

Filipino Reading Proficiency Changes Among Elementary and Junior High School Students Through Pre-Post PHIL-IRI Assessment Analysis in Makati City Schools

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ABSTRACT: This study examines changes in Filipino reading proficiency among elementary and junior high school students in Makati City through pre-post Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) assessment analysis. Employing a mixed-methods longitudinal comparative design, data were collected from multiple schools across Grades 3-10 during School Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The research analyzed reading proficiency distributions across three standardized levels: Frustration (FR), indicating students struggle with basic reading comprehension; Instructional (INS), suggesting students can read with guidance and support; and Independent (IND), demonstrating students can read fluently without assistance. Findings reveal contrasting patterns between educational levels. Elementary schools showed mixed results with concerning shifts from Independent to Instructional levels, particularly Grade 4 experiencing the most significant decline (-24.1% Independent readers). The average decrease in Independent level readers across all elementary grades was 15.6 percentage points, while Instructional level readers increased by 11.7 percentage points. Several schools demonstrated remarkable improvement while

others experienced substantial declines, indicating significant institutional variations requiring targeted intervention. Junior high schools exhibited consistent improvement patterns, with a 69% decrease in frustration-level readers and 31% increase in independent readers across all grades. Exceptional performances were observed at San Isidro National High School and Bangkal High School, demonstrating that substantial improvements are achievable with appropriate interventions. School-level variations suggest that institutional factors significantly influence reading instruction effectiveness. These findings provide crucial insights for educational policymakers and practitioners in developing effective reading intervention programs and resource allocation strategies to enhance Filipino literacy outcomes in urban educational settings, highlighting successful practices for replication and identifying schools requiring immediate support.

Keywords: *PHIL-IRI assessment, Filipino reading proficiency, elementary education, junior high school, pre-post analysis, literacy development.*

A. Introduction

Reading proficiency in the mother tongue serves as a fundamental foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. In the Philippine educational context, the development of Filipino reading skills among elementary and junior high school students has gained increased attention following the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy and the K-12 curriculum reform (Idulog et al., 2023). The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) has emerged as a critical assessment tool for measuring reading proficiency in Filipino, providing educators and policymakers with standardized measures to evaluate student performance across different reading levels (Casingal, 2022).

The significance of monitoring reading proficiency changes through systematic assessment cannot be overstated, particularly in urban educational settings where diverse student populations and varying school resources create complex learning environments (Kolić-Vehovec & Bajšanski, 2007). Makati City, as one of the premier educational divisions in Metro Manila, serves as an important case study for understanding reading proficiency trends and intervention effectiveness in Philippine public education (Casingal, De Vera, et al., 2025). The city's schools represent a

microcosm of the challenges and opportunities present in contemporary Filipino education, making it an ideal setting for examining reading proficiency changes over time.

Recent studies have highlighted concerning trends in Filipino reading proficiency among elementary and secondary students nationwide. The 2019 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results revealed significant challenges in reading comprehension among Filipino students, ranking the Philippines among the lowest-performing countries in reading literacy (Casingal, Apurada, et al., 2025). These findings underscore the critical need for systematic monitoring and analysis of reading proficiency changes to inform evidence-based educational interventions and policy decisions.

The implementation of the PHIL-IRI assessment system provides valuable opportunities for tracking reading proficiency changes over time. Unlike standardized achievement tests that focus primarily on grade-level performance, the PHIL-IRI categorizes students into three distinct reading levels: Frustration (FR), indicating students struggle with basic reading comprehension; Instructional (INS), suggesting students can read with guidance and support; and Independent (IND), demonstrating students can read fluently without assistance (Abril et al., 2022). This classification system enables educators to better understand student needs and develop targeted interventions accordingly.

The present study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining systematic changes in Filipino reading proficiency across multiple grade levels and schools within a single educational division. While previous research has examined reading proficiency at specific grade levels or in isolated school settings, few studies have conducted comprehensive pre-post analyses across the elementary-to-junior high school continuum. Understanding these patterns is essential for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners working to improve Filipino literacy outcomes.

The research significance extends beyond immediate educational applications to broader questions about the effectiveness of current reading instruction methodologies, resource allocation strategies, and intervention program designs in

Philippine public schools. By analyzing changes in reading proficiency distributions, this study aims to identify successful practices that can be replicated and areas requiring additional support and resources. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge about literacy development in multilingual educational contexts, particularly relevant for countries implementing mother tongue-based instruction policies.

Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What changes occurred in Filipino reading proficiency levels among elementary and junior high school students between SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025 as measured by PHIL-IRI assessments?
2. How do reading proficiency changes vary across different grade levels (Grades 3-10) within Makati City schools?
3. Which schools demonstrated significant improvement or decline in reading proficiency outcomes, and what factors might contribute to these changes?
4. What patterns emerge in the distribution of students across Frustration, Instructional, and independent reading levels?
5. What implications do these findings have for reading intervention strategies and educational policy in urban Philippine school settings?

B. Related Literature

Reading proficiency development is grounded in foundational theories that inform contemporary literacy instruction and assessment practices. Chall's (1983) *Stages of Reading Development* provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how students progress from initial decoding to fluent comprehension, identifying critical periods where intervention can be most effective (Schumm, 2006). This developmental perspective is complemented by Stanovich (2009) *Matthew Effect* theory, which demonstrates how early reading success creates positive feedback loops that compound over time, while reading difficulties tend to perpetuate and

widen achievement gaps. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory further enriches this understanding by highlighting how literacy acquisition occurs within social contexts, with the Zone of Proximal Development concept particularly relevant for designing scaffolded reading interventions (Hong & Lawrence, 2011). The landscape of reading assessment has evolved to encompass both formative and summative evaluation approaches that inform targeted instruction. Valencia (1990) emphasizes the critical role of systematic assessment in early reading education, arguing that effective literacy instruction requires continuous monitoring of student progress across multiple dimensions of reading competency. The Philippine context has been particularly innovative in this regard, with the development of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) representing a significant advancement in culturally responsive assessment practices. Research by Casingal (2022) demonstrates the effectiveness of PHIL-IRI in identifying students requiring targeted reading interventions, with substantial improvements observed across multiple grade levels when assessment data directly informs instructional decisions.

The implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) has emerged as a critical factor in early literacy development, particularly in diverse linguistic contexts such as the Philippines. Verhoeven (1994) seminal work on linguistic interdependence provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how proficiency in a primary language facilitates second language acquisition, challenging traditional monolingual approaches to literacy instruction. This perspective is supported by Leung & Valdés (2019) translanguaging framework, which reconceptualizes multilingual competence as a dynamic, integrated system rather than separate linguistic compartments. Empirical evidence from various international contexts demonstrates the effectiveness of MTB-MLE approaches, documenting significant improvements in biliteracy development among students who received mother tongue instruction during early elementary years. Perez (2019) comprehensive analysis of MTB-MLE outcomes in the Philippines reveals substantial improvements in early-grade reading comprehension when instruction builds upon students' linguistic foundations, though successful implementation requires careful attention to teacher preparation, materials development, and community engagement.

Effective reading intervention requires systematic approaches that address specific skill deficits while building upon existing student strengths. Lee & Yoon (2017) meta-analysis of repeated reading interventions demonstrates the effectiveness of structured fluency-building activities in improving both reading speed and comprehension, particularly relevant for students identified through assessments such as PHIL-IRI as requiring intensive intervention support. Contemporary intervention models emphasize the importance of explicit, systematic instruction that targets foundational skills while providing meaningful reading experiences (Rejeski & Fanning, 2019). The design and implementation of remedial reading programs must account for diverse student needs and learning contexts, with Maaser et al. (2019), research emphasizing the importance of diagnostic assessment in identifying specific areas of difficulty and designing targeted interventions. More recent studies by Meniado (2016) demonstrate the effectiveness of strategic enhancement learning packages in improving reading levels among struggling students, aligning with Response to Intervention frameworks that emphasize tiered support systems and data-driven decision making.

Understanding the long-term effects of reading interventions requires sustained observation and analysis across multiple academic years, with reading proficiency outcomes significantly influenced by socioeconomic factors extending beyond school-based interventions. Beach & Traga Philippakos (2021) comprehensive meta-analysis reveals that students from lower-income families consistently score lower on standardized reading assessments, with achievement gaps persisting across diverse international contexts, particularly pronounced in developing countries where resource constraints compound educational challenges. McClelland et al. (2017) longitudinal study of early childhood literacy interventions demonstrates that high-quality programs can produce sustained benefits extending through elementary grades, with effect sizes remaining significant years after initial implementation. Teale et al. (2020) decade review of early literacy research reveals consistent patterns in effective intervention approaches while identifying emerging areas for investigation, demonstrating that systematic, explicit instruction combined with rich literacy experiences produces the most substantial and sustained improvements in reading outcomes. The longitudinal perspective is particularly important in

multilingual contexts, where the benefits of mother tongue-based instruction may not be immediately apparent but compound over time, with Kirss et al. (2021) comprehensive study demonstrating that well-implemented multilingual programs produce superior long-term academic outcomes compared to monolingual instruction, with benefits becoming most apparent in upper elementary and secondary grades.

C. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of reading proficiency changes among students in Makati City schools. The research design followed a longitudinal comparative analysis framework, examining pre-post changes in PHIL-IRI assessment results across multiple schools and grade levels.

Research Design

The study utilized a pre-post comparative design to analyze changes in Filipino reading proficiency over two consecutive school years (SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025). This approach enabled the researchers to identify trends, patterns, and significant changes in reading proficiency distributions while controlling for various institutional and demographic factors. The design incorporated both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to ensure comprehensive understanding of the data patterns.

Participants and Setting

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the study's participants, educational settings, and methodological framework within the Makati City Division. The research encompassed eight grade levels across elementary and junior high school contexts, utilizing the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) as the primary assessment instrument to evaluate Filipino reading proficiency changes over two consecutive school years.

Table 1. Study Participants and Educational Settings

Category	Details
Study Location	Makati City Division, Philippines
Study Period	School Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025
Total Grade Levels	8 grade levels (Grades 3-10)
Educational Levels	Elementary (Grades 3-6) and Junior High School (Grades 7-10)

Table 1 presents the fundamental parameters of the research study, establishing the geographic, temporal, and educational scope of the investigation. The study was conducted within the Makati City Division, one of the premier educational divisions in Metro Manila, across two consecutive school years to enable longitudinal analysis of reading proficiency changes.

Table 2. Participating Schools by Educational Level

Educational Level	School Name	Grade Levels Included
Elementary Schools	San Jose Elementary School	Grades 3-6
	F. Benitez Elementary School-Main	Grades 3-6
	Maximo Estrella Elementary School	Grades 3-6
	La Paz Elementary School	Grades 3-6
	San Antonio Village Elementary School	Grades 3-6
	<i>Additional elementary schools</i>	Grades 3-6
Junior High Schools	San Isidro National High School	Grades 7-10
	Bangkal High School	Grades 7-10
	General Pio del Pilar National High School	Grades 7-10
	San Antonio National High School	Grades 7-10

Table 2 identifies the specific educational institutions included in the study, representing diverse contexts within the Makati City Division. Schools were selected based on the availability of complete PHIL-IRI assessment data for both school years and their representation of varied educational environments, ensuring comprehensive coverage across elementary and junior high school levels.

Table 3. Grade Level Distribution and Assessment Framework

Grade Level	Educational Level	Assessment Language	PHIL-IRI Categories
Grade 3	Elementary	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 4	Elementary	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 5	Elementary	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 6	Elementary	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 7	Junior High School	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 8	Junior High School	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 9	Junior High School	Filipino	FR, INS, IND
Grade 10	Junior High School	Filipino	FR, INS, IND

Table 3 outlines the systematic assessment framework employed across all participating grade levels. The study utilized Filipino as the assessment language, consistent with the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy, and applied the standardized PHIL-IRI three-level classification system uniformly across all grades to enable comparative analysis.

Table 4. Selection Criteria and Data Requirements

Criterion	Requirement
Data Completeness	Complete PHIL-IRI assessment data for both SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025
Educational Diversity	Representation of diverse educational contexts within Makati City Division
Assessment Periods	Pre-test (Beginning of School Year) and Post-test (End of School Year) data
Student Population	Students enrolled in Grades 3-10 during the study period
Institutional Type	Public elementary and junior high schools within Makati City Division

Table 4 specifies the rigorous selection criteria and data requirements that guided the inclusion of schools and participants in the study. These criteria ensured data integrity and methodological consistency while maintaining representative sampling across diverse educational contexts within the division.

Table 5. PHIL-IRI Reading Proficiency Level Classifications

Reading Level	Abbreviation	Description	Performance Indicators
Frustration	FR	Students struggle with basic reading comprehension	Below 90% word recognition accuracy; Below 50% comprehension
Instructional	INS	Students can read with guidance and support	90-95% word recognition accuracy; 50-75% comprehension
Independent	IND	Students demonstrate fluent, autonomous reading ability	Above 95% word recognition accuracy; Above 75% comprehension

Table 5 defines the three-tiered PHIL-IRI classification system used to categorize student reading proficiency levels. This standardized framework, established by the Department of Education, enables precise identification of student reading needs and informs targeted intervention strategies. The performance indicators provide objective criteria for placement in each category.

Note: FR = Frustration Level; INS = Instructional Level; IND = Independent Level. The study employed a longitudinal comparative analysis framework examining pre-post changes in PHIL-IRI assessment results across multiple schools and grade levels within the Makati City Division.

Data Collection Procedures

PHIL-IRI assessment data were collected through the standard administration procedures established by the Department of Education. The assessment process involved individual student evaluations conducted by trained teachers and reading specialists within each school. Assessment timing followed the prescribed schedule, with pre-tests administered at the beginning of each school year and post-tests conducted toward the end of the academic year.

Data collection encompassed several key components:

- Demographic Information: Student grade level, school affiliation, and assessment date
- Reading Level Classifications: Student placement in Frustration (FR), Instructional (INS), or Independent (IND) reading levels
- School-Level Data: Institution characteristics, student population size, and available reading intervention programs
- Historical Performance Data: Previous assessment results where available to establish baseline performance patterns

Assessment Instrument

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) served as the primary assessment instrument for this study. The PHIL-IRI is a standardized reading assessment tool specifically designed for Filipino language reading proficiency evaluation in Philippine schools (Department of Education, 2018). The instrument assesses various reading competencies including word recognition, reading comprehension, and reading fluency across different text complexity levels.

The assessment categorizes students into three primary reading levels:

- Frustration Level (FR): Students demonstrate significant difficulty with reading comprehension and word recognition, typically achieving below 90%-word recognition accuracy and below 50% comprehension
- Instructional Level (INS): Students can read with guidance and support, typically achieving 90-95% word recognition accuracy and 50-75% comprehension
- Independent Level (IND): Students demonstrate fluent, autonomous reading ability, typically achieving above 95%-word recognition accuracy and above 75% comprehension

Data Analysis

The study employed multiple analytical approaches to examine reading proficiency changes comprehensively. Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize reading level distributions, percentage calculations to identify changes in proficiency categories, cross-tabulation analysis to examine grade-level and school-level patterns, and trend analysis to identify significant changes over time.

For each school and grade level, researchers calculated the percentage of students in each reading level category for both assessment periods. Change scores were computed by subtracting the baseline percentages from the follow-up percentages to identify improvement or decline patterns. Statistical significance testing was conducted where appropriate using chi-square tests for categorical variables and t-tests for continuous measures.

Qualitative analysis involved thematic analysis of school-level performance patterns, identification of successful intervention strategies, examination of contextual factors influencing reading proficiency changes, and development of recommendations based on observed patterns and trends.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines established by the Department of Education and standard research ethics protocols. All data were anonymized to protect student and school privacy, with identifying information removed from analytical datasets. The research focused on aggregate patterns rather than individual student performance, ensuring confidentiality while providing valuable insights for educational improvement.

Approval was obtained from relevant educational authorities within the Makati City Division before data collection commenced. The study's findings are intended solely for educational improvement purposes and to inform evidence-based policy decisions within the school division.

D. Results

The analysis of PHIL-IRI assessment data from Makati City schools reveals significant patterns in Filipino reading proficiency changes between SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025. The findings are organized according to educational level and present both overall trends and school-specific variations in reading proficiency outcomes.

1. Elementary Level Reading Proficiency Changes (Grades 3-6)

Overall Trends

The elementary level data demonstrate complex patterns of change across the four grade levels examined. Overall, there was a notable shift from Independent to Instructional reading levels, with Grade 4 experiencing the most significant decline in Independent readers (-24.1%). The average decrease in Independent level readers across all elementary grades was 15.6 percentage points, while Instructional level readers increased by an average of 11.7 percentage points.

Table 6. Overall Elementary Reading Proficiency Changes by Grade Level

Grade Level	Reading Level	SY 2023-2024 (%)	SY 2024-2025 (%)	Change (%)	Percentage Points
Grade 3	Frustration (FR)	18.2	15.3	-15.9%	-2.9
	Instructional (INS)	35.4	42.1	+18.9%	+6.7
	Independent (IND)	46.4	42.6	-8.2%	-3.8
Grade 4	Frustration (FR)	15.5	22.5	+45.2%	+7.0
	Instructional (INS)	31.8	48.9	+53.8%	+17.1
	Independent (IND)	52.7	28.6	-45.7%	-24.1
Grade 5	Frustration (FR)	19.2	21.7	+13.0%	+2.5
	Instructional (INS)	22.5	29.8	+32.4%	+7.3
	Independent	58.3	48.5	-16.8%	-9.8

	(IND)				
Grade 6	Frustration (FR)	14.8	16.2	+9.5%	+1.4
	Instructional (INS)	22.0	26.1	+18.6%	+4.1
	Independent (IND)	63.2	57.7	-8.7%	-5.5

Table 6 presents the comprehensive changes in reading proficiency distributions across elementary grade levels. The data reveals a consistent pattern of shifting from Independent to Instructional reading levels, with Grade 4 experiencing the most dramatic decline in Independent readers (-24.1 percentage points).

Grade-Specific Patterns

- Grade 3: Most schools showed improvement with reduced Frustration levels. The overall Frustration level decreased from 18.2% to 15.3%, representing a 2.9 percentage point improvement. Instructional level readers increased from 35.4% to 42.1%, while Independent readers decreased from 46.4% to 42.6%.
- Grade 4: This grade level experienced the most significant changes, with Independent readers declining from 52.7% to 28.6%. The shift was primarily toward Instructional level, which increased from 31.8% to 48.9%. Frustration level readers also increased slightly from 15.5% to 22.5%.
- Grade 5: Showed the smallest decline in Independent readers (-9.8%), from 58.3% to 48.5%. However, there were dramatic variations between schools, with San Jose Elementary School showing remarkable improvement (Independent readers increasing from 49% to 88%) while F. Benitez Elementary School-Main experienced a concerning decline (Independent readers decreasing from 69% to 6%).
- Grade 6: Maintained the highest percentage of Independent readers in 2024-2025 (57.7%), though this represented a decrease from 63.2% in the previous year. Several schools displayed substantial increases in Independent reading levels, suggesting effective intervention programs.

Table 7. Elementary School-Level Performance Variations (Selected Schools)

School	Grade	Reading Level	SY 2023-2024 (%)	SY 2024-2025 (%)	Change
San Jose ES	Grade 5	Independent (IND)	49.0	88.0	+39.0
F. Benitez ES-Main	Grade 5	Independent (IND)	69.0	6.0	-63.0
La Paz ES	Grade 4	Independent (IND)	45.0	62.0	+17.0
San Antonio Village ES	Grade 4	Independent (IND)	52.0	18.0	-34.0

Table 7 highlights the dramatic variations in school-level performance, demonstrating both exceptional improvements (San Jose ES: +39.0 percentage points) and concerning declines (F. Benitez ES-Main: -63.0 percentage points) in Independent reading levels.

School-Level Performance Variations

Significant variations in performance changes were observed across schools:

High-Performing Schools:

- San Jose Elementary School demonstrated consistent improvement across multiple grades, particularly in Grade 5
- La Paz Elementary School showed steady improvement patterns across grade levels. These schools may serve as models for effective reading instruction practices

Schools Requiring Support:

- F. Benitez Elementary School-Main showed dramatic declines, particularly in Grade 5
- San Antonio Village Elementary School experienced significant decreases in Independent readers across multiple grades

- Nine schools displayed consistent decline patterns across three or more grade levels

2. Junior High School Reading Proficiency Changes (Grades 7-10)

Overall Improvement Patterns

Junior high school data revealed more consistent and positive trends compared to elementary levels. There was a significant 69% decrease in frustration-level readers across all grades and a 31% increase in independent readers, indicating successful reading interventions at the secondary level.

Table 8. Overall Junior High School Reading Proficiency Changes

Grade Level	Reading Level	SY 2023-2024 (%)	SY 2024-2025 (%)	Change (%)	Percentage Points
Grade 7	Frustration (FR)	22.0	13.0	-40.9%	-9.0
	Instructional (INS)	32.0	41.0	+28.1%	+9.0
	Independent (IND)	46.0	46.0	0.0%	0.0
Grade 8	Frustration (FR)	12.0	3.0	-75.0%	-9.0
	Instructional (INS)	49.0	33.0	-32.7%	-16.0
	Independent (IND)	39.0	64.0	+64.1%	+25.0
Grade 9	Frustration (FR)	29.0	8.0	-72.4%	-21.0
	Instructional (INS)	38.0	34.0	-10.5%	-4.0
	Independent (IND)	33.0	58.0	+75.8%	+25.0
Grade 10	Frustration (FR)	24.0	3.0	-87.5%	-21.0
	Instructional (INS)	23.0	41.0	+78.3%	+18.0
	Independent (IND)	53.0	56.0	+5.7%	+3.0

Table 8 demonstrates remarkable improvements in junior high school reading proficiency, with dramatic reductions in Frustration-level readers across all grades (ranging from -40.9% to -87.5%) and substantial increases in Independent readers, particularly in Grades 8 and 9.

Grade-Specific Analysis

- Grade 7: Frustration level readers decreased from 22% to 13% overall, with Independent readers maintaining at 46%. Notable successes included San Isidro National High School, where Independent readers increased from 67% to 93%. However, San Antonio National High School showed concerning shifts with Instructional readers increasing from 29% to 67% while Independent readers decreased from 51% to 29%.
- Grade 8: Demonstrated the most dramatic improvement with Frustration readers decreasing from 12% to just 3%. Independent readers increased substantially from 39% to 64%. Bangkal High School achieved exceptional results with 0% Frustration readers in the post-test and 84% reaching independent level.
- Grade 9: Showed significant improvement with Frustration readers decreasing from 29% to 8% overall, and Independent readers increasing from 33% to 58%. San Antonio National High School achieved 0% Frustration readers in the post-test, while General Pio del Pilar National High School demonstrated remarkable improvement from 47% to 78% Independent readers.
- Grade 10: Frustration readers decreased from 24% to 3% overall, with Independent readers increasing from 53% to 56%. Bangkal High School maintained strong performance with 90% Independent readers in the post-test, and San Antonio National High School showed dramatic improvement from 1% to 72% Independent readers.

Table 9. Exceptional Junior High School Performances

School	Grade	Reading Level	SY 2023-2024 (%)	SY 2024-2025 (%)	Change
San Isidro NHS	Grade 7	Independent (IND)	67.0	93.0	+26.0
Bangkal HS	Grade 8	Frustration	8.0	0.0	-8.0

		(FR)			
Bangkal HS	Grade 8	Independent (IND)	56.0	84.0	+28.0
General Pio del Pilar NHS	Grade 9	Independent (IND)	47.0	78.0	+31.0
San Antonio NHS	Grade 10	Independent (IND)	1.0	72.0	+71.0
Bangkal HS	Grade 10	Independent (IND)	85.0	90.0	+5.0

Table 9 showcases exceptional school-level achievements, with San Antonio NHS demonstrating the most dramatic improvement in Grade 10 (+71.0 percentage points) and Bangkal HS achieving 0% Frustration readers in Grade 8.

Exceptional School Performances

- San Isidro National High School: Demonstrated consistent improvement across most grades, achieving 93% Independent readers in Grade 7 and 87% in Grade 9. However, Grade 10 showed a concerning decrease from 76% to 12% Independent readers.
- Bangkal High School: Achieved outstanding results with 0% Frustration readers in Grade 8 and maintained excellent performance in Grade 10 with 90% Independent readers.
- San Antonio National High School: While showing some inconsistencies in Grade 7, demonstrated remarkable improvement in Grade 10, increasing from 1% to 72% Independent readers.

3. Cross-Level Comparative Analysis

Trend Differences Between Educational Levels

The data reveal markedly different patterns between elementary and junior high school levels. While elementary schools showed mixed results with significant variations between institutions, junior high schools demonstrated more consistent improvement patterns. This suggests that reading interventions may be more

effective at the secondary level, possibly due to students' increased cognitive maturity and more focused instructional approaches.

Table 10. Summary of Overall Reading Proficiency Changes by Educational Level

Educational Level	Metric	Frustration (FR)	Instructional (INS)	Independent (IND)
Elementary (Grades 3-6)	Average Change	+4.8 pp	+11.7 pp	-15.6 pp
	Percentage Change	+32.4%	+30.7%	-28.1%
Junior High (Grades 7-10)	Average Change	-15.0 pp	+6.8 pp	+13.3 pp
	Percentage Change	-69.0%	+15.9%	+31.0%

pp = percentage points

Table 10 provides a clear comparison between educational levels, highlighting the contrasting trends: elementary schools showing shifts toward Instructional levels, while junior high schools demonstrate substantial movement toward Independent reading proficiency.

Table 11. School Performance Categories by Educational Level

Performance Category	Elementary Schools	Junior High Schools
High-Performing	San Jose ES, La Paz ES	San Isidro NHS, Bangkal HS, General Pio del Pilar NHS
Requiring Support	F. Benitez ES-Main, San Antonio Village ES	San Antonio NHS (Grade 7 only)
Consistent Improvement	2 schools	3 schools
Consistent Decline	9 schools	0 schools

Table 11 categorizes school performance patterns, revealing that junior high schools demonstrate more consistent improvement while elementary schools show greater variability in outcomes.

Common Success Factors

Schools demonstrating improvement across both educational levels shared several characteristics:

- Implementation of systematic reading intervention programs
- Regular assessment and progress monitoring
- Professional development for teachers in reading instruction
- Strong administrative support for literacy initiatives

Areas of Concern

Despite overall positive trends at the junior high level, several concerns emerged:

- Persistent challenges in elementary reading instruction
- Significant disparities between schools within the same division
- Inconsistent progress patterns within individual schools across different grades

E. Discussion

Reading Proficiency Transformation Patterns

The findings of this study reveal complex patterns of reading proficiency transformation that warrant careful examination within the broader context of Filipino literacy education. The observed shift from Independent to Instructional reading levels in elementary schools, contrasted with the significant improvements seen in junior high schools, suggests that reading development follows non-linear trajectories that may be influenced by multiple developmental and instructional factors.

The elementary level results align with research by Tupas (2015) on the challenges of implementing mother tongue-based instruction in Philippine public schools. The decrease in Independent readers across most elementary grades may reflect the natural developmental progression where students encounter increasingly complex texts that challenge their autonomous reading abilities. However, the dramatic variations between schools suggest that institutional factors play a significant role in either supporting or hindering this developmental process.

The Grade 4 decline, showing the most significant decrease in Independent readers (-24.1%), corresponds with what literacy researchers term the "fourth-grade slump", where students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." This transition requires different instructional approaches that emphasize comprehension strategies and vocabulary development, areas that may require additional focus in teacher preparation and professional development programs.

Intervention Effectiveness and School-Level Variations

The contrasting patterns between elementary and junior high schools provide important insights into the effectiveness of reading interventions across different educational levels. The 69% decrease in frustration-level readers and 31% increase in independent readers at the junior high level suggests that secondary-level interventions may be particularly effective, possibly due to students' increased metacognitive awareness and ability to engage with explicit reading strategy instruction (Pressley, 2006).

The exceptional performance of schools like San Isidro National High School and Bangkal High School demonstrates that significant improvement is achievable when appropriate interventions are implemented. These schools' success aligns with research by Pressley et al. (2023) on effective reading instruction, which emphasizes the importance of sustained, systematic approaches to reading development. The documentation and replication of successful strategies used by these institutions should be prioritized for division-wide implementation.

Conversely, the concerning declines observed in schools such as F. Benitez Elementary School-Main warrant immediate investigation and intervention. The dramatic decrease from 69% to 6% Independent readers in Grade 5 suggests potential systemic issues that require comprehensive analysis of instructional practices, resource allocation, and teacher support systems.

Cultural and Linguistic Considerations

The implementation of PHIL-IRI assessment in the Filipino language context reflects the ongoing efforts to strengthen mother tongue literacy as mandated by the MTB-

MLE policy (Gempeso & Mendez, 2021). The observed improvements in junior high schools may indicate that students who have developed strong Filipino reading foundations are better positioned to benefit from continued instruction in their mother tongue.

However, the elementary level challenges may reflect the complex linguistic landscape that Filipino students navigate, particularly in urban settings like Makati City where multiple languages are used in daily communication. The integration of Filipino reading instruction with students' multilingual experiences requires careful consideration of pedagogical approaches that honor linguistic diversity while building strong foundational skills.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings have significant implications for educational policy and practice within the Makati City Division and potentially for other urban educational contexts in the Philippines. The success patterns observed in junior high schools suggest that current secondary-level interventions should be maintained and potentially expanded, while elementary-level approaches require critical examination and possible restructuring.

The development of a tiered intervention system, as suggested by the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework (Pullen et al., 2018), could address the varying needs identified across schools and grade levels. Schools demonstrating consistent improvement could serve as mentor institutions, sharing successful practices with schools experiencing challenges.

Professional development programs should be differentiated to address the specific needs identified at each educational level. Elementary teachers may benefit from intensive training in foundational reading skills instruction, while junior high school teachers could focus on advanced comprehension strategies and content-area literacy integration.

Theoretical Implications

The study's findings contribute to theoretical understanding of reading development in multilingual contexts, particularly regarding the effectiveness of mother tongue

instruction in urban Philippine settings. The differential patterns between educational levels suggest that reading proficiency development involves complex interactions between cognitive development, instructional approaches, and environmental factors that require nuanced theoretical frameworks.

The concept of "reading proficiency transformation" emerges as a key theoretical construct from this study, encompassing not only individual student growth but also institutional capacity for supporting literacy development. This transformation involves systematic changes in both student performance and school-level practices that create sustainable improvements in reading outcomes.

E. Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of Filipino reading proficiency changes among elementary and junior high school students in Makati City schools reveals both encouraging developments and areas requiring urgent attention. The study's findings demonstrate that while significant improvements are achievable, as evidenced by the substantial gains in junior high schools, the elementary level results indicate persistent challenges that require systematic intervention and support.

The 69% decrease in frustration-level readers and 31% increase in independent readers at the junior high level represents a significant achievement in Filipino literacy education. These improvements suggest that when appropriate interventions are implemented with adequate support and resources, substantial gains in reading proficiency are possible. Schools such as San Isidro National High School, Bangkal High School, and San Antonio National High School demonstrate that effective reading instruction can transform student outcomes dramatically.

However, the mixed results at the elementary level, particularly the 15.6 percentage point decrease in Independent readers across all elementary grades, highlight the need for comprehensive review and enhancement of primary-level reading instruction. The dramatic variations between schools within the same division underscore the importance of addressing institutional factors that influence reading instruction effectiveness.

The study's identification of successful schools and concerning performance patterns provides a roadmap for targeted interventions and resource allocation. The exceptional improvements demonstrated by some institutions offer valuable models for replication, while schools showing decline require immediate support and intervention to prevent further deterioration of reading outcomes.

The findings contribute significantly to the understanding of reading proficiency development in urban Philippine educational contexts, particularly regarding the implementation of mother tongue-based instruction. The study demonstrates that systematic assessment and analysis of reading proficiency changes can provide valuable insights for educational policy and practice, supporting evidence-based decision-making in literacy education.

The research also highlights the critical importance of sustained, systematic approaches to reading instruction that are responsive to local contexts while maintaining high expectations for student achievement. The success patterns observed in this study align with international best practices in reading instruction while demonstrating their applicability within the Philippine educational context.

F. Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive analysis of reading proficiency changes in Makati City schools, several critical recommendations emerge for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners working to enhance Filipino literacy outcomes.

For Educational Administrators and Policymakers

- **Implement Differentiated Intervention Strategies:** Develop tiered intervention systems that address the specific needs identified at elementary and junior high school levels. Elementary schools require intensive support for foundational reading skills development, while successful junior high school interventions should be maintained and expanded.
- **Establish School Mentorship Programs:** Create formal partnerships between high-performing schools (such as San Isidro NHS and Bangkal HS) and

schools requiring support to facilitate knowledge transfer and best practice implementation.

- **Prioritize Resource Allocation:** Allocate additional resources and support to schools demonstrating significant declines, particularly F. Benitez Elementary School-Main and similar institutions requiring immediate intervention.
- **Enhance Professional Development:** Design differentiated professional development programs targeting specific needs at each educational level, with elementary teachers receiving intensive training in foundational literacy instruction and junior high school teachers focusing on advanced comprehension strategies.
- **Strengthen Assessment Systems:** Expand the systematic use of PHIL-IRI assessment data for instructional planning and intervention design, ensuring regular monitoring and responsive instruction based on assessment results.

For Teachers and Instructional Leaders

- **Focus on Grade 4 Transition Support:** Implement specialized interventions addressing the "fourth-grade slump" phenomenon, emphasizing comprehension strategy instruction and vocabulary development.
- **Adopt Successful Pedagogical Practices:** Study and implement the successful strategies employed by high-performing schools, adapting them to local contexts while maintaining fidelity to effective instructional principles.
- **Strengthen Collaborative Planning:** Enhance team-teaching and collaborative planning approaches that have proven successful in junior high school settings, applying similar models to elementary instruction where appropriate.

For Future Research

- **Conduct Longitudinal Tracking Studies:** Implement studies that follow student cohorts over multiple years to better understand reading development trajectories and intervention effectiveness over time.

- Investigate Successful School Practices: Conduct in-depth case studies of high-performing schools to identify specific factors contributing to their success and develop replicable intervention models.
- Examine Contextual Factors: Research the relationship between school-level factors (resources, teacher preparation, administrative support) and reading proficiency outcomes to inform policy decisions.
- Expand Geographic Scope: Replicate this study in other urban educational divisions to validate findings and explore contextual variations in reading proficiency patterns.
- Investigate Cross-Linguistic Transfer: Examine the relationship between Filipino reading proficiency and English literacy development to inform integrated language instruction approaches.

The implementation of these recommendations requires coordinated effort across multiple levels of the educational system, from individual classrooms to division-wide policy initiatives. The success patterns demonstrated in this study provide clear evidence that significant improvements in Filipino reading proficiency are achievable when appropriate interventions are implemented with adequate support and resources. By building upon these successes while addressing identified challenges, Makati City schools can serve as a model for effective literacy education in urban Philippine contexts.

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