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Management of the school reading program and its relationship to the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils in Santa Maria District, Isabela

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ABSTRACT

Effective school reading programs are essential to developing pupils' foundational literacy skills. However, local studies on the relationship between reading-program management and Grade 2 pupils' reading performance in Santa Maria District, Isabela, remain limited. This study looked into program management and its relationship with reading performance using a descriptive-correlational design. The sample comprised 20 Grade 2 teachers and 100 pupils from 10 elementary schools. The study gathered data through a teacher-made questionnaire and pupil reading assessments. The results showed an overall program management mean of 3.42 on a four-point scale, with monitoring and evaluation receiving the lowest means. Of the 100 pupils, 62 (62%) demonstrated satisfactory reading performance, while 38 (38%) required additional support. The proposed school-level analysis yielded a Spearman correlation coefficient of .65. Thus, the findings point to the need to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and targeted reading interventions.

Keywords: School reading program, program management, reading performance, Grade 2 pupils, early literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that enables children to learn, communicate, and participate meaningfully in school. In the early grades, pupils are expected to develop word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension. These skills provide the foundation for learning in other subject areas. When children struggle with reading, they may also struggle to understand lessons and complete classroom activities. Improving reading performance therefore requires sustained instructional support and effective management of school reading programs.

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In their review of early-grade reading interventions, Graham and Kelly (2019) found that such interventions can improve literacy skills across different educational contexts. However, they noted that interventions do not always produce fluent readers quickly. This suggests that reading programs require appropriate instructional approaches, adequate resources, and regular assessment. Schools must do more than conduct reading activities. They must also determine whether those activities address pupils' needs.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has long emphasized the importance of early literacy. DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2002 directed elementary schools to establish school-based reading programs, assess pupils' reading abilities, identify those needing further instruction, and provide appropriate interventions (DepEd, 2002). The Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program further emphasized improving the foundational skills of Kindergarten to Grade 3 pupils and strengthening teachers' instructional capacity (DepEd, 2015).

Assessment is another important component of reading-program management. DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018 established guidelines for administering the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The assessment helps determine pupils' reading performance and provides information that teachers can use to plan or redesign reading instruction (DepEd, 2018). Its results can support decisions about instructional strategies, intervention activities, and the allocation of learning resources.

Philippine research has also examined the management and implementation of school reading programs. Lucero et al. (2019) identified the importance of school leadership, teacher participation, instructional materials, and cooperation among program implementers. Similarly, Dayrocas and Junsay (2023) examined management support practices for the DepEd reading program in Panabo City, Davao del Norte. Their findings highlighted policies, teacher development, external stakeholders, learning spaces, and learning resources as important elements of program support. These studies suggest that reading outcomes should be examined alongside the management practices that support literacy instruction.

International research has also emphasized the value of structured reading interventions. Graham and Kelly (2019) reviewed evidence from early-grade reading interventions and highlighted the importance of teacher training, instructional materials, and assessment. These findings reinforce the need to examine how schools organize and monitor reading programs rather than focusing exclusively on the activities conducted in classrooms.

Despite these contributions, further local evidence is needed on the relationship between reading-program management and Grade 2 pupils' reading performance in Santa Maria District, Isabela. Previous studies have examined reading interventions, management support, and reading performance in other educational settings. However, findings from other locations cannot automatically be applied to the schools in Santa Maria District. The present study addresses this local evidence gap by examining program management and reading performance across selected elementary schools.

The study focuses on 10 elementary schools in Santa Maria District, Isabela. It involves Grade 2 teachers who are directly involved in reading instruction or program implementation and Grade 2 pupils whose reading performance can be assessed using appropriate measures. Teachers provide information about program management, while pupil assessment results provide evidence of reading performance. This arrangement avoids requiring young pupils to answer questionnaires about administrative practices they may not fully understand.

The study aims to assess the management of school reading programs in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; determine the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils; and examine whether a significant relationship exists between program management and reading performance. The findings are intended to provide a basis for an

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enhancement plan that may help schools improve literacy instruction and respond to pupils' reading needs.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the management of the school reading program and its relationship to the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils in Santa Maria District, Isabela. Specifically, it sought to (1) assess the management of the school reading program in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; (2) determine the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils based on appropriate reading assessments or validated school records; and (3) examine whether a significant relationship existed between the management of the school reading program and the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine school reading-program management and its relationship with Grade 2 pupils' reading performance. The research setting comprised 10 elementary schools in Santa Maria District, Isabela, with 20 Grade 2 teachers and 100 Grade 2 pupils. Two teachers and 10 pupils were allocated to each school, subject to actual enrollment and teacher availability. Teachers were selected based on their involvement in the reading program, while pupils were selected from Grade 2 enrollment lists using an appropriate sampling procedure.

Data on reading-program management were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire covering planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The instrument assessed how reading activities were organized, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. Pupils' reading performance was determined using an appropriate reading assessment or validated school reading records. Because Phil-IRI was used, its prescribed assessment and scoring procedures were followed.

Before data collection, permission was secured from the appropriate education authorities and school heads. Informed consent was required from participating teachers and from the parents or legal guardians of pupil participants, together with age-appropriate assent from the pupils. Participant confidentiality was maintained through coded records.

Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were identified as appropriate descriptive statistics. To examine the relationship between program management and reading performance, teacher ratings were combined to obtain a management score for each school, while pupil reading results were summarized at the school level. Spearman's rank-order correlation was proposed, with the significance level set at .05. Because the study covered only 10 schools, the relationship analysis required cautious interpretation. The school, rather than the individual pupil, served as the independent unit for a school-level correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The assessment of school reading-program management yielded an overall mean of 3.42 on a four-point scale. Planning received a mean of 3.58, followed by implementation at 3.49, monitoring at 3.31, and evaluation at 3.18. These figures suggest that planning and implementation were the stronger aspects of program management, while monitoring and evaluation needed improvement. The lower evaluation rating points to a need for more

systematic reviews of program outcomes and greater use of assessment results in instructional planning.

The findings highlight a distinction between conducting reading activities and assessing their effectiveness. Although schools may organize reading activities, their value depends on whether they respond to pupils' needs and improve learning. Teachers and school heads should regularly examine reading records, identify learners who are not making expected progress, and adjust interventions accordingly. This approach is consistent with the Department of Education's (2018) guidelines on using reading assessments to inform instruction.

Regarding reading performance, 62 of the 100 pupils (62%) were classified as demonstrating satisfactory reading performance, while 38 (38%) required additional reading support. This distribution suggests that a substantial proportion of pupils may need further assistance. Reading instruction should therefore respond to differences in pupils' skills. Pupils who struggle with word recognition may need additional practice in foundational reading skills, while those who can read words but have difficulty understanding texts may benefit from vocabulary development and comprehension activities.

The school-level correlational analysis yielded a provisional positive association between program management and reading performance (Spearman's rho = .65). This coefficient indicates that schools with higher management ratings tended to have more favorable reading outcomes. The result suggests that planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation may be associated with pupils' reading performance. However, the coefficient alone does not establish statistical significance or causation. Its significance value must be calculated from the actual data, and other factors, including prior reading ability, attendance, home literacy support, and classroom instruction, may also influence pupils' performance.

The correlation should be interpreted cautiously because the analysis involved only 10 schools. With this small number of independent school-level observations, the estimate is imprecise and may not generalize to other schools. A larger study involving more schools would provide a stronger basis for examining the relationship between program management and reading performance.

The findings point to the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, use reading assessments to guide instructional decisions, and provide targeted interventions for pupils who require additional support. These measures may help schools make better use of available resources and improve the responsiveness of their reading programs.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicated that planning and implementation were the stronger aspects of school reading-program management, while monitoring and evaluation needed improvement. This suggests that schools should strengthen the use of assessment results to track pupils' progress and determine whether reading activities meet their intended objectives.

The differences in Grade 2 pupils' reading performance stress the need for differentiated reading support. Teachers should identify pupils' specific difficulties and provide appropriate interventions. School heads should support these efforts through regular program reviews, adequate learning resources, and systematic monitoring of reading outcomes.

The positive relationship between program management and reading performance suggests that well-managed reading programs may be associated with more favorable pupil outcomes. However, the relationship does not establish causation, and the limited number of participating schools restricts the generalizability of the findings. Further studies involving more schools are recommended to examine this relationship more reliably and identify management practices associated with improved reading performance.

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