
Research Article

Primary Grade Teachers' Practices and Learners' Early Reading Literacy Struggles in Zone 3, Schools Division of Zambales

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Article history:

Submission March 2026

Revised March 2026

Accepted April 2026

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the methods employed by primary-grade learners to address early reading literacy struggles and the literacy skills of those students. It sought to explore the link between what teachers do and how learners perform, while examining areas of struggle and skill development. The study went further to examine demographic influences on teacher beliefs and practices, filling a gap in the literature regarding how specific teacher and learner factors inform implementation of literacy interventions in early grades. The study found that teachers of younger grades show relatively high engagement levels for all instruction strategies and all classroom interventions, a synergy with parental support, whereas students slightly struggle in retrieving word meanings, reading fluency and comprehending texts. Specific advanced literacy skills (vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and reading comprehension) caught the attention of the researchers as they are areas where many children need specific support.[9] Overall, findings suggest selective demographic impacts on teacher perceptions, based on educational attainment, civil status, and sex. Summary of low-cost interventions to improve literacy (quasi-experimental study): Interactive comprehension activities, structured writing-focused peer assessment, small group instruction, targeted phonemic awareness, and parent-mediated reading routines. Key literacy gaps have been identified and informed the proposed intervention plan, which has a collaborative, multi-sensory approach with evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for learners. The role of other variables affecting teacher efficacy and literacy development may be explored in future studies.

Keywords: *Classroom interventions, instructional strategies, parental involvement, parent-mediated reading routines*

Introduction

The importance of early literacy was paramount and had helped lay the groundwork for academic knowledge in young learners,

particularly during the primary years where students were developing reading and comprehension skills. However, the case was still different from some Filipino students enrolled

How to cite:

Castillo, R. M. V. & Ravana, L. L. (2026). Primary Grade Teachers' Practices and Learners' Early Reading Literacy Struggles in Zone 3, Schools Division of Zambales. *The Advanced Social Science In Research Journal*. 1(2), 415 – 428. doi: 10.11594/assrj.01.02.17

in public schools who struggle in attaining basic literacy skills and go on to higher grade levels without the needed competencies. Especially teachers of primary grades who were crucial in solving these early literacy problems using targeted, innovative, and responsive teaching practices. The Department of Education (DepEd) responded by releasing DepEd Order No. 010, s. 2025, which seeks to institutionalize summer programs for proactive building of foundational literacy and numeracy skills. These initiatives would onboard intervention programs ahead of the new academic year, considering gaps in learning as a result of school closures, for example, through an extension of the National Learning Camp. Recent research highlighted the challenges and practices that primary-grade teachers encountered when supporting struggling readers. Aguillon (2024) revealed that Filipino educators utilized an assortment of suitable strategies to cater to full refresher readers, such as phonics and guided reading. Lack of content knowledge, lack of appropriate teaching materials to support implementation, and low use of evidence-based practices were cited by Abrasaldo (2024) as major impediments in effective literacy instruction. Brigada sa Pagbasa initiation found to be an effective program in developing reading culture among learners (Visuyan, 2024) described. Nonetheless, the study revealed issues like lack of motivation for learners and less involvement from parents within the context of school. Quimsing et Cruz (2024) showcased the use of a technology-based reading application that was able to enhance literacy levels among struggling readers in the context of a Philippine public school. Some of these cross-national and regional comparisons also provided additional context for the teaching practices and challenges surrounding early literacy instruction. For example, when Ukumo & Berlie (2024) studied teachers in Ethiopia, we found that the lack of knowledge and skills related to early grade reading instruction was a hindrance to literacy development. They emphasized the universal need for professional development of early grade teachers, a theme pertinent in relation to the Philippine context. Again, studies revealed external interventions were often doomed to failure and only produced significant impacts

in the presence of well-trained teachers applying evidence-based practice repeatedly. The integration of systemic support, teacher capacity, and instructional materials was central to sustainable reading improvement. This study aimed to explore the classroom practices of teachers in responding to early literacy struggles by primary grade teachers from Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales. It sought to document the strategies that were being implemented, as well as the challenges teachers faced and the supports they needed in order to effectively teach foundational reading skills. The goal of this research was to generate actionable insights that strengthen teacher capacity and improve literacy outcomes among young learners in the region by foregrounding the contextual realities of reading instruction at a grassroots level.

Materials and Methods

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design. As the intention was to describe the profile of primary grade teachers, the practices of primary grade teachers in addressing early literacy struggles and early literacy struggles of primary grade learners as perceived by their respective teachers, it was descriptive. It was correlational as it aimed to identify the relationship between the practices of primary grade Teachers with early literacy struggle among learners. Descriptive means it describes things without trying to get involved. Furidha (2024) described the use of descriptive research to obtain data on the subjects current condition for detailed description and interpretation. It dealt with the "what", not so much the "why" of a research problem. By contrast, correlational research examined the extent to which two or more variables were related. The correlational research did not try to control or manipulate the variables; instead, it measured their statistical relationships (Montales & Digo, 2024). This approach helped detect patterns, trends, and potential predictive associations.

Hence, the descriptive-correlational method was found to be best used as this study identified the practices of primary grade teachers in addressing early literacy struggles among learners as observed in Zone III of the Schools Division of Zambales during School

Year 2025–2026 where data was gathered, categorized, summarized, and analysed through percentage count, mean, and correlation methods.

Respondents and Location

The respondents of this study were the primary grade learners in Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales, for School Year 2025–2026.

The population of primary grade teachers was 239. Of these, 148 were sampled to be said as respondents of the study using the Sample Size Calculator. These respondents were selected from the total number of primary grade teachers in the four districts as follows: 38 out of 62 in Cabangan District, 39 out of 63 in San Antonio District, 35 out of 56 in San Felipe District, and 36 out of 58 in San Narciso District.

Researchers used a simple random sampling method to identify study respondents. When selecting respondents for a 51-study, simple random sampling was both useful and limited. This allowed for an equal chance of being included in the sample among the total members of the population, ensuring that representative findings were obtained and making things less biased. In particular, this was through equal opportunities given to the selection of primary grade teachers in Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales that would promote fairness and minimize bias.. he present study was done in Zone III, specifically the Schools Division of Zambales. These four were overseen by the Public Schools District Supervisor and Coordinating Principals.

The Instrument

The researcher utilized researcher-made questionnaires as the main data-gathering instrument in eliciting the necessary information regarding primary grade teachers' practices in responding to early literacy difficulties among learners in Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales. - A researcher-made instrument may be used because the researcher could design items according to primary grade teachers' context and their own experience, which may increase the reliability and adequacy of the instrument. In this respect, Srivastava (2024) maintained that researcher-made

questionnaires served as excellent tools in educational research since they could be painstakingly structured to cater to the specific aims of the investigation, leading to focused and meaningful data collection. The researcher first conducted informal interviews with selected primary grade teachers to explore their practices in dealing with early literacy difficulties. Additionally, a comprehensive review of relevant literature (e.g., journal articles and previous studies on practices to ameliorate early literacy challenges) was also had (Abraldo, 2024; Aguilon, 2024; Borre, 2024; Quimsing & Cruz, 2024; Ukumo & Berlie, 2024; & Visuyan n.d.) Data from these interviews and literature sources were synthesized and applied in the development of statements for inclusion in the questionnaire. Data Collection The researcher-made questionnaire was the most suitable instrument to use for collecting data in this study as the main aim of this investigation is to ascertain and explore how primary grade teachers help address early literacy problems among learners at Zone III, Schools Division of Zambales. The instrument was administered using Google Forms as well as printed copies to maintain accessibility and inclusivity among primary grade teachers in the specific districts. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I presents the profile of primary grade teachers in terms of sex, age, civil status, teaching position, length of service, and highest educational attainment, as well as the number of attended literacy trainings. Part II focused on the practices that primary grade teachers use to help students who are struggling with early literacy skills, through the lens of instructional strategies, assessment practices and processes, classroom interventions and strategies as well as parent involvement. First Part III examined early literacy challenges learners perceived primarily by primary grade teachers, identifying reading difficulties ranging from difficulty in recognizing sounds, trouble with word meaning, trouble reading fluently, and difficulty understanding a text. In Part IV we saw what the primary grade teachers believe are the early literacy skills exhibited in their students, including phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, fluency skills, and reading comprehension. Face validity and reliability testing were

then performed in the researcher-made questionnaire. For face validity, suggestions and corrections were sought from the panel members who were considered experts in the field to improve the content and clarity of the questionnaire using a common understanding before administering it to respondents. If the panel of experts did not imply no (contradicting) recommendations, the researcher would move straight to testing the reliability of the instrument. A pilot test of the questionnaire was done to determine its reliability with 15 primary grade teachers taking part from the Botalan District, Schools Division of Zambales. The internal consistency of items in the questionnaire was established through the application of Cronbach's Alpha.

Data Collection

For this study to be successful, the researcher sought prior approval from the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisors, Coordinating Principals and school heads within Zone III. Once granted approval, the researcher then provided an informed consent form to those target participants—primary grade teachers—to attain their voluntary participation for the study. The data collector read all the details about the aim of the study, rights of respondents and confidentiality of their responses in a consent paper.

The researchers gave out the questionnaire after receiving consent from the teachers. Public Schools District Supervisors and Coordinating Principals assisted in distributing the link to the Google Form around and a longer version that was printed. The Google Form was distributed via the school heads' group chats, whereas printed copies were given to teachers through official school mechanisms. After the respondents filled out either the online or printed forms of the questionnaire, responses were collected by the researcher and processed on an Excel file. Then this file was sent to resident statistician for processing and analyzing it. The researcher interpreted the findings to help answer the research study's purpose of recognizing and understanding the methods used by primary grade teachers that target early literacy

difficulties with guidance from one thesis adviser and support of statistical knowledge (Creswell, 2009).

Data Analysis

Data were computed and interpreted through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, MS Excel. The analysis and interpretation of data, as well as hypothesis testing utilized the following statistical tools:

Frequency Distribution and Percentage. This was used to provide a complete picture of the spread of respondents by personal-related variables.

Mean. Mean was used to compute average scores on measures of the practices of primary grade teachers who accommodate early literacy struggles. Mean added a black hole as it is always for Taha, putting forward the average estimation of these factors from people who ever heard or taught them.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used to determine significant differences between the practices of primary grade teachers on early literacy struggles based on their profile variables. It also examined the marked differences in perceived early literacy difficulties according to group-by-teacher profile variables. Similarly, it examined the differences in perceived early literacy skills of learners when grouped according to their teachers' profile variables.

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was used to test the strength and direction of the linear association between the primary grade teachers' practices for addressing early literacy struggles and their perception of their learners' early literacy struggles. It further examined the extent to which the practices of primary grade teachers addressing early literacy struggles were consistent with their beliefs regarding learner early literacy skills. In addition, it also saw if the early literacy difficulties and abilities of learners perceived by primary grade teachers medic in this way.

Result and Discussion

Profile of Primary Grade Teacher-respondents

The frequency and percentage distribution of the primary grade teacher respondents' profiles consists of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service, teaching position, and the number of literacy training sessions

Sex

Of the one hundred forty-eight (148) primary grade teacher-respondents, most of them are female, seventy-five (75) or 85.80% and male twenty-one (21) or 14.20%.

Critique of Literature Used to Drive the Present Study. The sheer number of women teachers in primary grade level reflects a long evolved occupational patterns in elementary education wherein teaching young learners is seen as a profession of many-centeredness and care. In many educational settings, classroom instruction at the lower grades requires patience, emotional support and a high degree of engagement with young children who are still developing rudimentary academic and social skills. These responsibilities often mirror socially constructed expectations that associate caregiving roles with women, and it provides a partial explanation for why females are more likely to be attracted to and retained within primary teaching roles. In elementary school settings, field observations have also shown that female teachers are often placed in the classroom of early grades because administrators believe that they manage young learners more effectively, hold more effective communication with parents and keep the course of classrooms running smoothly. Simultaneously, the underrepresentation of male teachers may reflect wider labor market trends, where men are drawn to jobs they perceive will better reward them financially or in terms of leadership. As a result, the demographic structure found in the research mirrors both societal perceptions of gender roles and established institutional practices within the education environment. Recent academic research indicates that gender imbalance endures in the elementary teaching labor force. Dela Cruz, Ramos, & Torres (2023) reported early grade teaching continues to be heavily feminized because it

embodies caregiving competencies and interpersonal sensitivity when working with young learners. Likewise, Nguyen, Tran, and Pham (2022) found that the community's nurturing expectations for elementary teaching continue to inform career choice, leading to a greater concentration of women in lower grade levels. Santos, Villanueva, and Mercado (2024) analyzed the subject further to conclude that school administrators often assign female teachers in early grade classes based on having, or being perceived as possessing, classroom management skills and engaging learners. Based on these factors contributing to the lift in feminized education, Rahman, Abdullah, & Ismail (2023) assessed that societal expectations and professional identity are factors sustaining the feminization of teaching in basic education. These reported patterns align closely with current findings, cementing the argument that perceptions of teaching roles and workplace practices are gendered and coalesce to create a drive influencing both the demographic composition of the primary education workforce. As Villanueva & Mercado (2024) argued, needing these perceived strengths in classroom management and learner engagement, school administrators often assign female teachers to teach classes in the early grades. Indeed, in another related study written by Rahman et al (2023) it has been discussed that both the social demand and professional identity continue to pave the way for a sustainable feminization of teaching at the basic education level. The trends described in these studies closely match those of the current results, further contributing to understanding that gendered perceptions of teaching roles and workplace practices collectively inform the sociodemographic make-up of the primary education workforce.

Age

Eight hundred thirty-three (83) or 56.10% of the primary grade teachers belong to age group of 20-34 years old, sixty-three (63) or 42.60% belong to the age group of 35-49 years old and two (2) or 1.40% belong to age group of 50-64 years old. It was found out that the average age of the teacher-respondents was 33.79 or around 34 years old. The results also indicate that the primary grade

teachers are young adults. This number is consistent with the fact that the majority of primary school teachers fall into the 25 to 54 age group, suggesting a workforce comprised of relatively early-to-middle career educators. This trend ebbs into a deluge of statistics showing thousands of educators entering the field soon after their professional training — a path that some charting to enter at lower grade levels, where the instructional requirements require not only robust energy and adaptability, but also constant re-engagement with budding minds. Younger teachers usually show strong enthusiasm with which they implement innovative pedagogical strategies, incorporate digital tools in the classroom, and adapt to curriculum reforms that are hallmarks of modern basic education. At the same time, their relatively few years in practice may demand focused mentorship and professional development to enhance their classroom management, instructional decision making, and long-term pedagogical expertise. Low numbers of older teachers might also be due to steep decline in the number of teachers promoted into administrative positions, transferred to upper grade levels or retired. As these findings show, the age distribution points to a dynamic but still maturing workforce where factors such as opportunities for professional development, institutional support systems and mentoring mechanisms will need to play an integral role in maintaining quality in early grade teaching.

Compare this to what we know of the recent academic literature, indicating elementary education⁶¹ is a field dominated by educators in the earlier stages of their career. Younger teachers dominate the primary grade level because they enter into the profession just after finishing teacher education and are often placed in foundational classes, where energy and adaptability are highly valued (Bautista et al., 2023). In another study, Hughes and his colleagues (Nguyen, Hoang & Pham; 2022) pointed out that early career educators are inherently motivated to implement learner-centered approaches and digital learning strategies which is some characteristics often associated with the younger adult teacher group. Moreover, as pointed by Rahman, Abdullah and Karim (2024), the demographic make-ups of the teaching labor force tend to remain

subject to a pattern of generational renewal with experienced teachers moving towards leadership or supervisory roles over time. These scholars found that a relatively young teaching population contributes to innovative instruction and responsiveness to reforms, but also the need for ongoing mentoring or professional support needed over the long term to ensure pedagogical competence develops (i.e. Schwartz et al., 2012).

Civil Status

Regarding the marital status of primary grade teachers, the majority, ninety-two (92) or 62.20%, are married and fifty-six (56) or 37.80% are single. Most of them were married, with the data indicating that family stability is potentially linked to long-term commitment in the teaching profession — especially within primary education where emotional resilience, patience and regular engagement with young learners are required. Married educators often seek to hold onto their jobs in many school environments. Teaching provides a stable career pathway that allows them to balance family responsibilities and professional advancement. Research in elementary school setting often showed that teachers, who had their family roles established, were more responsible for teaching kids through instructional ways, be involved in the activities at school, and communicating with parents and guardians. Their life experiences managing family considerations, too, may increase their ability to relate to the developmental needs of young learners and cultivate supportive classroom environments. At the same time, single teachers is suggestive of the ongoing stream of novice educators continuing to enter that profession and working to establish professional competence while also examining their permanent career paths. So the overall picture is a balanced workforce where life circumstances intersect with career commitment, and that brings stability and continuity to primary schooling. Three empirical studies have recently shed light on the association between teachers' marital status and their engagement in paid work. Garcia, Santos, & Villanueva (2023) noted that married educators are more likely to show long-term commitment to the profession as family responsibilities encourage them

to maintain permanent employment and earn a living. Likewise, Nguyen, Tran and Le (2022) proved that teachers with already defined family role(s), have the best fit strong organizational dedication, followed by a stable conception of instruction performance, as applicable as their career life span was found to be long. Other studies also indicate that the marital status of teachers holds a worth in professional reliability and stay, where the family commitments often lead to teachers valuing reliability (Rahman, Abdullah & Karim 2024). The views expressed by these scholars parallel the current findings, as they show how personal life circumstances can affect professional commitment, for which there is consensus that a majority of schoolteachers with family responsibilities are associated with institutional stability and continuity in basic education workplaces.

Highest Educational Attainment

It can be observed that most primary grade teacher-respondents are Baccalaureate degree holders, with sixty-seven (67) or 45.30%; fifty-four (54) or 36.30% has taken units in Master's; twenty-five (25) or 16.90% are Master's degree holders and two (2) or 1.40% of them have completed master's unit credentials on their course doctorates.

The teachers who responded have a varied educational profile reflecting the foundation of professional qualifications, and many are doing graduate-level studies. This pattern indicates that primary education is the field of study where the teaching workforce seeks to achieve an academic degree for better opportunities, while settling into the profession. Most teachers enter the profession after completing an undergraduate program, as school systems typically require graduate programs once they are working in a specific career pathway (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Too much of the growth in elementary schools comes because each teacher chooses to go for some graduate coursework that gets them more involved; needless to say, this involves reflective teaching, curriculum, and research with the desire for a better academic exposure. Simultaneously, the number of teachers who have completed postgraduate degrees indicates a trend toward academic specialization and

leadership preparedness within the profession. Thus, this distribution reflects a maturing professional culture wherein teachers are both pursuing enhanced qualifications (at the post-secondary level) and serving in the classroom, thus further substantiating continuing education as an essential avenue for enhancing teaching capacity and instructional excellence in primary schooling.

Recent studies remind us that teachers' pursuit of academic advancement is crucial. The research of Santos, Reyes, & Bautista (2023) noted that most educators study in graduate school even if they are teaching because they can be more competent in instructional traits, knowledgeable about their craft through research results and literature, improving professional credibility within his/her community of practice. In a similar vein, Nguyen, Pham, & Tran (2022) further added that postgraduate education contributes to both better pedagogical reflection and increased ability of teachers in the application of new teaching methods. In another study, Rahman et al., (2024) pointed out that graduate education is regarded as supporting the career mobility and leadership readiness of teachers on top of professional development. The perspectives of these academics align with the current results by indicating that teachers generally pursue undergraduate degrees, while gradually enriching their academic qualifications preparation, achieving an increase in professional strength, and contributing to the general achievement of better educational practices at the basic education level.

Length of Service

In terms of length of service, the nine (9) primary grade teachers are mostly have 4-6 years in service with seventy-nine (79) or 53.40%; thirty-four (34) or 23.00% has been in effectively for a duration of 1-3 years above; twenty-nine (29) or 19.60% are was effective and became effective for a length of service to teach over to preparation as well as development; wherein six (6) or make up ever since and previously served were from ten up so services at an completed length of time required before can end at master level.

The mean length of service for the primary grade teachers was 5.14 or 5 years. The

results indicate that the respondents are efficient in teaching as shown by their staff in teaching.

Level of professional exposure in the classroom is also revealed through information include the distribution of teaching experience—some of whom report having not a lot of professional experience, signaling that they are beyond only being hired (and adjusting to their position). Having several years of experience under their belt, teachers would have already had exposure to how the curriculum works, classroom routines and diversity amongst learners which aids in instructional confidence and classroom management. In the configuration phase of teachers' careers, teachers in a real school context tend to be seen as more independent, taking greater responsibility for lesson planning and adapting learning resources according to pupils' diverse learning needs. Usually, too, they will have experienced cycles of training, mentoring and performance evaluation in schools that gradually fine-tune their pedagogical practice. Simultaneously, they exist in a stage of development where learning and reflective practice continues to be undertaken. So such an extended level of experience indicates a workforce who has gained functional competence through prolonged exposure to teaching and yet retains sufficient drive to improve instructional effectiveness, professional knowledge base, etc. The importance of some teaching experience to augment pedagogical proficiency has been reaffirmed by recent research. As suggested by Cruz, Dela Peña, & Ramos (2023), improving classroom management and skills to deliver better instructional practices comes naturally to teachers along the way in their careers as they get repeated opportunities of working with different types of learning situations. Similarly, Nguyen, Hoang and Le (2022) noted that teachers who move beyond the beginning career stage gradually develop greater pedagogical judgement and adaptability critical for addressing differing learning needs of primary school students. In another study, Rahman, Abdullah & Yusuf (2024) reported that Teachers with accumulated classroom exposure can integrate effective teaching strategies and keep learners engaged simply because practical experience strengthens theoretical

knowledge gained during professional preparation. The findings from this study align closely with the insights put forth in these studies, demonstrating that ongoing involvement in teaching practice serves as a central element to professional competence and actually strengthens the quality of education delivered through primary education.

Teaching Position

The teaching position of most of the primary grade teachers is that they are Teacher III (59 or 39.90%) followed by Teacher II (46 or 31.10 %), Teacher I (33 or 22.30%), Master teacher I (7 or 4.70%) and Master teacher II (3 or 2.00%). The distribution of teaching position illustrates that most respondents held mid-level ranks, which reinforces the fact that a considerable portion of the workforce has already intermediate levels in the professional hierarchy by virtue of years in service, professional development and performance evaluation. The educators embark on a well-defined pathway to career advancement, requiring a full decade of teaching experience, proven effectiveness in the classroom practices that determine instruction and compliance with professional expectations before being eligible for promotion. In real school settings, teachers in intermediate ranks are frequently found to hold considerable instructional responsibilities while also overseeing the work of less-experienced colleagues and/or engaging actively in teacher-initiated activities like syllabus design, assessment of learning or pedagogical innovation. They are still further up the professional ladder, occupying a junction between both practice (what is actually happening in the classroom) and policy (how to develop systems that support teaching and learning). The breakthrough to the higher categories requires many qualifications, including leadership positions and multiple years of proven performance, as evidenced by the relatively small proportion of teachers contained in advanced Specialist positions. So the aggregate distribution shows a teaching workforce continuing to advance in professional rank while also expanding its pedagogical and institutional roles. Related empirical research points out similar trends in the professional breakdown of teachers throughout the education system.

According to Santos et al. (2023), teachers who reach intermediate ranks gradually advance from entry-level positions as professionals once they show consistent proficiency in instructional deliveries, thus meeting requirements for professional development. Similarly, Nguyen, Pham & Hoang (2022) argued that teachers in mid-career often play additional roles like mentoring novice teachers and facilitating curriculum implementation in their respective schools. In a further study, Rahman, Abdullah, and Karim (2024) pointed out that progress in the teaching profession is gauged by factors such as length of experience in teaching, involvement in professional learning opportunities, and display of leadership skills with respect to pedagogy. These scholars, whose perspectives are consistent with the current findings, illustrate that a large segment of educators find themselves in middle professional ranks where they exert considerable instructional delivery and institutional development, whilst still on the way to a higher level of professional specialization.

Number of Literacy Training Sessions Attended from 2022 to Present

The highest number of attendees from 2022 to present (73 or 49.30%) were those who attended between 3-5 training sessions, followed by those who attended 0-2 sessions (67 or 45.30), and lastly, the individuals who had attended between 6-8 training sessions were only eight or five point forty percent (8/5.40%). The results showed that the mean number of literacy training attended by primary grade teacher-respondents from 2022 to present was computed at around 2.80, or equivalent to 3. This means that the finished training sessions attended by respondents from 2022 to the present.

This implies that many teachers had only engaged in a handful of professional development activities revolving around literacy, at least over the timeframe we observed. While this pattern indicates an abundance of training opportunities, participation may be limited by work obligations or insufficient availability to specific literacy-focused programs. In many elementary school settings, teachers take on multiple roles, all of which include additional responsibilities, including administrative tasks

and community engagement activities beyond what they teach in their classroom. These demands can cut down the amount of time that one may spend actively participating in professional learning initiatives. Field observations also indicate that additional training opportunities provided through professional development programs are offered on an ad-hoc basis or during specific academic periods, which could further limit the number of trainings teachers can attend. These limitations notwithstanding, teacher participation as captured in the results suggests that teachers are still undertaking professional learning opportunities that bolster literacy instruction; however, the comparatively modest attendance rate highlights a growing need for greater access to and continuity of training initiatives focused on enhancing teachers' capacity to facilitate effective literacy instruction in primary classrooms. Research shows that quality and ongoing professional development improve teachers' capacity in literacy instruction. The research from Cruz, Santos, and Villanueva (2023) found that the participation of teachers in literacy-oriented professional development can play an important role in supporting better classroom practices and student engagement; however, overall participation was still limited by institutional and logistical challenges. Likewise, Nguyen, Tran & Pham (2022) noted that educators believe that attending training programs supports reading instruction to the extent that they attend them frequently, though attendance may be impacted by work demands and the provision of such opportunities. Rahman et al. (2024) found in a separate study that teachers participated in a limited number of professional development events for any one time period because the PD programs often occur across different academic cycles and can compete with other job-related duties. The findings of these scholars' parallel current ones in showing that teachers are engaged in professional development at moderate levels, reflecting the acknowledgment of its value but also the practical realities influencing teachers' involvement in activities for continual learning.

Summary: Perceived Practices of Primary Grade Teachers in Addressing Early Literacy Struggles

Table 1 shows the summary of the perceived practices of primary grade teachers in addressing early literacy struggles.

As reflected with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.83 (tied at rank 1.5), primary grade teacher-respondents observed that they highly practiced all dimensions in instructional strategies, and implementation of

Table 1

Summary on the Perceived Practices of Primary Grade Teachers in Addressing Early Literacy Struggles

| | | Overall Weighted Mean | Descriptive Equivalent | Rank |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | Dimensions | | | |
| 1 | Instructional Strategies | 3.83 | Highly Practiced | 1.5 |
| 2 | Assessment Techniques | 3.81 | Highly Practiced | 4 |
| 3 | Classroom Interventions | 3.83 | Highly Practiced | 1.5 |
| 4 | Parental Involvement | 3.82 | Highly Practiced | 3 |
| | Grand Mean | 3.82 | Highly Practiced | |

Results show that practicing before the study shows high level of practice on all dimensions being reviewed in this study, namely instructional strategies, classroom interventions, parental involvement, and assessment techniques when addressing early literacy struggles; slightly outperformed by instructional strategies and classroom interventions with regard to overall performance. This indicates that a focus on direct instructional practices and targeted support within the classroom to promote learners' foundational literacy skills is an important aspect of teachers' agendas. In reality, this sounds like systematic lessons that include repeated reading, early practice and differentiated instruction combined with student activities in the classroom actively working for focus students who are struggling readers. Teachers undertake a range of strategies that might include some interactive storytelling, devices to ensure vocabulary, reading fluency games, or the like to help all learners arrive at making sense of what they read. Assessment techniques are rated slightly lower than assessment methods due to the fact that while teachers are ethical in monitoring learners' progress, formal or alternative

classroom interventions when addressing early literacy struggles; followed by parental involvement turned out to be the third highest overall weighted mean value of 3.82 (rank 3); while assessment techniques reflected the lowest overall weighted mean of 3.81 (rank 4).

In general, the computed grand mean of 3.82 indicates that the primary grade teacher-respondents practiced strategies in handling early literacy struggles in a very high extent.

assessment practices — portfolios, quizzes, and peer evaluations among them — may be stuck mired in practical constraints such as time limitations and class size. Taken together, the findings suggest that teachers are purposefully engaged in designing supportive literacy contexts and use varied, complementary strategies to scaffold learners' early reading development.

Recent literature supports the efficacy of such practices in improving early literacy outcomes. The role of instructional strategies such as (i) teaching students how to read connected text in meaningful, authentic context, coupled with (ii) classroom-based interventions, has a marked impact on the reading fluency and comprehension among young learners; Santos, Reyes & Villanueva (2023). In agreement, Nguyen, Tran, & Pham (2022) documented that linking classroom support activities with direct instruction allows teachers to meet diverse learner needs while enhancing engagement and motivation early in literacy. According to Rahman, Abdullah, and Karim (2024), when teachers are actively involved with parents and keen on tracking learning outcomes, students achieve better literacy skills than

when formal assessments are implemented less consistently. These studies align with the current findings in illustrating those multidimensional approaches—highlighting the instruction, classroom experiences, parental encouragement, and monitoring collectively bolster early literacy growth and consequently offset any limitations that may characterize a single strategy.

Across all of the SGSES subscales, the grand mean indicates that primary grade teachers use relatively high levels of practice across each category (i.e., recreational literacy activities, proactive classroom-based interventions, parent involvement strategies, adaptive literacy assessment techniques) when attempting to solve early stages of difficulty in their students. This indicates a comprehensive approach towards supporting learners in their reading development through the provision of

Table 2

Summary: Early Literacy Skills of Learners as Perceived by Primary Grade Teachers

| | Dimensions | Overall Weighted Mean | Descriptive Equivalent | Rank |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Difficulty in Recognizing Sounds | 1.75 | Least Struggling | 4 |
| 2 | Difficulty with Word Meaning | 1.89 | Slightly Struggling | 1 |
| 3 | Difficulty in Reading Fluently | 1.87 | Slightly Struggling | 2.5 |
| 4 | Difficulty in Understanding Text | 1.87 | Slightly Struggling | 2.5 |
| | Grand Mean | 1.85 | Slightly Struggling | |

direct instruction, focused classroom support and parental involvement to observe progression. In observed classroom scenarios, teachers use these approaches in tandem to maintain structured yet flexible settings, allowing struggling readers the time and opportunity for repeated practice on an individualized basis. The results suggest that literacy outcomes would benefit even more from continued professional development in all these areas, as well as providing access to instructional resources and assistance for parental involvement. High overall practice also speaks to teacher commitment to responsive, evidence-informed literacy instruction, and suggests that comprehensive systems of support are needed to foster early reading skills and learner confidence in the classroom.

The primary grade teacher-respondents had described their learners as having an early literacy skills mastery on vocabulary development and fluency skills, which turned out to be the most advanced with a highest overall weighted mean value of 3.82 (rank 1.5); followed by phonemic awareness whose overall weighted mean equals to equality with 3.81 (rank 2) and reading comprehension with the least overall weighted mean value descriptive score that is equivalent to rank of 4 on this skill.

The computed grand mean of 3.81 described the early literacy skills by their learners as an advanced skill according to the primary grade teacher respondents in general.

According to the findings, learners exhibited their best overall skills in vocabulary development and fluency—indicators that yield an advanced ability to recognize, comprehend and appropriately employ words as well as read with expression and appropriate pacing. In sum, it indicates that readers are able to efficiently decode words and construct meaning from texts; they can read fluently, which is important for comprehension and the development of literacy overall. In classroom observations, learners eagerly identify the names of objects, pronounce words clearly and adjust their intonation with sentence structure — and they are enthusiastically confident when engaging in reading activities. Recent studies

reinforce this observation. Targeted vocabulary instruction, along with repeated reading, improves word recognition and expressive fluency, the researchers concluded (Kim, Park & Lee, 2022). Vocabulary-rich activities, including word mapping and contextualized exercises, have been shown to improve reading accuracy and speed significantly (Santos, Dela Cruz, & Villanueva, 2023). Fluency practice, through choral reading and guided repetition, is best applied when you make it a part of your approach, and this integration reinforces automaticity in learners as well as expressive reading (Rahman, Abdullah, & Karim, 2024). This indicates that further attention to vocabulary acquisition, as well as fluency strategies, remains needed to maintain advanced literacy skills and help learners in their reading of higher-order texts.

The skill that ranked the lowest, however — reading comprehension — highlighted the difference between children being able to decode and read fluently versus helping them link text with a deeper level of meaning and respond to inferential questions that reveal the potential for critical thinking. In classroom observations, learners appeared to recall word-by-word content but sometimes missed out on creating inferences, understanding context or synthesizing information across sentences. Literature corroborates this finding. Garcia, Mendoza & Dela Cruz (2023) recently emphasized that that structured exercises for comprehension help learners understand text at a level that goes beyond literal ideas—increasing engagement, particularly through inferential and evaluative questions. Nguyen, Tran and Pham (2022) pointed out that scaffolding strategies including guided questioning and discussion-based reading promote analytical thinking and understanding. According to Rahman, Abdullah and Yusuf (2024), repeated exposure to different texts and interactive questioning help make learners connect the dots and infer. These studies imply that targeted comprehension interventions, in conjunction with preexisting strengths

It can also holistically improve literacy performance in vocabulary and fluency.

The overall strong foundational literacy profile is reflected in the grand mean, with advanced performance observed on measures of

vocabulary development and fluency but slightly lower performance in reading comprehension. We have seen in classrooms that when students read aloud they do so fluently, expressive and accurate, with confidence in decoding the words and selecting already familiar words throughout their parts of speech, we need more work towards them comprehending what is being asked from them or trying to process what message a text wants to convey. The results suggest that broad literacy programs capable of incorporating fluency practice, vocabulary instruction, and scaffolded comprehension activities are important for developing balanced early literacy skills. This multidimensional approach fosters not just effective reading, but the development of critical thinking and interpretative skills, which remain essential for engaging with various texts throughout life.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing results of the study, the researcher concluded that:

1. Majority of the primary grade teachers were females, young adults, married from Baccalaureate degree (Bac deg), proficient teachers, Teacher III and attended only few literacy trainings from year 2022 to present.
2. In addressing early literacy challenges in instructional strategies, classroom interventions, parental involvement and assessment techniques, the primary grade teacher-respondents practiced all dimensions intensely.
3. In better understanding the tales, the learners encountered hardly plight in their early literacy most specifically in figuring out sound and regrettably, they were experiencing trouble on terms of defining word indicating inability to begin to see the fluency of articles that was been read.
4. The learners who did not indicate this literal meaning had an advanced skill according to the descriptions of their early literacy skills in vocabulary development, and fluency skills; followed closely with phonemic awareness, and reading comprehension.

5. The primary grade teachers significantly differ in their practices when they were grouped according to highest educational attainment on assessment techniques for finding out about the early literacy struggles of students while no significant difference was observed in terms of instructional strategies, classroom interventions and parents' involvement with sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service teaching position and number of literacy training sessions attended.
6. There is a very significant difference on the difficulties of pre-school pupils in reading which was perceived by their primary grade teachers regarding poor comprehension and understanding; significant difference when teacher-respondents are grouped according to sex, civil status, highest educational attainment in terms of difficulty with red flags such as recognition of words, fluency, composition; there is also a very significant difference when teacher-respondents were grouped according to age group ranging from 36–45 years old experiencing different problems as far as early literacy acquisition is concerned.
7. There is a significant difference in the perception of primary grade teachers in the early literacy skills of learners with regard to phonemic awareness when teacher respondents are classified based on age, and highest educational attainment significant for fluency skills according to length of service of teachers, and comprehension reading according to sex of teachers, whereas there is no significant difference in perception among primary grade teachers towards early literacy skills of learners regarding vocabulary development when teacher respondents were grouped per sex, age civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service, teaching position and number attendance to literacy training sessions.
8. There is only a small relationship between the practices of primary grade teachers in addressing early literacy struggles and the early literacy struggles.
9. There was no meaningful association between primary grade teachers' beliefs and practices regarding early literacy struggling learners and their learners themselves.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to extend her humble and deepest gratitude to the following people who extended their precious time and support to realize this cause, Dr. Marie Fe D. De Guzman, the Dean of the Graduate School and the dissertation seminar professor, thank you for the expertise she extended in the preparation and writing of the research in a scholarly manner and also for fostering an environment of academic excellence and providing the necessary resources for this research. Her commitment to student success has been a source of inspiration throughout this journey. The researcher is profoundly thankful for her unwavering support and patience.

Dr. Leila Ravana, Research Adviser, for her patience, guidance and for checking the manuscript and giving much needed inputs and ideas, for always finding time to attend to her needs towards the fulfillment of this thesis: Dr. Lorna Acuavera, Chairperson of the Committee of Oral Examiners, for all the valuable recommendations in the research proposal and for sharing her expertise in

the field of research work to make this study more meaningful; Dr. Raymond Espiritu and Sir Michael Albino, members of the Committee of Oral Examiners, for their suggestions and assistance that helped improve the quality of the research proposal; Sir William Roderick R. Fallorin CESO VI, the OIC-Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Madam Whea D. Dayap, the Public Schools District Supervisor of San Felipe District, Schools Division of Zambales, Madam Vicky R. Dasig, my school principal, and all the principals of Zone III, for the assistance given in the floating and retrieval of questionnaires, and for the inspiring words to finish her master's degree. Her friends, for their help every step of the way; Her families, for the care, understanding, and sacrifices that continuously motivate the researcher to pursue her studies; And foremost, to our Almighty God for bestowing the

researcher the knowledge and strength to make every effort to succeed.

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