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Research Paper

A Grounded Theory Approach in Understanding the Experiences and Dilemma of Non-Readers in Basic Education

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Abstract

Over the past few years, a reading problem still exists despite the different reading programs and projects implemented all over the Philippines. None of the implemented programs tells what teachers, parents, and school administrators must do to uplift students' reading skills. As stated in the DepEd Order no. 001 s. 2024, the Department's current initiatives aim to improve learners' academic performance, especially considering the low reading proficiency levels indicated by national and international large-scale assessments. These results highlight the urgent need to address learning gaps and enhance reading skills for all students. This study aimed to understand the experiences and dilemmas of non-readers in basic education in the Schools Division of Calamba City. The study applied a qualitative research design and followed the grounded theory research process. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews to gather information on six (6) pupils from Grade 4 from two different public schools in the Division of Calamba City. A face-to-face interview was conducted to gather data from the participants over two weeks. The first round of interviews per participant lasted for 12-15 minutes and was recorded using a mobile phone. A second round of interviews was conducted with the participants to determine whether any patterns in their demographic profile could impact their reading abilities. Our findings showed that parental involvement and teacher support were the most crucial aspects to overcome absenteeism, a problem that mostly hampered reading performances for non-readers in context. Thus, Educational leaders must provide the support system needed by schools and communities to meet the expectations of providing literate learners. Developing countries like the Philippines need a holistic approach from the community, school, and education leaders to fully establish the desired goals of the new *MATATAG* agenda of the Department of Education.

Keywords *Non-Readers, Educational Leaders, Family Involvement, Teacher Support, Reading Model*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the foundation of learning and academic success (Ditona & Rico, 2021). Studies by Reading Horizon (2022) show that students with reading difficulties often struggle with working memory, making it challenging to filter, categorize, and prioritize information.

Early-grade learners continue to face challenges in meeting language, literacy, and numeracy standards (Department of Education, 2019). Underperformance in English, Mathematics, and Science is largely attributed to weak reading comprehension skills. Both elementary and high school students struggle with literacy, particularly in reading.

To address this gap, DepEd is reinforcing the Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP). As part of this initiative, all DepEd offices—central, regional, division, and school levels—are encouraged to support the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumasa (3Bs Initiative). This program strengthens reading advocacy and ensures that every learner attains reading proficiency at their grade level.

Despite the presence of this program, the problem continues to intensify with the pandemic. The DepEd has been steadily striving to enhance students' academic performance, particularly by addressing low reading proficiency levels identified by national and international assessments. These findings underscore the immediate need to close learning gaps and improve students' reading skills.

To address literacy challenges, DepEd launched Catch-up Fridays on January 12, 2024, in elementary and secondary schools, as well as community learning centers (CLCs) nationwide. Every Friday in January 2024 was dedicated to the "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) activity and field orientation. Moving forward, Fridays will focus on the National Reading Program (NRP) in the morning and Values, Health, and Peace Education in the afternoon, incorporating the Homeroom Guidance Program (HGP).

The Philippines' poor performance in the 2022 PISA reflects a learning competency gap of five to six years (Servallos, 2023). The country ranked 77th out of 81 nations, scoring 355 in mathematics, 347 in reading, and 373 in science, significantly below the global average (Servallos, 2023). This study aims to develop a reading theory to help learners achieve grade-appropriate literacy skills, reduce the number of non-readers, and ultimately improve the national literacy rate. Effective research, implementation, and monitoring are essential for educators to develop evidence-based strategies in reading instruction.

Research Questions:
1. Central Question:
   - What is the significance of the lived experiences and challenges faced by non-readers in basic education?
2. Corollary Questions:
   - What difficulties do non-readers encounter?
   - What opportunities are available to non-readers?
   - What themes emerge from participants' shared experiences?

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

To describe the course of the grounded theory of this study, a paradigm presented the research framework that showed the conduct of this grounded theory type of research as well as the data collection and analysis of data gathered from the participants. According to Turner and Astin (2021), in qualitative research, grounded theory is both a methodology and a method. This research method is used to gain an emic understanding of a phenomenon. Simply put, this means understanding the perspective, or point of view, of an "insider," or those who have firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon. Grounded theory is a research method that originated in the social sciences but has recently been applied to education and health research. Grounded theory's goal is to generate a theory that is grounded in data and shaped by the perspectives of participants, moving beyond description and toward the theoretical explanation of a process or phenomenon (Turner and Astin 2021).
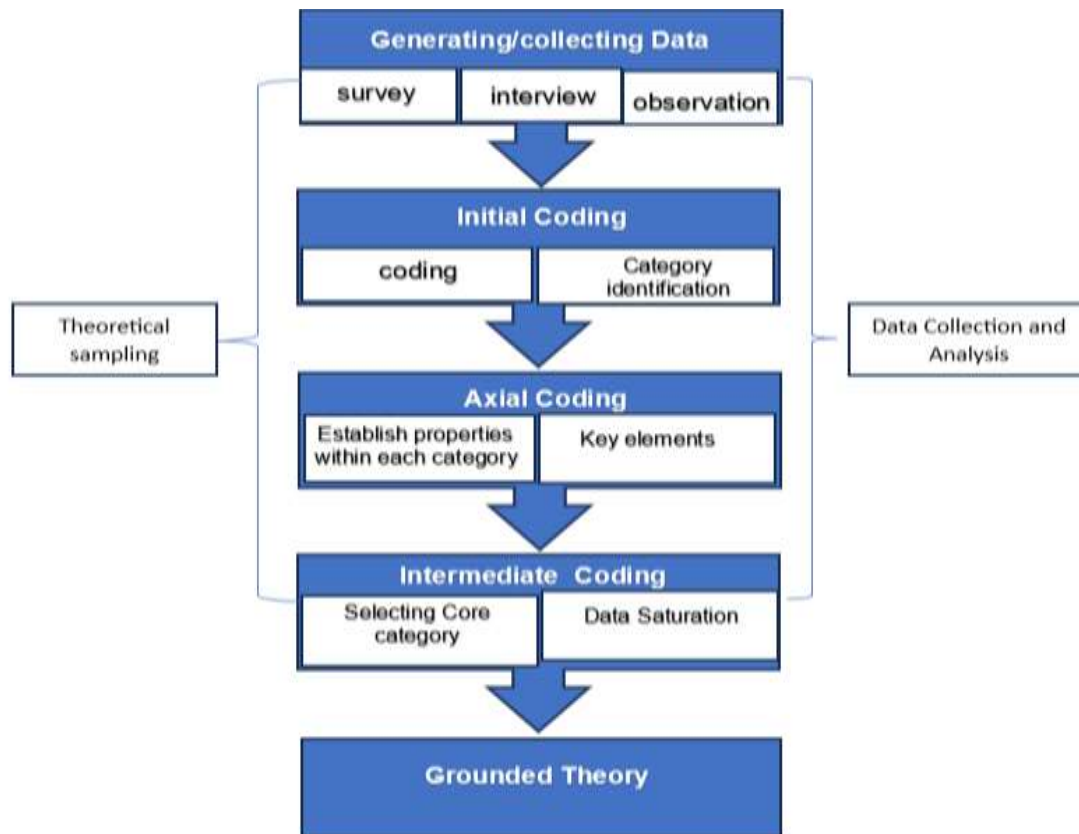
Figure 1. Research Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many children and adults struggle with reading due to various factors, including innate learning ability, home environment, parental involvement, and school quality. To enhance reading instruction, educators must understand the theories underlying effective teaching methods (Roe et al, 2019).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Reading explores how context, culture, and social interactions influence reading development (Simply Psychology, 2024). This theory suggests that reading is not just a cognitive process but a socially and culturally influenced activity, shaped by norms, customs, and values. In reading education, this underscores the need for social learning environments that embrace students' cultural and linguistic diversity.

Similarly, Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the role of observation and environmental interactions in shaping learning (Main, 2023). It asserts that individuals acquire knowledge through social interactions—not solely through intellectual engagement—but also by observing and mimicking others, including peers, parents, and teachers.

Chi (2024), in an interview with a UP College of Education faculty member, highlighted the strong link between educators' proficiency and the quality of reading instruction. The discussion emphasized gaps in fundamental teaching competencies, underscoring the need for stronger teacher training in reading education.

Padilla (2022), an expert in reading and literacy education, highlighted cases where teachers lacked fundamental skills, such as correctly pronouncing letter sounds, which negatively impacted reading instruction and student progress. Several factors contribute to poor reading literacy skills among elementary students in the Philippines, including insufficient resources, inclusion of students with learning challenges, low reading interest, inadequate teaching

proficiency, limited materials, parental engagement, and student well-being (Librea et al., 2023). Additionally, non-mastery of reading elements, the presence of at-risk learners, and the absence of a strong reading culture further hinder literacy development. To address these issues, Philippine elementary schools should implement a structured reading program with continuous progress monitoring and reading assessments (Librea et al., 2023). Providing adequate support for children's reading abilities can help them catch up with their peers (Ustun-Yavuz, 2024).

A study at Boston Central Elementary School found that the key predictors of Grade 3 students' reading performance were vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, teacher influence, and parental involvement (Paguyan & Taoc, 2022). Similarly, assessing students' reading abilities plays a crucial role in designing effective intervention materials. School administrators and program specialists are encouraged to develop support programs for both teachers and students to strengthen literacy skills (Pocaan et al., 2022).

Larioque (2023) emphasized that the poor reading abilities among Filipino students, particularly millennials, highlight the need to strengthen reading as a core study skill and promote positive study habits. Reading difficulties can directly affect learning attitudes, reading perspectives, and overall academic performance.

School absenteeism negatively impacts educational outcomes, creating knowledge gaps and limiting access to learning resources. Regular school attendance is essential for vocabulary and reading comprehension development. Additionally, Wyse and Bradbury (2022) stressed that curriculum policies and teaching practices should be guided by strong research evidence on effective reading instruction methods.

Buckingham (2020) noted that understanding phonological connections between speech and print is essential for early reading acquisition. Wirth et al. (2020) found that a stimulating home learning environment significantly influences children's literacy and numeracy skills in both the short and long term. Similarly, Luo and Wei (2023) emphasized that high parental engagement positively impacts language learning outcomes, leading to improved school attitudes and academic motivation. Supporting parental involvement in children's education can yield long-term benefits (Utami, 2022).

Home reading activities enhance children's reading skills, though their frequency declines as reading proficiency improves. Parents' perceptions of their child's reading interest both influence and are influenced by reading skills, while children's self-reported interest is shaped by their reading ability but does not affect it in return (Georgiou et al., 2021).

Aguirre et al. (2024) underscored the importance of tailored interventions and consistent practices to support struggling readers. Their study suggests that remediation materials can enhance early literacy skills, particularly in letter-sound associations, syllabication, and word recognition. Similarly, Muller et al. (2020) found that interventions emphasizing syllable reading practice improve phonological decoding and word recognition efficiency.

Teaching reading extends beyond recognizing letters or symbols; it is a complex process that requires targeted strategies to enhance reading skills. Various factors—teachers, parents, environment, technology, and learners' challenges—influence reading development. Understanding these factors is essential for teachers to implement appropriate strategies, materials, and approaches tailored to students' individual needs. A one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective, particularly for students with diverse learning needs.

One effective way to teach children is to help them perceive reading as an essential life skill rather than a school requirement (Ehri, 2020). Teachers play a critical role in shaping young learners' literacy skills, particularly at the primary education level. Their attitudes toward reading instruction significantly impact students' literacy development (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020).

A study by Maiden et al. (2024) found that listening while reading with error correction and repeated reading with word rehearsal are equally effective in improving reading accuracy and reducing errors. These findings emphasize the importance of corrective feedback, such as error correction and word rehearsal, in fostering reading progress.

Parental involvement also plays a crucial role in children's language learning outcomes; however, inappropriate parental engagement can hinder language acquisition (Luo & Wei, 2023). Parents serve as key facilitators of literacy development, particularly during early schooling years. However, those with their reading difficulties may struggle to provide adequate support. Dejacto et al. (2023) emphasized that a strong teacher-parent partnership can significantly enhance students' overall academic development both at school and at home.

While technology can present challenges to students' learning, it also serves as a valuable educational tool. Continuous innovation and adaptability are crucial for improving education quality and addressing literacy challenges. Strengthening reading programs is imperative to prevent the Philippines from ranking among the lowest in global reading proficiency assessments.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative, non-experimental research design focusing on the experiences and perspectives of non-readers in basic education. The grounded theory approach was selected to identify and conceptualize social patterns affecting children's reading abilities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Specifically, the Straussian grounded theory approach was used, which advocates for the integration of a literature review (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Breckenridge and Jones (2009) supported this perspective, explaining that while existing literature can inform the initial stages of data collection, it should hold no theoretical significance until validated or refuted by emerging data.

Corbin and Strauss (1990) emphasized that an early literature review enhances theoretical sensitivity, provides secondary data, raises critical questions, guides theoretical sampling, and strengthens analysis. These advantages reinforced the decision to adopt the Straussian grounded theory approach.

Grounded theory is particularly suitable for exploring student perceptions as it prioritizes data-driven insights (Feeler, 2012). This highly inductive approach ensures that students' experiences and perspectives shape the research findings (Feeler, 2012). It is especially effective when investigating topics with limited existing theoretical frameworks, as it seeks not only to understand but also to develop a theory grounded in participants' lived experiences (Miller, 2011).

The study incorporated observations, interviews, and document analysis to enhance data quality. Archival studies and teacher perspectives were also included alongside student interviews. Participants were asked about reading strategies and instructional methods, and the findings were systematically categorized and organized until a core category emerged, leading to the development of a theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Selection Criteria and Participants

Purposive sampling was initially used to guide data collection, where participants were deliberately selected to address the research question. This approach provided the initial dataset for analysis, while theoretical sampling was later employed based on codes and categories emerging from the data (Tie et al., 2019).

This study was conducted with six non-reader intermediate students in the Division of Calamba. Their experiences were compared and analyzed to determine their learning-to-read

challenges. Interviews were conducted over two weeks, followed by a second round of interviews in the subsequent week to gather additional insights and verify previous responses.

Participants were asked about age, parental educational attainment, and parental involvement in their learning. The Pupils at Risk of Dropping Out (PARDO) program was used as a supplementary resource, providing data on parents' education, financial status, extracurricular participation, emotional adjustment, and children's nutritional status. These resources helped identify factors influencing students' reading abilities.

The researcher engaged with participants to evaluate the authenticity and suitability of their responses, ensuring a deep understanding of their experiences. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to facilitate more meaningful discussions, given that the participants were students. This method allowed the researcher to delve deeper into responses and ensure comprehensive insights.

To uphold ethical research standards, approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of Calamba City, Laguna before commencing the study. The study's importance and objectives were clearly explained to teachers, parents, and participants. Parental consent was secured, emphasizing voluntary participation and the right to withdraw if privacy concerns arose. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that their responses would be used exclusively for research purposes.

The researcher maintained objectivity and neutrality throughout data collection, ensuring an unbiased analysis of responses. Participants' experiences were handled with sensitivity and respect, avoiding offensive language or judgmental remarks.

Research Instrument

The researcher conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with selected intermediate learners to gather insights into their reading challenges. In addition to interviews, observations were used to collect and analyze data. The researcher carefully examined participants' responses, behaviors, and family backgrounds to identify factors influencing their reading abilities.

A set of guiding questions was prepared to ensure that the interviews aligned with the study's objectives. However, additional topics emerged as the interviews progressed, allowing participants to clarify, elaborate, or rephrase their answers as needed (Langkos, 2014).

Interviews were conducted with students from Palingon Elementary School and San Juan Elementary School. Before implementation, the questionnaire underwent validation for content accuracy and grammatical clarity. The validation process used a tabular format checklist, categorizing each question as accepted, revised, or rejected, with an additional column for comments and suggestions. Following the interviews, observations, and document analysis, a theoretical framework was developed to capture the experiences and challenges of non-readers in basic education.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data for this study were collected from six non-readers. Initially, the researcher submitted a formal request to the School Division Superintendent to obtain permission for the study. Upon approval, additional permission was sought from the selected schools to interview students. Consent forms were distributed to parents and guardians, explaining the study's purpose and ensuring that all collected information would be used solely for research purposes.

The data collection process involved face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions. This approach allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions and gather more accurate insights. During the interviews, the researcher observed students' attitudes and gestures while also assessing their reading abilities through word and sentence reading exercises. Each interview lasted 12–15 minutes and was recorded using a mobile phone. The researcher then transcribed and

analyzed the data, identifying initial categories. A second round of interviews was conducted to determine whether demographic factors influenced reading abilities. Data collection lasted two weeks, and similar responses were grouped into themes. The process continued until no new patterns emerged, indicating that data saturation had been achieved.

The study employed an in-depth interview technique, fostering a cooperative and engaging environment between the researcher and participants (Feeler, 2012). In Grounded Theory research, achieving data saturation is a fundamental goal (Charmaz, 2006). Data coding ceased once no new occurrences or characteristics were identified (Glaser, 1965). The complexity of Grounded Theory studies depends on the research question. Since this study involved relatively simple questions, data saturation was reached without requiring extensive fieldwork or large datasets (Aldiabat & Navenec, 2018). According to Charmaz (2006), the nature of a research question significantly influences the pace at which data saturation is achieved.

Treatment of Qualitative Data

In grounded theory analysis, the researcher followed a systematic process: identifying recurring themes through a detailed review of the data, coding emergent themes using keywords and phrases, organizing the codes into hierarchical concepts, and categorizing these concepts based on identified relationships (Miller, 2025). The resulting categories and their interconnections served as the foundation for the development of a new theory. The researcher implemented the following steps: coding the data, refining the Code System, building categories through Creative Coding, and constructing theories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis: inadequate family home-based involvement, weak family school-based home involvement, chronic absenteeism, appalling phonic awareness, and phonologic awareness, Inoperative reading materials, and incongruous reading tutorials

Thematic Chart A

Table 1. Inadequate Family Home-Based Support

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	*My grandmother is the one who teaches me how to read, but only occasionally. Only when I want to read*	Lack of support in reading by other family members	
P2	*When my mom was here, she taught me to read. But that is rare because moms go to work.*	Less support from the mother in reading	
P3	*Mother only asks me to read sometimes because she is always busy.*	Less time of mother in teaching reading	**Inadequate Family Home-Based Support**
P4	*No one teaches at home because my mother is away from home. When I was learning modularly, my older sister taught me*	No support from mother	

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P5	*No one taught me that. Mom taught me sometimes but rarely because she was busy selling and I took care of my sibling.*	Less or no support in teaching reading	
P6	*Sometimes, my mom asks me to read.*	Less involvement of parents in reading.	

The first superordinate theme highlights one of the main challenges faced by non-readers in basic education—the lack of parental support. When participants were asked about their parents' involvement in their reading difficulties and school activities, all reported minimal to no support from their families.

A child's early educational development begins at home, forming the foundation of their learning journey. Within this environment, children acquire their first language and adopt various communication styles from their parents. Early exposure to education and reading, reinforced by parental encouragement, fosters a positive attitude toward school attendance. However, a lack of family involvement at an early age can shape a child's perception of education.

Before entering school, parents play a crucial role in introducing basic concepts such as letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. As children grow, parents should also emphasize the value of education. However, many learners in the Philippines come from low-income households, where parental engagement in literacy development is limited.

"No one taught me that. My mom teaches me sometimes, but rarely, because she's busy selling and I take care of my sibling," - Participant 5

Unfortunately, only a small percentage of parents in this demographic actively engage their children in activities designed to enhance literacy skills.

Thematic Chart B

Table 2. Weak Family School-Based Involvement

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	*Mother goes to school when she is summoned. She was called because I was very unruly. She also goes when report cards are distributed. But she seldom attends meetings.*	Less attendance in PTA meeting. The parent went to school when called.	
P2	*Mom went to get the report card. Sometimes, she arrives late.*	Less involvement in PTA meetings	**Weak Family School-Based Involvement**
P3	*"Mom went to school during card giving. The card always has a signature. Sometimes she cannot attend meetings.*	Reduced involvement in PTA meetings	

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P4	*My parents are not here, so my brother's wife went to school just to sign the card.*	Parents have no time to attend school meetings.	
P5	*Mother goes to school when it's time to distribute the report card, But she just can't attend meetings.".*	Reduced involvement in PTA meetings	
P6	*She always goes during report card distribution. However, sometimes she cannot attend meetings because she has many siblings. When I have done something wrong, Dad also goes. Sometimes, the teacher will come to our house.*	Less attendance in PTA meeting. The parent went to school when called because the pupil misbehaved.	

The second superordinate theme relates to the first Superordinate. Weak parental support in school was observed among the participants. Mostly, their parents went to school to sign the participants' card or if their child misbehaved at school. Parents' involvement in school includes regular communication with teachers to help learners fill in the gaps in their literacy problems. Parental involvement does not stop in signing and seeing the school report cards of the children. Through family involvement, children may feel that they are important and that reading is important. According to Annie (2022), teachers play a central role in defining educational goals by actively engaging in the learning process.

However, families and caregivers possess vital insights about their children that teachers may not possess. Thus, when both parties contribute their perspectives, a student's learning experience is enhanced. It was also observed by the researcher from her previous pupils that they wanted their parents to be involved in school events and programs. They feel proud when their parents come to school and are mentioned by teachers for their participation. The pupils whose parents do not have time with their children in school develop emotional or behavioral problems, thus affecting their academic performance, including reading.

Thematic Chart C

Table 3. Chronic Absenteeism

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	I am not often absent from school; I have more days present than absent. (Upon confirmation with the teacher he is always absent.)	Record of constant absenteeism	**Chronic Absenteeism**
P2	I am often absent. When I am sick, sometimes I have a fever;	Constant absenteeism due	

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
	sometimes I feel lazy; sometimes I do not have an allowance. When I feel lazy, they try to force me to go to school, but I still cannot.	to illnesses and laziness in going to school.	
P3	I am only occasionally absent. It is when I have an ear infection or when my tooth is painful.	Absenteeism is caused by sickness.	
P4	Often, I am absent because I have stomachaches caused by not eating. Sometimes, I have no school allowance to buy food in school.	Contant absence is caused by sickness and sometimes due to poverty.	
P5	I am sometimes absent because I get sick, and sometimes my nose bleeds.	Absenteeism due to sickness	

The third superordinate theme is connected to the first and second. Five of six participants consistently miss school, a significant threat to the academic progress of a considerable portion of the student body. The reasons for their frequent absences varied, with some citing illness and others lacking financial resources for transportation or meals. Poverty contributes to poor nutrition and subsequent health issues, perpetuating a cycle of absenteeism. This not only impacts their physical well-being but also diminishes their motivation to engage in learning because of prolonged illness and accustomed absence from school.

If the two initial superordinate themes are addressed, absenteeism will likely decrease. Students who receive support from their parents both at home and in school are less inclined to skip school, even when they are unwell.

Thematic Chart D

Table 4. Appalling Phonic and Phonological Awareness

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	Sometimes I get confused by words. I do not know all the sounds of the letters yet.	non-mastery of letter sounds, poor word recognition	
P2	I get confused with words. During exams, if I don't understand or do not know the reading, I just assume. I still don't know all the sounds of the letters.	non-mastery of letter sounds, poor word recognition	**Appalling and Phonological Awareness**

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P3	I am not yet good at English. I only know CVC words, and I do not know all the letters sounds yet.	Non-mastery of phonics. Poor word recognition	
P5	I struggle with English. I still don't know all the sounds of the letters. I just assume on tests when I don't understand what I'm reading.	Non-mastery of phonics. Poor word recognition	
P6	I get a little confused with some words; I still don't know all the sounds of the letters.	Non-mastery of phonics. Poor word recognition	

The fourth superordinate theme in addressing the challenges faced by non-readers in basic education emphasizes the importance of teacher support. A meta-analysis by the National Institute for Direct Instruction (2023) found that students who received instruction using the Phonics Approach demonstrated a 41% improvement in decoding skills compared to those who did not receive explicit phonics instruction (Main, 2023).

Among the six study participants, five had not mastered letter sounds. Phonemic awareness is typically developed when parents engage with their children at an early age. As children begin to communicate, they adopt the sounds they are exposed to at home and in their community, contributing to the development of their mother tongue or first language. Parental involvement plays a critical role in shaping early literacy skills.

All participants began their primary education during the pandemic, a period when distance learning posed challenges to early reading development. Their parents did not provide sufficient reading instruction, and their teachers were unable to focus on phonics instruction due to the limitations of remote learning. Additionally, the demographic profile of the learners revealed that their parents' highest level of education was high school graduation.

Teachers must understand their learners' unique reading difficulties and implement appropriate instructional strategies. Ensuring that students master letter sounds is essential, as it forms the foundation for phonemic and phonological awareness. By identifying and addressing individual reading challenges, teachers can employ effective methods to help students develop literacy skills.

Thematic Chart E

Table 5. Inoperative Reading Materials

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	I have reading materials, but I only occasionally get to read them.	Available reading materials but not used	
P2	I read the reading materials when my mom was here. That is rare because moms go to work. Sometimes, the teacher asks us to read at school.	Reading materials are seldom used	
P3	I have reading materials in both English and Filipino. They only read at school and at home.	Used reading materials in school and home seldom	
P4	Yes, Ms. K provided the reading materials. She provided Filipino materials. They are only read occasionally at school and at home.	Reading materials are seldom used	Inoperative Reading Materials
P5	I have the reading materials provided by Ms. Astilla. They are only read occasionally.	Reading materials are seldom used	
P6	Ms. Tin provides reading materials, but they are only read occasionally.	Reading materials are seldom used	

Reading materials are essential tools in teaching children how to read. However, providing these materials alone is insufficient; teachers must ensure that students receive appropriate reading materials tailored to their individual needs. To achieve this, teachers must first assess students' reading abilities and select materials accordingly.

During the first two weeks of the school year, teachers evaluated students' reading skills using assessment tools provided by the Department of Education (2019). These assessments helped determine students' reading levels and guided teachers in selecting suitable instructional materials. However, a key challenge faced by non-readers is their limited engagement with these materials, as both parents and teachers rarely encourage them to read. Struggling readers require additional time, effort, and support to develop their literacy skills. Without proper guidance and reinforcement, reading materials remain ineffective in fostering reading proficiency.

According to Cuntapay (2019), the development of validated reading instructional materials by master teachers and language educators—aligned with students' interests—has proven to be effective in literacy instruction. The study also highlighted the importance of

assessment tools in accurately measuring reading ability and the role of monitoring tools in improving Grade 2 students' English reading skills. Regular monitoring and guidance ensure that students use reading materials effectively. Additionally, parents should be oriented on how to utilize reading materials at home, as greater parental and teacher involvement significantly enhances literacy development.

Thematic Chart F

Table 6. Incongruous Reading Tutorial

Participant	Selected Codes	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
P1	I occasionally had one-on-one reading tutorials in Grade 3 and now in Grade 4. Ms. Alcon used to have me read in Grade 3, but now it's Ms. Astilla.	Reduced time in one-on-one reading tutorial	
P2	We are often asked to read in the room (but this is in chorus). Sometimes we read in both English and Filipino. Sometimes we have one-on-one reading sessions.	Practice reading in chorus and less time in reading tutorial.	
P3	Yes, we have reading sessions one by one in Grade 4. Sometimes we read in Tagalog. It's only once a week that we read. Sometimes, there is none.	A teacher rarely conducts a reading tutorial	**Consistency in Reading Tutorial**
P4	We had a remedial reading one-on-one reading tutorial with Ms. K, but it was only occasionally.	A teacher rarely conducts a reading tutorial	
P5	Yes, we have reading tutorials, but I'm only asked to read occasionally, even back in Grade 3.	A teacher rarely conducts a reading tutorial	
P6	I am asked to read by Ms. Ning (Learning Support Aide teacher), sometimes I am late because I am still eating in the canteen as feeding beneficiary. (her adviser only occasionally asks her to read)	Pupils rarely conduct reading tutorials, and advisers rely on an LSA teacher	

Most non-readers fall into the low-average learner category, often exhibiting low retention levels and requiring additional instructional support. Daily reading tutorials are essential, especially for students whose parents have limited time to provide reading instruction at home. Tomelden (2019) found that teachers who conducted consistent remedial reading sessions were able to effectively monitor students' progress from their initial engagement to later stages, ensuring the sustainability of remedial reading programs. The principles of consistency and reinforcement played a vital role in helping students develop reading skills and recognize their importance.

As a first-grade teacher, the researcher observed that daily reading tutorials significantly benefited struggling readers. Repetition was identified as an effective strategy for improving students' retention of letter sounds, words, phrases, and sentences. Allocating at least 20 minutes per day to reading practice helped reinforce learning, making reading an integral part of children's daily routines.

In addition to structured instruction, teachers should also implement motivational strategies to encourage participation in remedial reading sessions. Providing small incentives for attendance and recognizing students' progress and achievements can boost their motivation and eagerness to improve their reading skills.
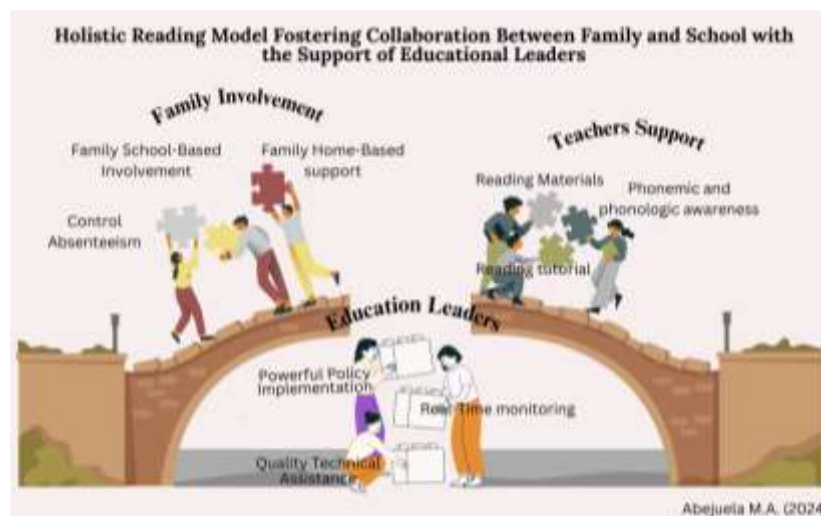
EDIFICE APERTURE MODEL

Figure 2. Edifice Aperture Model
A Holistic Reading Model for Fostering Collaboration between Family and School with the Support of Educational Leaders

The model was created through an in-depth analysis of the collected data. The advent of the theories was derived from the themes emerging in the theoretical sampling and enhanced through validations from experts in the field. Collaboration with family, teachers, and administrators is deemed necessary.

Family involvement in education includes the following;
1. *Family Home-Based support.* Children begin developing their literacy skills by engaging with their parents at home.
2. *Family School-Based Involvement.* Students whose parents remain involved with the school demonstrate better attendance and behavior, attain higher grades, show improved social skills, and adjust more successfully to the school setting.
3. *Control Absenteeism.* If the involvement of the first two families results in chronic absenteeism, it will no longer be a problem.

Teacher Support involves the following;
1. *Phonemic and phonologic awareness.* The use of ABAKADA (the traditional way of Filipino teaching reading) should be eliminated. The teacher may orient the parents to the effectiveness of phonemic and phonological awareness in reading.
2. *Reading materials.* Different innovative and validated reading materials must be

conceptualized. This will provide a variety of materials based on learners' reading levels.
3. *Reading Tutorials.* Regular daily reading sessions of 20-30 minutes at home and school significantly benefit slow learners. This practice helps prevent students from falling behind and should be maintained on the next-grade level.

Educational leadership plays a vital role in the educational system**.** The following are the significant roles of these leaders.
1. *Powerful Policy Implementation*. The rigid implementation of some policies is lacking in the Philippines. If top management thoroughly implements the different policies, rules, and regulations, more responsible parents, teachers, and administrators will be produced.
2. *Real-time monitoring.* This will allow the administrator to see the real scenario in the school setting and offer an immediate solution.
3. *Quality Technical Assistance.* Maximizing the government funds allotted to training, workshops, and other developmental needs of teachers' technical assistance is crucial.

To further enhance the model, the researcher sought the help of experts in the field of reading, particularly teachers who are frequently handling non-readers. An open discussion and brainstorming of the other existing problems were conducted, and other supporting mechanisms that would help the teachers, parents, and students were elaborated.

Most models and theories about reading only discussed the strategies needed to teach young learners how to read. This approach applies only to developed countries with excellent educational systems. In a country like the Philippines, holistic approaches through this model are needed to materialize the advocacy of improving literacy skills and produce zero non-readers. The helping hands of the family, teachers, and educational leaders must be able to edifice the gaps in literacy. This makes this model unique among the others.

The "Edifice Aperture Model" is a reading model that facilitates cooperation between families and schools together with the support of educational leaders to fully address the reading gap among learners. As the education sector has always faced reading problems throughout the school year despite the different programs and projects implemented, we must see what is lacking. Why is the problem with reading not stopping and why the Philippines is still at the lowest level in the international assessment? This gives the researcher the idea of creating a model that will connect the important factors affecting a child's early educational development. Collaboration between families and schools is essential to bridge the gap between non-readers. The six themes identified from this collaboration must come together to fully edifice the aperture, as the bridge will remain unstable if any piece is missing. To make the bridge stable and strong, educational leaders must support their families and teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

One significant discovery from this research is the identification of non-readers who are not classified as having learning difficulties. These students lack support from their families because most of their parents are busy working and taking care of their siblings. All participants had a low family income.

Their teachers also do not give additional effort in providing daily reading tutorials to help close the literacy skill gap. As learners progress to the next-grade level, they encounter greater difficulty in acquiring new skills because they have not fully mastered the competencies from the previous level.

The results revealed that almost all participants demonstrated phonic proficiency deficiency. Furthermore, the reading assessments administered by the researcher highlighted the

participants' insufficient word recognition and vocabulary skills. This is because most participants struggled with recalling the words they had read. This contributed to their difficulty in comprehending the test material, leading them to resort to guessing answers.

Examining the responses to the questions, a notable number of participants lack a thorough comprehension of the significance of learning to read. Many students struggle to grasp the importance of reading in their daily lives. While most students recognize the need for reading to facilitate learning and complete their studies, they fail to recognize the broader significance of reading.

Teachers and school administrators manipulated the outcome of the reading assessment to ensure a good school record, thus distorting the true situation in the educational setting and hindering the implementation of appropriate interventions. This is one of the factors that affects the results of the National Achievement Test as well as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Several researchers in the Philippines have revealed the effectiveness of different programs and projects in eradicating non-readers. Despite these findings, the ability to read is still the primary problem of the Philippine educational system. The approach to eliminating non-readers must be holistic. Proper monitoring of all factors that significantly affect the learner's ability to read must be performed consistently.

School administrators should thoroughly investigate the underlying causes of the longstanding issue of slow and non-readers in the Philippines. Teachers must have several teaching strategies that they can employ to help non-readers overcome their reading difficulties. Building rapport with the students will promote a positive attitude toward reading, leading them to attend remedial reading and lessen absenteeism. Parents need to recognize their significant role in their child's educational success. Establishing communication and collaboration with the child's teacher is crucial to effectively support learners in meeting their educational needs.

The objective of this study is to investigate the difficulties and opportunities of non-readers in the Division of Calamba, revealing additional contributing factors that the Department of Education needs to fulfill to enhance its educational system.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study discovered the experiences and perspectives of non-readers in basic education. This study was conducted among selected non-readers in the Division of Calamba for the school year 2023-2024. The scope includes a thorough understanding of students' experiences with the support they received from their families and teachers in their learning. This study involves a comprehensive analysis of how these experiences impact learners' educational progress. The respondents were six (6) selected non-readers from Grade 4 in the Division of Calamba.

While this research aims for depth and richness in exploring participants' experiences, inherent limitations must be considered. The scope may not fully capture the complete range of experiences and challenges faced by non-readers in basic education because individual experiences can vary significantly. Additionally, this study does not include the perspectives of students from other schools, which could offer a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and challenges. Despite these limitations, this research aimed to offer valuable insights into the lived experiences of non-readers in basic education, providing a foundation for further discussions, comparisons, and potential solutions to the literacy issue in the Philippine education system. For future researchers, to obtain more precise data on the large number of non-readers, it is recommended to verify the suggested number of participants when using qualitative grounded theory research.

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