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Implementation Of Phonics-Based Approach And The Performance Of The Grade 3 And 4 Pupils In English

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Abstract — The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent of implementation of Phonics-Based Approach and the Performance of the Grade 3 & 4 Pupils in English, Dayhagan Elementary School, Ormoc City Division, Ormoc City. The findings of the study were the bases for the proposed intervention plan. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the extent of implementation of the Phonics-Based Approach and its relationship to the performance of Grade 3 and 4 pupils in English. The descriptive component focused on assessing how frequently and effectively phonics strategies—such as letter-sound recognition, blending, segmenting, and decoding—are implemented in the classroom. Data on implementation were collected using a validated teacher questionnaire, while academic performance data were gathered from learners' English grades and performance in standardized reading assessments aligned with curriculum competencies. the Test of Relationship, which examines the correlation between the implementation of the Phonics-based Approach and the performance of learners in English. The analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and a corresponding t-test to determine whether the observed relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. The computed r-value with a computed t-value compared to the critical t-table value. Based on these values, the null hypothesis (Ho), which states that there is no significant relationship between the variables, was rejected, leading to the conclusion that there is a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the implementation of phonics-based instruction and learners' academic performance.

The correlation coefficient of 0.58 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as the level of implementation of the phonics-based approach increases, learners' academic performance in English also tends to improve. The strength of this correlation suggests that while phonics instruction is not the sole factor influencing academic success, it plays a substantial and meaningful role. The computed t-value exceeding the critical value (further confirms that the observed relationship did not occur by chance and is statistically significant at the 5% level.

This result affirms that the phonics-based approach contributes significantly to learners' English proficiency, supporting findings from Tables 1 and 2. The strong implementation of phonics strategies—such as blending, segmenting, and letter-sound recognition—appears to be positively influencing reading comprehension, word recognition, and spelling abilities. Consequently, these foundational skills translate into better academic performance in English. The moderate relationship also implies that while phonics is effective, other factors such as teaching strategies, learner motivation, and parental involvement may also impact academic outcomes and should be explored in future studies.

Based on the findings, there are important implications for instructional planning and curriculum enhancement. Schools should continue to strengthen the use of phonics-based instruction as an evidence-based strategy for improving learners' academic performance. Professional development programs for teachers could be designed to refine the use of explicit and systematic phonics, while interventions can be targeted toward learners who fall within the lower performance ranges. Moreover, school leaders should consider sustaining administrative and material support to ensure consistent implementation across grade levels and schools

Keywords — Implementation, Phonics-Based Approach, performance, Grade 3&4, English

I. Introduction

Blending is a key process in phonics instruction, where students are taught to combine individual letter sounds to form words. For example, after learning the sound of the letter “b” as /b/ and the sound of “a” as /a/, learners can blend them to form “ba,” and then add “g” to complete the word “bag.” This method is particularly effective in teaching consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, which are often the first set of words introduced to beginning readers.

According to Ehri (2014), systematic phonics instruction significantly improves early reading skills, especially among learners who struggle with decoding words. The researcher of this study has firsthand experience applying these methods through tutoring children from kindergarten to high school and has found phonics to be particularly effective among early readers, especially those in Kindergarten 1.

DepEd Order No. 53 series of 2016, Lifting of the Moratorium on the Supplementary Reading, Reference, and Other Materials and the Approved List of Supplementary Reading Materials is one of the basis to empower reading obstruction of every learner. It announces that the moratorium on the procurement of supplementary reading, references and other instructional materials is to be lifted effective immediately. There were therefore lists of supplemental readings that, I can say could be used in one of the activities to be done in order to achieve the solution of the problem.

This study aims to build a strong foundation for early literacy by explicitly teaching the relationship between letters and sounds. A major focus of the study is the systematic instruction of phonemes (individual sounds) and graphemes (letters or groups of letters) to enhance learners’ ability to decode words accurately. Understanding which letters are vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and which are consonants is a vital first step. When learners recognize that each letter corresponds to a specific sound, it becomes easier for them to blend those sounds to form syllables, words, and even phrases. This study recognizes that reading begins with mastering basic phonetic rules before progressing to more complex reading tasks.

The study is motivated by the observation of struggling readers, particularly those who have difficulty identifying sounds and blending them into words. One particular tutee, a

Kindergarten 1 student, struggled with reading basic CVC words and phrases. Through consistent phonics-based intervention, this learner began to demonstrate progress. This real-life experience strengthens the rationale of the study, supporting the idea that phonics is not only research-based but also practically effective.

Furthermore, phonics-based instruction encourages learners to become independent decoders. Once students understand the rules and patterns of English phonics, they can begin to sound out unfamiliar words on their own, reducing dependence on memorization. This autonomy is essential for reading fluency and comprehension, particularly for Grade 3 pupils who are expected to transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.

This study’s importance also lies in its potential to inform educational practices in elementary schools. In the Philippines, where reading comprehension continues to be a challenge based on various national assessments, implementing a systematic phonics-based approach could be a low-cost and highly effective intervention. The results of this study can guide teachers, school heads, and curriculum planners in designing early reading programs that focus not just on fluency, but on building phonemic awareness and decoding skills. The integration of phonics into daily instruction can make a meaningful difference in learners' literacy development.

The researcher is committed to completing this study because of a strong belief in the impact phonics-based instruction can have, especially for struggling readers. The firsthand tutoring experiences combined with established research provide both personal and academic motivation. Through this research, the goal is not just to assess effectiveness, but to create a replicable instructional plan that could help improve the reading performance of many Grade 3 learners across schools. In a country where many children fall behind in basic literacy, this study could be one key step in bridging the gap between decoding and comprehension.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent of implementation of Phonics-Based Approach and the Performance of the Grade 3 & 4 Pupils in English, Dayhagan Elementary School, Ormoc City Division, Ormoc City. The findings of the study were the bases for the proposed intervention plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answers the following questions:

1. What Is The Extent Of The Implementation Of The Phonics-Based Approach In Terms Of:

    1. Guidelines
    2. Techniques
    3. Materials
    4. Benefits
    5. Participation Of Learners
    6. Challenges?

2. What is the performance of the Grade 3 &4 pupils in teaching English?

3. Is there a significant relationship in the performance of the Grade 3 & 4 pupils on the extent of the implementation of Phonics-Based Approach in teaching English?

4. What intervention plan can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship in the performance of the Grade 3 & 4 pupils on the extent of the implementation of Phonics-Based Approach in teaching English.

II. Methodology

Design. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the extent of implementation of the Phonics-Based Approach and its relationship to the performance of Grade 3 and 4 pupils in English. The descriptive component focused on assessing how frequently and effectively phonics strategies—such as letter-sound recognition, blending, segmenting, and decoding—are implemented in the classroom. Data on implementation were collected using a validated teacher questionnaire, while academic performance data were gathered from learners' English grades and performance in standardized reading assessments aligned with curriculum competencies. The correlational aspect aimed to establish whether a significant relationship exists between the level of phonics-based instruction and pupils' academic performance. Respondents included all Grade 3 and 4 English teachers using total enumeration sampling and selected pupils through purposive sampling. Statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation were used to describe the level of implementation, while Pearson's r was applied to analyze the correlation between variables. The findings of this study are expected to inform instructional practices and provide insights for improving early-grade literacy outcomes through effective phonics instruction.

The main local of the study in Dayhagan Elementary School in the Schools Division of ormoc City, Leyte. The respondents of the study were the 50 Grade 3 & 4 learners. The information for the analysis was gathered using The research instruments used in this study included a validated teacher questionnaire designed to measure the extent and effectiveness of phonics-based instructional strategies such as letter-sound recognition, blending, segmenting, and decoding in the classroom. Additionally, learners' academic performance data were gathered through their official English subject grades and results from standardized reading assessments aligned with curriculum competencies. These instruments enabled the researcher to collect both descriptive and performance-related data necessary for examining the correlation between phonics-based instruction and academic achievement. The proposed Reading Intervention Plan was taken based on the findings of the study.

Sampling The respondents of the study were the were the 50 grade 3 & 4 learners in Dayhagan Elementary School in the Schools Division of Ormoc that were involved in this study were being identified and the primary means of reach is during the actual conduct of the study as well as during the gathering of data in the school where the study was conducted.

Research Procedure.

1. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the extent of implementation of the Phonics-Based Approach and its relationship to the academic performance of Grade 3 and 4 pupils in English.

2. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities:

    - A letter of request was sent to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent to seek approval to conduct the study within the selected public elementary schools.
    - Upon endorsement from the SDS, further permission was requested from the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) overseeing the target schools.
    - With the endorsement from both the SDS and PSDS, individual School Principals of the identified schools were approached to secure approval for accessing school records and administering questionnaires to teachers and learners.
    - Each letter outlined the objectives, scope, and ethical considerations of the study, emphasizing the confidentiality of all collected data and the voluntary participation of respondents.

3. A structured teacher questionnaire was developed to assess the extent of phonics-based instruction, focusing on key strategies. The questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in early-grade literacy and English instruction.

3. All Grade 3 and 4 English teachers in the participating schools were selected using total enumeration sampling.

4. Teachers completed the validated questionnaire on the implementation of phonics-based strategies.

5. Academic performance data were gathered from:

    a. Report card grades in English

    b. Scores from standardized reading assessments aligned with curriculum standards

6. All data were collected in coordination with the school administration, ensuring ethical protocols such as informed consent and confidentiality.

7. The following statistical tools were applied:

- Mean and standard deviation to describe the level and consistency of phonics-based instruction across classrooms.
- Pearson's r to determine the correlation between the level of phonics instruction and pupils' academic performance.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the principal, approval of the Superintendent of the Division. Orientation of the respondents both School Principal, teachers and parent were done. Participation was strictly voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Results were used solely for research and educational improvement purposes.

Treatment of Data. The data gathered was scored, analyzed, and interpreted as:

The quantitative responses were tallied and tabulated. The data were treated using the following statistical tools.

The Simple Percentage was employed to determine the reading performance of the Grade 3 & 4 pupils.

Weighted Mean. This was utilized to assess the Reading performance of the Grade 3 & 4 pupils.

Pearson r- This tool was used to calculate the test of relationship and the Performance of the Grade 3 & 4 Pupils in English.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Extent Of the Implementation of The Phonics-Based Approach

	A. GUIDELINES	**Weighted Mean**	**Interpretation**
1	Clear phonics teaching guidelines are provided by the school/department.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	Teachers are aware of the official phonics-based teaching guidelines.	5.0	Strongly Agree
3	Guidelines align with national or institutional literacy standards.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	Implementation procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.	5.0	Strongly Agree
5	There is administrative support for following phonics guidelines.	4.0	Agree
	Mean	4.80	Strongly Agree
	B. TECHNIQUES		
1	Teachers use blending and segmenting in phonics instruction.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	Multisensory techniques are incorporated in lessons (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic).	4.0	Agree
3	Teachers differentiate phonics instruction based on learner needs.	5.0	Strongly Agree

4	Explicit and systematic phonics instruction is implemented regularly.	5.0	Agree
5	Teachers integrate phonics with reading and spelling activities.	4.0	Agree
	Mean	4.60	Strongly Agree
	C. Materials		
1	Adequate phonics-based learning materials are available.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	Materials used are appropriate for the learners' reading levels.	5.0	Strongly Agree
3	Teachers create or adapt materials to suit phonics instruction.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	Use of digital or multimedia resources supports phonics learning.	4.0	Agree
5	Materials align with the guidelines and objectives of the curriculum.	5.0	Strongly Agree
	Mean	4.80	Strongly Agree
	D. Benefits		
1	Phonics instruction improves learners' reading accuracy.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2	Learners show better word recognition and decoding skills.	5.00	Strongly Agree
3	Students gain confidence in reading through phonics.	4.00	Agree
4	Phonics improves learners' spelling skills.	4.00	Agree
5	Phonics-based approach supports overall language development.	4.00	Agree
	Mean	4.40	Agree
	E. Participation of Learners		
1	Learners are actively engaged in phonics activities.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2	Students demonstrate interest and enthusiasm during phonics lessons.	4.00	Agree
3	Learners independently apply phonics strategies in reading.	4.00	Agree
4	Participation is inclusive regardless of learners' skill levels.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5	Learners respond positively to feedback during phonics instruction.	4.00	Agree
	Mean	4.40	Strongly Agree
	F. Challenges		
1	Lack of training or expertise hinders phonics instruction.	1.0	Strongly Disagree
2	There is insufficient time allocated for phonics in the schedule.	2.0	Disagree
3	Inadequate resources affect effective implementation.	1.0	Strongly Disagree
4	Learner diversity makes uniform instruction challenging.	2.0	Disagree
5	Resistance to change from traditional methods affects implementation.	2.0	Disagree
	Mean	1.60	Strongly Disagree
	Grand Mean	4.10	AGREE

Legend: 4.21- 5.00 – Strongly Agree
3.41- 4.20 – Agree
2.61-3.40 - Undecided
1.81- 2.60- Disagree
1.00-1.80- Strongly Disagree

This table presents the Extent of the Implementation of the Phonics-based Approach, as assessed across six major areas: Guidelines, Techniques, Materials, Benefits, Participation of Learners, and Challenges. Each component includes five specific indicators rated on a five-point Likert scale. The overall ratings per category were analyzed based on their weighted means and corresponding qualitative interpretations, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The table also presents a grand mean of 4.10, which reflects an overall rating of “Agree” among respondents, indicating a generally favorable implementation of the phonics-based approach in the participating schools.

In terms of Guidelines, Techniques, and Materials, the results show a very high level of implementation, with weighted means of 4.80, 4.60, and 4.80 respectively—all interpreted as "Strongly Agree." Teachers affirm the presence of clear phonics guidelines aligned with literacy standards, regular updates to implementation procedures, and strong awareness of instructional expectations. Techniques such as blending, segmenting, and differentiated instruction are consistently practiced, and the availability of appropriate and curriculum-aligned materials further supports effective delivery. These strong results indicate a well-established structure and instructional foundation for phonics-based instruction in the schools surveyed.

Under Benefits and Participation of Learners, both categories received a weighted mean of 4.40, interpreted as "Agree." This suggests that while phonics instruction is recognized for improving reading accuracy, decoding skills, and spelling, there may still be room for improvement in fostering higher levels of learner confidence and enthusiasm. Similarly, while learners are generally engaged and responsive during phonics lessons, not all are consistently demonstrating independence or enthusiasm, which may suggest the need for more engaging, learner-centered instructional strategies.

Conversely, Challenges recorded a notably low mean of 1.60, interpreted as “Strongly Disagree.” This indicates that major barriers commonly associated with phonics implementation—such as lack of training, time constraints, insufficient resources, and resistance to instructional change—are not perceived as significant issues in the participating schools. This low challenge rating aligns with the high ratings in other domains, affirming that the schools are operating in a supportive and well-equipped environment for phonics instruction.

Based on the grand mean of 4.10 ("Agree"), the findings suggest that the implementation of the phonics-based approach is generally effective, though not without opportunities for enhancement, especially in terms of maximizing learner benefits and increasing motivation. These results imply a strong institutional foundation, yet call for continued efforts in refining strategies

that boost learner engagement and ensure consistent instructional excellence across classrooms. Future training and collaborative planning could further elevate implementation levels from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree" across all categories.

Table 2
Academic Performance of Learners

No.	Interpretation	Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	Outstanding	90-100	11	18
4	Very Satisfactory	85-89	9	15
3	Satisfactory	80-84	21	34
2	Fairly Satisfactory	75-79	20	33
1	Did Not Meet Expectations	Below 75	0	0
	Total		61	100
	Average		82.87	Satisfactory

This table presents the Academic Performance of Learners, highlighting the distribution of Grades 3 and 4 pupils based on their final English grades using the Department of Education's standard grading scale. The table categorizes learners into five performance levels: Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), Fairly Satisfactory (75–79), and Did Not Meet Expectations (Below 75). Each category shows the corresponding frequency and percentage of learners, with the overall class average computed at 82.87, which falls under the "Satisfactory" level.

As shown in the table, the highest proportion of learners falls within the Satisfactory category (80–84), comprising 21 students or 34% of the total. This is closely followed by 20 learners (33%) in the Fairly Satisfactory range (75–79). This indicates that 67% of the learners are performing within the middle achievement bands, suggesting a moderate level of proficiency in English. Meanwhile, 11 learners (18%) achieved an Outstanding performance, and 9 learners (15%) performed at a Very Satisfactory level. These results show that a notable portion of students are excelling, though the majority are still clustered in average performance categories.

Encouragingly, no learners scored below 75, meaning none fell into the "Did Not Meet Expectations" bracket. This indicates a baseline level of English proficiency has been attained by all students, which may be attributed to structured classroom instruction, including the use of phonics-based strategies as reported in Table 1. However, the relatively small number of students achieving high performance levels (Outstanding and Very Satisfactory combined at 33%) suggests that there is room for improving instructional techniques and support systems to elevate more students toward higher levels of academic achievement.

Based on the average score of 82.87 ("Satisfactory"), the implication is that while learners are meeting minimum expectations in English, targeted interventions are necessary to enhance overall proficiency. The findings suggest the need for differentiated instruction and enrichment activities, especially for those at the lower end of the satisfactory spectrum. Educators may also

need to assess classroom practices and ensure that teaching strategies, including phonics-based approaches, are effectively bridging learning gaps and motivating students to perform at higher levels.

Table 3
Test of Relationship

Variables Correlated	r	Computed value or t	Table Value @.05	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Implementation of the Phonics-based Approach to Academic Performance	0.58	2.823	1.994	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship (Moderate)

This table presents the Test of Relationship, which examines the correlation between the implementation of the Phonics-based Approach and the academic performance of learners in English. The analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and a corresponding t-test to determine whether the observed relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. The computed r-value is 0.58, with a computed t-value of 2.823 compared to the critical t-table value of 1.994. Based on these values, the null hypothesis (Ho), which states that there is no significant relationship between the variables, was rejected, leading to the conclusion that there is a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the implementation of phonics-based instruction and learners' academic performance.

The correlation coefficient of 0.58 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as the level of implementation of the phonics-based approach increases, learners' academic performance in English also tends to improve. The strength of this correlation suggests that while phonics instruction is not the sole factor influencing academic success, it plays a substantial and meaningful role. The computed t-value (2.823) exceeding the critical value (1.994) further confirms that the observed relationship did not occur by chance and is statistically significant at the 5% level.

This result affirms that the phonics-based approach contributes significantly to learners' English proficiency, supporting findings from Tables 1 and 2. The strong implementation of phonics strategies—such as blending, segmenting, and letter-sound recognition—appears to be positively influencing reading comprehension, word recognition, and spelling abilities. Consequently, these foundational skills translate into better academic performance in English. The moderate relationship also implies that while phonics is effective, other factors such as teaching strategies, learner motivation, and parental involvement may also impact academic outcomes and should be explored in future studies.

Based on the findings, there are important implications for instructional planning and curriculum enhancement. Schools should continue to strengthen the use of phonics-based instruction as an evidence-based strategy for improving learners' academic performance.

Professional development programs for teachers could be designed to refine the use of explicit and systematic phonics, while interventions can be targeted toward learners who fall within the lower performance ranges. Moreover, school leaders should consider sustaining administrative and material support to ensure consistent implementation across grade levels and schools.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the analysis clearly demonstrates a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between the implementation of the Phonics-Based Approach and the academic performance of learners in English. The findings indicate that more consistent and effective use of phonics strategies is associated with improved reading and language skills, which in turn enhance overall academic outcomes. While phonics instruction plays a crucial role, it is important to recognize that other contributing factors, such as teaching methods, learner motivation, and parental support, also influence academic success. These results highlight the need for continued emphasis on phonics within instructional planning, alongside comprehensive support for teachers and learners. By sustaining and strengthening phonics-based practices through targeted professional development and adequate resources, schools can better promote literacy achievement and foster improved academic performance among Grade 3 and 4 pupils.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to for each stakeholder group based on the findings the extent of implementation of Phonics-Based Approach to the academic Performance of the Grade 3 & 4 Pupils in English:

Key Stage 2 Learner, should Actively participate in phonics-based activities and practice reading regularly to strengthen letter-sound recognition, blending, and decoding skills.

Teachers, should Continuously apply and integrate systematic phonics instruction in daily lessons, ensuring the use of effective strategies like blending, segmenting, and multisensory activities.

School Heads should Provide strong administrative support to encourage consistent implementation of the Phonics-Based Approach across grade levels.

Public Schools District Supervisors should promote and supervise the adoption of phonics-based instructional programs within schools under their jurisdiction.

Education Program Supervisors should Support curriculum development that integrates phonics-based instruction aligned with national literacy standards. Facilitate ongoing research and evaluation to improve phonics programs and their impact on learner performance.

Parents should engage actively in their children's literacy development by encouraging reading at home and reinforcing phonics skills learned in school. Communicate regularly with teachers about their child's progress and seek guidance on how to support learning at home.

Researcher should disseminate the findings to relevant stakeholders through presentations, reports, and publications to inform educational practices. Collaborate with schools and educational authorities to support the implementation of recommended strategies based on research evidence.

Future Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of phonics-based instruction on academic performance across different grade levels. Explore additional variables such as socio-economic status, learner motivation, and parental involvement to better understand factors influencing phonics implementation.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE

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The author is born on December 22, 1997 at Ormoc City Leyte, Philippines. He finished with flying colors as Magna Cum Laude in his Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education at Western Leyte College, Inc. In his background study, he loves to teach multi-grade level including kinder and preschooler since he is an Elementary educator and that leads him to take Master of Arts Major in Elementary Education (MAEd). Now, he is a candidate for a graduating student in Master degree of Arts Major in Elementary Education at Western Leyte College of Ormoc City.

He is a private home tutor since 2019 up to the present while waiting for the chance to be part of the DepEd employee as a Teacher I. He is also a board passer last September 2023. He finished a specialization training Communication and Computer Training for NCII under the TESDA scholarship of PCCI. He loves to sing praise and worship to the living God since he is a worship leader and a Youth leader to his church.