meet basic needs. The study also affirmed the socio-economic impact on reading performance, aligning with previous research that low-income families face challenges in fostering a supportive reading environment. The findings underscore the importance of parental support and the teacher's role in improving students' reading abilities. This study provides a basis for future research and program development, highlighting the need for a contextualized reading program tailored to junior high school settings, reflecting their unique needs and challenges.

## TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

Translational research for the aforementioned study on Project SPARE, aimed at enhancing the reading abilities of struggling readers, can be disseminated through various innovative and popular media forms to effectively communicate the findings to diverse audiences. One potential medium is policy briefs, which can inform educational policymakers about the critical role of parental involvement and the need for targeted interventions based on parents' educational and employment backgrounds. Additionally, creating illustrative books that depict success stories of students who improved their reading skills through Project SPARE can serve as inspirational and educational tools for both parents and educators.

Engaging storytelling sessions and dramatizations can bring the study's findings to life, showing real-life scenarios of how different strategies positively impacted learners. Brochures and posters distributed in schools and community centers can succinctly present key findings and recommendations, ensuring accessibility to a broader audience. Paintings and visual arts can be



utilized to create impactful imagery that captures the essence of parental involvement and its significance in children's reading development.

Moreover, radio segments and video clips can be produced to reach a wider audience, particularly those who may not have access to written materials. These audio-visual formats can feature interviews with educators, parents, and students, providing personal insights and testimonials on the effectiveness of the reading programs. Songs and dances themed around the importance of reading and family involvement can be integrated into school events and community gatherings, making the message engaging and memorable.

Overall, employing a multifaceted approach using various media forms will ensure that the scientific information from the study is translated into understandable and actionable insights for all stakeholders involved in the educational process, thereby fostering a supportive and informed community focused on improving reading abilities among struggling readers.

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