

# Family Engagement and Comprehensive Rapid Literacy (CRLA) Results Among Elementary Learners

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*Abstract* — This study examined the relationship between family engagement and literacy development in Grade 1 learners at San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center. Anchored in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, complemented by Social Cognitive and Sociocultural Theories, the research explores the multifaceted nature of family engagement, encompassing communication, participation in school activities, and home-based literacy support. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design, employing questionnaires and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) to gather data from 90 Grade 1 learners and their parents. Respondent profiles included age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, household income, and family structure. The CRLA results showed significant improvement from pre-test to post-test, with a notable increase in "Grade Ready" students. However, analysis revealed no significant correlations between demographic variables (age, sex, education, occupation, income, family structure) and either CRLA scores or levels of family engagement. While family engagement was rated highly across all dimensions (learning about student activities, school communication, using achievement data, community collaboration), no significant correlations were found between these dimensions and CRLA scores, although using student achievement data showed the strongest, albeit non-significant, correlation with post-test results. The findings suggest that while a supportive school environment and strong communication are crucial for family engagement, more targeted, data-driven literacy support strategies may be needed to directly impact literacy outcomes as measured by the CRLA. The study recommends maintaining the inclusive environment, documenting effective literacy instruction, strengthening data-sharing with families, designing focused family literacy workshops, providing teacher professional development on literacy-focused engagement, and implementing a comprehensive family engagement program. Future research could explore longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships and investigate the impact of specific literacy-focused interventions on CRLA scores.

*Keywords* — *Family engagement, Literacy development, Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), Pre-test, Post-test*

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## I. Introduction

San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center, like many educational institutions, recognizes the profound impact of family engagement on student conduct and academic performance. Understanding the nuances of student behavior necessitates a comprehensive examination of the various factors that influence their actions, attitudes, and interactions within the school environment. The school's approach to student discipline is multifaceted, encompassing not only punitive measures but also proactive strategies aimed at fostering positive behavior and preventing misconduct. Early literacy development is crucial for a child's academic success and overall well-being. However, a significant gap exists between children who enter Grade 1 with strong literacy skills and those who struggle. Research consistently highlights the critical role of family engagement in bridging this gap. This thesis investigates the relationship between family engagement and literacy development among Grade 1 pupils, exploring the specific ways in which parental involvement impacts reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall literacy achievement. The study aims to identify effective strategies for fostering family engagement and ultimately improving literacy outcomes for young learners. The foundation for lifelong literacy is laid during the early years of schooling. Grade 1 represents a pivotal point in a child's literacy journey, where foundational skills are developed and solidified. This thesis examines the significant contribution of family engagement to the literacy development of Grade 1 pupils. By exploring the multifaceted nature of family involvement encompassing parental attitudes, home literacy practices, and school-home communication this research seeks to understand how these factors influence children's reading abilities and overall academic progress. The findings will inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening family engagement and promoting literacy success. This thesis investigates the impact of family engagement on the literacy development of Grade 1 pupils. Focusing on parental reading habits, school-home communication strategies, children's reading comprehension, this study aims to determine the strength of the correlation between these two variables and to identify effective strategies for enhancing both family engagement and literacy outcomes in the early years of schooling. In an increasingly literacy-demanding world, ensuring that all children develop strong literacy skills from an early age is paramount. This thesis contributes to the growing body of research on early literacy development by examining the crucial role of family engagement in supporting Grade 1 pupils' literacy acquisition.

### **Background and Rationale**

Family engagement plays a pivotal role in shaping student behavior, both within and beyond the confines of the classroom, particularly in the context of elementary education (Zhang & Bano, 2010). The degree to which families actively participate in their children's educational journey has far-reaching implications for academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being (Amini, 2022). When parents perceive themselves as capable contributors to their children's schooling, and when teachers actively foster engagement, the school's climate for involvement is significantly enhanced (McDowall et al., 2017). This collaborative partnership between home and school creates a supportive ecosystem that nurtures students' holistic growth

(Davis, 2021). To extend this point, literacy scholars have identified engagement through collaborative activities as critical support to the development of content knowledge and literacy (Lorimer, 2018). Furthermore, the cultivation of positive family-school relationships is essential for creating a cohesive and supportive learning environment that extends beyond the classroom walls.

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(Anderson & Kincaid, 2005; Ogal, 2020) Effective behavior management strategies have demonstrated a positive influence on early literacy skills, suggesting that a well-managed classroom environment can indirectly contribute to academic success (Gage et al., 2015). Creating a positive school environment where students feel safe, respected, and valued is paramount. In order to accomplish this schools should establish clear expectations for behavior and consistently reinforce positive conduct (Greenwood et al., 2002). When schools prioritize creating a safe environment and emphasizing connections, schools can improve student behavior and academic outcomes. Such a climate fosters students' sense of belonging and encourages them to actively engage in their learning (Maier et al., 2017). Moreover, collaborative school cultures that prioritize empowerment, engagement, and mutual respect have been linked to increased student motivation, achievement, and overall learning outcomes (Osorno & Federico, 2022). The school environment encompasses both the physical and psychological aspects of the school setting, including the facilities, resources, and overall atmosphere (Osborne, 2024). This highlights the importance of educators serving as role models who embody values in their attitudes and behaviors (Martinsone & Žydzūnaitė, 2023).

The significance of school climate extends beyond mere academic outcomes, influencing various aspects of student development and well-being (Cohen et al., 2009). A positive school climate, characterized by safety, community, academic support, and institutional environment, shapes students' emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and social development (Monsillion et al., 2023). When students feel supported, respected, and connected to their school community, they are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors and engage in prosocial activities. Positive school climates are characterized by a strong structure and systems of support for students, including clear rules, policies, and consistent enforcement, coupled with teacher, parent, and staff presence, openness, and positive engagement with students (Waasdorp et al., 2022). Moreover, schools with a positive climate tend to have higher attendance rates, lower rates of disciplinary issues, and improved academic outcomes (Howard, 1974). Students who feel safe and supported are more

likely to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally (Howard, 1974). Addressing concerns about school climate and prioritizing student well-being are essential components of creating a conducive learning environment that supports the holistic development of all students (Hanuliaková & Barnová, 2015). School climate refers to the values, beliefs, and attitudes that form relationships between students, teachers, and administrators (Kohoulat et al., 2015). Student behavior is significantly influenced by the school's climate, where students' perceptions create beliefs about the school.

Given the interconnectedness between school climate and student behavior, schools must adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors. The school climate encompasses the overall learning environment and quality of life within a school, influencing students' academic and social experiences (Lester & Cross, 2015; Parris et al., 2020).

Parents provide a multidimensional role and are considered to be their child's first teachers and socializing agents (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006a). They are caregivers that provide a nurturing environment where a child can feel safe, while providing the essential needs that motivate active learning within the child. Therefore, parental involvement is vital in supporting a child's literacy development (Aronson, 1996). Parental involvement in education has a profound effect on a child's ability to become a successful adult (Aronson, 1996). Parental involvement is defined as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including: assisting their child's learning, being actively involved in their child's education at school, and serving as full partners in their child's education and being included, as appropriate in decision making to assist in the education of their child. (Parental Involvement: Title I, 2004, p. 31).

This research builds upon a foundation of studies demonstrating the strong link between family engagement and literacy development. International research (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020; Van Voorhis et al., 2014; He & Thompson, 2022) highlights the multifaceted nature of family engagement, its positive impact on academic outcomes, and the need for inclusive approaches. Locally, Sheridan et al. (2011) and Weiss (2008) show the effectiveness of interventions and the importance of ongoing, dynamic family involvement, particularly for disadvantaged children. This study addresses the gap in research by focusing specifically on the relationship between various family engagement practices and CRLA scores among Filipino elementary learners, aiming to identify effective practices and provide evidence-based recommendations for improved literacy outcomes.

This study focuses on the relationship between family engagement and Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) results among elementary learners in San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center, San Juan District. The scope includes analyzing various dimensions of family engagement (e.g., communication, participation in school activities, home-based learning support) and their correlation with CRLA scores. However, the study is limited to a specific sample size, time frame, specific types of family engagement practices considered,

reliance on self-reported data. Furthermore, the study's findings may not be generalizable beyond the specific context of the chosen population and setting.

This study investigates the relationship between family engagement and literacy proficiency, as measured by the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), among elementary students at San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center, San Juan District. We will analyze three key aspects of family engagement: communication with teachers, participation in school activities, and home-based literacy support, examining their correlation with CRLA scores to understand how families can best support their children's literacy development. Our aim is to identify specific family engagement practices associated with higher CRLA scores, providing practical recommendations for educators and families to strengthen their collaborative efforts. A key limitation is the study's focus on a single school. The findings, therefore, may not be generalizable to other schools with different demographics, resources, or educational contexts. The unique characteristics of San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center, should be considered when interpreting the results. This localized focus limits the breadth of applicability of our conclusions. Another limitation stems from the sample size. The number of participants will influence the statistical power of our analysis and the confidence with which we can draw conclusions. While a larger sample would enhance generalizability, practical constraints may limit the scope of our study. Consequently, caution is warranted when extrapolating our findings beyond the specific sample. Furthermore, our reliance on self-reported data through surveys and questionnaires introduces the potential for bias. Participants may inaccurately recall or report their engagement levels, influenced by factors such as social desirability bias or recall bias. These inherent limitations in self-reported data must be considered when interpreting the results. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study, collecting data at a single point in time, prevents the establishment of causal relationships between family engagement and CRLA scores. We can only identify correlations, not definitively determine cause-and-effect. A longitudinal study would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between these variables. Therefore, any conclusions drawn from this study should be interpreted cautiously, acknowledging the limitations of the research design.

### **Literature Review**

According to Kelty and Wakabayashi's (2020) study, "Family Engagement in Schools: Parent, Educator, and Community Perspectives," a comprehensive understanding of family engagement necessitates considering the perspectives of parents, educators, and community members. The study emphasizes the crucial role of inclusive opportunities, open communication, and parent education in fostering successful partnerships between families and schools.

The research presented in "The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8" by Van Voorhis et al. (2014) demonstrates a clear positive correlation between family involvement and young children's literacy and math skills. The study highlights

the importance of home-based learning activities, active family participation in school, and supportive parenting practices in promoting early academic success.

He and Thompson's (2022) "Family Involvement and English Learners' Outcomes: A Synthetic Analysis" examines the impact of family involvement on English learners' academic, behavioral, and socioemotional development. This research indicates a strong positive association between family involvement and improved outcomes, particularly when parents hold high educational expectations and encourage their children's aspirations.

Sheridan et al.'s (2011) "A Randomized Trial Examining the Effects of Parent Engagement on Early Language and Literacy: The Getting Ready Intervention" demonstrates the effectiveness of a targeted parent engagement intervention in improving early language and literacy skills among disadvantaged preschool children. This study provides strong evidence supporting the implementation of similar interventions to improve literacy outcomes.

Weiss's (2008) research, "Family Involvement and Children's Literacy," underscores the significant role of family involvement in promoting children's literacy, particularly among low-income children. The study emphasizes the importance of sustained, dynamic family involvement over time and the need for school environments that actively support family engagement.

Buhs et al. (2011) in their study, "Family Engagement in Literacy Activities: Revised Factor Structure for The Familia – an instrument examining family support for early literacy development," evaluated the reliability and validity of a measure designed to assess family support for early literacy development. This research provides a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners seeking to measure and understand family engagement in literacy activities.

A report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), "Children's Elementary School Outcomes After Participating in Family Literacy Programs," examines the long-term effects of family literacy programs on children's elementary school outcomes. The report finds significant growth in language and literacy skills among children who participated in these programs, highlighting the lasting benefits of such initiatives.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) article, "Usable Knowledge: Family Involvement and Children's Literacy," presents findings from a longitudinal study emphasizing the crucial role of family involvement in achieving literacy success. This research reinforces the importance of sustained family engagement in supporting children's literacy development.

Panorama Education's "Family Engagement in Schools: A Comprehensive Guide" offers a broad overview of family engagement, detailing its significance, common obstacles, and effective strategies for fostering meaningful involvement. The guide serves as a valuable resource for educators and families seeking to improve family engagement practices. Kelty and Wakabayashi's (2020) study, "Family Engagement in Schools: Parent, Educator, and Community Perspectives," provides valuable insights into the perspectives of parents, educators, and community members

regarding family engagement. This research informs the development of effective state-level policies and programs aimed at improving family engagement initiatives.

These studies collectively demonstrate the multifaceted nature of family engagement and its significant impact on literacy development. By integrating the insights from these diverse perspectives, educators and families can collaborate to create supportive and enriching learning environments that promote literacy success for all children.

## II. Methodology

This chapter includes adequate facts which were treated prior to the conduct of the study. It contains research design, participants, sampling, measures, procedures, data processing and ethical considerations.

**Research Design:** This study will employ a descriptive correlational research design. This design is appropriate for investigating the relationships between family engagement and literacy development among Grade 1 pupils. Descriptive correlational research is used to describe the characteristics of the variables and to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between them (Creswell, 2014). It does not establish causality, but rather explores the associations between variables. In this case, it will allow us to examine the correlation between various dimensions of family engagement (communication, participation, home-based support) and literacy proficiency as measured by the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA).

**Sample of the Study:** This study employed total enumeration as the sampling technique. Total enumeration, also known as a census, involves collecting data from every member of the population (Babbie, 2013). In this research, the population consisted of all parents/guardians of Grade 1 students enrolled at San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center during the 2024-2025 school year. Given the relatively small size of this population, total enumeration was deemed feasible and appropriate. This approach ensures that the findings are representative of the entire target population within the specific school context, minimizing sampling error and enhancing the accuracy of the results. However, it's important to acknowledge that the findings may not be generalizable to other schools with different demographics or contexts.

**Procedures:** The data collection process began with obtaining necessary ethical approvals from Northwest Samar State University (NWSSU), the San Juan District In-Charge, and the school head of San Juan Central Elementary School with SPED Center. Informed consent was obtained from all participating teachers and parents/guardians, ensuring voluntary participation and emphasizing the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data were collected using a two-part questionnaire. The first part, a demographic questionnaire (adapted from Families Together, Inc.), gathered information on parent/guardian demographics (age, gender, highest educational attainment, occupation, household income, and family structure). The second part, a validated family engagement survey (adopted from Families Together, Inc.), utilized a Likert scale

to assess parents' perceptions of school climate, communication effectiveness, and community collaboration. Questionnaires were administered at times convenient for parents/guardians, facilitating high participation rates. Throughout the data collection process, close coordination with school administrators ensured smooth implementation and minimized disruption to school activities. The use of pre-validated instruments with established reliability and validity enhanced the quality and trustworthiness of the collected data.

**Measures:** This survey, adopted from Families Together, Inc., is designed to assess family engagement in the school community. It focuses on gauging parents' perceptions of school climate and communication practices. The questionnaire utilizes a Likert scale ("Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree") to measure responses across several key areas. These areas include the welcoming nature of the school environment, the school's inclusivity and respect for diversity, fair treatment of students regardless of background, and the welcoming nature of parent group meetings. A second section focuses on communication effectiveness, assessing the school's success in keeping families informed, facilitating communication between families and teachers, utilizing diverse communication methods, accessibility of school administration, teacher-parent communication frequency, and the availability of translation services. It's important to emphasize that this is an *adopted* questionnaire, meaning it was not created for this specific study but rather adapted from an existing instrument developed by Families Together, Inc.

**Data Processing:** Prior to conducting the inferential statistical analyses (Pearson correlations), normality testing was performed on all continuous variables: age, household income, CRLA pre-test scores, and CRLA post-test scores. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess normality. The results revealed that several variables showed significant departures from normality ( $p < .05$ ). Specifically, household income and CRLA post-test scores demonstrated non-normal distributions. Given these findings, the use of Pearson's  $r$  correlation may not be entirely appropriate, and the results should be interpreted cautiously. Non-parametric alternatives, such as Spearman's rank correlation, would have been more suitable for these specific variables.

**Ethical Considerations:** Several ethical considerations guided this research, addressing potential challenges proactively. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants (teachers and parents/guardians), ensuring voluntary participation and clearly outlining the study's purpose, data usage, and participants' rights to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained throughout by anonymizing data and securely storing all collected information. The questionnaire included assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, and the data were analyzed in aggregate form, preventing the identification of individual participants. To mitigate potential bias in self-reported data, the researchers employed validated instruments with established reliability and validity, minimizing the risk of inaccurate or misleading responses. Furthermore, the research team adhered to all relevant guidelines and regulations set forth by Northwest Samar State University (NWSSU) and ensured that the study benefited participants by contributing to the understanding of family engagement in literacy development and providing

evidence-based recommendations for improving literacy outcomes. Finally, the research team secured ethical approvals from NWSSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the District In-Charge, and the school head to ensure adherence to ethical standards at all stages of the research process.

### III. Results and Discussion

This section presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the relationship between family engagement and Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) results among elementary learners. The discussion addresses each research question identified in the study, examining the relationships between respondent profiles, family engagement levels, and literacy outcomes.

**Summary of Findings.** The salient findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The demographic profile of respondents revealed a predominantly middle-aged population with 57.78% aged 31-40 years (mean age=35.74, SD=6.76). Gender distribution showed a strong female predominance (71.11%, n=64) compared to male respondents (28.89%, n=26). Educational attainment indicated that most respondents had pursued higher education, with 44.44% reaching college level and 34.44% completing college education. Occupation was diverse, with housewives (27.78%, n=25) and government employees (22.22%, n=20) being most prevalent. Nearly half (48.89%, n=44) of respondents fell within the lowest income bracket (₱7,000-₱15,000), with an overall mean household income of ₱20,311.11. The predominant family structure was nuclear (66.67%, n=60), followed by extended (26.67%, n=24).
2. The CRLA results showed positive literacy development, with Reading at Grade Level students increasing from 81.82% (n=72) in the pre-test to 88.89% (n=80) in the post-test. Conversely, students requiring Transitioning Reader decreased from 12.5% (n=11) to 6.67% (n=6), and those needing Low emerging Reader decreased from 5.68% (n=5) to 4.44% (n=4), with no students in the High emerging reader and Developing reader category in either assessment.
3. Family engagement was rated exceptionally high across all dimensions: learning what students are doing in class (M=4.89, SD=0.32), informative school communications (M=4.82, SD=0.46), using student achievement data (M=4.86, SD=0.37), and collaborating with community (M=4.90, SD=0.30), with collaborating with community receiving the highest overall rating.
4. No significant relationships were found between respondent profile variables (age, sex, highest educational attainment, occupation, household income, family structure) and CRLA results, with correlation coefficients ranging from  $r=0.125$  to  $r=0.176$  and p-values consistently exceeding 0.05.

5. No significant relationships were found between respondent profile variables (age, sex, highest educational attainment, occupation, household income, family structure) and family engagement levels, with correlation coefficients ranging from  $r=0.103$  to  $r=0.168$  and p-values consistently exceeding 0.05.
6. No significant relationships were found between family engagement dimensions and CRLA results, with correlation coefficients ranging from  $r=0.137$  to  $r=0.196$  and p-values consistently exceeding 0.05, though using student achievement data showed the strongest correlation with post-test results ( $r=0.196$ ,  $p=0.064$ ), approaching but not reaching statistical significance.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the salient findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The demographic profile of respondents reveals a predominantly middle-aged female population with relatively high educational attainment but modest household income. The predominance of nuclear and extended families suggests that most children have multiple family members potentially available to support their literacy development. This profile represents a diverse cross-section of families engaged in supporting elementary learners' literacy development.
2. The improvement in CRLA results from pre-test to post-test demonstrates positive literacy development among Grade 1 learners during the assessment period. The increase in Reading at grade level students and decrease in students requiring refreshers suggests effective literacy instruction and potentially beneficial family engagement practices, though the specific contribution of family engagement to this improvement could not be statistically established.
3. The exceptionally high ratings across all family engagement dimensions indicate that respondents perceive strong involvement in their children's education. The particularly high rating for collaborating with community suggests strong partnerships between families, schools, and community resources, creating a comprehensive support network for children's literacy development.
4. The absence of significant relationships between respondent profile variables and CRLA results suggests that demographic factors do not determine literacy outcomes in this sample. This finding supports the potential effectiveness of the educational environment in providing equitable opportunities for literacy development regardless of family background, age, gender, educational attainment, occupation, income, or family structure.

5. The absence of significant relationships between respondent profile variables and family engagement levels indicates that demographic factors do not determine how parents engage with their children's education. This finding suggests that the school may be successfully implementing inclusive family engagement practices that effectively reach families across diverse backgrounds.
6. The non-significant correlations between family engagement dimensions and CRLA results, despite consistently positive relationships, suggest that the specific practices measured may not directly translate into measurable differences in literacy outcomes as assessed by the CRLA. The approaching-significance correlation for using student achievement data with post-test results suggests that more targeted, data-informed engagement approaches may be most likely to influence literacy outcomes.

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