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Teachers' Practices and Implementation Experiences in School Reading Programs: Basis for a Capability-Building Intervention Framework

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ABSTRACT

School reading programs remain essential in addressing learners' literacy development and improving academic performance in basic education. However, the successful implementation of these programs largely depends on teachers' instructional practices, intervention strategies, and institutional support mechanisms. This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' practices and implementation experiences in school reading programs and developed a capability-building intervention framework grounded on the challenges and enabling practices identified by participants. Twelve public elementary school teachers involved in school-based reading programs were purposively selected from selected schools in the Philippines. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis revealed five major themes: (1) Contextualized and Learner-Centered Reading Instructional Practices; (2) Intervention Strategies for Struggling and Non-Reader Learners; (3) Collaborative Support and Stakeholder Participation in Reading Programs; (4) Instructional and Resource Challenges in Reading Program Implementation; and (5) Professional Development Needs and Instructional Capacity Enhancement. Findings showed that teachers utilized differentiated instruction, remedial reading sessions, peer-assisted learning, and localized reading materials to support learners' literacy development. However, challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, limited parental support, learner diversity, and inadequate teacher training affected program implementation. The study concludes that sustainable school reading programs require strengthened teacher capability-building initiatives, institutional support systems, and collaborative stakeholder engagement. The proposed capability-building intervention framework emphasizes professional development, resource enhancement, monitoring systems, and contextualized literacy instruction to improve reading program effectiveness. The findings contribute to the growing discourse on literacy intervention and teacher capacity development in basic education.

Keywords: school reading programs, literacy instruction, teachers' experiences, reading intervention, capability-building framework, qualitative research, literacy education

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1. Introduction

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental skills necessary for academic achievement and lifelong learning. In basic education, reading proficiency significantly influences learners' performance across various subject areas, making literacy development a major educational priority. In the Philippine educational context, concerns regarding learners' reading comprehension, decoding skills, and overall literacy performance continue to challenge schools and educators. Large-scale assessments and national reports have consistently highlighted the need for strengthened school reading programs and targeted literacy interventions to address the growing number of struggling and non-reader learners.

School reading programs are institutionalized literacy initiatives designed to improve learners' reading skills through structured instructional strategies, remediation sessions, and learner-centered literacy activities. These programs often include oral reading activities, phonics instruction, reading remediation, peer tutoring, storytelling, and contextualized literacy tasks. Teachers play a critical role in implementing these programs because they directly facilitate reading instruction, assess learner progress, and provide intervention support for learners with varying literacy needs.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of effective literacy instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, and teacher preparedness in improving learners' reading achievement (Snow & Matthews, 2016; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Research further suggests that successful reading programs require not only instructional competence but also adequate institutional support, parental involvement, and access to appropriate instructional resources.

Despite the implementation of various reading initiatives in schools, many teachers continue to encounter challenges related to learner diversity, limited instructional materials, insufficient training, and time constraints. Moreover, there remains limited qualitative research exploring teachers' lived experiences and implementation practices in school reading programs, particularly within public elementary school settings in developing educational contexts.

Thus, this study explored teachers' practices and implementation experiences in school reading programs and proposed a capability-building intervention framework grounded on teachers' identified needs, challenges, and instructional experiences.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 School Reading Programs and Literacy Development

School reading programs are designed to strengthen learners' literacy competencies through systematic instructional interventions and reading enrichment activities. According to Duke and Cartwright (2021), effective reading programs integrate phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, and fluency-building activities to improve learners' literacy outcomes.

Reading interventions are particularly important for struggling readers and learners experiencing literacy difficulties. Studies reveal that early literacy support significantly improves learners' academic achievement and long-term educational success (Snow & Matthews, 2016). Contextualized and learner-centered reading instruction further enhances learner engagement and reading comprehension.

2.2 Teachers' Instructional Practices in Reading Instruction

Teachers' pedagogical practices greatly influence the effectiveness of school reading programs.



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Differentiated instruction, guided reading, peer-assisted learning, and individualized remediation sessions are among the commonly utilized literacy intervention strategies.

According to Rasinski et al. (2020), effective reading teachers provide explicit instruction, continuous assessment, and scaffolded learning opportunities that support learners' reading development. Teachers also adapt instructional approaches based on learners' reading levels, interests, and linguistic backgrounds.

2.3 Challenges in Reading Program Implementation

Research consistently identifies several barriers affecting reading program implementation. These include limited instructional resources, insufficient teacher training, large class sizes, learner diversity, and inadequate parental support (OECD, 2019).

Teachers often experience difficulties in managing struggling readers while simultaneously addressing curriculum requirements and administrative responsibilities. Consequently, professional development and institutional support remain essential in strengthening reading program implementation.

2.4 Capability-Building in Literacy Education

Capability-building initiatives focus on enhancing teachers' instructional competence, literacy intervention skills, and program implementation capacities. Professional development programs, mentoring systems, collaborative learning communities, and instructional coaching contribute to teacher effectiveness in literacy instruction.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), sustained professional learning opportunities improve teachers' pedagogical practices and positively influence learner achievement. Capability-building programs therefore play a critical role in sustaining effective school reading initiatives.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences, instructional practices, and implementation challenges in school reading programs. Phenomenology was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives, reflections, and experiences within their actual educational contexts. The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in the Philippines implementing school-based reading programs. The participants consisted of twelve public elementary school teachers selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria required participants to be currently involved in school reading programs, have at least three years of teaching experience, directly implement literacy interventions, and willingly participate in the study. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving reading program materials, intervention plans, and learner progress records. The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which involved data familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, and thematic interpretation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, credibility was established through member checking and triangulation, dependability was strengthened through audit trails, confirmability was ensured through reflective journaling, and transferability was achieved through thick descriptions of participants' instructional contexts and experiences.

4. Results and Findings



Theme 1: Contextualized and Learner-Centered Reading Instructional Practices

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of contextualized and learner-centered instructional approaches in improving learners' reading engagement, comprehension, and participation in school reading programs. Teachers described how the use of localized and culturally relevant reading materials helped learners better relate to reading lessons and increased their interest in literacy activities. Participants explained that learners became more responsive when reading texts reflected familiar community experiences, local culture, and everyday situations. Teachers further highlighted that adapting instructional strategies according to learners' reading levels, interests, and learning needs contributed to more meaningful literacy experiences and improved learner confidence.

One participant shared:

"Mas nagiging interesado ang learners kapag ginagamit namin ang localized reading materials."

Another teacher explained:

"I adjust my reading activities depending on the learners' reading levels and needs."

Participants described utilizing various learner-centered instructional strategies such as storytelling, guided reading, differentiated instruction, collaborative reading tasks, oral reading activities, and interactive literacy games. Teachers noted that these strategies encouraged active learner participation and reduced learners' anxiety toward reading activities. Some participants also emphasized the effectiveness of integrating visual aids, contextualized stories, and technology-assisted literacy activities to sustain learner attention and comprehension.

One teacher stated:

"Kapag interactive at relatable ang reading materials, mas willing silang magbasa at sumagot."

Another participant shared:

"Storytelling activities help learners become more engaged and expressive during reading sessions."

The findings indicate that contextualized and learner-responsive instructional practices positively support literacy engagement and reading development. These findings align with constructivist learning perspectives emphasizing meaningful and experience-based learning opportunities. The findings also support the study of Duke and Cartwright (2021), which highlighted that contextualized literacy instruction and differentiated reading activities significantly improve learners' comprehension and reading motivation. Similarly, Gay (2018) emphasized that culturally responsive instructional practices enhance learner participation and create inclusive learning environments that accommodate diverse learner backgrounds and literacy needs.

Theme 2: Intervention Strategies for Struggling and Non-Reader Learners

Teachers highlighted various intervention strategies implemented to support struggling readers and non-reader learners within school reading programs. Participants explained that remediation activities were essential in addressing learners' reading difficulties and improving foundational literacy skills. Teachers described conducting individualized reading sessions, phonics instruction, peer tutoring, vocabulary-building exercises, and repetitive reading drills to assist learners experiencing reading challenges.



One participant stated:

“Naglalaan kami ng remediation time para sa mga non-readers after regular classes.”

Another teacher shared:

“Peer-assisted reading activities help struggling learners become more confident.”

Participants explained that individualized instructional support allowed teachers to closely monitor learners' progress and identify specific literacy difficulties. Some teachers described grouping learners according to reading proficiency levels to provide targeted intervention activities. Others utilized oral reading assessments and comprehension checks to monitor learners' literacy development and adjust instructional approaches accordingly.

One participant explained:

“Kailangan talagang tutukan ang bawat bata kasi iba-iba ang reading difficulties nila.”

Another teacher remarked:

“Phonics activities and repetitive reading exercises help learners improve decoding skills.”

Teachers further emphasized the importance of patience, encouragement, and positive reinforcement when working with struggling readers. Participants observed that learners gradually developed confidence and motivation when teachers provided supportive and non-threatening reading environments.

The findings suggest that continuous monitoring, differentiated intervention strategies, and individualized instructional support significantly contribute to improving learners' literacy performance. These findings align with Snow and Matthews (2016), who emphasized the importance of early literacy intervention and individualized support in addressing reading difficulties among young learners. Likewise, Rasinski et al. (2020) noted that scaffolded literacy instruction and repeated reading practices positively influence learners' reading fluency and comprehension development.

Theme 3: Collaborative Support and Stakeholder Participation in Reading Programs

Participants identified collaborative support among teachers, parents, school administrators, and community stakeholders as a significant factor contributing to the effectiveness and sustainability of school reading programs. Teachers emphasized that literacy development becomes more successful when multiple stakeholders actively participate in supporting learners' reading practices both inside and outside the classroom.

One participant remarked:

“Kapag supportive ang parents, mas mabilis ang improvement ng bata sa reading.”

Another teacher explained:

“School administrators provide support through reading materials and program monitoring.”

Participants shared that parents who regularly assisted learners with reading activities at home contributed to improved learner confidence, reading habits, and literacy progress. Teachers also emphasized the importance of constant communication with parents regarding learners' reading performance and intervention needs. Some participants explained that home reading activities, reading logs, and parent-guided literacy tasks strengthened learners' reading exposure beyond school hours.

One teacher stated:

“Kapag may follow-up ang magulang sa bahay, mas nagiging consistent ang practice ng learners.”



Another participant shared:

“Community volunteers and reading advocates also help during literacy activities.”

Teachers likewise recognized the role of school administrators in providing institutional support through reading materials, monitoring mechanisms, and literacy-related school initiatives. Participants observed that collaborative efforts among stakeholders enhanced program implementation and strengthened learner participation in reading activities.

The findings indicate that stakeholder collaboration positively influences the implementation and sustainability of school reading programs. These findings support Epstein’s theory of school-family-community partnerships, which emphasizes the importance of collaborative educational support systems in improving learner outcomes. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) highlighted that collaborative educational environments strengthen instructional effectiveness and learner achievement.

Theme 4: Instructional and Resource Challenges in Reading Program Implementation

Despite the positive instructional practices and intervention efforts, participants encountered several challenges affecting the implementation of school reading programs. Teachers identified structural, instructional, and resource-related barriers that limited the effectiveness of literacy interventions and increased instructional difficulties.

One participant shared:

“Minsan kulang ang instructional materials kaya gumagawa na lang kami ng sarili naming materials.”

Another teacher stated:

“Mahirap pagsabayin ang regular teaching load at reading remediation.”

Teachers explained that limited access to appropriate reading materials hindered the implementation of differentiated literacy activities. Some participants described creating improvised instructional resources using personal funds and available local materials to address resource shortages. Participants also emphasized that large class sizes made individualized intervention difficult, particularly when managing learners with varying reading proficiency levels.

One participant remarked:

“Mahihirapan talagang matutukan lahat kapag marami ang struggling readers sa klase.”

Another teacher explained:

“Kulang din minsan ang parental support kaya nahihirapan ang learners mag-practice sa bahay.”

Teachers further highlighted the need for additional training related to reading assessment, intervention strategies, and differentiated literacy instruction. Participants explained that limited professional development opportunities affected their confidence in implementing specialized reading interventions.

The findings demonstrate the significant instructional and structural difficulties experienced by teachers implementing literacy programs. These findings align with OECD (2019), which identified inadequate instructional resources, teacher workload, and insufficient professional development as major barriers affecting literacy education in schools. Likewise, Ainscow (2020) emphasized that inclusive literacy programs require sufficient institutional support, instructional resources, and teacher capacity-building initiatives to effectively address diverse learner needs.



Theme 5: Professional Development Needs and Instructional Capacity Enhancement

Participants strongly expressed the need for continuous professional development programs focusing on literacy assessment, intervention strategies, differentiated instruction, instructional material development, and learner-centered reading approaches. Teachers emphasized that capability-building initiatives are necessary to improve instructional competence and sustain effective reading program implementation.

One participant explained:

“Kailangan pa namin ng more training tungkol sa intervention strategies for struggling readers.”

Another teacher stated:

“Professional development helps us improve our reading instruction practices.”

Participants described the importance of attending seminars, workshops, mentoring programs, and collaborative learning sessions to enhance their literacy instruction skills. Teachers believed that professional development opportunities would strengthen their ability to address diverse learner needs and implement more effective reading interventions.

One teacher shared:

“Mas nagiging confident kami kapag may updated training tungkol sa reading instruction.”

Another participant remarked:

“Importante ang sharing of best practices among teachers para matuto kami sa isa’t isa.”

Participants further emphasized the importance of sustained instructional coaching, collaborative mentoring, and school-based professional learning communities in enhancing literacy instruction practices. Teachers explained that continuous learning opportunities help them remain responsive to evolving literacy challenges and instructional demands.

The findings indicate that capability-building initiatives are essential for strengthening teachers’ literacy intervention competencies and sustaining effective school reading programs. These findings support Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who emphasized that sustained professional development positively influences instructional effectiveness and learner achievement. Similarly, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) highlighted that teacher capacity-building plays a critical role in promoting inclusive and responsive educational practices.

5. Discussion

The findings reveal that teachers employ diverse learner-centered and contextualized instructional strategies to improve learners’ literacy performance. Differentiated instruction, guided reading, remediation sessions, and peer-assisted learning significantly support struggling readers and non-reader learners.

The study further highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration in strengthening reading program implementation. Parental involvement, administrative support, and community participation contribute to program sustainability and learner progress.

However, teachers continue to encounter significant instructional and structural challenges, including inadequate resources, limited training, and learner diversity. These barriers affect the overall effectiveness and sustainability of school reading programs.

The findings support existing literature emphasizing the importance of teacher capability-building and



institutional support in literacy intervention programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

6. Proposed Capability-Building Intervention Framework

The proposed capability-building intervention framework includes the following components:

1. Professional Development Enhancement

- Reading intervention workshops
- Literacy assessment training
- Differentiated instruction seminars
- Instructional material development training

2. Instructional Resource Support

- Provision of contextualized reading materials
- Development of digital literacy resources
- Reading assessment tools enhancement

3. Collaborative Literacy Support Systems

- Parent engagement programs
- Teacher mentoring and coaching
- Community literacy partnerships

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

- Learner reading progress tracking
- Program implementation monitoring
- Instructional feedback systems

5. Sustainable Literacy Program Management

- Institutional policy support
- Reading program funding allocation
- Continuous literacy advocacy initiatives

7. Conclusion



Teachers play a vital role in implementing school reading programs through contextualized instruction, remediation strategies, and learner-centered literacy interventions. While motivational and collaborative practices support learners' reading development, teachers continue to face significant challenges related to resources, training, and instructional demands.

The study concludes that sustainable school reading programs require strengthened capability-building initiatives, institutional support systems, and collaborative stakeholder engagement. The proposed intervention framework provides a comprehensive guide for enhancing teachers' literacy instruction capacities and improving reading program implementation in schools.

8. Implications of the Study

1. Schools should strengthen teacher capability-building programs focusing on literacy intervention and differentiated instruction.
2. Educational institutions should provide adequate reading materials and instructional resources.
3. Policymakers should support sustainable literacy initiatives and school-based reading interventions.
4. Future studies may explore learners' perspectives and quantitative assessments of reading program effectiveness.

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