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Turning HS Non-Decoders to Basic Decoders Through Sound City's Exploring Sounds in Words: A Basis in Crafting an Intervention Plan for Reading

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the efficacy of Sound City's Exploring Sounds in Words, a systematic phonics program, in changing high school non-decoders into minimal decoders. The study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design and had ten Grade 7 students from two public high schools in Nueva Ecija as participants who were labeled as non-decoders based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Participants received a four-week intervention through the use of Sound City Reading materials, and they were assessed before and after intervention on alphabet knowledge, letter-sound relation, and simple word form decoding. The findings indicated minimal change in written letter-sound identification but statistically significant improvements in oral reading proficiency in letter sounds, letter pairs, and simple sight words. Socio-demographic information showed that low parental literacy and inadequate home reading support explained the reading struggles of the participants. The research concluded that Sound City Reading is a good tool for improving decoding skills in older struggling readers and suggested its wider application as a formal intervention strategy in primary education. The results underscore the necessity of phonics-based teaching, enhanced teacher training, and increased parental engagement to tackle entrenched learning gaps in literacy.

Keywords: decoding, phonics, reading intervention, non-decoders, Sound City Reading, literacy, secondary education, phonological awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Rationale

Reading is the process of recognition or interpretation of written materials and deals with the language form Stricklin (2011). Reading is making the mind to be more active to be able to learn new strategies, gain new skills, and enhance comprehension. It is one of the macro skills that allows an individual to comprehend and produce spoken language for proper and effective interpersonal communication. Reading is related to academic performance throughout the school years. Thus, acquiring this skill early on is important. Curricula in all countries specify that students should learn reading in grades 1-2, (EFA FTI Secretariat, 2011).

Reading offers a constructive approach to improving one's vocabulary and language skills as it is a process of way of thinking and a kind of communication that requires a wide range of complex abilities. In an article from World Bank (2024) the most important skill for a beginner reader is the ability to understand spoken language: and the ability to map printed words onto spoken language reading specialists call this ability "decoding".

Decoding is the ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences; also, the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out (Foorman et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is an early reading skill that requires the readers to associate the letters with their sounds, blending them together to read the word. According to Sedeinberg (2017), all readers of an alphabetic language such as English use phonics knowledge and decoding skills to read words. As early as preschool, learners are

taught on how to decode letters and their sounds, a skill that is lifelong.

According to the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics might be effective for older students who lack the prerequisite skills for reading fluently. Furthermore, research also suggests that when the instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics is explicit, systematic, and includes instruction in reading fluency and automaticity, older students can benefit from it (NICHD, 2000).

However, there are a considerable number of high school students who are non-decoders. According to a study made by the World Bank in 2024, over 6000 scores from more than 300 reading assessments in 122 languages from 62 low-middle income countries including the Philippines are not able to decode printed words.

In the Philippines, the learning poverty is 56.4 percentage points higher than the average for the East Asia and Pacific Region. Learning poverty means being unable to read and nor understand even a short passage which is age-appropriate text by age 10. They may know a word if they hear it, but they cannot quickly and easily recognize that same word on the page and then turn it into "spoken language in their heads." They fail because they have not gotten enough instruction and practice in mapping letters to sounds and sounds to letters.

Decoding is a foundation skill in reading, it is crucial in reading comprehension, fluency and overall literacy. Students who are non-decoders face challenges in this phonological process and also struggle academically across other subjects, as reading comprehension is

required for success in various disciplines (Snowling & Hulme, 2012).

Furthermore, despite the growing importance of reading in the Philippines, the reading performance results from the assessment conducted by PISA in 2018 suggested that most countries in the Southeast Asian region, Philippines included, are lagging in comparison to the neighboring East Asian countries. Meanwhile the 2022 PISA results suggest that compared to the 2018 proportion of the students scoring below the baseline level of proficiency or Level 2 did not change significantly not only in math and science but also in reading.

There are various literacy programs which focus on comprehension and critical thinking, however, foundational skills in reading like phonological awareness and basic decoding skills are overlooked. With the increase in academic demands in high school, the gap between proficient readers or decoder students and non-decoders can widen, making effective intervention programs more necessary now more than ever. According to the data provided by the World Bank, large scale learning assessments of the students in the Philippines indicate that 90% of the students do not achieve the MPL or the minimum proficiency level in reading at the end of primary school.

In an article published by SageJournals (2018) "Ending the Reading Wars: Reading Acquisition From Novice to Expert", reading is the basis for the acquisition of knowledge for cultural engagement, for democracy and for success in the workplace. Moreover, low literacy presents a critical and persistent challenge around the world. Even in developed countries, it is estimated that approximately 20% of 15-year-olds do not attain a level of reading performance that allows them to participate effectively in life (Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development, 2016). Illiteracy costs the global economy more than \$1 trillion (U.S. dollars) annually in direct costs alone (World Literacy Foundation, 2015).

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 or "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" aims to ensure that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education. This Sustainable Development Goal is composed of 10 targets encompassing many different aspects of education, seven of which are the outcome targets while the remaining three are the means of implementation. One of the seven targets of the expected outcomes is Universal Youth Literacy.

The ability to read and decode words accurately is a skill crucial for reading fluency and comprehension. To bring renewed attention to this problem, the researchers are determined to conduct a study as an intervention in turning high school non-decoders to basic decoders through the use of Sound City's Exploring Sounds in Words.

Sound City Reading, authored by Kathryn J. Davis in 2023, and designed to teach students how to read, has a systematic sequential phonics program designed for students who are just learning to read as well as the students who need support in strengthening their word recognition and comprehension skills.

To cascade and seize the opportunity that Sound City Reading generously offers to learners who are struggling to read, the researchers aimed to test the material as an intervention aid to the students who are

still on the process of coping with their learning gap in reading.

The end goal of this study is to provide a basis in crafting an intervention plan tailored for reading that can be applied in the basic education schools in the province of Nueva Ecija then in the entire region of Central Luzon.

Locally, reading has been a concern in the province of Nueva Ecija, it has not been put on exemption in the report of the World Bank that students cannot understand a simple and age-appropriate text by the age of 10 (UNESCO, 2019). This finding reflects the educational quality all throughout the regions in the Philippines. As practitioners of reading education in public schools, the researchers are eyewitnesses of how reading has been considered an arduous task among Filipino students.

This study aims to fill the gap of how phonics-based interventions can aid older students, specifically the non-decoders. The result from this study will be utilized as an effective phonemic awareness intervention turning non-decoders as basic decoders, making a significant impact on learner's reading abilities such as reading comprehension and fluency. Moreover, once the study establishes promising results in a small scale, the researchers intend to conduct it in a bigger locale so that the end goal of adding the Sound City Reading in the arsenals of teachers in promoting reading among schools may come into a full realization.

1.2. Research Questions

To reach the main objective of the study, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Sound City's Exploring Sounds in Words in turning high school non-decoders into decoders as a basis for crafting an intervention plan for reading.

Specifically, the researchers seek to answer the following questions:

- A. How may the profile of the participants be described:
 - 1) sex;
 - 2) age;
 - 3) year level;
 - 4) family income;
 - 5) age of mother;
 - 6) highest educational attainment of mother;
 - 7) occupation of mother;
 - 8) age of father;
 - 9) highest educational attainment of father;
 - 10) occupation of father;
- B. How may the knowledge of the students in reading before and after applying the intervention be described in terms of:
 - 1) Written Test
 - i. Alphabet (A-Z)
 - ii. Alphabet letter sounds (A-Z)
 - 2) Reading Test
 - i. Alphabet Letter Names (A-Z)
 - ii. Alphabet Letter Sounds (A-Z)
 - iii. Letter Pairs (Vowel-Consonant)
 - iv. Basic Sight Words (Vowel-Consonant)
 - v. Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel)
 - vi. Basic Sight Words (Consonant-Vowel)
 - 3) Is there a significant difference between the pretest and post test results of the reading performance of the students?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study made use of one-group pretest-posttest design that involves a single group of participants that is subjected to an assessment for the researchers to see if there is a change after an independent variable is applied. Because of this, the researchers applied a pretest to determine the current level of reading skill of the participants, and post test to see if there is a change to the dependent variable of the study after receiving the intervention materials from Sound City Reading.

Campbel and Stanley (1963) however, cited some limitations of this design because it does not have a control group hence identifying a causal relationship cannot be fully established. Nevertheless, this is noted by the researchers to be considered in the future since the study aims at the time being is to transform non-decoders into decoders. Moreover, concerns such as students may change over time, and familiarity with the test are not deemed to be a contributing factor because the participants are non-decoders.

Familiarity with the letters, and their sounds might only be possible after the participants have undergone the intervention program with an aid of Sound City Reading.

2.2. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study are the identified non-decoders in the selected schools in the Department of Education – Schools Division of Nueva Ecija and Schools Division of Muñoz.

The participants were determined based on the existing records of the students in their respective schools. The ones who are identified as non-decoders were selected to as qualified participants of the study.

Since the last stage in the Phil-IRI is Grade 7, they were selected as respondents. As to where the students are studying, the participants are enrolled in Muñoz

National High School and Lino P. Bernardo National High School. This study targeted only the non-decoders or students who find it difficult to recognize symbols.

2.3. Research Locale

The study was conducted in two public schools: Muñoz National High School and Lino P. Bernardo National High School. These schools are where the researchers work, and are targeted to be the beneficiaries of the outputs of the study.

2.4. Materials and Procedures

The study employed the Sound City Reading Learning Intervention authored by Kathryn J. Davis. The materials in the said website are provided by free to all who desire to learn reading from the starting point where the students are convenient to start.

2.5. Procedure of Data Gathering

- 1) Pre-Test: Participants have undergone pretesting to gauge their existing reading level. Although they were considered non-decoders in their schools, this phase served as a validation of the participant's reading level.
- 2) Implementation of Intervention: Over a designated period, the Sound City Reading program was administered. Lessons were conducted daily, emphasizing consistent practice and mastery of skills.
- 3) Post-Test: Post-assessment that is based on Phil-IRI was given to see the improvement of the students.

2.6. Sources of Data

The sources of data were from the questionnaires that determines their demographic profile and their reading level.

2.7. Data Analysis

To address the research questions, the collected data were analyzed using quantitative methods. The following statistical tools and processes were utilized:

- 1) Frequency and Percentage were used to organize the demographic profile of the respondents. Also, these organized the number of correct answers by the participants.
- 2) Mean was used to clearly weigh the average of the participants in their pretest and post test.
- 3) Mean Difference specifically paired T-test was used to compare the pretest and post test of the participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the data derived from the instrument administered based on the "Sound City's Exploring Sounds in Words" which

also served as the intervention material utilized after the pre-assessment among targeted participants. The instrument had been administered among learners falling under "non-readers," the lowest among all levels (Abocejo, 2022) who have been selected as participants of the study.

Hence, a total of 10 students deemed as non-decoders had been considered as participants accounting for the case study towards crafting an intervention plan for reading.

3.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

The table presented above is the sex of the participants involved in the study. Accordingly, there have been five (5) male and five (5) female students selected, accounting for a total of 10 participants.

The results indicate that regardless of sex, a student can

Table 1. Sex of the participants

Sex	N	%
Male	5	50%
Female	5	50%

Table 2. Age of the participants

Age	N	%
12	5	50%
13	4	40%
14	0	0
15	0	0
16	1	10%

Table 3. Year level of the participants

Year level	N	%
7	10	100%
8	0	0
9	0	0
10	0	0

be a non-decoder. Khan et al. (2023) noted that girls exhibit better reading skills than boys, but this is because of cognitive development, learning styles or social-emotional factors. This claim is also supported by Rowe et al. (1992) that putting gender as a factor in reading performance is general and broad thus it cannot be associated or considered as a factor in reading.

Table 2 shows the age of participants with age mostly ranging from 12 to 13. Meanwhile, there is another participant involved in the study (whose age is 16) who can be a student who had been promoted to the higher level but has fallen down to “non-decoder” category, the lowest of all level based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory or the Phil-IRI result (Abocejo, 2022); such factor is quite evident on why he has been retained as a freshman (Grade 7) student in junior high school.

Age plays a crucial role in reading because a student improves as s/he progresses in his/ her education (Sambayon et al., 2023). However, it should be noted that when a student experiences reading difficulties in his/ her early years, it can potentially lead to a wider gap in learning achievement (Entwisle et al., 2007). Sambayon et al. (2023) suggest that reading intervention should be given early for it is proven that it has a big effect on the thinking, learning and doing skills of students.

As shown from the table, ten (10) participants were those of students from the seventh grade (Grade 7) who are considered non-decoders, the lowest of all levels, where the learner can barely to not utter letter-sound associations at all for blended consonants, single consonants, as well as those of other keyword sounds (Abril, Acerbo, & Abocejo, 2022).

Table 4. Family monthly income

FMI	N	%
below Php 11,000	6	60%
Php 11,000 – Php 22,000	3	30%
Php 23,000 – Php 44,000	1	10%
Php 45,000 – Php 76,000	0	0
Php 45,000 – Php 76,000	0	0
Php 77,000 – Php 131,000	0	0
Php 132,000 – Php 219,000	0	0
Php 220,000 and above	0	0

Table 5. Age of their respondents’ mothers

Age	N	%
below 20 years old	0	0
21 – 25 years old	0	0
26 – 30 years old	0	0
31 – 35 years old	2	20%
36 – 40 years old	2	20%
41 – 45 years old	3	30%
46 – 50 years old	1	10%
51 years old and above	0	0
Does not know the age of their parents	2	20%

These participants have been chosen per the revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) program mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd) serving as an assessment tool in determining the performance of learners in reading proficiency. According to Abril, Acerbo, and Abocejo (2022), Phil-IRI has been introduced to the secondary level in 2018 among Grade 7 students in addressing the problems over the growing numbers of non-readers both in Filipino and English.

Table 4 presents the participants' family monthly income. Accordingly, 60% of those students declared it is Php11,000 at most. Thirty percent (30%) of these students, on the other hand, ranged their income from Php11,000 up to Php22,000 while there is a sole student at 10% that earns an income of more than Php20,000.

Family income has been consistently linked to academic

outcomes, including reading achievement. Students who come from lower-income background often face challenges such as limited learning resources at home which can negatively impact their reading development (Chen et al., 2018; Hemmerechts et al., 2016).

Table 5 presents the age of the mothers' participants. Thirty percent (30%) of those participants' mothers aged 41 to 45 years. Moreover, participants whose mothers aged 31 to 35 and 36 to 40 years are both at 20%, respectively. Another 20% is derived from those participants who do not know the age of their mothers. Furthermore, a sole participant's mother aged 46 to 50 years.

This aligns with the trend of increasing maternal age observed in recent decades. As J. Salkind (2005) notes, the mean age of mothers has steadily increased in the United States. While older parental age can be

Table 6. Highest educational attainment of their mothers

Highest Educational Attainment	N	%
Elementary undergraduate	1	10%
Elementary graduate	2	20%
High school undergraduate	0	0
High school graduate	2	20%
Vocational	0	0
College undergraduate	2	20%
College graduate	0	0
Master's degree	0	0
Doctorate degree	0	0
Does not know the educational attainment of their parents	3	30%

Table 7. Occupation of their mothers

Occupation	N	%
Overseas Filipino Worker	3	30%
Laundry attendant/housekeeper	2	20%
Vegetable seller	3	30%
Seamstress (bag maker)	1	10%
Poultry (chicken) harvester	1	10%
Does not know the occupation of their parent	0	0
Does not have an occupation	0	0

associated with increased socioeconomic stability (Kenny et al., 2013), it is important to acknowledge potential complexities.

When it comes to the respondents' mothers' educational attainment, the table shows that the participants' mothers attained college degree (20%), high school (20%), and elementary level (30%). However, there were three out of 10 participants who do not know the highest educational attainment of their mothers.

Educational attainment is strongly correlated to the reading success of the students. According to Kloosterman et al., (2010), parents with higher levels of education achievement tend to enrich learning experiences, and value education more. Also, they can offer efficient academic support and guidance. Isha and Mamat (2019) also add that parents with higher levels

of education possess great knowledge and skills in developing the reading skills and knowledge of their children.

In terms of the livelihood of the participant's parents, Table 7 elaborates that most of the respondents' mothers are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) at 30% while another 30% came from those participants whose mothers are vegetable sellers. On the other hand, some of the participants' mothers are laundry attendant/housekeeper (20%), seamstress/bagmaker (10%), and poultry harvester (10%).

It can be inferred from the data that the mothers of the students are usually in occupation that tends to be hectic and busy therefore their guidance to their children are affected. However, because of the demands of education such as financial resources, the mothers

Table 8. Age of their fathers

Age	N	%
below 20 years old	0	0
21 – 25 years old	0	0
26 – 30 years old	0	0
31 – 35 years old	0	0
36 – 40 years old	1	10%
41 – 45 years old	2	20%
46 – 50 years old	2	20%
51 years old and above	1	10%
Does not know the age of their parents	4	40%

Table 9. Highest educational attainment of their fathers

Highest Educational Attainment	N	%
Elementary undergraduate	1	10%
Elementary graduate	0	0
High school undergraduate	2	20%
High school graduate	2	20%
Vocational	0	0
College undergraduate	0	0
College graduate	0	0
Master's degree	0	0
Doctorate degree	0	0
Does not know the educational attainment of their parents	5	50%

have chosen to look for occupations that can sustain their living.

According to Juan (2019), socioeconomic status is a leading factor influencing reading competence. Thus, it can be noted that most of the participants' parents are working away from home as OFWs. With this, the absence of parents within homes is a potential factor that translates into a 'non-reading cultural event' (Tomas, Villaros, & Galman, 2021) derived from the parent's occupation.

Table 8 displays the age of participants' fathers relatively ranged at 41 to 45 (20%) and 46 to 50 years (20%), a 40-percent combined from two age groups. Another 40% can be attributed to those participants who said they have no idea what their father's age is. Additionally, there were two participants whose fathers aged from 36 to 40 years (10%) and 51 years and above (10%).

Some studies suggest that advanced paternal age, for example, can be associated with certain developmental outcomes in children (Xia, 2020). However, as highlighted in the study of Xia (2020), the relationship between parental age and child development is multifaceted. Factors like parental education and access to resources also play a significant role.

Table 9 reveals that five out of 10 participants said they have no idea in terms of their fathers' highest educational attainment. Nevertheless, the rest of the participants said their father reached and/or finished high school (40%) while there was a single participant whose father is an elementary undergraduate (10%). It can be gleaned from the data that none of the paternal parents of the respondents were able to finish college which can be a major factor in guiding the students in reading.

Aside from the absence of parents within homes due to their working overseas, it is the lack of guidance in

Table 10. Occupation of their fathers		
Occupation	N	%
Farmer	5	50%
Janitor	1	10%
Tricycle driver	1	10%
Construction worker	1	10%
Does not know the occupation of their parent	1	10%
Does not have an occupation	1	10%

Table 11. Pretest and Posttest Written Results on Alphabet and Alphabet Letter Sounds		
Name of Written Test	Average Score	% of Score
Pre-assessment		
Alphabet (A-Z)	23.9	91.92%
Alphabet Letter Sounds (A-Z)	20.4	88.69%
Post-assessment		
Alphabet (A-Z)	24.0	92.31%
Alphabet Letter Sounds (A-Z)	20.6	89.57%

reading that becomes another factor by which it fosters a ‘non-reading cultural event’ since most of the participants’ fathers have barely finished an even higher degree in education. Hence, this could contribute to the way they teach their children reading as they themselves apparently do not even know how to read (Idulog et.al., 2023).

It can be observed that 50% of participants’ fathers are farmers while the rest are janitors (10%), tricycle drivers (10%), and construction workers (10%); while the remaining 20% percent of the participants said they do not know the occupation of their father or their father does not have a job to begin with.

Similarly, since most of their fathers are working outside most especially in the agricultural field, it is

indeed the absence of parents within homes and the lack of guidance in reading that serve as the underlying factors contributing to a seemingly non-reading cultural phenomenon that can be derived from the participants’ parents’ occupation and the level of education their parents have attained.

3.2. Knowledge in Reading Before and After the Application of Sound City Reading

This part presents the learning of students in reading before and after the application of the intervention.

3.2.1. Written Test Results in Alphabet and Alphabet Letter Sounds

Table 11 presents the written pretest and posttest results of the reading performance of the students in

Table 12. Pretest and Posttest Reading Results on Alphabet and Alphabet Letter Sounds, Letter Pairs, and Basic Sight Words		
Name of Reading Test	Average Score	% of Score
Pre-assessment		
Alphabet Letter Names (A-Z)	19.4	74.62%
Alphabet Letter Sounds (A-Z)	15.6	67.83%
Letter Pairs (Vowel-Consonant)	8	50.0%
Basic Sight Words (Vowel-Consonant)	18.2	56.9%
Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel)	13.5	71.1%
Basic Sight Words (Consonant-Vowel)	23	60.53%
Post-assessment		
Alphabet Letter Names (A-Z)	25.6	98.46%
Alphabet Letter Sounds (A-Z)	19.6	85.22%
Letter Pairs (Vowel-Consonant)	13.2	82.5%
Basic Sight Words (Vowel-Consonant)	26.3	82.19%
Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel)	17	89.47%
Basic Sight Words (Consonant-Vowel)	30.9	81.32%

terms of recognizing the alphabets A-Z and their sounds.

It can be assumed that the students have a prior and solidified knowledge in recognizing individual symbols in terms of their form and sounds. However, they recognize them in written test; meaning they know what a particular letter looks like.

It can be noticed that there is only a slight improvement on the pretest and post test results of the participants.

3.2.2. Reading Test on Alphabet Letter Names and Sounds (A-Z), Letter Pairs (Vowel Consonant), Basic Sight Words (Vowel Consonant), Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel) and Basic Sight Words (Consonant-Vowel)

During the reading assessment of the students where they were asked to read-out-loud the letter names and their sounds, letter pairs, and basic sight words, significant scores can be noticed. The participants' scores did not pass a 75% threshold. This means that the participants were having a difficulty in recognizing words and letters.

However, during the post-test, significant improvements were observed. The percentage rose significantly. The

lowest among the scores was 81.32%, the Basic Sight Words (Consonant-Vowel) yet it is above 75%.

3.3. Significant Difference on the Pretest and Post-test Reading and Written Results.

Table 13 presents the test of hypothesis on significant difference of the reading and written pretest and posttest results of the participants.

Results show that only pair 1, the pretest and posttest results for the written sounds had a p-value of .258 > 0.05 hence indicating an acceptance of the null hypothesis. There is no significant difference on the pretest and posttest results on written letter sounds.

Accordingly, this is due to the seemingly phonological incognizance among the participants of writing the letter sounds from the English alphabet as it can be attributed to the lack of phonological awareness (Tomas, Villaros, & Galman, 2021) out of the traditional phonics instruction taught in Philippine schools (Bustos-Orosa & Ferrer, 2013).

Apparently, the traditional phonics instruction taught in the Philippines under the Cartilla Method introducing the letters including c, f, j, ñ, q, v, x, z that were added to the Filipino alphabet (Abakada) can be considered as

Table 13. Paired T-test Results on the Pretest and Post-test Reading and Written Results

		Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Pair 1	Pretest and Posttest for Written Letter Sounds	-.01357	-1.135	220	.258	Accept Ho
Pair 2	Pretest and Posttest on Reading Letter Sounds	-.18841	-5.636	206	.000	Reject Ho
Pair 3	Pretest and Posttest on Reading Letter Pairs Vowel and Consonant	-.27928	-9.054	221	.000	Reject Ho
Pair 4	Pretest and Posttest Results for Reading Letter Sounds	-.15217	-5.410	229	.000	Reject Ho
Pair 5	Pretest and Posttest for Reading Letter Pairs (Vowel-Consonant)	-.32500	-8.086	159	.000	Reject Ho
Pair 6	Pretest and Posttest for Reading Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel)	-.18421	-5.939	189	.000	Reject Ho

the underlying factor why student participants have failed to writing correctly the original letter sounds from the English alphabet.

On the other hand, pairs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 had a p-value of $.000 < 0.05$ indicating a rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the following variables: Reading Letter Sounds, Reading Letter Pairs (Vowel and Consonant), Reading Letter Sounds, Reading Letter Paris (Vowel-Consonant), and Reading Letter Pairs (Consonant-Vowel).

Sound City Reading, the material administered during the intervention phase in between the pretest and posttest stages made the student participants “re-familiarize” themselves with the original letter names and sounds of the English alphabet as it is correctly “reintroduced” to them through the most appropriate arrangement of reading the letters in sound, in pairs, and in words possible, doing away with the Cartilla Method taught in Philippine schools.

Meanwhile, the results from pairs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 speak volume to the potential of the intervention material that is the Sound City Reading from which it could actually serve as a foundation in crafting an intervention plan in reading

4. SUMMARY

The study serves as a basis in crafting an intervention plan for reading specially those considered as ‘non-decoders’ based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) as a reading assessment tool mandated and implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd).

A pre-experimental design is applied in the study. Specifically, this study is a one-group pretest-posttest

design wherein a similar instrument was administered during pre- and post-assessment among 10 non-decoders as participants where five (5) of those are from Muñoz National High School – Main from Science City of Muñoz while another five (5) came from Lino P. Bernardo National High School in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija.

Selection of the participants are derived from the schools’ respective Phil-IRI results. The instrument, on the other hand, is based on the Sound City Reading that is the intervention material utilized in between pre- and post-testing period.

Findings derived from the data are in response with the following: the participants’ socio-demographic profile and their reading performance; a significant difference before and after the application of the intervention; a foundation in crafting an action/intervention plan for reading.

The study revealed that the livelihood and the educational attainment of the participants’ parents contributed to their becoming non-decoders who can barely to not read a single word or two at all. Meanwhile, the application of intervention material that is the Sound City Reading made a significant difference as struggling readers have re-familiarized themselves with the basic sounds and its respective printed letters from the English alphabet including that of reading the letter pairs and CVC words with varying combinations.

As a result, the administration of Sound City Reading and the progress among struggling readers to becoming basic decoders that is evident have built a foundation towards outlining an intervention plan for reading that is effective, measurable and sustainable.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the data gathered and analyzed from the study, it has come up with the following conclusions:

'Non reading cultural phenomenon' can be attributed most to the livelihood of the struggling readers' parents as it resulted to the absence of a guardian within homes who could have guided and taught them reading. Meanwhile, the level of education attained by their parents is another factor as even though they will be returning home once they have finished their work outside, they can barely to not teach their children how to read at all. If anything, parents themselves do not even know how to read, too. Blue-collar jobs like that of domestic helpers (who usually work overseas) or even that of farmers as the struggling readers' parents' most documented occupations derived from this study fostered the non-reading cultural event making their children deprived of reading within the four corners of their home. Hence, this resulted to their becoming non-decoders in school, their supposed second home.

The lack of quality reading instructions has been observed during the early phase of the assessment. Pre-assessment results, both in written and reading test implied the strong influence of the Cartilla method or the Filipino alphabet (Abakada) associated with the letters and its respective syllabic units of sound introduced by the Spanish due to three hundred and thirty-three years of colonization. Consequently, it has made it difficult among struggling readers to write and even read mostly the letter sounds, letter pairs, as well as the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words from the English alphabet. Indeed, the Cartilla method made these learners become visually adept in decoding letter names but phonologically inept, incognizant, and almost if not utterly impaired in distinguishing the distinct sounds of letters while combining these sounds into reading letters in pairs and in words.

Sound City Reading as the intervention material introduced and administered after the pre-assessment phase made the struggling readers 're-familiarize' themselves with the basic sounds and printed letters, together with the basic words that can be created through their respective combination. Thus, it can be implicated that writing and reading the letter names, sounds, letter pairs (either vowel-consonant or consonant-vowel pair), as well as the simple CVC words are best learned by the learners, most especially by the struggling readers through sounds by which it has to be heard first before it is written or even read.

6. RECOMMENDATION

By the conclusions the researchers have come up with, its respective recommendations are as follows:

Since 'non-reading culture' has been taking place within struggling readers' homes due to their parents' livelihood and their level of education, a school should be the supposed second home for them wherein quality reading instructions and interventions are promoted and practiced in the likes of the Sound City Reading as the intervention material administered in the study. Nevertheless, struggling readers' parents have to cooperate with teachers when it comes to teaching quality reading out of the reading instructions and interventions administered which goes beyond classrooms. Instead, quality reading instructions and interventions shall be continued outside the school especially among these struggling readers towards building a culture of reading where reading becomes a habit even upon returning home.

Quality reading instructions here in the Philippines is apparently a cause of concern among learners and teachers in schools. This is because it has been associated with the Cartilla method over the original

English alphabet, making it difficult among struggling readers to recognizing mostly its letter sounds, letter pairs (particularly the vowel-consonant pairs), as well as the CVC words. This led to their being visually capacitated with letter names but phonetically disabled to its distinct letter sounds. Thus, this case study serves as a foundation in partaking in future researches such as proposing a contrastive analysis between the Filipino alphabet associated with the Cartilla method and that of the English alphabet.

As Sound City Reading evidently served its purpose as the intervention material utilized in the study, the re-familiarization of struggling readers with the basic sounds and printed letters together with the letter pairs and basic words created through their respective combination, this shall be translated into crafting an intervention plan for reading. Such intervention must consider that learners, particularly those of deemed non-decoders as participants of the study learn most from discerning the sounds first before decoding its respective letters instead of proceeding the other way around.

The ability of the teacher-researchers in teaching the sounds of the letters and pronunciation of basic CVC words plays an important role in the overall application and instruction of the reading intervention material. They serve as models to the students to whom they will copy from the pronunciation and utterance of the letter sounds and basic CVC words. Thus, teachers teaching reading must know first how to properly pronounce or say the correct sound of the letters or the correct pronunciation of words for them to properly teach them to their students.

Although comprehensive in nature, the result of the study must be viewed with discretion because of the low number of participants the data were derived from.

A wider yet more focused application of the Sound City Reading as reading instruction and intervention material inside and beyond the classrooms is also highly encouraged to gather more data about its effectivity in teaching reading.

The instrument used in this study mainly focuses on the vowel sound /a/ together with the basic CVC words using it. Additionally, the intervention process was conducted for only a month. It is encouraged to continue developing and using the Sound City Reading as a reading instruction material with the other vowel sounds in teaching the students reading in a long-term application for a more comprehensive and extensive result.

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8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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NA

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