

Catch-up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance of elementary learners: Basis for an action plan

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Abstract: This study determined the level of Catch-Up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance of elementary learners in the Buenavista II District, Division of Bohol for the school year 2024–2025. Using a quantitative, descriptive research design, data were gathered from 47 teachers and 820 Grade 4 to 6 learners through survey questionnaires and the Phil-IRI pre-test. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson's r , and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed that the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays was moderate across three categories: structural implementation, curricular integration, and engagement strategies, with strengths in clear guidelines and interactive teaching strategies, but weaknesses in grade-level consistency and teacher preparedness. Reading motivation was also moderate, with learners valuing the importance of reading but showing lower compliance and tendencies toward reading work avoidance. Reading performance, however, was low, with 68% of learners at the frustration level and none at the independent level based on Phil-IRI results. Correlation and regression analyses showed no significant relationships between Catch-Up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance. These results suggest that while the initiative and learner motivation are present, they do not significantly affect learners' reading outcomes. The study concludes with the development of a targeted action plan that recommends stronger program implementation, enhanced motivational strategies, and focused reading interventions. It also encourages future research with broader samples and qualitative approaches to gain deeper insight into the interplay between literacy programs and learner outcomes.

Keywords: Catch-up Fridays, Reading Motivation, Reading Performance

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, literacy has remained a central focus of global educational reforms, emphasizing the importance of reading proficiency as a foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. Reading is not only a basic academic skill but also a key factor in personal and societal development. According to UNESCO (2021), strengthening foundational literacy skills is critical for achieving inclusive and equitable quality education, particularly in the early years of schooling.

In response to these alarming findings, the Department of Education introduced Catch-up Fridays through DepEd Order No. 001, s. 2024. This initiative designates Fridays for focused literacy instruction and engagement, aiming to address learning gaps and reinforce foundational reading skills. The program aligns with several legal and policy mandates, including Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), and the Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP)

under DepEd Order No. 70, s. 2011. It also supports the objectives of the National Reading Program by promoting structured, school-based reading interventions.

However, the effectiveness of Catch-up Fridays varies significantly depending on how well schools implement the program, the extent to which it is integrated into the curriculum, and the level of learner engagement. Particularly in districts such as Buenavista II District, disparities in teacher training, instructional materials, and learner support have raised questions about the program's actual impact on reading outcomes. Moreover, while structural and curricular components are crucial, learner motivation is an equally critical but often underemphasized factor in reading success. As Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasize, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, driven by interest, self-efficacy, and perceived value, directly influence reading performance.

This study is anchored in three major theoretical frameworks: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which underscores the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning; Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which focuses on the motivational roles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; and Guthrie's Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), which integrates motivation and cognitive strategy instruction to promote reading engagement. These frameworks collectively inform the investigation of how Catch-up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance interact and influence each other.

A growing body of literature supports the interplay between effective reading interventions, motivation, and performance. Studies by Reyes and Dela Cruz (2020), Lee and Smith (2020), and Cruz and Ramos (2019) highlight that motivation-based reading strategies significantly improve learners' reading skills. Other researchers, including Gonzalez and Silva (2020), Adams and Wilson (2020), and Li and Zhang (2022), have found that contextual factors such as peer collaboration, parental involvement, gamification, and differentiated instruction enhance both reading motivation and outcomes.

Given this context, this study aimed to determine the level of Catch-up Fridays implementation in terms of structural implementation, curricular integration, and engagement strategies. It also sought to measure learners' reading motivation across several dimensions and assess their reading performance using Phil-IRI pre-test results. Furthermore, the study explored the relationships among Catch-up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance. The results provided evidence for crafting an action plan aimed at improving reading motivation and performance through effective, research-based strategies.

Study Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of "Catch-up Fridays" implementation, the level of reading motivation, and the reading performance of elementary learners in the Buenavista II District for the school year 2024–2025. It specifically aimed to determine the level of program implementation in terms of structural components, curricular integration, and engagement strategies; determine the learners' level of reading motivation based on key dimensions such as reading efficacy, challenge, curiosity, involvement, importance, recognition, grades, social interaction, competition, compliance, and reading work avoidance; and evaluate their reading performance as reflected in the Phil-IRI pre-test results.

Furthermore, the study aimed to identify significant relationships between the level of Catch-up Fridays implementation and reading performance, between reading motivation and reading performance, between Catch-up Fridays implementation and reading motivation, and the combined influence of implementation and motivation on learners' reading performance. Based on the findings, the study also sought to propose a comprehensive action plan to enhance the effectiveness of Catch-up Fridays and improve reading outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to determine the level of implementation of Catch-up Fridays, the reading motivation of elementary learners, and their reading performance in the Buenavista II District, Division of Bohol. The design allowed for the systematic collection of numerical data without manipulating variables, providing insights into the relationships among the program's implementation, learners' motivation, and reading outcomes. Data collection involved three instruments: a teacher questionnaire on Catch-up Fridays implementation (adapted from Venzon, 2024), a learner questionnaire measuring reading motivation across eleven dimensions (adapted from Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), and reading performance data sourced from the Phil-IRI pre-test (DepEd, 2018). A total of 47 teachers and 820 learners from Grades 4 to 6 served as respondents, offering a comprehensive overview of the program's impact.

To ensure ethical conduct and validity, permissions were secured from academic and school authorities before administering the instruments. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to determine levels of implementation and motivation, while reading performance was evaluated using frequency and percentage distribution. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied to determine the relationships between variables, and multiple regression analysis determined the predictive influence of Catch-up Fridays and reading motivation on learners' performance. The findings guided the formulation of an action plan aimed at enhancing reading motivation and proficiency through improved implementation of the Catch-up Fridays program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study determined the level of Catch-up Fridays implementation, the level of reading motivation and the reading performance of elementary learners. After a thorough analysis, the researcher came up with the following findings, as explicitly discussed below.

Level of Catch-Up Fridays Implementation

The level of Catch-Up Fridays implementation in Buenavista II District is moderately implemented across all three areas: structural implementation ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.63$), curricular integration ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.53$), and engagement strategies ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.53$). Under structural implementation, the highest-rated item is the presence of clear guidelines and procedures ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.54$), while the lowest is consistency across grade levels and subject areas ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.67$). In curricular integration, the highest-rated item is the enhancement of engagement and outcomes through integrated literacy activities ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.55$), and the lowest is teacher preparedness ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.48$). For engagement strategies, the highest-rated item is the effective use of interactive teaching methods ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.50$), while the lowest is active student participation ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.52$).

The findings indicate that teachers in the Buenavista II District are moderately implementing Catch-Up Fridays across structural implementation, curricular integration, and engagement strategies. The presence of clear guidelines suggests that schools offer a structured environment that promotes accountability and maximizes instructional time, aligning with Cruz and Ramos (2019) and Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the role of structure in fostering competence and intrinsic motivation. However, inconsistency in implementation across grade levels indicates a lack of uniformity, potentially hindering equitable access to literacy interventions. Tan and Lee (2021) caution that inconsistent

program delivery undermines the effectiveness of catch-up initiatives, a concern echoed by Sociocultural Theory, which underscores the importance of shared, inclusive learning practices. The integration of literacy into academic content appears to enhance engagement and learning outcomes, supporting Guthrie's CORI framework and the findings of Reyes and Dela Cruz (2020) on curriculum relevance and student motivation. Despite this, teacher preparedness remains a concern, highlighting the need for targeted professional development, as emphasized by Bautista and Reyes (2022) and the CORI framework's focus on teacher efficacy. Engagement strategies are strengthened by the effective use of interactive, learner-centered teaching methods that foster autonomy and relatedness, core principles of Self-Determination Theory and findings by Roberts and Hughes (2020). Nonetheless, student participation still requires improvement, pointing to the need for differentiated and inclusive approaches, as advocated by Chen and Dawson (2021) and the culturally responsive principles of Sociocultural Theory. Overall, the findings underscore the moderate implementation of Catch-Up Fridays and emphasize the need for improved coherence, teacher support, and learner engagement to enhance the program's sustainability and impact, reinforcing Lee and Smith's (2020) assertion that structured, motivational interventions are essential for long-term literacy success.

Reading motivation

The level of reading motivation among elementary learners in Buenavista I District is moderately motivated across all dimensions. The highest indicator is Importance ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.96$), indicating that learners value reading as significant. The lowest indicators are Compliance ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.10$) and Reading Work Avoidance ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.10$), showing that learners are less motivated by external demands and show low avoidance of reading tasks.

The results reflect that elementary learners in the Buenavista II District are moderately motivated to read, with their strongest motivation stemming from the perceived importance of reading. This indicates that learners view reading as a meaningful activity connected to their academic success and future aspirations, aligning with Self-Determination Theory's concept of internalized extrinsic motivation and Guthrie's CORI framework, which emphasizes the role of valuing reading to sustain engagement. Supporting this, Reyes and Dela Cruz, as well as Lee and Smith, found that intrinsic motivation driven by reading's personal significance leads to stronger comprehension and academic performance. Conversely, the lowest indicators in compliance and reading work avoidance suggest that learners are less driven by external demands and demonstrate minimal avoidance of reading tasks, even when challenging. This represents a positive shift away from compliance-based behavior toward more autonomous and self-directed reading engagement, consistent with Johnson and Parker and with Wang and Chen, who highlighted the importance of supportive teacher-student relationships in fostering intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, low avoidance indicates learners are willing to engage with complex texts, reinforcing their moderate overall motivation. These findings support the conclusions of Bautista and Reyes, who found that setting personal reading goals and receiving encouragement from teachers significantly boosts motivation. Overall, the results suggest that learners are more motivated by the personal value they place on reading rather than by external pressures, implying that initiatives like Catch-Up Fridays are cultivating a reading culture rooted in appreciation rather than obligation, as echoed by Cruz and Ramos and Tan and Lee. This underscores the need for educators to continue emphasizing the meaningfulness of reading to nurture intrinsically motivated, lifelong readers.

Reading performance

Based on the Phil-IRI pre-test, the average reading performance of the 47 Grade 4–6 learners in the Buenavista II District is low. 0 learners (0%) were at the Independent Level, 15 learners (32%) were at the Instructional Level, and 32 learners (68%) were at the Frustration Level. The implication of this finding is that the majority of learners require intensive reading intervention and support, as they are not yet capable of reading independently or with minimal guidance.

The findings reveal that the average reading performance of Grade 4–6 learners in the Buenavista II District is notably low, with the majority falling within the Frustration Level and none reaching the Independent Level, indicating a critical need for intensive reading intervention. This outcome may be partially attributed to the early administration of the Phil-IRI pre-test shortly after the initial implementation of Catch-Up Fridays, before the program's full impact could be realized, an observation supported by Cruz and Ramos and Tan and Lee, who assert that catch-up programs require sustained execution for measurable improvement. The dominance of frustration-level readers underscores Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which stresses the need for scaffolded support within the Zone of Proximal Development, enabling learners to progress through guided and collaborative reading activities. Additionally, the absence of intrinsic motivation, as explained by Self-Determination Theory, may be a contributing factor, with low reading efficacy and limited autonomy possibly undermining engagement. This is echoed by Reyes and Dela Cruz, and Lee and Smith, who found that intrinsic motivation and supportive instruction correlate strongly with reading achievement. The CORI framework further emphasizes that reading success depends on integrating strategy instruction with motivation-enhancing activities, such as using high-interest texts and real-world connections, elements that may not yet have been fully implemented. External challenges such as inconsistent instructional quality, limited access to reading materials, and lack of home support, as noted by Adams and Wilson and Taylor and Freeman, likely exacerbate the issue. Overall, the findings call for urgent, sustained, and theory-driven interventions—aligned with programs like ECARP and Catch-Up Fridays, to build learners' reading fluency, comprehension, and autonomy.

Relationship among Catch-Up Fridays and reading performance

The results show no significant relationships among the variables: Catch-up Fridays implementation and reading performance ($r = -0.13$, $p = .375$), reading motivation and reading performance ($r = -0.23$, $p = .124$), and Catch-up Fridays implementation and reading motivation ($r = -0.10$, $p = .504$). Additionally, the combined effect of Catch-up Fridays implementation and reading motivation on reading performance is not significant ($R^2 = 0.08$, $p = .276$). These findings imply that neither the implementation of Catch-up Fridays nor reading motivation, alone or combined, significantly influence the learners' reading performance.

The findings indicate no statistically significant relationships among Catch-up Fridays implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance, whether examined individually or in combination. This suggests that neither the extent of program implementation nor learners' self-reported motivation, as currently structured, significantly influences reading outcomes. While these results may initially seem discouraging, they highlight deeper systemic issues such as variability in instructional quality, program fidelity, and learner engagement. The findings underscore the importance of not just implementing interventions but doing so with consistency, quality, and alignment to learners' needs. Theoretical perspectives such as Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Ryan and Deci's Self-

Determination Theory, and Guthrie's CORI framework, reinforce the need for scaffolded support, autonomy-enhancing practices, and strategy-integrated motivation. Without these components, even well-intentioned programs may yield limited effects. Thus, the non-significant results serve not as a dismissal of Catch-up Fridays or motivation-based strategies, but as a call for more holistic, theory-informed, and contextually adapted interventions that blend quality instruction, student-centered motivation, and collaborative support to meaningfully impact reading performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The Catch-Up Fridays program was moderately implemented by teachers in Buenavista II District, with strengths in structural organization, curriculum integration, and engagement strategies; however, gaps remain in teacher preparedness, consistent grade-level delivery, and active student involvement. Learners exhibited moderate reading motivation, particularly in valuing reading, though motivation was lower in areas such as compliance and reading work avoidance.

Reading performance of elementary learners, as indicated by the Phil-IRI pre-test, was low, with the majority of learners falling within the frustration level, underscoring the need for targeted reading interventions. Despite the presence of Catch-Up Fridays and efforts to build reading motivation, no significant relationships were found among the program's implementation, reading motivation, and reading performance. This suggests that while supportive structures and motivational factors exist, they have yet to exert a meaningful impact on improving reading outcomes and may require enhancement to better address learners' needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

The school administrators and teachers are encouraged to strengthen the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays by ensuring consistency across grade levels and subject areas. This can be achieved through the establishment of clearer standard operating procedures, regular monitoring of activities, and continuous professional development that focuses on literacy instruction and effective curricular integration.

The teachers are advised to intensify their efforts in improving learners' intrinsic reading motivation by incorporating interest-based reading activities, offering students the freedom to choose reading materials, and implementing goal-oriented tasks. They should avoid relying heavily on compliance-based strategies and instead foster a learning environment that promotes genuine enjoyment of reading.

The reading coordinators or the teachers and intervention specialists should provide targeted and intensive reading interventions for learners who fall under the frustration and instructional levels. These interventions should be developmentally appropriate, based on diagnostic assessments, and designed to address specific reading challenges while providing adequate scaffolding.

The curriculum planners and school literacy teams are encouraged to enhance student engagement during Catch-Up Fridays by integrating interactive teaching strategies such as educational games, peer tutoring, and collaborative reading tasks. These methods are likely to boost student participation and improve reading comprehension skills.

The district education leaders and those responsible for developing the action plan should formulate a comprehensive reading improvement plan based on the findings of this

study. This plan must include strategic interventions that aim to strengthen the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays, enhance motivational components in reading activities, and provide specific support for struggling readers. The action plan should be grounded in data, focused on clear goals, and subject to regular evaluation for its effectiveness.

Future researchers and academic institutions are recommended to conduct further studies that involve larger and more diverse samples. They are also encouraged to incorporate qualitative research methods such as interviews, classroom observations, and post-intervention assessments in order to gain deeper insights into the effects of program quality, teaching strategies, and learner characteristics on reading performance and program effectiveness.

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