CORRELATION BETWEEN READING ATTITUDE AND READING COMPETENCE OF GRADE 4 PUPILS

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ABSTRACT

Reading is a fundamental skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. It serves as the foundation for acquiring knowledge, developing critical thinking, and fostering creativity. Despite its importance, many learners face challenges in developing strong reading skills, often influenced by various factors such as reading attitudes. Understanding these factors is crucial for designing effective interventions that enhance literacy outcomes. This study explored the relationship between reading attitude and reading competence among Grade 4 learners. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the research examined how pupils' reading attitude correlates with their reading competence. A total of 60 Grade 4 pupils were surveyed, and their reading competence and reading attitude were evaluated through standardized tools—Phil-IRI (Philippine Informal Reading Inventory) and ERAS (Elementary Reading Attitude Survey). The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.48$) with a computed p-value of $<.01$ between reading attitude and reading competence, highlighting the importance of fostering a positive attitude to improve literacy skills. The study advocates for a comprehensive reading program that nurtures positive attitudes toward reading to enhance both reading competence and learning outcomes.

Keywords: Reading Attitude, Reading Competence, Reading Program

INTRODUCTION

Reading serves as the gateway to all other forms of learning, laying the groundwork for intellectual growth and comprehension. The ability to read empowers individuals with the critical tools needed to think, communicate effectively, and navigate complex ideas. Conversely, challenges in reading competence often impede progress across academic subjects, particularly for beginning and struggling readers who may find the process frustrating and overwhelming (Gediki et al., 2022). This highlights the critical importance of fostering a positive reading attitude as a key component of literacy development and competence.

Reading attitude refers to the emotional dispositions, perceptions, and beliefs individuals hold about reading and its related activities (Sukarni, 2019). A positive reading attitude is marked by enthusiasm, enjoyment, and an appreciation for the value of reading, while a negative attitude is often associated with disinterest, reluctance, and avoidance (Bayraktar & Firat, 2020). Research consistently underscores the significant influence of reading attitudes, both recreational and academic, in shaping reading competence (Yulia et al., 2024).

Globally, World Bank Group (2022) report reveals that 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand simple text, up from 57% pre-pandemic. This rise in "learning poverty" is attributed to school closures, ineffective mitigation, and economic shocks during COVID-19. Latin America and South Asia saw the largest increases, while Sub-Saharan Africa's rates, though slightly less affected by closures, remain critically high at 89%. The report warns that returning to pre-pandemic conditions won't suffice—urgent efforts to recover and accelerate learning are necessary to prevent long-term economic and social consequences, especially for disadvantaged children.

Moreover, this World Bank report emphasizes that children with weak foundational literacy skills are at greater risk

of long-term learning losses, reinforcing the importance of examining factors that influence reading competence—such as reading attitude. By identifying the relationship between reading attitude and competence, the study can provide critical insights into how fostering a positive reading mindset can enhance literacy outcomes.

In the Philippines, the importance of reading has taken center stage due to concerning outcomes in international assessments. The country's participation in PISA 2018 revealed alarming literacy rates, placing the Philippines at the lowest rank in reading among 79 participating nations. Similarly, in PISA 2022, the nation ranked 77th out of 81 countries, with learning competencies lagging five to six years behind international standards. These gaps in literacy have been identified as a major barrier to academic progress, prompting the Philippine government to implement initiatives aimed at improving the quality of basic education (Villaver et al., 2024).

One such initiative is the *Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa* (Challenge: Every Child Reads) program, launched through DepEd Memorandum No. 173, series of 2019. The 3Bs initiative focuses on fostering a culture of reading, ensuring that every child achieves proficiency at their grade level. By empowering teachers to become effective reading instructors, the program seeks to address literacy gaps and create a supportive environment for learners to thrive.

The results of the Phil-IRI 2024 assessment for Grade 4 pupils reveal critical insights into reading competence at the elementary school.

• Frustration Level (*pupil withdraws from reading*): 6% of pupils (3 pupils) at Grade 1 reading level, 20% (10 pupils) at Grade 4 reading level.

• Instructional Level (*pupil can only read when being guided*): 26% of pupils (13 pupils) at Grade 4 reading level

• Independent Level (*pupil can read alone*): 48% of pupils (24 pupils)

These findings highlight a significant challenge: a portion of pupils struggles with grade-level material, with some unable to meet the reading expectations of much lower grades. Conversely, the data also underscore the presence of independent readers, suggesting the effectiveness of certain instructional approaches and the potential for further literacy development.

A closer examination reveals the importance of addressing the varying needs of these pupils. Struggling readers, particularly those at frustration levels, may benefit from targeted interventions that focus on foundational skills and motivation. Meanwhile, pupils at the instructional level require structured support to transition into independent reading. Positive reading attitudes emerge as a unifying factor that can bridge these gaps, influencing engagement, enjoyment, and achievement in reading (Bayraktar & Firat, 2020).

The results of the 2024 Phil-IRI assessment reveal a pressing need to address reading competence among Grade 4 pupils. These findings highlight significant disparities in literacy, with some pupils unable to engage with age-appropriate texts. This variability underscores the necessity of exploring factors that contribute to reading success, particularly the role of reading attitude. Research suggests that fostering positive reading attitudes can enhance motivation, engagement, and overall literacy outcomes, making it a critical area of focus (Fithriyah, 2021). By examining the correlation between reading attitude and reading competence, the study can inform targeted interventions and the development of a structured reading program. Such a program can address the needs of struggling readers while supporting those at instructional levels to progress toward independent reading, ultimately enhancing the overall reading performance of Grade 4 pupils.c

Existing literature affirms the profound impact of reading attitude on pupils' reading habits, motivation, and overall competence. For example, Bayraktar & Firat (2020) highlighted the connection between a positive attitude toward reading and improved comprehension and academic performance. Akhmetova et al. (2022) further noted that early reading attitudes significantly predict future reading achievement, while Nja et al. (2022) emphasized the lasting effect of positive attitudes on academic success. Despite its significance, the exploration of reading attitude as a contributing factor to reading competence remains under-

represented in research compared to other areas like reading strategies and instructional techniques (Sur & Ünal, 2024).

This study aims to bridge that gap by investigating the role of reading attitude in shaping reading competence among Grade 4 pupils. By examining the interplay between these variables, the study seeks to provide valuable insights for designing targeted interventions that foster literacy improvement, address disparities among learners, and enhance the performance of struggling readers. In doing so, it hopes to contribute to the broader goal of cultivating a culture of reading and ensuring academic success for all learners.

METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between reading attitude and reading competence among Grade 4 pupils for the school year 2024–2025. The descriptive design was employed to gather detailed information about pupils' reading attitudes and competence levels without altering their natural environment. As defined by Manjunatha (2019), descriptive research focuses on observing and describing phenomena as they naturally occur. Within this framework, the correlational design allowed the researcher to explore the association between the two variables of the study, as described by Devi et al. (2023), without introducing experimental interventions.

The study involved all 60 Grade 4 pupils from Gloria District, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, employing complete enumeration as a sampling method. This approach, which involves collecting data from every individual in the population, ensured comprehensive and accurate insights into the group's characteristics. Complete enumeration is particularly advantageous in smaller populations or when the study requires a thorough understanding of each individual, as highlighted by Abrol (2021).

Data collection focused on assessing reading competence and attitude through public-domain, validated tools. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Assessment Tool was used to evaluate reading competence. This tool, a public-domain instrument prescribed by the Department of Education (DepEd) and implemented for Grades 4 to 10, measures pupils' abilities in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension in both English and Filipino. Its use is mandated by DepEd Memorandum No. 14, s. 2018, titled Policy Guidelines on the Administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory. The assessment categorizes pupils into four levels of reading performance—independent, instructional, frustration, non-reader—and assigns corresponding numerical values ranging from 1 (Very Low) to 4 (Very High) as defined by the Reading Competence Scale (Abril et al., 2022).

To assess reading attitude, the study employed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), a validated, public-domain tool developed by McKenna and Kear (1990). Recent studies highlighted the continued validity of ERAS in measuring reading attitude among elementary learners (Cheema et al., 2024; Ho et al., 2022; Nootens et al., 2019). The ERAS is specifically designed for elementary learners and features 20 items that gauge attitudes toward both recreational and academic reading. Each item presents a brief statement about reading, accompanied by four Garfield images illustrating different emotional states, from very positive to very negative. Responses were scored using a 4-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 (Very Negative) to 4 (Very Positive). The survey's engaging and child-friendly format ensures accurate and reliable measurements of reading attitude (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2020).

After securing approval from the School Head, the researcher personally administered the instruments to ensure consistency and reliability. All data were collected promptly after the respondents completed the assessments, ensuring the integrity of responses. The gathered data were systematically tabulated, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted to derive meaningful insights.

Data analysis incorporated descriptive and inferential statistics to address the study's objectives. The median was utilized to describe the extent of pupils' reading attitudes and competence, providing a clear picture of

their central tendencies. The percentage formula was applied to summarize the distribution of reading competence levels, offering a visual representation of the results. To determine the existence and strength of any relationship between reading attitude and reading competence, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed, allowing for the identification of significant associations between the two variables.

The study adhered to stringent ethical standards throughout its conduct. Informed consent was obtained from pupils and their parents or guardians, with clear communication of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the measures taken to protect confidentiality. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing adverse consequences. All data were anonymized to safeguard the participants' identities, with secure storage protocols in place to ensure restricted access. The research avoided any invasive or potentially harmful procedures, prioritizing the emotional well-being of the participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reading Attitude in Terms of Recreational Reading

The findings in Table 1 reveal that Grade 4 pupils generally exhibit a positive attitude toward recreational reading, with an overall median score of 3. This indicates that, on average, pupils enjoy reading activities, particularly when they align with their interests and offer opportunities for leisure and exploration. However, there are variations in the levels of enthusiasm expressed toward specific aspects of recreational reading, which provide deeper insights into their preferences and challenges.

Pupils responded very positively (Median = 4) to items such as receiving books as presents, starting new books, visiting bookstores, and reading different kinds of books. These activities suggest that the pupils are highly motivated by novelty, diversity, and the sense of reward associated with reading. The excitement surrounding starting new books and receiving books as gifts highlights the role of external stimuli in sparking interest and fostering a positive reading experience.

Recent studies echo these findings. For instance, Xiao et al. (2023) demonstrated that when children are introduced to diverse reading materials in engaging contexts, such as bookstores or gift-giving scenarios, their enthusiasm for reading increases significantly. Similarly, Parker et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of providing access to various books to cultivate a love for reading and enhance literacy outcomes, particularly among young learners.

Another noteworthy finding is the generally positive response to reading during structured or familiar settings, such as reading at home or during free time at school (Median

Table 1. Pupils' reading attitude in terms of Recreational Reading

No	Recreational reading item	Mean	Interpretation
1	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?	3	Positive
2	How do you feel when you read a book in the school during free time?	3	Positive
3	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	3	Positive
4	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	4	Very Positive
5	How do you feel about spending free time reading?	3	Positive
6	How do you feel about starting a new book?	4	Very Positive
7	How do you feel about reading during summer?	3	Positive
8	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	2	Negative
9	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?	4	Very Positive
10	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	4	Very Positive
	OVERALL MEAN	**3**	**Positive**

= 3). These results align with the idea that consistent opportunities for reading in safe, comfortable environments encourage a positive disposition toward books. This is supported by Alghonaim (2020), who found that creating regular, stress-free reading opportunities significantly enhances children's attitudes and engagement with reading activities.

One significant challenge observed is the negative attitude (Median = 2) toward reading instead of playing. This finding suggests that many pupils view reading as less enjoyable compared to play, which remains a dominant and integral part of their daily lives. Pulimeno et al. (2020) highlight this dynamic, noting that young learners often prioritize play over structured tasks, as it offers immediate gratification and opportunities for social interaction. When reading is perceived as a competing activity, it can lead to disinterest or aversion.

To address this issue, educators and parents may consider integrating play and reading through interactive and gamified approaches. Studies by Lustyantie and Aprilia (2020) show that storytelling games, role-playing based on books, and other playful activities can transform reading into an extension of play, effectively engaging children who are otherwise reluctant to read.

The generally positive attitude toward recreational reading is a promising indicator of the pupils' potential to develop strong reading habits and competencies. Pupils who find joy in reading are more likely to engage deeply with texts, develop critical thinking skills, and enhance their comprehension. This relationship is well-documented; Xiao et al. (2023) found that children who enjoy reading for leisure tend to outperform their peers in both narrative and informational reading tasks.

However, the negative response to reading over playing signals the need for interventions that position reading as an enjoyable, rather than competing, activity. By framing reading as a social or interactive experience and providing access to appealing and diverse reading materials, educators can help foster a more robust and enduring love for reading.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of understanding pupils' attitudes toward recreational reading and leveraging these insights to create a supportive and engaging reading culture. Providing opportunities that align with pupils' interests and reducing barriers such as the perceived conflict between reading and play can significantly enhance their overall literacy development.

Table 2. Pupils' Reading Attitude in terms of Academic Reading

No	Academic reading item	Mean	Interpretation
1	How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?	3	Positive
2	How do you feel about doing workbook pages and worksheets?	3	Positive
3	How do you feel about reading in school?	3	Positive
4	How do you feel about reading your school books?	3	Positive
5	How do you feel about learning from a book?	3	Positive
6	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?	4	Very Positive
7	How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?	4	Very Positive
8	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?	3	Positive
9	How do you feel about using a dictionary?	3	Positive
10	How do you feel about taking a reading test?	4	Very Positive
	OVERALL MEAN	**3**	**Positive**

Reading Attitude in Terms of Academic Reading

The findings in Table 2 indicate that Grade 4 pupils generally exhibit a positive attitude toward academic reading, with an overall median score of 3. This suggests that pupils appreciate the value and importance of academic reading activities but display varying levels of enthusiasm depending on the specific task or context.

The very positive responses (Median = 4) to items such as "How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?", "How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?", and "How do you feel about taking a reading test?" highlight the pupils' enjoyment of structured and interactive classroom reading activities. These findings suggest that pupils are most engaged when academic reading involves collaborative and purposeful tasks, such as storytelling or time-bound activities that challenge their comprehension and recall skills.

Research supports these observations. Lustyantie and Aprilia (2020) emphasize that narrative storytelling in class fosters emotional and intellectual engagement, making reading more enjoyable and meaningful for learners. Similarly, Parker et al. (2022) found that structured reading activities, especially those with interactive elements, enhance pupils' positive attitudes and lead to greater participation in academic tasks.

Additionally, pupils expressed positive attitudes toward tasks such as using dictionaries, completing worksheets, and reading aloud in class. These findings suggest that they value these activities as part of the learning process, even if they do not evoke the same level of excitement as storytelling or class discussions. Alghonaim (2020) observed that while routine academic tasks may not be inherently engaging, pupils often recognize their educational value, which contributes to a positive attitude overall.

Although pupils' attitudes toward academic reading were positive, the results suggest that not all tasks generate high enthusiasm. Routine or repetitive activities, such as completing workbook pages or worksheets, elicited moderate responses (Median = 3), indicating that while pupils understand their necessity, these tasks lack the interactive or engaging elements that make reading more enjoyable. Chen et al. (2021) observed that non-interactive, monotonous tasks often fail to sustain young learners' interest, even if they contribute to skill-building.

A notable finding is the moderate attitude toward reading aloud in class (Median = 3). While some pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate, others may feel anxious about public performance or struggle with fluency, which can diminish their enthusiasm. This aligns with Gediki & Akyolii's (2022) findings, which highlight the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment to reduce anxiety and encourage active participation in oral reading.

The generally positive attitude toward academic reading reflects the pupils' readiness to engage with school-based literacy tasks. This is encouraging, as academic reading is essential for building foundational skills such as vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and critical thinking. Xiao et al. (2023) found that pupils with positive attitudes toward academic reading are more likely to demonstrate higher reading competence, as they engage more deeply with educational materials and apply effective strategies for understanding complex texts.

However, the findings also underscore the importance of balancing routine tasks with more engaging activities to sustain pupils' interest in academic reading. Interactive approaches, such as group discussions, gamified reading exercises, and digital tools, can make even traditionally less exciting tasks, like dictionary use or worksheets, more appealing. Research by Parker et al. (2022) suggests that integrating technology and collaboration into academic reading activities significantly enhances motivation and performance.

Additionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment during oral reading activities can help alleviate performance anxiety and encourage more active participation. Strategies such as peer support, small-group reading, or voluntary participation can make these activities less intimidating and more enjoyable for all pupils.

The findings highlight the need for a balanced approach to academic reading instruction. While pupils show a positive disposition toward most academic reading tasks, incorporating engaging, interactive, and varied strategies can further enhance their attitudes and ensure a more robust development of their literacy skills.

Reading Competence in Terms of Oral Reading

The results regarding the oral reading competence of Grade 4 pupils reveal a diverse range of proficiency levels: 22% of the pupils are categorized as frustration-level readers (*pupils who withdraw from reading situations*), 46% as instructional-level readers (*pupils who can read only with guidance*), and 32% as independent readers (*pupils who can read alone with ease*). Notably, no pupil fell under the non-reader category (*pupils unable to recognize words*). These findings provide a clear picture of the varying degrees of reading fluency, comprehension, and decoding skills among the pupils, reflecting the developmental stage of their reading abilities.
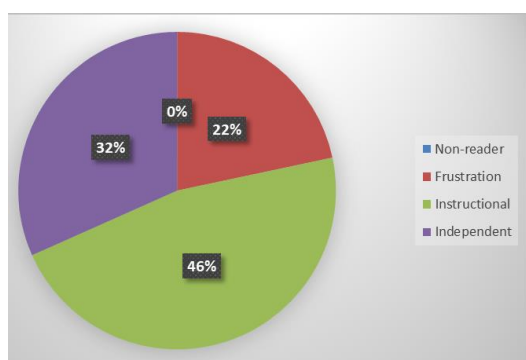
Figure 1. Proportion of Pupils' Reading Competence in Terms of Oral Reading

A significant proportion of pupils (22%) fall into the frustration-level category, meaning they struggle with fluency and comprehension when reading grade-level texts. These students likely encounter difficulties in decoding words, recognizing vocabulary, and maintaining comprehension, which may hinder their ability to process reading material independently. The frustration-level readers represent those who need considerable support to engage with texts effectively, often requiring more scaffolding, repetition, and direct instruction.

Recent studies support these findings. Dietrichson et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of early intervention for pupils who fall into the frustration-level category. They argue that these learners are at risk of academic setbacks if not provided with tailored interventions that address their specific reading challenges. Teachers can support these pupils by focusing on fundamental reading skills such as phonics, word recognition, and reading fluency. Additionally, providing more accessible texts and repeated practice can help build confidence and skill, making reading less overwhelming for these pupils.

The largest group of pupils (46%) are classified as instructional-level readers, indicating that they can comprehend grade-level material with the assistance of a teacher or peer support. These pupils are still developing their independent reading skills and may struggle with more complex texts, particularly when dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary, sentence structures, or themes. Instructional readers benefit from scaffolded reading instruction, where teachers provide guidance on how to approach and decode texts, ensuring pupils understand the material while enhancing their reading strategies.

The findings align with those of Lustyantie & Aprilia (2020), who found that instructional-level readers—while not yet independent—show significant progress when provided with structured support, such as guided reading sessions, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension strategies. Instructional-level readers are in a critical stage of their literacy development, and with the right interventions, they are poised to transition to independent reading.

Approximately 32% of the pupils are categorized as independent readers, meaning they can read and comprehend grade-level material without much assistance. These pupils demonstrate fluency, strong word recognition, and good comprehension skills, enabling them to engage with texts effectively and independently. Independent readers are able to tackle a wide range of texts, both narrative and expository, and are capable of using strategies such as inference,

summarization, and self-monitoring while reading.

Research by Gediki & Akyolii (2022) supports the findings that independent readers are more likely to achieve long-term academic success. These pupils tend to have strong vocabulary knowledge, a good understanding of reading strategies, and the ability to synthesize information from various texts. Their ability to read independently allows them to engage with more challenging content, fostering deeper understanding and critical thinking. Independent readers also demonstrate greater perseverance and motivation to tackle complex tasks, as they view reading as a rewarding and manageable activity.

The distribution of pupils across the frustration, instructional, and independent levels highlights the importance of differentiated reading instruction. Pupils at the frustration and instructional levels require targeted interventions to build foundational skills and fluency. For instance, frustration-level readers may benefit from explicit instruction in phonics and decoding strategies, along with exposure to simpler texts. Instructional readers, on the other hand, would benefit from guided reading sessions and the gradual introduction of more complex texts to build their confidence and independence.

Moreover, providing opportunities for peer-supported reading or small group work can help scaffold pupils' abilities, as suggested by research from Parker et al. (2022). For instructional-level readers, interactive reading sessions where peers assist one another can be an effective strategy to improve comprehension and fluency. This collaborative approach can also provide motivation and social engagement, which are crucial for maintaining enthusiasm toward reading.

For independent readers, educators can focus on refining their higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as they engage with more challenging texts. Providing them with opportunities to explore a wider variety of genres and themes can further nurture their love for reading and foster lifelong literacy skills.

While the Grade 4 pupils demonstrate a diverse range of oral reading competencies, the findings underscore the need for personalized and supportive reading instruction. By addressing the specific needs of each group—whether frustration, instructional, or independent—teachers can foster an environment where all pupils can progress toward becoming proficient, confident readers.

Reading Competence in Terms of Silent Reading

The findings on the silent reading competence of Grade 4 pupils reveal distinct patterns in terms of their reading proficiency.
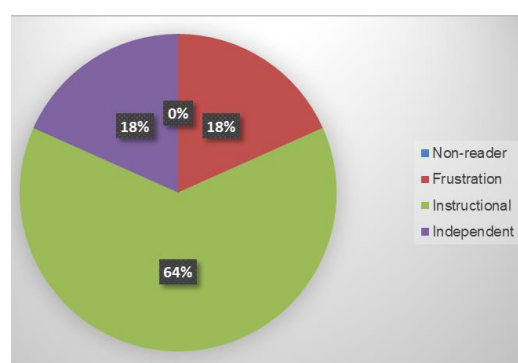
Figure 2. Proportion of Pupils' Reading Competence in Terms of Silent Reading

A significant proportion of pupils, 64%, fall into the instructional level, which means they can read and understand texts with some teacher support but struggle with fluency and comprehension when reading independently. This group is typically transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn, and they need scaffolding and structured guidance to effectively decode words and make meaning from the text. The instructional group, as noted in research by Lustyantie & Aprilia (2020), often benefits from additional support such as guided reading sessions and vocabulary-building exercises that help them develop stronger fluency and comprehension skills.

A smaller percentage of pupils, 18%, were classified as independent readers in silent reading. These pupils are able to read fluently and comprehend texts on their own, demonstrating strong reading skills. Independent readers, who show high

proficiency in decoding and understanding text, are more likely to engage with a wide variety of reading materials, making them better equipped for academic success. This finding aligns with studies by Gediki & Akyolii (2022), which emphasize that independent readers are typically more confident in their reading abilities and can process complex information without much assistance.

However, another 18% of the pupils are classified as frustration-level readers in silent reading. These pupils face significant difficulties with comprehension and decoding, and often require extensive teacher intervention to understand the text. Frustration-level readers struggle to make sense of even simple passages, which can impact their academic progress if not addressed promptly. Early intervention, such as one-on-one reading support and tailored instruction, is essential for these pupils to prevent long-term difficulties in literacy development. Research by Dietrichson et al. (2021) suggests that early identification of struggling readers and providing targeted interventions is crucial in improving their reading skills and overall academic performance.

While the instructional group represents the majority, with 64% of pupils in this category, it is evident that a substantial number of pupils are still in the developmental phase of reading. As such, targeted interventions and evidence-based teaching strategies, such as guided reading sessions, collaborative reading, and vocabulary-building activities, are necessary to bridge the gap between instructional and independent reading levels. Incorporating interactive reading activities, as supported by Lustyantie & Aprilia (2020), can enhance engagement and help pupils gain confidence in their silent reading abilities. Furthermore, fostering an environment where pupils are exposed to a wide range of texts and given opportunities to practice silent reading independently will be key to moving more pupils into the independent reading category.

These findings highlight the need for tailored reading programs that cater to the specific needs of each group, with particular focus on building fluency and comprehension for instructional-level readers and offering intensive support to frustration-level readers. As reading is a fundamental skill that underpins academic achievement, addressing the challenges faced by these learners will be crucial in improving their overall literacy competence.

Relationship Between Reading Attitude and Reading Competence

The results presented in Table 3 show a statistically significant relationship between the reading attitude and reading competence levels of Grade 4 pupils for the school year 2024-2025. The Pearson's r value of 0.48, which is considered a moderate positive correlation, indicates that as the pupils' reading attitudes improve, so does their reading competence. This relationship is statistically significant, with a p-value of less than 0.01, meaning that the likelihood of this result occurring by chance is very low.

Table 3. Correlation between Reading Attitude and Reading Competence

	Reading Competence
Reading Attitude	.48**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The positive correlation suggests that pupils with a more positive reading attitude are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of reading competence. A positive reading attitude can foster motivation, which is a critical factor in the development of reading skills. When pupils feel positively about reading, they are more likely to engage in reading activities both inside and outside of the classroom, leading to greater exposure to texts and an improvement in reading skills. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of reading attitudes in developing reading competence. For instance, a study by Akhmetova (2022) found that pupils with positive attitudes toward reading were more likely to engage in recreational and academic reading, which in turn contributed to improved reading fluency and comprehension. Furthermore, a study by Abid et al. (2023) showed that pupils who expressed a strong interest in reading and

found enjoyment in the activity performed better in reading assessments.

The moderate correlation ($r=$ 0.48) between reading attitude and reading competence indicates a positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that pupils with a more positive reading attitude tend to exhibit higher reading competence, and vice versa. However, the strength of the relationship is moderate, meaning that while there is an observable connection, other factors may also be associated with reading competence. This finding underscores the potential value of fostering a positive reading attitude as part of a broader approach to understanding and supporting reading development.

Given the significant relationship between reading attitude and competence, it is essential for educators to nurture positive attitudes toward reading in their pupils. This can be achieved through various strategies, such as providing engaging and varied reading materials, incorporating interactive and enjoyable reading activities, and creating an environment where pupils feel encouraged and supported in their reading endeavors. Additionally, programs that promote the value of reading for pleasure, alongside academic reading, may help further strengthen both the attitude and competence of pupils.

By focusing on both enhancing pupils' reading attitudes and providing targeted interventions to address reading skills, schools can help develop proficient, confident readers. These efforts should be aligned with the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of emotional and motivational factors in literacy development.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study on the reading attitude and reading competence of Grade 4 pupils reveal a significant connection between pupils' attitudes toward reading and their proficiency in reading tasks. In terms of reading attitude, the results show that the pupils generally exhibit a positive attitude toward recreational reading, with notable enthusiasm for activities like starting new books, receiving books as gifts, and visiting bookstores. Academic reading also received a

positive response, especially for interactive activities like reading stories in class and taking reading tests.

Regarding reading competence, the pupils demonstrated varying levels of proficiency. In oral reading, the majority of pupils were categorized as instructional readers, with a smaller portion at the independent level. Similarly, in silent reading, most pupils were at the instructional level, with only a few classified as independent readers. These findings suggest that while pupils show a positive reading attitude, there is still room for improvement in reading competence, especially in terms of independent reading skills.

A moderate positive correlation was found between reading attitude and reading competence, indicating that pupils with more positive attitudes toward reading tend to perform better in reading tasks. This reinforces the importance of fostering a positive attitude toward reading, as it appears to play a key role in improving reading competence.

Overall, the results highlight the importance of cultivating positive reading attitudes in pupils and providing additional support to strengthen their reading competence, especially for oral and silent reading.

However, this study has certain limitations. The sample size was limited to a specific group of Grade 4 pupils in one geographic location, which may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data for assessing reading attitudes, which might be subject to social desirability bias.

Future research should address these limitations by including a more diverse and representative sample, and employing longitudinal designs to examine changes in reading attitudes and competence over time. Further studies might also investigate the impact of specific interventions, such as targeted reading programs or the integration of digital reading resources, on improving both reading attitude and competence among pupils.

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