



EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN TEACHING READING TO KINDERGARTEN LEARNERS AS BASIS FOR PROGRAM INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study determined the experiences of teachers in teaching reading to kindergarten learners as basis for program intervention. The results revealed that kindergarten teachers experienced teaching reading as a combination of challenges and rewards and emphasized the need to provide patience and encouragement to learners, develop foundational literacy skills, use multisensory and engaging instructional strategies, and build interest, motivation, and a love for reading. It was found that the most significant challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers in teaching reading to their learners were varied readiness levels, short attention spans, foundational skill gaps, limited home reinforcement, motivation and confidence issues, absenteeism, and language diversity. The coping mechanisms used by kindergarten teachers in teaching reading, based on the results of the in-depth interviews, include the use of play-based and multisensory approaches, differentiated instruction, phonics-focused routines, positive reinforcement, structured classroom systems, family collaboration, and remedial intervention.

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Keywords: *Experiences, Teachers, Teaching Reading, Kindergarten Learners, Program*

Intervention

INTRODUCTION

Reading was widely recognized as the foundation of lifelong learning. It was through reading that learners acquired knowledge across subject areas, developed higher-order thinking skills, and became empowered to participate actively in society (National Early Literacy Panel, 2023).

Kindergarten was often the entry point where systematic exposure to print, letters, sounds, and rich oral language occurred. Contemporary research affirmed that explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and letter–sound relationships, integrated with language-rich read-alouds and vocabulary building, produced measurable gains in early literacy (McGraw Hill, 2024). For this reason, kindergarten was regarded as the most crucial stage of formal education, where children transitioned from informal learning at home to structured literacy experiences in school (Piasta & Wagner, 2021).

Early reading instruction—especially in kindergarten— established the basic alphabetic, phonological, and language skills that underpinned later success in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and content learning (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2023). Research had shown that high-quality reading instruction in the early years significantly impacted students' reading outcomes (Graham et al., 2023).

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In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) emphasized the importance of early literacy through major policies and programs. Republic Act 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, mandated Kindergarten as the compulsory entry stage to basic education, underscoring its role in preparing children holistically for lifelong learning. DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2012 institutionalized Kindergarten Education as part of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, while the “Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP)” sought to ensure that all children became independent readers by the end of Grade 3.

Furthermore, teachers were the frontliners of literacy development. Their day-to-day experiences reflected the intersection of policy, pedagogy, and practice. Kindergarten teachers played a vital role in shaping young learners' reading skills. However, many kindergarten teachers faced challenges in effectively teaching reading skills to their students (Villanueva, 2023). Studies highlighted the need for evidence-based reading instruction in kindergarten, emphasizing the importance of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency skills (Nimer & Napil, 2024). Moreover, implementing such instruction was challenging, particularly in classrooms with diverse student needs and abilities (Ocampo, 2023).

Thus, gaining insight into the experiences of kindergarten teachers in teaching reading was essential. Their perspectives may offer meaningful understanding of classroom realities, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they used to support young learners' reading development. The findings of this study served as a basis for developing program interventions to support kindergarten teachers in enhancing their reading instruction.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study is to determine the experiences of teachers in teaching reading to kindergarten as basis for program intervention in District of Cabatuan I, Cabatuan, Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research method using in-depth interviews. The descriptive method was adopted to systematically describe a phenomenon, behavior, or condition as it existed in its natural context, with the purpose of identifying patterns or trends.

During the interview sessions, the interviewer and the interviewee were seated at a comfortable distance and were given ample time to reflect on the series of questions related to a particular issue.

This process was intended to obtain the participants' relevant views and insights regarding the issue within a social context through their responses.

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is regarded as a philosophical approach in qualitative research that aims to explore and describe the lived experiences of individuals. It focuses on how people interpret and give meaning to their experiences, recognizing that these personal perspectives may differ from commonly accepted

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or generalized views. Through the collection of rich, first-hand accounts, often gathered through in-depth interviews, the researcher is able to understand the meanings and impressions participants attach to their experiences.

As explained by Hopp (2020), phenomenology deals with the study of the structures of consciousness from the first-person point of view. A central concept in phenomenology is intentionality, which means that human experience is always directed toward something. Every experience is related to an object, shaped by its meaning or content, and made possible by certain conditions. By examining this intentional relationship, phenomenology provides a systematic way of identifying and understanding the essence of human experience.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were ten (10) selected kindergarten teachers of the District of Cabatuan I, Cabatuan, Iloilo during the School Year 2025–2026.

Sampling Design

This study used purposive sampling, which is a non probability sampling technique. In this method, participants are intentionally chosen based on specific characteristics that are relevant to the purpose of the study. According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling involves selecting individuals who have the qualities or experiences needed to provide meaningful information for the research. In simple terms, participants are chosen because they can give valuable insights that help answer the research questions.

Also known as judgmental sampling, this method depends on the researcher’s knowledge and judgment in selecting the most suitable participants for the study. It is

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commonly used in qualitative and mixed-methods research, especially when the goal is to gather detailed information from participants with relevant experiences. Although purposive sampling is useful in obtaining deep and relevant data, it may also lead to researcher bias, such as observer bias, which should be carefully controlled throughout the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a researcher-made interview schedule prepared to gather in depth responses from the participants. It consisted of four open-ended questions that were directly based on the objectives of the study, ensuring that the data collected were relevant and complete. During the interviews, a voice or video recorder was also used with the participants' consent. This helped the researcher record the participants' responses accurately and preserve the authenticity of the data.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Before it was used, the researcher-made interview schedule went through a validation process to ensure that it was appropriate and relevant to the study. The validation was conducted by the research adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors with expertise in research, testing and assessment, and the English language. Each question in the interview schedule was carefully examined, assessed, and revised when necessary based on their recommendations.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the interpretations drawn from research findings or assessment results. It is concerned with

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whether the evidence and interpretations obtained from an instrument accurately reflect what it is intended to measure (Hawkins, 2021).

The comments, corrections, and suggestions given by the panel of validators were carefully reviewed and incorporated into the instrument. To support this process, the validation form developed by Good and Scates (see Appendix A) served as the basis for recording and integrating the feedback of the validators.

Data Gathering Procedures

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, School Heads, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools, communities, or places convenient for the participants to conduct the interviews.

The researcher conducted interviews with the participants, but prior to this, the researcher encouraged the participants to sign a waiver or permission related to the conduct of the study.

Using in-depth interviews, a voice and video recorder was also provided to fully capture the participants' responses. The researcher consolidated all of the collected data after the series of interviews.

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Data Analyses

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, organize, and interpret patterns or themes within the data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis aims to examine qualitative data in a systematic way in order to identify recurring themes that provide insight into participants' experiences, thoughts, and behaviors. This process involves coding the data, looking for patterns, and developing themes that reflect both the obvious and underlying meanings in the responses.

Thematic analysis is flexible because it may be used either inductively or deductively, depending on the purpose of the study. It also requires careful and transparent procedures to ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings.

Through this approach, researchers are able to gain a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena by identifying important patterns and relationships within the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study determined the experiences of teachers in teaching reading to kindergarten learners as basis for program intervention in District of Cabatuan I, Cabatuan, Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

The study employed a qualitative research method using in-depth interviews. It utilized a narrative research design and thematic analysis.

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The participants of the study were ten (10) purposively selected kindergarten teachers from the District of Cabatuan I, Cabatuan, Iloilo.

A researcher-made interview questionnaire was used as the main research instrument and was validated by experts. The interviews were scheduled during the teachers' vacant time. Formal letters were personally delivered and sent via email to the school heads, who approved and designated the participants for the interview.

The researcher personally conducted the in-depth interviews. A voice recorder and note-taking were used for data gathering, while photo documentation was done with the participants' permission.

After the series of interviews, the researcher consolidated all the collected data. The narratives were gathered, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted using a thematic approach.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the responses from the in-depth interview, the kindergarten teachers from different schools have diverse experiences that serve as a basis for program intervention which could foster an effective and relevant educational program for the Kindergarten learners. They experienced teaching reading as both challenging and rewarding and emphasized the need to provide patience and encouragement, develop foundational literacy skills, use multisensory and engaging instructional strategies, and build learners' interest, motivation, and love for reading.

During the conduct of in-depth interview with the participants, it was found out that the most significant challenges encountered by the kindergarten teachers in teaching reading

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to their learners were varied readiness levels among learners, short attention span, foundational skill gaps, limited home reinforcement, motivation and confidence issues, and absenteeism and language diversity.

The coping mechanisms of kindergarten teachers in teaching reading, based on the results of the in-depth interview, include the use of Play-based and Multisensory approaches such as songs, movement, storytelling, games, and visual aids, differentiated instruction, phonics focused routines, positive reinforcement, structured classroom systems, family collaboration, and remedial intervention.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Kindergarten teachers' experiences in teaching reading reveal both significant challenges and meaningful rewards. Effective early reading instruction requires patience, creativity, and sustained encouragement, as teachers address learners' varied readiness levels, short attention spans, and gaps in foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and letter recognition.

Successful instruction depends on the continuous adaptation of strategies, close monitoring of learners' progress, and the integration of character formation with academic skill development.

Teachers carry the dual responsibility of developing learners' literacy skills while fostering motivation and positive attitudes toward reading. Challenges such as absenteeism, low learner confidence, and limited parental involvement increase the complexity of instruction and require flexibility, diagnostic sensitivity, and individualized support.

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Learners with weak foundations need structured remediation, while those with higher readiness benefit from enrichment. Thus, effective teaching relies on differentiated instruction, short and engaging lessons, and strong home-school collaboration to ensure that no learner is left behind.

The successful implementation of early reading instruction depends on teachers' ability to combine structured phonics-based approaches with play-based and multisensory strategies. Innovation, compassionate flexibility, and creativity are essential in addressing diverse learner needs.

Teachers' effectiveness is further strengthened by experience, reflective practice, consistent routines, positive reinforcement, and collaboration with parents. Overall, quality kindergarten reading instruction is grounded in adaptive pedagogy, continuous professional growth, strong family partnerships, and holistic support that fosters both academic competence and character development.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are highlighted:

Schools should strengthen support systems for kindergarten reading instruction by providing continuous professional development focused on responsive teaching, learner assessment, and creative instructional design.

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Teachers should be equipped with practical strategies to address diverse readiness levels through targeted support and meaningful enrichment while maintaining engaging and developmentally appropriate lessons. Schools should also promote structured routines, reflective practice, and positive classroom environments that nurture both skills and attitudes toward reading.

Stronger home–school partnerships should be established to ensure consistent support at home, shared responsibility for learner progress, and sustained encouragement that builds confidence, motivation, and literacy development. Schools are also encouraged to implement a kindergarten reading intervention program that addresses learner differences, skill gaps, and motivation through engaging instruction. This program should include small-group support, individualized attention, and regular progress monitoring to enhance learners’ interest and confidence in reading.

To ensure sustainability, collaboration among teachers, administrators, parents, and stakeholders is essential. School administrators should integrate the program into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and allocate resources for instructional materials and training. Teachers should receive ongoing professional development, mentoring, and opportunities for reflective practice. Regular monitoring of learners’ progress should guide instructional improvements and program refinement, while strengthened family engagement should reinforce learning beyond the classroom.

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Finally, future studies should involve a wider group of kindergarten teachers and learners and consider additional variables such as school context, teaching experience, and learner background to further validate and enhance the findings of this study.

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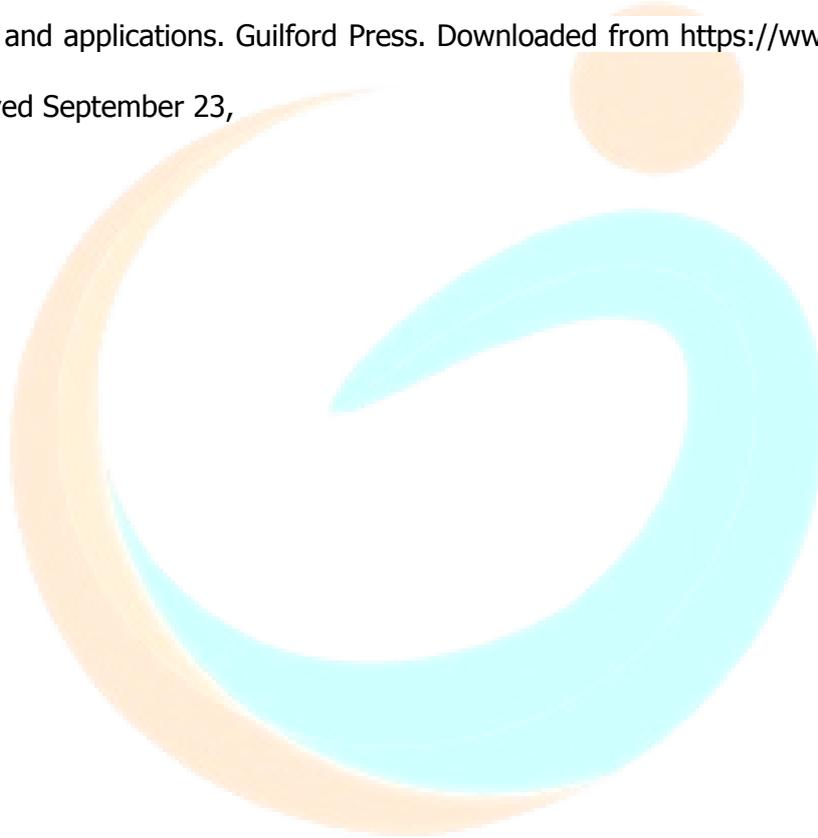
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