



## Perceptions of Intermediate-Level Public School Teachers in Implementing the Catch-Up Friday Program

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### Abstract

This study explored intermediate-level public school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Catch-Up Day program, a remedial initiative designed to support struggling learners by providing additional instructional time. The program bridges learning gaps and enhances students' reading and comprehension skills. Specifically, the study aimed to (1) examine teachers' perceptions of the program, (2) explore its implementation in public schools, (3) identify challenges faced, (4) determine coping strategies, (5) examine the program's impact on teachers' experiences (6) assess its effectiveness, (7) gather recommendations for improvement. A single case study method was used, involving six (6) intermediate-level teachers from Grades 4 to 6 from a public school in Pagadian City, Zamboanga, Del Sur. Data were collected through interviews guided by an Interview Guide, conducted in a quiet school office after class hours to minimize disruptions, and analyzed using categorical aggregation, clustering data into categories to identify patterns. Findings revealed that teachers viewed the program positively and recognized its benefits despite the additional workload. Key strategies included sharing lesson plans, interactive activities, reinforcing basic reading skills, implementing peer tutoring, and incorporating enhancement activities. Challenges such as increased workload, poor reading comprehension, lack of parental support, and low student interest were managed through supplementary materials, take-home activities, parental communication, and interactive reading sessions. Teachers affirmed the program's effectiveness in improving reading skills and emphasized the need for adequate resources and support. This study's findings provide insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers to enhance programs and address the needs of both teachers and students.

**Keywords:** *Catch-Up Friday Program, Intermediate level Teacher, Perception*

### INTRODUCTION

The global learning crisis has been a growing concern for years, but the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly worsened this situation. When schools worldwide were shut down, over 1.6 billion learners were affected at the peak of the pandemic, according to UNESCO. The learning crisis in the Philippines has been particularly severe due to pre-existing educational challenges and the impact of prolonged school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic—severe for nearly two years—one of the longest in the world—leading to substantial learning losses, particularly in foundational skills such as reading and comprehension. The implementation of the catch-up Friday program is a critical time in Philippine education. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) results, the Philippines ranked 79th out of 81 participating countries in reading proficiency (Malipot, 2023). The World Bank (2022) reported that learning poverty in the Philippines has reached 91%, meaning that 9 out of 10 Filipino children aged 10 cannot read and understand a simple text. These statistics underscore the urgent need for targeted intervention programs.

The integration of the Catch-Up Friday Program has been widely explored in recent years because of its significance in addressing learning gaps, promoting student engagement, and ensuring

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academic progress. [De Guzman and Bermejo \(2019\)](#) demonstrated positive reinforcement outcomes in targeted intervention programs. Despite these advancements, challenges such as inconsistent implementation, limited resources, and varying levels of teacher preparedness remain significant barriers. In Philippine education, numerous programs have been implemented to enhance the reading abilities of students. Among these are the Every Child a Reader Program (E.C.A.R.P.), mandated by DepEd Memorandum No. 402 s.2004 and Administrative Order No. 324, which aim to ensure reading proficiency by Grade 3, and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), a national tool introduced in 2012 to assess reading levels from Grades 1 to 6.

Additionally, the Reading Recovery Program (R.R.P.), funded by the central office, focuses on early intervention to address literacy challenges before they hinder academic success ([Gilbas, 2022](#)). Despite these efforts, reading comprehension remains a persistent challenge. Recent statistics reveal that 9 out of 10 Filipino children aged 10 years struggle to read and understand simple texts, underscoring the need for more effective strategies to address this educational crisis. DepEd has taken coordinated action to recover and expedite learning in response to the growth in learning poverty in the Philippines. The Department of Education (DepEd) addresses this issue by implementing "Catch-up Day." Implementing "Catch-up Day" is part of the learning recovery program to help improve students' reading, analysis, and comprehension skills.

This research explored the perceptions of selected intermediate-level teachers from public schools in Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur, Philippines, during the 2024 academic year.

This study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the perceptions of intermediate-level teachers when implementing the Catch-up Day program?
2. How do intermediate-level teachers implement the Catch-up Day program in public schools?
3. What challenges do intermediate-level teachers encounter in the implementation?
4. How do they cope with these challenges?
5. How do intermediate-level teachers perceive the influence of the Catch-up Day program on their teaching experience?
6. How do intermediate-level teachers perceive the effectiveness of Catch-up Day?
7. What are the intermediate-level teachers' recommendations for improving catch-up Day implementation?

The results could help school administrators and policymakers make informed decisions about program design, implementation strategies, adjustments, and resource allocation to better meet teachers' needs. This study applies [Vygotsky's \(1978\)](#) Scaffolding Theory and highlights how the Catch-Up Day program provides structured support to enhance student learning. It explores teacher collaboration, guided interventions, and parental involvement, focusing on implementation, challenges, and effectiveness.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is an essential skill that forms the foundation of learning. It grants individuals enhanced access to their school curriculum, improves their interpersonal skills, and broadens their understanding of the world ([Anglia, 2020](#)). The purpose of reading is to understand ([Kasmawati, 2020](#)). It is the ultimate measure of reading proficiency, as it involves extracting meaning from written passages ([Alghonaim, 2020](#)). In addition, it is the main objective among proficient readers and is widely regarded as the most common assumption regarding the aim of reading ([Grabe & Yamashita, 2022](#)).

While reading serves as a foundation for learning and personal development, many individuals worldwide struggle to master this skill, leading to widespread reading difficulties in various countries. As [Claessen et al. \(2020\)](#) noted, reading difficulties are common worldwide. Global learning literacy is at crisis levels and is expected to worsen. According to the [U.S. Career Institute \(2024\)](#), nine countries worldwide have achieved a 100% literacy rate: Andorra, Finland, Greenland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and North Korea. Additionally, 37 countries have a literacy rate exceeding 99.0%, including the United States, which shares a 99.0% literacy rate with nations such as Sweden, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and France.

Conversely, eight countries have literacy rates below 40%, all of which are located in Africa. These include Chad (26.76%), Mali (30.76%), South Sudan (34.52%), Botswana (36.75%), Afghanistan (37.27%), Niger (37.27%), Niger (37.34%), the Central African Republic (37.49%), and Somalia (37.80%). Various factors contribute to low literacy rates in these regions, with poverty being a significant barrier. In some areas, children are forced to work instead of attending school to support their families ([U.S. Career Institute, 2024](#)). The 2022 PISA results showed that the performance of Filipino students in the three subject domains remained stable despite the COVID-19 pandemic; no significant improvements were noted. In mathematics, reading, and science, the Philippines were ranked as among the lowest performers among the 81 countries under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D.). The country was ranked 79th in reading. The average O.E.C.D. is at Level 2 or 476, whereas the Philippines is at Level 1a or 347 ([Malipot, 2023](#)). The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (B.A.R.M.M.) scored the lowest at 71.6%. The National Capital Region, on the other hand, registered the highest functional literacy of 96.5% ([Archive, 2022](#)).

In the Philippines' education, many programs are being implemented to enhance the reading abilities of Filipino students. Through the years, D.E.P.E.D. has launched several programs to cater to learners' reading needs. These programs constitute a comprehensive effort to improve reading skills and comprehension among students. Among them is the Every Child a Reader Program (E.C.A.R.P.), mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd) through DepEd Memorandum No.402 s.2004 and Administrative Order No. 324, which aims to ensure that every child achieves reading proficiency by Grade 3. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is a national assessment tool that measures students' reading levels from Grades I to VI in 2012. Reading Recovery Program (R.R.P.), backed by central office funding, targets early identification and intervention of literacy difficulties to prevent them from impacting a child's educational journey. Together, these programs aim to enhance students' reading skills and comprehension abilities across different levels of schooling ([Gilbas, 2022](#)).

However, despite the implementation of numerous programs and the longstanding recognition of reading comprehension as a crucial aspect of the learning journey, reading comprehension remains a significant challenge for schools within the Philippine education system. Statistics on Philippine education highlight that 9 out of 10 children aged 10 struggle with reading simple texts.

[Tomas et al. \(2021\)](#) found that poor reading skills among learners can be attributed to several factors in a regular classroom setting. These include the presence of learners at risk, such as (1) non-readers in early grades who struggle with alphabet recognition and reading certain Filipino words, (2) the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (L.S.E.N.s) without tailored assessment or teaching methods, impacting overall reading performance, and (3) frequent absenteeism due to family issues, further hindering reading progress. This study underscores the critical importance of reading proficiency for academic success.

D.E.P.E.D. Secretary VP Sara Z. Duterte announced that the Department is developing a policy for "Catch-up Friday," which will allow every Friday of the week as a time for essential education learners to improve their reading and writing skills ([Barcelona, 2023](#)). The official guidelines for the program are provided in DepEd Memorandum No. 001, s. 2024. All Fridays throughout the school year serve as Catch-up Days. The Catch-Up Friday program aims to strengthen fundamental, social, and other crucial skills required to fulfill the objectives of primary education. DepEd anticipates that students' capacities in reading, critical thinking, analysis, and writing will be enhanced through this initiative. The program's objectives align with the National Learning Recovery Program, which aims to provide comprehensive support for students nationwide and tackle the educational obstacles brought about by the pandemic ([Paculba, 2024](#)). The Catch-up Day program is implemented for all learners in all public elementary and secondary schools and community learning centers nationwide to enhance students' academic performance in the K to 12 Basic Education Program, considering their low proficiency levels in reading based on national and international large-scale assessments.

Teaching children to read using combined reading comprehension strategies has been shown to significantly improve children's reading proficiency ([Cooter, 2019](#)). In the Catch-up Day program, students' progress is monitored using self-reflection journals; grades are not assigned in this curriculum. Despite offering additional support to the students' academics, potential challenges and limitations can hinder this program's success. The existing literature has yet to extensively address teachers' experiences or perceptions in implementing Catch-up Friday; it only tackled the reading proficiency levels and perspectives of Grade 10 pupils. Consequently, this study aimed to understand the perceptions and challenges that intermediate-level teachers face in implementing the Catch-up Friday program.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored in [Vygotsky's \(1978\)](#) Scaffolding Theory, which serves as the skeleton of this research—knowing the perceptions of public-school intermediate-level teachers in implementing the Catch-Up Day Program. [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#) proposed that learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners can accomplish tasks with the support of a more knowledgeable other, such as a teacher or peer. In the catch-up day programme context, teachers' perceptions are influenced by their experiences in providing targeted support to students within their ZPDs. This includes identifying students' specific learning needs, scaffolding their learning through appropriate interventions, and gradually withdrawing support as they become more proficient. This research uncovers teachers' perceptions of facilitating student learning during catch-up sessions by applying [Vygotsky's \(1978\)](#) scaffolding theory.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researchers employed a qualitative approach and conducted a case study based on the methodology outlined by [Merriam \(1998\)](#). The study took place in a public school in Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur, Philippines, focusing on intermediate-level teachers from Grades 4 to 6. Specifically, the study involved six (6) intermediate-level teachers from a public elementary school who implemented the Catch-up Friday program. Grades 4 to 6 were chosen as participants because they represent the intermediate level of elementary education, where students transition from foundational literacy skills to more complex reading and writing tasks.

The main instruments in this study were the researchers themselves, who were assisted by an interview guide. The interview guide included a list of questions written out in full to prompt the interviewer to dig deeper and ask probing questions during the interview. The participants' responses served as preliminary data for analysis and interpretation. The instrument focused on

the participants' perceptions regarding the specific questions that led the researcher to obtain primary data on the perceptions of public-school intermediate-level teachers in implementing the Catch-Up Day program.

The researchers observed the following steps. First, the researcher sent a formal letter to the school principal where the study was conducted. Second, the researcher sought consent from a selection of intermediate-level teachers as participants and informed them about the purpose of their participation. They were also given an overview of the questions to prepare for answering. The researcher ensured the confidentiality of the participants' responses. Third, once the participants had agreed, the interviews were initiated. Lastly, the researchers evaluated and interpreted the data collected after the interviews to ensure valid and reliable results. The gathered data were used to develop the conclusion to be presented. The researchers collected data over two months beginning in 2024.

The data were analyzed using Merriam's (1998) method. Merriam (1998) viewed analysis as dismantling information and perceptions and assigning significance to the components. To simplify the process of finding meaning, Merriam (1998) categorical aggregation clustered the data into classes or categories. This allowed data analysis by identifying categories and patterns arising from the conversations. As a result, the researcher located patterns and connections using thematic analysis to analyze the data. After data collection, the study began to uncover concepts and identify data that could address the research questions.

Finally, the researchers adhered to ethical principles when treating the interview data. The study employed three (3) ethical considerations when conducting research. First, the participants were given informed consent forms. The goal was for human volunteers to engage in research freely after receiving complete information about what it entailed to participate and giving their agreement before doing so. Secondly, confidentiality: all participants' responses were for research only. The breach of confidentiality jeopardized the research's confidence and reputation and, in the long run, made it harder to participate in research in the future. Finally, the researcher ensured that intermediate-level teachers' participation was voluntary. The researcher scheduled an interview after the participants agreed and provided consent.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

A comprehensive examination of the transcripts revealed the underlying meanings of the responses of the participating teachers. The researchers identified several emerging categories of teachers' perceptions of implementing the Catch-up Friday program. The data presented below focused on the perceptions of intermediate-level teachers in implementing the Catch-up Friday program, teachers' ways of implementing Catch-up Friday, the challenges encountered by intermediate-level teachers in implementing Catch-up Friday, their coping mechanisms, examine the program's impact on teachers' experiences, the effectiveness of the Catch-up Friday program, and their recommendations for the implementation of Catch-up Friday—the research participants coded as intermediate-level teachers 1 (I.L.T. 1- I.L.T. 6).

### **Intermediate-level Teachers' Perceptions of the Catch-up Program**

The researchers asked intermediate-level teachers about their perceptions of the Catch-up Day program, and two categories emerged: Additional work for teachers and Beneficial for struggling readers.

#### *Additional work for teachers.*

Many intermediate-level teachers have claimed that the Catch-up Day program is additional work. The research participants shared the following:

*"As a teacher, this is additional work for most of us, not just for me but for most of us." I.L.T 4.1*

*"We are sad because implementing the program requires teachers to create lesson plans for all subjects, which is quite difficult. It is not easy to make lesson plans while also helping with reading the Catch-Up Friday program". I.L.T 4.2*

*"It adds extra activities, which can be a burden for the teacher" I.L.T. 4*

*"My initial reaction to Catch-up Friday is additional work and preparation." I.L.T. 5*

*"The Catch-Up Day program is difficult for teachers because we do not have pre-made reading materials. Preparing these materials took much time, even though we had an orientation. We still need to spend additional time to make the program better and more effective." I.L.T 6.2*

The study found that many intermediate-level teachers view the Catch-up Day program as an additional workload. Teachers reported that the program requires significant extra effort because they must create lesson plans for all subjects and prepare reading materials without sufficient pre-made resources. [Rafanan et al. \(2024\)](#) stated that the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays posed significant challenges for teachers, leading to heightened stress, struggle, and confusion due to a lack of resources and inadequate training. Work overload significantly contributes to burnout among teachers, diminishing physical and emotional energy ([Malik, 2019](#)).

#### *Beneficial for struggling readers.*

Many intermediate-level teachers have also claimed that the Catch-up Day program benefits pupils with reading difficulties. The research participants shared the following:

*"We were all genuinely happy with our initial reaction. As teachers, we were thrilled to hear about Catch-Up Friday because it was what we wanted, especially for our higher-grade pupils. We were genuinely happy; our prayers were answered, especially as the children are still products of this modular setup". I.L.T 6.1*

*"My perception is that the Catch-Up Day is positive for children because it can enhance their reading skills." I.L.T 4.2*

*"As a grade 4 teacher, I find the Catch-Up Friday program very helpful, especially for pupils that are slow readers and struggle to keep up. This program is essential for helping students develop their reading skills because they missed out on face-to-face teaching during the pandemic." I.L.T 4.3*

*"My perception of Catch-Up Friday is that, at first, we were simply going to catch up on lessons. Because the catch-up lessons were initially shortened, the participants felt challenged. However, as we continued, I realized that the guidelines focus on reading enhancement, which is very beneficial for the pupils". I.L.T. 5*

Teachers viewed the catch-up Friday program as highly beneficial for pupils with reading difficulties, fostering optimism about its impact. Students also express enjoyment and learning. This finding aligns with [Cayabyab et al. \(2023\)](#), who found remedial reading programs effective. The



study draws its theoretical framework from Scaffolding Theory, proposed by [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#), which contends that learners can achieve higher levels of competence with the support of more knowledgeable individuals, gradually decreasing assistance as they develop mastery. In the Catch-up Friday program context, teachers serve as knowledgeable others, providing support and guidance to struggling learners. This aligns with the scaffolding theory, where teachers scaffold students' learning experiences to enhance their reading skills and academic success.

### **Teachers' Catch-up Day Implementation in Public Schools**

The researchers asked the intermediate-level teachers how they implemented the Catch-up Day program, and several categories emerged. These categories include Sharing lesson plans with other teachers, Using interactive activities, Employing basic reading skills, Using peer tutoring strategies, and Incorporating enhancement activities.

#### *They shared lesson plans with other teachers.*

Intermediate-level teachers shared how they collaborated with other teachers. The research participants shared the following:

*"Before we began, we had an orientation with our principal and teachers. We had a collaboration. To reduce the workload, we assigned one person to prepare the lesson plan and another person to prepare the activities. Collaboration is essential for us. In grade 6, we have a nice setup because we practice team teaching to reduce the workload." I.L.T 6.1*

*"I share resources with my co-teachers at the grade level. We collaborate and plan what to do every Friday, discussing our plans together." I.L.T. 5*

The results revealed that intermediate-level teachers highly value collaboration in their professional practice. Teachers described various forms of collaboration, such as joint orientations with principals and colleagues, resource sharing within grade levels, and collaborative planning sessions. [Gamboa \(2022\)](#) found that teacher collaboration enhances the instructional effectiveness of faculty members and contributes to high-quality education.

#### *They used interactive activities.*

One of the intermediate-level teachers taught catch-up activities. The research participants shared the following:

*"Sometimes, we do not use chairs; instead, we use floor mats or carpets, or I borrow gymnastic mats to excite the children. I also prepare small tokens with my own money to make them happy. I designed interactive activities to prevent them from getting bored. Like spelling and finding words, those are some activities." I.L.T 4.2*

The study found that an intermediate-level teacher effectively used interactive activities to engage students during Catch-up Day. [Geng et al. \(2019\)](#) discovered that interactive teaching methods enhanced students' communication skills, teamwork abilities, and self-directed learning aptitudes.

#### *They employ basic reading skills.*

Intermediate-level teachers employ basic reading skills for pupils with reading difficulties.

The research participants shared the following:

*"I truly implement Catch-Up Friday because some of my pupils struggle with reading. While 90% of the participants can read, 10% cannot. I have them read simple stories and then ask them comprehensive questions. If they struggle to answer, I simplify it further. We revisit basic reading skills like blending, pairing, CVC, and others." I.L.T. 5*

The study found that intermediate-level teachers use basic reading skills to support students with reading difficulties. [Bantayan et al. \(2023\)](#) found that phoneme instruction and consonant-vowel-consonant techniques significantly enhance reading performance among grade school students.

*They used a peer tutoring strategy*

Intermediate-level teachers used a peer tutoring strategy to teach the catch-up Day program.

*"For those pupils who do not know how to read, I employ peer tutoring, where fast learners assist slow learners and vocabulary activities." I.L.T 6.2*

The study found that intermediate-level teachers use peer tutoring as a strategy in the Catch-up day programme to support pupils with reading difficulties. [Gubalani et al. \(2023\)](#) suggested that peer tutoring is a straightforward and practical approach that can be easily implemented. This approach effectively addresses the disparities among learners from different academic and cultural backgrounds within a classroom setting, especially when resources are limited.

*Incorporating enhancement activities.*

Intermediate-level teachers used enhancement activities to teach the Catch-up Day program. The research participants shared the following:

*"I incorporate enhancement activities into our sessions. For non-readers, I implement intervention strategies to help them improve. Additionally, I focus on developing their reading comprehension skills." I.L.T 6.1*

The study found that intermediate-level teachers incorporated enhancement activities in the Catch-up Day program to support reading improvement. Teachers' reading activities effectively improved learners' reading comprehension skills ([Capin, 2023](#)). This study applies [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#), in which teachers collaborate, share resources, and use instructional strategies to support students' learning. Through interactive activities, peer tutoring, and interventions, they create scaffolded environments that foster academic growth.

### **Challenges Encountered by Intermediate-level Teachers in Implementing Catch-up Day Activities**

When the researchers asked the intermediate-level teachers about the challenges they had encountered during the implementation of the catch—up day program, several categories emerged. These categories were Poor reading comprehension, Lack of parental support, and lack of student interest.



*Pupils' poor reading comprehension.*

The intermediate-level teacher shared that some of her students struggled to comprehend what they had read. The research participants shared the following:

*"About 75% of the students can comprehend what they read, while 25% struggle to comprehend the material." I.L.T 4.3*

According to the [World Bank \(2022\)](#), 90% of Filipino children aged 10 years struggle with reading comprehension, with a pre-pandemic learning poverty rate of 70% ([Chi, 2024](#)). A 2018 PISA study also found that the Philippines ranked lowest in reading comprehension, at 340 out of 79 countries.

*Lack of parental support.*

The intermediate-level teacher shared that one of her challenges was a lack of parental support and not allowing their child to attend school. The research participants shared the following:

*"Some parents allow their children to be absent on Fridays to help them sell". I.L.T 4.2*

Teachers face challenges due to a lack of parental cooperation, as some parents allow their children to skip Fridays for selling activities. [Tomelden \(2019\)](#) also supported this, citing irregular attendance caused by household duties, income contributions, limited parental supervision, and low student enthusiasm for reading.

*Lack of pupils' interest.*

Intermediate-level teachers shared that some pupils became bored or not interested and fell asleep. The research participants shared the following:

*"Some children fall asleep during class. Besides that, some pupils are not interested in participating." I.L.T 4.1*

This study finds support in [Riana et al. \(2021\)](#), who identified several factors contributing to low reading interest: (1) reliance on instant information from search engines, (2) distractions from social media, (3) lack of encouragement from teachers and parents, (4) insufficient reading facilities, (5) unengaging reading methods, and (6) gaming addiction that limits book reading. This study applies [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#), as Catch-Up Friday requires additional planning to support student learning. Challenges like poor reading skills, low parental involvement, and student disinterest highlight the need for improved scaffolding through engaging activities, targeted interventions, and stronger parental support.

**Coping Mechanism Employed by Intermediate-level Teachers to Address Challenges**

The researchers asked the intermediate-level teachers how they coped with the challenges they encountered in implementing the Catch-up Day program, and several categories emerged. These categories include Sharing materials, Providing take-home activities, Communicating with parents, and Providing interactive reading activities.

*Sharing of materials.*

The intermediate-level teacher shared that they exchanged materials with their co-level teachers. The research participants shared the following:

*"We co-teachers at the same grade level share resources and ideas for activities to reduce our workloads." I.L.T 6.1*

*"We teachers agreed to contribute money to buy materials online because we were not provided with ready-made materials, then we share the materials." I.L.T 4.2*

Teaching effectiveness can be enhanced by creating an environment that promotes collaborative planning, reflection, and knowledge-sharing among educators, ultimately leading to better student learning outcomes ([Nasir & Mydin, 2023](#)).

*They provided take-home activities.*

Intermediate-level teachers shared how they deal with poor reading comprehension. The research participants shared the following:

*"To address the challenge of the 25% of students who struggle to comprehend, I provide them with take-home activities to be completed with the guidance of their parents." I.L.T 4.3*

This finding aligns with [Cusinato et al. \(2020\)](#), who emphasized parental support in learning, including homework. Similarly, [Collison et al. \(2019\)](#) noted that parental involvement enhances comprehension and preparedness.

*They are communicating with their parents.*

Intermediate-level teachers shared how they deal with parents who let their children be absent during the Catch Up Day program. The research participants shared the following:

*"To cope with the challenge, I always remind the parents that this program is significant for their children." I.L.T 4.2*

This result is supported by research showing that parental engagement in children's schooling can significantly impact their success ([Tran et al., 2020](#)). Evidence indicates that students achieve academic achievement, attend school more consistently, and score higher on standardized tests when their parents are involved in their education ([Castillo et al., 2020](#)).

*They provided interactive reading activities.*

The intermediate-level teacher provides information about how she handles students who are not interested in class, feel bored, and fall asleep. The research participants shared the following:

*"I gave them interactive reading activities to keep them engaged and prevent them from falling asleep. Sometimes, I also offer prizes as incentives." I.L.T 4.1*

Another study has presented a similar result, which indicates that giving learners enough praise, encouragement, and rewards increases their motivation to learn ([Gumapac et al., 2021](#)). Anchored in [Vygotsky's \(1978\)](#) Scaffolding Theory, this study highlights collaborative learning among intermediate teachers through shared materials and ideas. Teachers use online resources

for interactive activities and provide take-home tasks for parental guidance, extending scaffolding beyond classrooms. Communication with parents reinforces support and ensures a structured learning environment.

### **Intermediate-Level Teachers' Perceptions of the Catch-Up Day Program's Influence on Their Teaching Experiences**

The intermediate-level teachers provided the following responses regarding their perceptions of the program's influence on their teaching experience.

#### *Increased workload.*

Intermediate-level teachers expressed that implementing Catch-up Day adds to their workload. The research participants shared the following:

*"As I mentioned earlier, it is an additional workload compared to our normal routine because it is just based on the M.E.L.C. Now, I have to think about the activities to do on Fridays. Besides that, we also need to create a separate lesson plan for the catch-up day, which is additional work. In addition, I still need to reproduce activity sheets." I.L.T 4.1*

*"It is quite difficult for teachers. It is not easy to create lesson plans and develop numerous activities to capture the attention of students while also focusing on improving their reading skills." I.L.T 4.2*

*"The workload has indeed doubled." Just imagine, on Fridays, you have to prepare activities and lesson plans, and then you have to do it all over again from Monday to Thursday." I.L.T 6.1*

When educators are overwhelmed by stress and workload, their ability to maintain focus and motivation may suffer, negatively impacting their efficiency and capacity to provide students with quality education (Hester et al., 2020). This study applies Vygotsky (1978), in which teachers guide students to bridge learning gaps. However, the additional workload may hinder effective support.

### **Intermediate-level Teachers' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of the Catch-up Friday Program**

The intermediate-level teachers provided the following responses regarding their perspective on the effectiveness of the Catch-up Day program. This category emerged from "Improves learners' reading skills.

#### *Improve learners' reading skills.*

The intermediate-level teacher explains how the catch-up day program has improved learners' reading skills. The research participants shared the following:

*"There has been improvement, though I still have a few students—almost half of my pupils—who could not read at the beginning of the month. We are almost at the end of the class because it is already May. Thus, there has been progress. Perhaps half of my pupils could not read before, but now they can." I.L.T 4.1*

*"The effectiveness of 'Catch-up Friday' in my section is evident, as it has significantly improved the performance of my slower learners." I.L.T 4.2*

*"It is probably about 70% effective because you can develop the children's reading ability. You can check their pronunciation because they will read out loud, and you can also follow up on their comprehension." I.L.T 4.3*

*"Yes, for me, it is effective because there is more time for reading. It can also improve if you stick to a normal schedule because there is no rush. For me, Catch-up Friday is effective in my class in the sense that they need help, especially with reading, and to impart value." I.L.T 5*

*"Almost half of my pupils could not read before, but now there is been an improvement." I.L.T 6.1*

*"It is effective, but our workload doubles because we do reading in the morning and then in the afternoon, there are three other subjects to teach." I.L.T 6.2*

Saro et al. (2024) conducted a research study on the effectiveness of catch-up sessions. Their results are consistent with our findings, which highlight the efficacy of Catch-Up Friday sessions in enhancing reading proficiency and cultivating an engaging learning environment that fosters academic growth and development. It improves students' reading skills through consistent engagement and dedicated time each week.

This study applies Vygotsky (1978), highlighting how the Catch-up Friday program supports students' reading development. Intermediate teachers' insights confirmed that the program provides structured assistance, gradually fostering reading proficiency, which aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding. In this study of the Catch-up Friday program, intermediate-level teachers provided valuable insights into its effectiveness in improving learners' reading skills. Through the responses of the participants, it is evident that the Catch-up Friday program serves as a scaffold for enhancing students' reading abilities. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding, as the program provides structured support tailored to the students' needs, allowing them to gradually develop their reading proficiency.

### **Intermediate-level Teachers' Recommendations for the Improvement of the Catch-up Friday Program**

The intermediate-level teachers provided the following recommendations for improving the Catch-up Day program: The necessity of providing Catch-up resources.

*The necessity of providing Catch-up resources.*

Intermediate-level teachers shared the lack of resources in the program. The research participants shared the following:

*"We hope that DepEd is well prepared. What happened is, we bought commercial materials just so we can really cater to the children and so we can be guided as well." I.L.T 4.1*

*"My insight regarding the implementation of the Catch-up Day program is that they should provide us with materials to facilitate easier implementation for our children." I.L.T 4.2*

*"Hoping that DepEd will provide resources or materials that teachers can freely select according to what is appropriate for learners' capacity." I.L.T 4.3*

*"The resources provided by DepEd are just examples and guides; you have to describe them yourself. It is really difficult because you have to search for them. They are available on YouTube, but they are usually short. If it is for other grade levels, students search for resources. We are teachers in the same grade level, and we share lessons among ourselves. It's a good thing I know someone, but they should provide resources for smooth teaching."* I.L.T 5

*"They need to provide the materials, teaching guides, ready-made teaching guides that teachers can simply follow, making it automatic."* I.L.T 6.1

*"They should provide strategies and handouts, like prototype lesson plans for teaching guides that resemble those from 2016, where they prototype them in advance, and everything is already laid out."* I.L.T 6.2

Acita et al. (2022) found that school districts struggled to secure sufficient funding to provide essential resources for their schools. As a result, learners experience various challenges because of resource shortages. In addition, this situation may contribute to emotional outbursts from teachers who struggle to manage the stress of their roles.

The study draws its theoretical framework from the concept of scaffolding theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Intermediate-level teachers advocate for more resources in implementing the Catch-up Friday program, which aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of structured support for skill advancement. Adequate resources provide the necessary scaffolding for effective teaching and learning, empowering teachers to support students' learning effectively.

The effectiveness of Catch-up Friday aligns with previous studies, such as Dorado and Medina (2022), emphasizing the importance of structured reading programs in enhancing literacy skills through targeted interventions. This study also aligns with the findings of Rominimbang et al. (2024), who emphasized the role of Department of Education program supervisors in each region in ensuring adequate resources for reading and providing further training for teachers in the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays. Similarly, this study explores how public-school intermediate-level teachers perceive the implementation of the Catch-Up Day program, shedding light on the support they receive and the challenges they encounter.

## CONCLUSIONS

The researchers concluded that the participants perceived implementing the Catch-up Friday program as both challenging and beneficial. Although the program requires additional effort, teachers recognize its positive impact on students' reading skills. Despite challenges such as increased workload, comprehension difficulties, and limited parental involvement, intermediate-level teachers demonstrate resilience and innovation by employing collaborative strategies like lesson sharing, interactive teaching, peer tutoring, and enrichment activities. To address obstacles, they use resource sharing, take-home activities, and active parent communication to enhance student engagement and learning.

This study contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of teachers' experiences in implementing literacy interventions. The study highlights the importance of structured support systems, instructional strategies, and policy enhancements to improve reading programs. The findings guide educators, administrators, and policymakers in refining Catch-up Friday by strengthening teacher support, providing adequate resources, and promoting home-school collaboration to maximize its effectiveness in improving student literacy and educational equity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

DepEd should provide adequate resources, including ready-made materials and teaching guides, to ease teachers' workload and ensure smooth program implementation. Regular training sessions should enhance teachers' effectiveness in meeting students' needs. Additionally, the school will conduct a parent meeting to inform them about the Catch-Up Day program and its role in supporting their children at home. This study may also inspire future researchers to explore related studies and contribute valuable insights into effective strategies for addressing learning gaps and improving student outcomes.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The study on the perceptions of intermediate-level public school teachers in implementing the Catch-Up Friday Program identified several limitations that may have affected the comprehensiveness and generalizability of the findings.

1. **Limited Sample Size and Geographic Scope:** The research focused on only six intermediate-level teachers from a single public school in Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur, Philippines. This small sample size may not accurately represent the broader educator population and limits the generalizability of the findings to other schools and regions. Additionally, since the study was confined to a single city, it may not fully capture the diverse educational contexts across the Philippines, particularly in rural or highly urbanized areas.
2. **Qualitative Methodology and Subjectivity:** While qualitative methods provided rich insights into teachers' perceptions, they introduced a degree of subjectivity in interpreting responses, which could affect the consistency of the results. Furthermore, the lack of quantitative data prevented statistical validation of observed trends or the measurement of the program's effectiveness through numerical analysis.
3. **Time Constraints and Program Implementation:** Data collection was conducted over two months, which may not have been sufficient to assess long-term impacts or changes in teacher perceptions over time. Additionally, the Catch-Up Friday Program was newly implemented, meaning there may not have been enough time to evaluate its sustained effects on teaching practices and student learning outcomes.
4. **Focus on Teacher Perceptions:** The study exclusively examined teachers' viewpoints, without incorporating perspectives from students, parents, or school administrators. This limitation restricts the ability to develop a more holistic understanding of the program's implementation and overall impact on the school community.
5. **Limited Exploration of External Factors:** The research did not extensively examine external influences such as resource availability, policy support, or socioeconomic conditions that might affect the success of the program. Factors such as teacher workload, classroom size, and administrative backing were not deeply analyzed, potentially leaving gaps in understanding the program's broader implications.

### Suggestions for Further Research

1. **Expand Sample Size and Geographic Scope:**
  - Conduct studies involving a larger sample size across multiple schools in different regions of the Philippines to ensure broader representation.
  - Include schools from rural, urban, and semi-urban settings to capture diverse educational contexts.
2. **Incorporate Mixed Methods:**
  - Combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide richer insights and



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- statistical validation of trends.
  - Use surveys or standardized assessments to measure student outcomes alongside teacher perceptions.
3. Longitudinal Studies:
    - Investigate the long-term effects of the Catch-Up Friday Program on students' reading proficiency and overall academic performance.
    - Track changes in teacher perceptions over multiple school years to understand evolving challenges and successes.
  4. Include Multiple Stakeholders:
    - Explore perspectives from students, parents, school administrators, and policymakers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the program's implementation.
    - Assess how collaboration among stakeholders influences program effectiveness.
  5. Examine Resource Allocation:
    - Study how variations in resource availability (e.g., teaching materials, training programs) impact the program's success.
    - Investigate whether additional funding or support mechanisms are needed for effective implementation.
  6. Analyze External Factors:
    - Examine how socioeconomic conditions, policy frameworks, and community engagement affect program outcomes.
    - Assess how external challenges (e.g., teacher workload, classroom size) influence implementation fidelity.
  7. Evaluate Student Outcomes:
    - Conduct studies focusing on students' reading comprehension levels before and after participating in Catch-Up Friday sessions.
    - Compare outcomes between schools implementing the program and those without similar interventions.
  8. Develop Intervention Models:
    - Test alternative models or strategies for improving reading proficiency that complement or enhance the Catch-Up Friday Program.
    - Evaluate how integrating technology or innovative teaching methods influences student engagement and learning outcomes.

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