

Functional Literacy in Public Senior High Schools of Pinamalayan District Towards a Proposed Extension Program

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the functional literacy of Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners in public senior high schools in Pinamalayan District, Oriental Mindoro, during School Year 2025–2026 and used the integrated findings as the basis for a proposed literacy-support output. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed. The quantitative phase involved 276 learners randomly selected from a population of 1,738 through stratified proportional random sampling across nine public senior high schools. A researcher-made questionnaire measured reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, and research skills using a four-point scale. The qualitative phase purposively involved 10 learners and 10 teachers through semi-structured interviews to explain the quantitative patterns. Quantitative data were analyzed

using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, while qualitative data were analyzed through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. Learners demonstrated a High Extent of functional literacy in reading comprehension ($M = 3.15$), visual literacy ($M = 3.15$), social media literacy ($M = 3.33$), and research skills ($M = 3.15$). Social media literacy obtained the highest overall mean, while comparatively weaker indicators involved inferential and figurative comprehension, production of visual representations, management of online presence, and structured research planning. Qualitative findings showed that functional literacy was shaped by home literacy support, access to resources, teacher scaffolding, motivation, self-regulated and collaborative literacy practices, cognitive and contextual barriers, and the need for responsive school support. Teachers further emphasized socio-economic conditions, literacy interventions, workload, and stakeholder collaboration. The integrated findings indicate that functional literacy is multidimensional and supported by coordinated action across school, home, and community contexts. These results informed the proposed School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy for Functional Literacy Development through Project LITERA-SH.

Keywords: *functional literacy, reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, research skills, senior high school*

INTRODUCTION

Functional literacy has become a central indicator of educational quality because learners are increasingly expected to understand, evaluate, and apply information across academic, social, digital, and real-life contexts. Contemporary literacy therefore extends beyond basic reading and writing to the interpretation of multimodal texts, responsible use of digital information, and the ability to participate meaningfully in inquiry and decision-making. International discussions of 21st-century reading and media literacy likewise emphasize critical

comprehension, information evaluation, and ethical participation in digital environments (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2021).

In the Philippines, continuing concerns about learning outcomes make functional literacy especially important. National and international reports have drawn attention to literacy gaps and learning poverty, while the Philippine Statistics Authority continues to monitor literacy as an indicator of educational participation and development (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025; World Bank, 2023). Within basic education, Republic Act No. 9155 and the K to 12 curriculum provide a policy context for improving the quality of learning, and the MATATAG reform agenda reinforces the need for stronger foundational and applied competencies (Department of Education, 2016, 2025; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001).

For Senior High School learners, literacy demands are particularly broad. Students are expected to comprehend increasingly complex texts, interpret graphs and other visual representations, evaluate online information, and perform research-related tasks. Such expectations align with multiliteracies perspectives in which meaning is constructed through linguistic, visual, digital, and other modes rather than through print alone (Cope & Kalantzis, 2020). Digital literacy research similarly stresses that students must not only access information but also judge its credibility and use technology responsibly (Ng, 2020; Smith & Storrs, 2023).

These concerns are relevant to Pinamalayan District, Oriental Mindoro, where public senior high schools serve learners from varied social, economic, and educational backgrounds. The thesis identified local reading-related concerns through Philippine Informal Reading Inventory information and argued that conventional reading indicators alone do not fully represent the literacy competencies required in contemporary senior high school education. A multidimensional assessment of reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, and research skills was therefore necessary to describe learners' strengths and areas for further support.

Although literacy research has examined reading achievement, digital participation, and general academic performance, fewer local studies have treated functional literacy as an integrated set of textual, visual, digital, and inquiry-based competencies while simultaneously examining the contextual conditions that shape those competencies. This gap is important in geographically and socioeconomically diverse settings where access to resources, family support, instructional practices, learner motivation, and school interventions may interact in different ways. Home literacy experiences and instructional support have been associated with literacy development, while structured programs and responsive teaching can help address learning difficulties (Dong et al., 2020; Slavin et al., 2021).

Accordingly, the study assessed the perceived level of functional literacy among Senior High School learners in Pinamalayan District in terms of reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, and research skills; identified factors perceived to influence functional literacy; explored the experiences and perceptions of learners and teachers regarding these factors; and used the integrated findings as the basis for a proposed School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy for Functional Literacy Development through Project LITERA-SH.

Literature Review

Functional Literacy and Multiliteracies

Functional literacy refers to the ability to use literacy skills purposefully in academic, social, and practical contexts. This perspective shifts attention from the simple decoding of words to the comprehension, evaluation, and application of information. Bao (2017) linked functional literacy with comprehension and problem-solving, while OECD (2021) emphasized that contemporary readers must negotiate increasingly complex and digitally mediated information. Functional literacy therefore requires both foundational language ability and the capacity to transfer understanding to real situations.

Multiliteracies further expands this view by recognizing that meaning is communicated through multiple modes. Cope and Kalantzis (2020) describe multimodal meaning-making as a core feature of contemporary communication, making visual, digital, and cultural forms of literacy increasingly important. Freire's (1970)

critical perspective also positions literacy as a means of interpreting the world rather than merely recognizing words, which is consistent with the study's emphasis on the meaningful use of information across contexts.

The social character of literacy is equally important. Rigopouli (2025), drawing on Vygotskian perspectives, highlights the role of social interaction and guided learning in educational development. In the present study, this orientation supports the view that functional literacy is shaped not only by individual competence but also by interactions with teachers, families, peers, learning resources, and digital environments.

Reading Comprehension and Visual Literacy

Reading comprehension involves constructing meaning from text through the coordination of vocabulary, background knowledge, inference, and higher-order reasoning. Kendeou and O'Brien (2018) noted that comprehension theories increasingly account for the dynamic processes through which readers integrate textual information and prior knowledge. Rasinski (2020) likewise emphasized the importance of fluent and meaningful reading, suggesting that successful comprehension depends on more than literal recall. For Senior High School learners, these competencies are necessary for interpreting academic texts and applying information to authentic problems.

Visual literacy complements textual comprehension by requiring learners to interpret and evaluate meaning communicated through graphs, charts, images, symbols, and other multimodal resources. Kamalvand and Khany (2024) highlighted the importance of visual literacy competencies in educational settings, while Tan et al. (2023) discussed the role of digital technologies in multimodal literacies. These perspectives support the inclusion of visual literacy as a distinct functional literacy dimension, especially in classrooms where instructional content is increasingly represented through combined textual and visual modes.

Reading and visual literacy also interact. Learners often need to connect written explanations with diagrams, tables, infographics, or multimedia representations. Strengthening this integration can support comprehension of complex information and enable learners to communicate ideas in more concise and accessible forms. The study therefore considered both interpretation of visual materials and learners' capacity to use visual evidence meaningfully.

Social Media and Digital Literacy

Digital and social media environments require learners to make rapid judgments about credibility, bias, persuasion, privacy, and responsible participation. Ng (2020) described digital literacy as a necessary competence in 21st-century education, and Smith and Storrs (2023) emphasized the continuing importance of digital literacies in formal learning. UNESCO (2021) similarly frames media and information literacy around access, analysis, evaluation, and ethical use of information.

For adolescents, social media literacy is especially relevant because online platforms function simultaneously as spaces for communication, entertainment, identity formation, and academic information seeking. Barri et al. (2025) examined internet literacy and etiquette among high school students, while Sarlin et al. (2024) linked digital literacy with reading interest. These studies suggest that frequent technology use does not automatically produce critical digital competence; learners may be confident users while still needing support in evaluating persuasive or deceptive content and managing their digital presence.

Digital access also creates opportunities for reading and inquiry. Subaveerapandiyan and Sinha (2022) connected digital literacy with reading behavior, reinforcing the idea that technology can support literacy development when learners have the skills to select and use information appropriately. The study therefore assessed not only online access but also critical evaluation, ethical behavior, awareness of cyberbullying, and management of online activity.

Research Skills and Inquiry-Based Literacy

Research skills represent an applied form of functional literacy because learners must identify questions, locate information, evaluate sources, synthesize evidence, and communicate findings. These tasks require planning, judgment, and the responsible use of information. Bao (2017) emphasized problem-solving within

functional literacy, which is consistent with the inquiry-based demands of Senior High School research tasks. The study therefore treated source evaluation, paraphrasing, evidence-based conclusions, citation, and organization as essential components of research literacy.

Research performance also depends on structured support. Darling-Hammond (2020) emphasized learning environments that develop deeper understanding and learner capacity, while McMaster et al. (2021) discussed the value of data-based individualization and responsive instructional support. Within the study context, these ideas are relevant because learners may possess basic source-evaluation skills yet still need scaffolding in planning, sequencing, and managing research tasks.

The role of digital resources further connects research skills with information literacy. Students increasingly rely on online sources, which expands access while also increasing the need for critical evaluation and academic integrity. The research-skills dimension of the study was therefore designed to capture both information use and the organizational processes necessary to produce academically acceptable research outputs.

Home, School, and Community Supports for Literacy

Literacy development occurs within interconnected learning environments. Dong et al. (2020) emphasized the role of parents in literacy development, indicating that home support can provide opportunities for reading, language use, and academic encouragement. At the school level, effective teaching, access to materials, and systematic interventions can help learners develop stronger literacy skills. Slavin et al. (2021) synthesized evidence on reading programs and highlighted the importance of structured approaches to literacy improvement.

Schools also require institutional capacity to respond to diverse literacy needs. Darling-Hammond (2020) emphasized the importance of supportive learning systems, while McMaster et al. (2021) illustrated how differentiated and individualized supports can respond to variation in learner performance. In the Philippine setting, the K to 12 curriculum, MATATAG agenda, and governance framework under Republic Act No. 9155 provide a policy environment in which schools are expected to strengthen learning outcomes through responsive programs and resource support (Department of Education, 2016, 2025; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001).

The literature therefore supports a collaborative view of functional literacy. Learners' skills are influenced by home guidance, access to books and digital resources, teacher scaffolding, motivation, classroom opportunities, and broader socio-economic conditions. The present study examined these influences through an explanatory sequential design so that quantitative literacy levels could be interpreted alongside the experiences of learners and teachers.

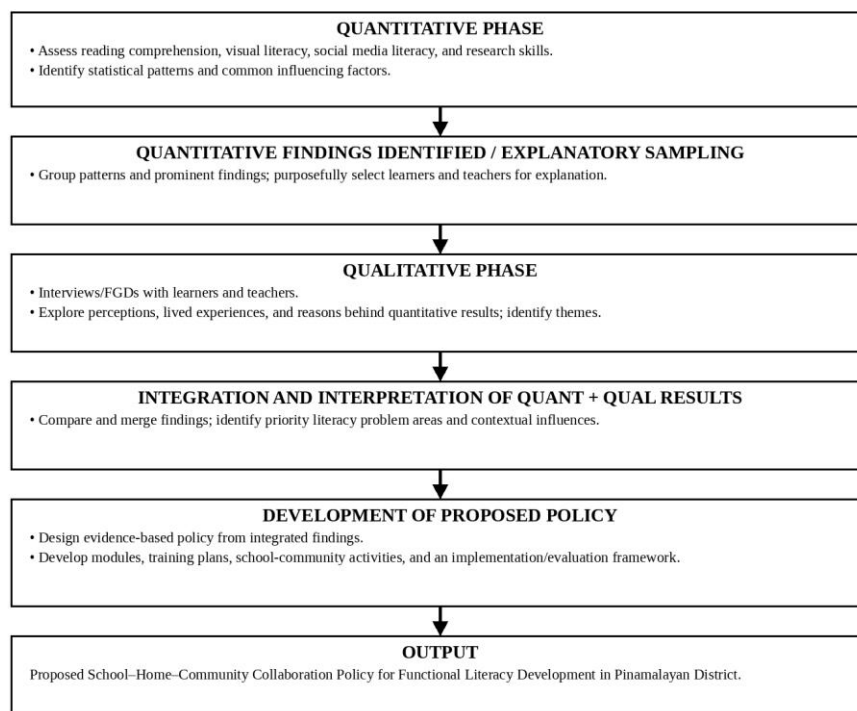


Figure 1. *Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods (ESMM) Conceptual Framework retained and reformatted from the thesis.*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by a qualitative phase intended to explain and contextualize the quantitative findings. The design allowed the researcher to determine the perceived level of functional literacy and then explore the experiences, perceptions, and contextual conditions underlying the numerical results. The quantitative findings informed the selection of qualitative participants and the focus of the semi-structured interview questions. This sequencing followed the logic of explanatory sequential mixed-methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The qualitative component used a qualitative descriptive approach. Reflexivity was acknowledged to reduce the influence of researcher assumptions during interviewing and interpretation. The integration of phases occurred through explanatory sampling, development of interview prompts from quantitative results, and comparison of qualitative themes with the quantitative patterns. This integration provided the basis for the proposed School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in nine public secondary schools offering Senior High School in Pinamalayan District, Schools Division of Oriental Mindoro, during School Year 2025–2026. The district was considered appropriate because its schools serve learners from diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds. The thesis also identified local reading-related concerns through Philippine Informal Reading Inventory information, providing contextual justification for examining functional literacy beyond conventional reading performance.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The quantitative population consisted of 1,738 Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners. Using G*Power with an effect size of 0.15, an alpha error probability of .05, and statistical power of .95, the study identified a quantitative sample of 276 learners. Stratified proportional random sampling was used, with the school serving as the stratification variable, to proportionately represent Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners across the nine public senior high schools and reduce sampling bias.

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select 10 Senior High School learners and 10 teachers. Learners were chosen to reflect different quantitative patterns, including relatively high, average, and low literacy results, while teachers contributed professional perspectives on instruction, school literacy programs, and contextual influences. This purposeful selection was intended to explain the quantitative findings rather than to provide a statistically representative qualitative sample.

Research Instrument

Two instruments were used: a researcher-made questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire measured four dimensions of functional literacy—reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, and research skills—with 10 statements for each dimension. Reading comprehension addressed understanding, interpretation, inference, and application of written texts; visual literacy covered interpretation and evaluation of visual representations; social media literacy assessed critical evaluation, online responsibility, and digital behavior; and research skills examined the ability to locate, evaluate, organize, and use information for academic purposes.

Items were rated through a four-point scale and were developed from related literature, literacy frameworks, and Senior High School competencies. The instruments were reviewed by experts, including Master Teachers in English and Filipino, and revisions were incorporated before administration. Reliability was examined through a pilot test involving 10 students who were not part of the final respondents, using Cronbach's alpha as the internal-consistency measure (Cronbach, 1951). The semi-structured interview guide explored literacy experiences, instructional practices, home and school support, challenges, and perceived barriers, with flexibility for probing and follow-up questions.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher sought approval from relevant authorities, including the Schools Division Superintendent and the school heads of the nine participating public secondary schools. After the required permissions were secured, the questionnaire was personally administered to the identified Senior High School learners. The quantitative results were subjected to preliminary analysis and then used to identify participants and issues for the qualitative phase.

The qualitative phase followed the quantitative analysis. Ten selected learners and 10 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews to elaborate the statistical patterns and describe factors, challenges, and experiences associated with functional literacy. The researcher had also undergone capacity-building activities concerning the ethical handling of participants, including minors, and appropriate procedures for managing sensitive concerns during data collection.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage were used where applicable, while weighted mean was used to describe the perceived level of functional literacy in the four dimensions. The verbal interpretation followed the study's four-point scale: 3.50–4.00, Very High Extent; 2.50–3.49, High Extent; 1.50–2.49, Low Extent; and 1.00–1.49, Very Low Extent.

Qualitative data were analyzed through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. The process involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Themes from learner and teacher narratives were then compared with the quantitative findings to generate integrated explanations and meta-inferences.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and protection from harm. The purpose and procedures were explained to participants in understandable language, and participants were informed that they could withdraw without penalty. For minor participants, parental or legal-guardian consent and learner assent were secured. Interview questions were designed to minimize discomfort, and participants were not compelled to answer questions they found uncomfortable.

Personal identifiers were replaced by codes or pseudonyms, and research data were stored in password-protected digital files or secured physical storage accessible only to the researcher. The thesis also specified limited data retention followed by secure deletion or destruction, no monetary or material incentives, and responsible dissemination practices intended to avoid labeling or stigmatizing learners. Findings were reported as patterns and areas for support rather than as individual deficiencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Functional Literacy Across Four Dimensions

The quantitative results showed a consistently High Extent of perceived functional literacy across all four assessed domains. Social media literacy obtained the highest overall mean ($M = 3.33$), while reading comprehension, visual literacy, and research skills each obtained an overall mean of 3.15. These findings indicate that learners generally perceived themselves as capable of accessing, interpreting, evaluating, and applying information across textual, visual, digital, and inquiry-based tasks. The pattern supports the multidimensional view of literacy advanced in multiliteracies and digital-literacy scholarship (Cope & Kalantzis, 2020; Ng, 2020).

Table 1. *Overall Level of Functional Literacy Among Senior High School Learners*

Functional Literacy Dimension	Overall Mean	Interpretation
Reading comprehension	3.15	High Extent
Visual literacy	3.15	High Extent
Social media literacy	3.33	High Extent
Research skills	3.15	High Extent

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension was rated at a High Extent ($M = 3.15$). The strongest indicator was the ability to relate ideas from a text to real-life situations ($M = 3.44$), followed by distinguishing facts, opinions, and claims ($M = 3.42$). In contrast, understanding figurative language and inferring meanings not directly stated each obtained $M = 2.87$. The pattern suggests that learners were more confident in practical and explicit comprehension tasks than in interpretive processes requiring inference and abstraction. This distinction is consistent with comprehension research that emphasizes the higher cognitive demands of integrating textual information with prior knowledge (Kendeou & O'Brien, 2018) and with the importance of developing fluent, meaningful reading beyond word recognition (Rasinski, 2020).

Visual literacy

Visual literacy also obtained a High Extent ($M = 3.15$). Learners reported their strongest performance in connecting visual images with written text and evaluating how visuals support a lesson or argument (both $M = 3.26$). The lowest indicator involved emphasizing key details using diagrams and models ($M = 3.05$). The finding implies that learners were more comfortable interpreting existing visual information than producing visual representations themselves. This distinction is relevant to multimodal literacy, in which comprehension and production are complementary but not identical competencies (Kamalvand & Khany, 2024; Tan et al., 2023).

Social media literacy

Social media literacy was the highest-rated dimension ($M = 3.33$). Analyzing how social media influences opinions and behavior reached a Very High Extent ($M = 3.50$), while managing one's online presence and activity was the lowest-rated indicator ($M = 3.06$). Learners therefore appeared highly aware of the social influence of digital platforms but less confident in aspects of self-management and digital identity. The result is consistent with media-literacy frameworks that distinguish routine digital participation from critical, ethical, and strategic use of online information (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). Barri et al. (2025) similarly emphasized the continuing need for internet literacy and etiquette among high school students.

Research skills

Research skills were rated at a High Extent ($M = 3.15$). Evaluating the reliability and validity of sources obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.26$), followed by correct citation of references ($M = 3.25$). Creating a structured plan for a research task obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.00$). Thus, learners perceived themselves as relatively capable of judging and using sources but less confident in organizing the research process. The result supports the view of functional literacy as problem-solving and information use (Bao, 2017) and indicates a need for structured scaffolding that helps learners sequence and manage complex academic tasks (Darling-Hammond, 2020; McMaster et al., 2021).

Table 2. *Highest- and Lowest-Rated Indicators Within Each Functional Literacy Dimension*

Domain	Highest-Rated Indicator	Mean	Lowest-Rated Indicator	Mean
Reading comprehension	Relates ideas from text to real-life situations	3.44	Understands figurative language / infers unstated meanings	2.87
Visual literacy	Connects visual images with written text; evaluates how visuals support ideas	3.26	Emphasizes key details using diagrams and models	3.05
Social media literacy	Analyzes how social media influences opinions and behavior	3.50	Manages online presence and activity	3.06
Research skills	Evaluates reliability and validity of sources	3.26	Creates a structured plan for a research task	3.00

Factors Influencing Functional Literacy

The qualitative phase explained why relatively high self-reported literacy levels coexisted with particular areas of difficulty. Learner narratives produced eight major themes: home literacy support, resource accessibility, teacher scaffolding, persistent cognitive and contextual barriers, motivation, adaptive literacy and self-regulated learning practices, interactive and social learning engagement, and the need for responsive literacy-support systems. These themes show that literacy development was experienced as both an individual and environmental process rather than as a skill located solely within the learner.

Home support was described in terms of parental guidance, encouragement, and provision of learning tools, while limited family support and low parental educational attainment were identified as barriers. Access to books, libraries, and digital resources also shaped opportunities to practice literacy. These findings are consistent with research emphasizing the role of parental involvement in literacy development (Dong et al., 2020) and the importance of equitable access to learning opportunities. Learners also described teacher scaffolding—clear explanations, step-by-step guidance, remediation, repetition, and patience—as an important support, reinforcing the value of structured instructional intervention (Slavin et al., 2021).

At the same time, participants identified comprehension and vocabulary difficulty, reduced focus during lengthy texts, time constraints, limited resources, and workload as persistent barriers. Motivation, regular practice, strategic note-taking, peer assistance, and use of educational digital content were described as adaptive responses. Digital environments therefore operated as both a resource and a potential source of distraction, a tension also

reflected in studies of digital literacy and reading behavior (Sarlin et al., 2024; Subaveerapandiyan & Sinha, 2022; Smith & Storrs, 2023).

Table 3. *Integrated Themes on Factors Influencing Functional Literacy*

Integrated Factor	Learner Perspective	Teacher Perspective
Home and family support	Parental guidance, encouragement, home literacy opportunities, and learning tools supported literacy; limited support constrained it.	Teachers emphasized parental involvement, home conditions, and socio-economic circumstances as major influences.
Resources and technology	Books, libraries, online applications, and digital materials increased opportunities to read and research.	Teachers identified access to books, ICT tools, printed materials, and digital resources as enablers, but noted unequal availability.
Instruction and scaffolding	Clear explanation, repetition, remediation, and patient step-by-step support helped learners understand difficult tasks.	Teachers emphasized differentiated instruction, one-on-one or small-group support, cross-curricular literacy, and technology-enhanced instruction.
Learner motivation and self-regulation	Academic goals, perseverance, regular practice, task breakdown, note-taking, and peer support sustained engagement.	Teachers associated stronger literacy with motivation, disciplined learning habits, and proactive participation.
Barriers and learning conditions	Vocabulary difficulty, lengthy texts, lack of focus, limited resources, workload, and time constraints hindered progress.	Teachers highlighted weak foundational skills, limited home support, socio-economic barriers, technology distractions, resource shortages, and workload.
Collaboration and support systems	Learners preferred interactive, collaborative, and literacy-rich programs with adequate learning spaces and materials.	Teachers stressed continuous monitoring and shared responsibility among teachers, parents, school leaders, and other stakeholders.

Integrated Mixed-Methods Interpretation

Integration of the two phases clarified the meaning of the quantitative scores. In reading comprehension, learners' High Extent rating coexisted with qualitative reports of difficulty with vocabulary, long texts, and abstract meanings, explaining the lower ratings for figurative language and inference. In visual literacy, frequent exposure to multimedia and digital resources appeared to support interpretation of visual information, while limited opportunities to create diagrams or critically examine complex visual messages helped explain the weaker production-oriented indicators.

In social media literacy, extensive use of digital platforms likely contributed to high confidence in understanding social media influence, yet learner and teacher narratives also identified technology-related distraction and the need for responsible online guidance. In research skills, learners reported using digital sources and independent strategies, but teachers emphasized the importance of scaffolding and structured support. This convergence explains why source evaluation was relatively strong while research planning was comparatively weaker. Digital-literacy scholarship similarly cautions that access and frequent use do not necessarily produce advanced critical or organizational competence (Ng, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

The overall meta-inference was that functional literacy in Pinamalayan District was generally strong at the level of learner self-perception but remained shaped by multiple interacting conditions. Home support, resource access, effective instruction, motivation, and literacy opportunities strengthened performance, whereas limited foundational skills, socio-economic constraints, resource shortages, and inconsistent support could restrict growth. The results therefore support a coordinated rather than single-school or single-classroom response.

Proposed School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy Through Project LITERA-SH

The integrated findings served as the basis for the School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy for Functional Literacy Development through Project LITERA-SH. The policy is designed as a coordinated response to the literacy strengths and needs identified in the study, linking school-based instruction with family engagement, community participation, and responsible use of technology. Its proposed interventions include Reading Comprehension Clinics, the Parent Literacy Engagement Program, ARAL Plus or enhanced remediation, Interactive Literacy Hubs, Motivation and Goal-Setting Workshops, a Digital Literacy and Responsible Use Program, Teacher Capacity Building through Learning Action Cell sessions, and the establishment of Literacy Corners and Quiet Study Spaces.

This output is consistent with the study's finding that functional literacy depends on more than individual learner performance. It requires access to meaningful literacy experiences, targeted instructional support, responsive resources, and stakeholder collaboration. Such a systems-oriented approach is also compatible with Philippine basic-education governance and curriculum priorities that place responsibility for learning quality across school leadership, teaching practice, and community participation (Department of Education, 2016, 2025; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Senior High School learners in Pinamalayan District demonstrated a High Extent of perceived functional literacy across reading comprehension, visual literacy, social media literacy, and research skills. Social media literacy obtained the highest overall mean, while the detailed indicators showed specific areas that warrant continuing support, particularly inferential and figurative comprehension, creation of visual representations, management of online presence, and organization of research tasks. The mixed-method findings demonstrate that functional literacy is multidimensional and cannot be understood through learner skill alone. Home literacy support, resource access, teacher scaffolding, learner motivation, self-regulated practice, socio-economic conditions, and opportunities for collaborative and interactive learning all shaped learners' literacy experiences. The convergence of learner and teacher perspectives further indicates that sustained literacy development requires coordinated support across school, home, and community settings. On this basis, the study developed the School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy for Functional Literacy Development through Project LITERA-SH as an evidence-informed response to the identified strengths and needs.

Recommendation

Learners should continue strengthening functional literacy through regular reading, critical analysis of visual and online information, responsible digital participation, and systematic research practice, with particular attention to inference, visual production, online self-management, and research planning. Teachers should integrate contextualized, learner-centered, and differentiated literacy activities across subjects and provide explicit scaffolding, guided practice, remediation, and opportunities for collaborative learning. School heads should strengthen literacy programs, ensure access to reading and digital resources, provide quiet and literacy-rich learning spaces, support professional development through Learning Action Cell sessions, and establish mechanisms for monitoring literacy interventions. Parents should be actively engaged through home-reading support, academic monitoring, and regular communication with schools. The Department of Education and other education stakeholders may consider the study's School–Home–Community Collaboration Policy and Project LITERA-SH components when designing locally responsive literacy initiatives. Future researchers may replicate the study in other districts, include additional literacy dimensions, use objective performance measures alongside self-report data, and examine the longer-term effects of school–home–community literacy interventions.

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