

Reading Skills Of Grade 4 Learners: Appreciation, Practices, And Challenges Of The Parents And Teachers In Bayugan South District

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Abstract: *This study aimed to determine the level of reading skills of grade 4 learners in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as perceived by parents and teachers. It also aimed to determine the practices and challenges encountered by parents and teachers in teaching reading. Using a quantitative non-experimental approach, particularly a descriptive design, the research aimed to investigate the different of reading skills as perceived between parents and teachers in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A researcher-made survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool. The researcher employed a probability sampling design, specifically utilizing simple random sampling methods. For selecting teacher participants, complete enumeration was employed, ensuring the inclusion of all Grade 4 class advisers within the study. In contrast, the fish-bowl technique was utilized for selecting parent participants. Frequency counts and percentages, Weighted mean and Mann-Whitney U test were used as statistical treatments to analyze the data gathered. The findings of the analyses of the data obtained from the survey revealed that the level of reading skills of the Grade 4 pupils in the Bayugan South district as appreciated by parents and teachers in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency is satisfactory. Hence, parents perceived in terms of vocabulary is satisfactory and to as teachers is moderate. Pupils show moderate in terms of comprehension as appreciated by parents, and as to teachers. It was also found that the appreciation of the level of reading skills of grade 4 learners between parents and teachers was significantly different in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. On the other hand, the level of reading in terms of comprehension was found to have no significant difference as appreciated between parents and teachers. As to the best practices/initiatives of the parents, most of the participants said that "repeated reading" is the best practice that could be utilized toward improving the reading skills of the students. While teachers believe that "remedial reading" is the best practice that might be used to help children develop their reading skills. Moreover, "Lack of child's interest in reading" is one of the challenges parents faced when teaching reading while most teachers agreed that the biggest challenge they faced when teaching reading to learners is "a lack of parental support." These results highlight how important the collaborative efforts between parents and teachers in teaching reading to the pupils. When parents and teachers communicate and work together, they can identify individual strengths and areas for improvement, tailor instruction to meet specific needs, and provide holistic support for learners reading development. The study also emphasized the importance of reading intervention program to enhance the level of reading skills of the pupils.*

Keywords: appreciation, challenges, comprehension, practices, reading skills

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that not only broadens learners' horizons but also equips them with essential knowledge and life lessons. In today's information-driven society, the ability to comprehend written language is indispensable. As highlighted by Ditona and Rico (2021), reading is the cornerstone of most learning endeavors, enabling students to interact with and derive meaning from written texts. Therefore, cultivating proficient reading skills from a young age is advantageous for students, shaping their future academic and personal growth. However, despite the critical role of reading in education, parents and teachers often encounter challenges in effectively imparting and fostering this skill among learners.

Understanding the intricacies of reading comprehension involves mastering several key components. Phonological awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are vital pillars identified by the National Reading Panel (Whalon et al., 2019). Each component plays a crucial role in independently comprehending written content, underscoring the multifaceted nature of reading proficiency.

Appreciation for reading skills encompasses not only recognizing its importance but also cultivating a culture that values reading both at home and in the classroom. Parents and teachers play pivotal roles in instilling this appreciation by modeling reading behaviors, providing access to diverse reading materials, and celebrating reading achievements. Understanding the extent to which parents and teachers appreciate the significance of reading skills sets the stage for exploring their efforts in supporting learners'

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reading development. The elementary school years, particularly fourth grade, mark a pivotal stage in students' reading development. This phase represents a transition period, as students move from their mother tongue to English as the primary mode of instruction. With approximately 30% of instructional time dedicated to English, reading, and language arts, fourth grade is critical for nurturing reading skills (Hoyer & Sparks, 2020). Despite the challenges inherent in teaching reading, educators at the primary level are continuously exploring innovative strategies to enhance students' literacy abilities (Moktari & Velten, 2019).

Moreover, inclusive education principles underscore the commitment of educators to create nurturing environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students (Pei, 2019). However, financial constraints and parental limitations pose additional obstacles to the holistic development of learners. Parents, grappling with pressures related to supporting their children and managing household responsibilities, may face challenges in actively engaging with their children's education (Agua & Balasabas, 2022). To address these challenges, educators must employ tailored remediation and enhancement activities aligned with students' learning styles (Mendoza, 2019). Similarly, parents play a pivotal role as motivators in their children's educational journey, necessitating their active involvement in school-related activities (Manlangit et al., 2020).

This research aimed to determine the appreciation, practices, and challenges faced by parents and teachers regarding the reading skills of fourth-grade learners in the South Bayugan district, Bayugan City Division, Agusan del Sur, Caraga. Despite the significant interest in enhancing reading skills within the Bayugan City Division, existing interventions may not adequately address the prevailing challenges. By delving into the experiences of both parents and teachers, this study aims to inform the development of targeted intervention programs tailored to address the identified issues and foster a conducive learning.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive method design. It is descriptive because it illustrates the parents' and teachers' perceptions of the reading skills of their children and pupils. Moreover, it involved testing whether the difference between the reading skills of the pupils, as appreciated by the parents and as appreciated by the teachers, exists or not. The interview and survey techniques were employed. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also done to determine the best practices and the problems encountered by the parents and teachers.

The researcher employed a probability sampling design, specifically utilizing simple random sampling methods. Particularly, the study involved 16 teachers and 134 parents a total of 150 participants from the public elementary schools of Bayugan South District, Bayugan City Division. This study employed a researcher-made survey questionnaire comprising two (2) parts. The first part of the survey consisted of items aimed at assessing the appreciation of parents and teachers regarding the reading skills of Grade 4 pupils. These items were presented in a checklist format, utilizing a five-point scaling pattern: 5- Very satisfactory, 4- Satisfactory, 3- Moderate, 2- Low, and 1- None-reader. Each level of reading skill—Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension—contained four items, a total of 20 items. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions focused on exploring the best practices employed by parents and teachers, as well as assessing the challenges they encountered. These questions were administered through interviews. Frequency Counts and Percentages, Weighted mean, and Mann-Whitney U Test were used to analyze the numerical data of the study.

OBJECTIVE

To determine and assess the significant difference between the appreciation of parents and teachers in reading skills in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and propose an intervention program based on the practices and challenges encountered by parents and teachers in teaching reading.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Reading Skills as Appreciated by Parents and Teachers in terms of Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension

Table 1 shows the mean distribution of the Level of Reading (LOR) skills of the Grade 4 pupils in Bayugan South District as appreciated by parents. As observed, the highest mean score of 4.46, is attributed to variable 2 this means that the level of reading skills in terms of phonics is satisfactory or extensive. On the other hand, variable (5) comprehension got the lowest mean of 3.45. This indicates that the level of reading skills of grade 4 pupils in terms of comprehension is moderate and as interpreted as moderately extensive. Holistically, the table got a composite mean of 4.08 which signifies that there is a satisfactory level of reading skills as perceived by parents. This specifies that the participants view the level of reading skills of the Grade 4 pupils in Bayugan South District as appreciated by parents in terms of phonics as extensive. The parents' appreciation of the way teachers teach their children is satisfactory. This can be attributed to the fact that strategies that include using word study activities, focusing on common phonics patterns, explicit phonics instruction with practice opportunities, and guided reading sessions with emphasis on segmenting and blending are used in teaching to further develop students' phonics skills. Mengitie (2019) revealed that employing phonic reading strategies can lead to improvements in children's phonic performance. This highlights the effectiveness of utilizing specific teaching approaches to support children's phonics development. On the other hand, there is a room for improvement of the reading skills in terms of comprehension. This may be due to the pupil's limited background knowledge and it could affect the reading comprehension of the pupils. Therefore, it may require additional instruction and practice for this skill. Wang et al. (2020) mentioned that environmental factors such as limited exposure to diverse texts and lack of reading support at home impact comprehension in fourth-grade students. Findings suggested that these factors contribute to moderate comprehension levels of the students.

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Table 1 Mean Distribution of the Level of Reading (LOR) Skills of Grade 4 Pupils in terms of Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension as Appreciated by Parents

	Variable	Mean	Remarks	Interpretation
1	Phonological Awareness	4.43	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
2	Phonics	4.46	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
3	Fluency	4.14	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
4	Vocabulary	3.94	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
5	Comprehension	3.45	Moderate	The level of reading skill is moderately extensive
	Overall Weighted Mean	4.08	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 Nonreader; 1.50 – 2.49 Low; 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate; 3.50 – 4.49 Satisfactory; 4.50 – 5.00 Very satisfactory

Table 2 shows the mean distribution of the Level of Reading (LOR) skills of the Grade 4 pupils in Bayugan South District as appreciated by teachers. As observed, variable number one (1) “Phonological Awareness” had the highest mean rate of 3.91, which has an equivalent verbal interpretation of “satisfactory.” This describes that the level of reading skill is very extensive. Meanwhile, variable number two (5): Comprehension, obtained the lowest mean of 3.33, with an equivalent verbal interpretation of “satisfactory” or “moderately extensive”. As a whole, it has a mean of 3.64, with a verbal interpretation of “satisfactory” or “extensive”. This indicates that the participants perceive the level of reading skills of the Grade 4 pupils in the Bayugan South district as appreciated by teachers is extensive. Bagolong (2021) highlighted that pupils possess strong reading skills, particularly in terms of phonemic/phonological awareness. This understanding of how pupils acquire the ability to read text suggests that their future reading achievement will be greatly enhanced. On the other hand, teachers should have innovative teaching strategies that can be used, which, in turn, help develop the preceding skills of the pupils. Hence, what learners require during the vocabulary development process is direction and guidance from their teachers in managing study time to optimize learning both inside and outside of the classroom (Rogers, 2018).

Table 2 Mean Distribution of the Level of Reading (LOR) Skills of Grade 4 Pupils in terms of Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension as Appreciated by Teachers

	Variable	Mean	Remarks	Interpretation
1	Phonological Awareness	3.91	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
2	Phonics	3.84	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
3	Fluency	3.67	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive
4	Vocabulary	3.47	Moderate	The level of reading skill is moderately extensive
5	Comprehension	3.33	Moderate	The level of reading skill is moderately extensive
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	Satisfactory	The level of reading skill is extensive

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 Nonreader; 1.50 – 2.49 Low; 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate; 3.50 – 4.49 Satisfactory; 4.50 – 5.00 Very satisfactory

Significant Difference of the Level of Reading Skills of Grade 4 Learners as Appreciated by the Parents and Teachers in terms of Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension

Table 3 presents the significant difference in the level of reading (LOR) skills of Grade 4 pupils as perceived between parents and teachers. As observed, appreciations on level of reading by parents and teachers were found to be significantly different in terms of phonological awareness, phonemic, fluency, and vocabulary at level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$, with $U_1 = 1526.0, p = 0.005$, $U_2 = 1693.0, p = 0.000$, $U_3 = 1621.0, p = 0.000$, and $U_4 = 1538.0, p = 0.004$, respectively. Consequently, the mean from parents’ perceived the level of reading of their grade 4 children in terms of phonological awareness, phonemic, fluency, and vocabulary, as significantly higher than the perception of the teachers. The study suggested that there were no significant differences in how parents and teachers perceived the comprehension abilities of students. This means that, overall, both parents and teachers tended to have similar assessments or judgments regarding the students’ comprehension skills.

Table 3 Significant difference in the level of reading (LOR) skills of Grade 4 pupils as perceived by parents and teachers

Dependent Variable	Grouping Variable	Mean	U statistics	p-value	Remark
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LOR in terms of phonological awareness	Parents	4.427	1526.0	0.005	<i>Significant</i>
	Teachers	3.906			
LOR in terms of phonics	Parents	4.456	1693.0	<0.001	<i>Significant</i>
	Teachers	3.844			
LOR in terms of fluency	Parents	4.136	1621.0	<0.001	<i>Significant</i>
	Teachers	3.672			
LOR in terms of vocabulary	Parents	3.944	1538.0	0.004	<i>Significant</i>
	Teachers	3.469			
LOR in terms of comprehension	Parents	3.448	1195.0	0.449	<i>Not significant</i>
	Teachers	3.328			

Significant @ $\alpha=0.05$ level tested using Mann-Whitney U test

It suggested that parents and teachers may have different perspectives on a child's reading abilities. On the other hand, the level of reading in terms of comprehension was found to have no significant difference as perceived between parents and teachers, with $U_5 = 1195.0, p = 0.449$. Hence, parents and teachers have the same level of perception towards the level of reading comprehension of the pupils. The study suggested that there were no significant differences in how parents and teachers perceived the comprehension abilities of students.

Such findings can have several implications. It could indicate that parents and teachers are effectively communicating and sharing information about the students' progress and abilities. Alternatively, it might suggest that the criteria or methods used by parents and teachers to evaluate comprehension align closely enough that they result in similar perceptions (Ombayao-Mugot & Tantiado, 2023)

Moreover, the Grade 4 pupils' reading skills in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as appreciated by parents did not matter in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as viewed by their teachers. Parents can say that their children are good at vocabulary, however, it may be viewed differently by their teachers. Teachers have standardized tools to measure the reading skills of their pupils which are different from parents' standards. While parents' appreciation is satisfactory level of the reading skills of the pupils in terms of vocabulary the teachers' appreciation in terms of vocabulary is moderate. This means that parents think that their children are learning well in school, but teachers' assessments of their children need more follow-up and support to attain a high or satisfactory level of reading proficiency.

Best Practices/Initiatives of the Parents and Teachers in Teaching Reading Skill

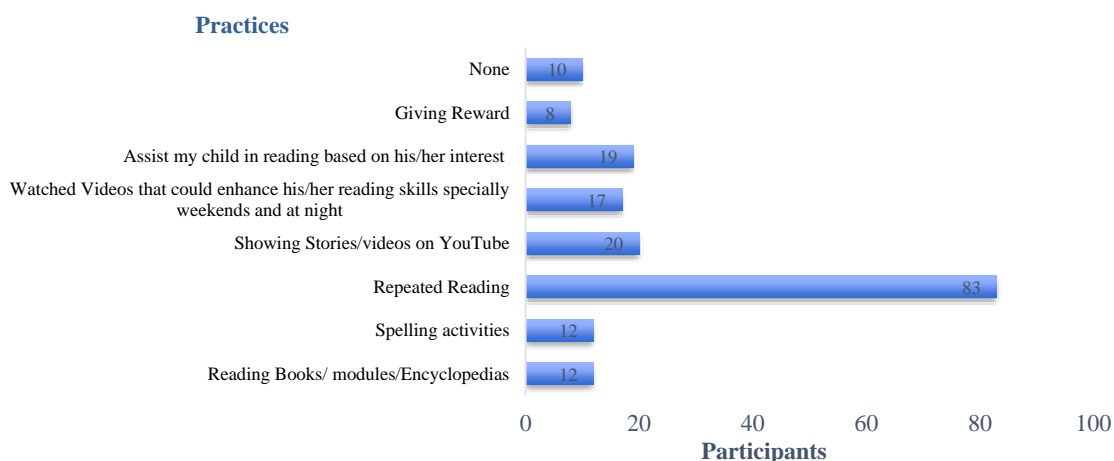


Figure 1. Practices and Initiatives of the Parents in Teaching Reading Skills

Figure 1 shows the best practices/initiatives of the parents in teaching reading skills. As shown, most of the participants (83) said that "repeated reading" is the best practice that could be utilized toward improving the reading skills of the pupils. On the other hand, the "giving rewards" got the lowest number of suggestions with only eight (8) participants responding. This means that parents employ an approach that does not require educational materials. This is because most

parents are working and do not have time to create teaching materials. However, repeated reading is successful, indicating that they are capable of improving their children's abilities while both working and caring for their houses. Based on prior research, repeated readings are indeed a valuable instructional strategy in primary classrooms for fostering both fluency and reading comprehension. By engaging in multiple readings of a text, students develop familiarity with the material, which in turn enhances their reading fluency—the ability to read with proper pace, accuracy, and expression. Moreover, as students become more fluent, their

comprehension of the text typically improves as well. This strategy is supported by studies that demonstrate how repeated readings can lead to significant gains in both fluency and comprehension, making it a valuable tool for educators to incorporate into their teaching practices (Wymer, 2022).

Figure 4 displays the teachers' greatest efforts and teaching methods for reading skills. As observed, most of the participants (9) said that “remedial reading” is the finest method that may be used to enhance kids' reading abilities. Then again, “word of the day (in the morning before the class started,” “reading log using SRA stories every afternoon before class started,” “answering HOTS questions” and “READ (Drop Everything and Read)” got the lowest suggestions from the respondents with one (1) participant each.

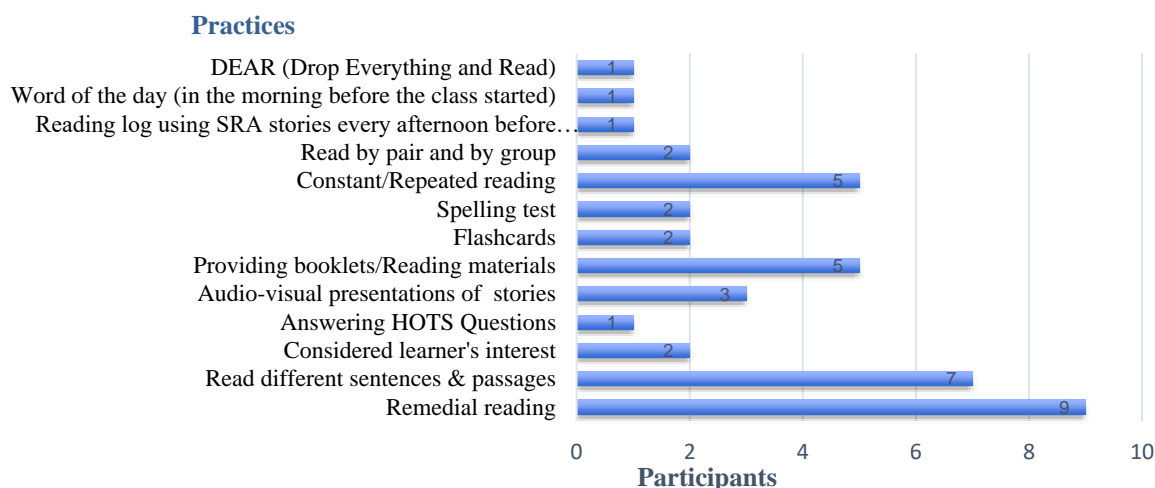


Figure 2. Practices and Initiatives of the Teachers in Teaching Reading Skills

Arevalo (2023) highlighted the positive effects of remedial reading instructions, it's important to note that the effectiveness of such interventions may vary depending on factors such as the quality of instruction, the intensity and duration of the intervention, and the individual characteristics of the students involved. Ongoing research and evaluation are essential for refining and improving remedial reading practices to best support Grade 4 pupils in their literacy development. Implementing proper interventions and having competent reading teachers in all classrooms can lead to improved learning outcomes. A variety of reading demands can be satisfied by consistent daily training. Some children require individualized instruction to learn to read. Remedial reading training is an excellent approach and practice for helping students learn to read. Making remedial reading instructions an effective strategy in helping and making pupils learn to read.

Challenges Encountered by the Parents and Teachers in Teaching Reading Skills

Figure 3 displays the parents' challenges encountered in teaching or reading skills. As seen, most of the parents agreed that “lack of child's interest in reading” is the greatest challenge they face in teaching reading skills. On the other hand, “lack of knowledge” serves as the least challenging aspect, with eleven (11) participants. This implies that the academic progress and general well-being of children are significantly influenced by their parents and parental reading involvement was positively associated with reading skills. Parents play a vital role in pupils' education. Children's interest in reading plays a significant to their reading skills. Furthermore, parents must emphasize intrinsic motivation, particularly interest in reading materials, as a significant predictor of reading engagement so that their children will become motivated to read.

Caliskan and Ulas (2022) revealed that parent involvement in reading activities can significantly impact primary school students' reading comprehension skills, reading motivation, and attitudes toward reading. Through activities such as shared reading, discussions about books, and modeling reading behavior, parents can enhance their children's comprehension abilities and cultivate a positive attitude towards reading. This involvement fosters a supportive reading environment at home, which in turn promotes a lifelong love for reading and improves overall academic performance.

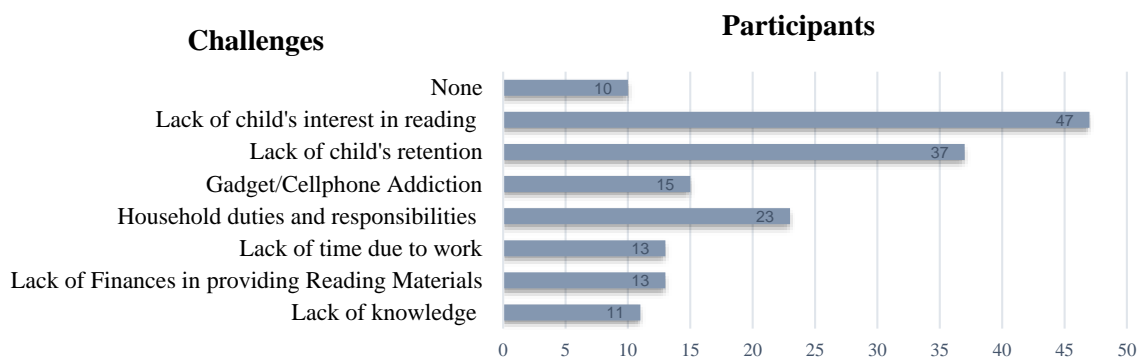


Figure 3. Challenges of the Parents in Teaching Reading Skill

Figure 4 displays the teachers' challenges encountered in teaching or reading skills. As seen, most of the parents agreed that *“lack of parent’s support in reading”* is the greatest challenge they face in teaching reading skills. On the other hand, *“Schedule due to school activities and reports”*, *“Lack of finances and “Learners’ absenteeism”* serve as the least challenging aspect, with one (1) participant.

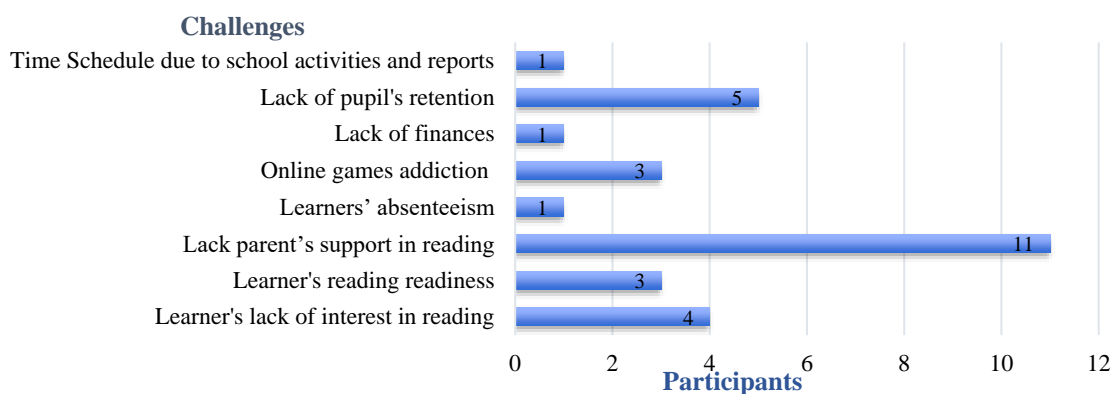


Figure 4. Challenges of the Teachers in Teaching Reading Skill

Ombayao-Mugot and Tantiado (2023) demonstrated a substantial association between the level of parental participation and students' reading proficiency. As a result, parents should be aware that parenting, contact with teachers, and home learning all have a substantial impact on how well school-aged children can read. It is suggested that the school implement a variety of school events and projects including parents in order to build a good relationship between teachers and parents, as well as between parents and students.

Research consistently shows that parental involvement in education positively correlates with academic achievement. Lack of parental support in reading can contribute to lower academic performance, as reading skills are fundamental to success across all subjects. Children may struggle to comprehend textbooks, complete assignments, and perform well on assessments if they haven't received adequate support at home. On the other hand, the lack of parental reading support can influence teachers' instructional approaches and highlight the importance of collaborative efforts between home and school to promote literacy development among students. By recognizing and addressing the underlying factors contributing to this lack of support, teachers can better tailor their strategies to meet the needs of all learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the data, parents and teachers may incorporate real-world examples and applications of reading skills to help students see the relevance and applicability to this concept in their daily lives. This can help learners become more engaged and motivated to learn. Schools may adopt the intervention program to help learners improve their reading skills.

Conclusions

The teachers utilized innovative teaching that made the parents’ level of trust and confidence satisfactory in terms of teaching phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Their learners can sound, syllables, and word parts. On the other hand, learners demonstrate strengths in foundational reading skills, such as phonics, and fluency, there is room for

improvement in knowledge in comprehension ability. By addressing this area through targeted instruction and collaborative efforts between parents and teachers, students can further develop their reading proficiency and achieve greater academic success.

The teachers have successfully implemented instructional strategies to develop these foundational reading skills in Grade 4 learners. This indicates that the curriculum and teaching methods employed in these areas are effective in supporting reading skills development. On the other hand, the teachers' appreciation of the learners in terms of vocabulary and comprehension skills is moderate or moderately extensive. It highlights areas where learners may require additional support and intervention. While teachers have prioritized and excelled in teaching foundational skills, there is a need to dedicate more instructional time and resources to vocabulary development and comprehension strategies. Teachers may implement innovative teaching strategies that can be used, which, in turn, help develop the preceding skills of the pupils. If they will not find ways to improve these skills of the pupils this may cause a problem in the new competencies that they want to develop for their learners.

Moreover, the Grade 4 pupils' reading skills in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as appreciated by parents did not matter in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as viewed by their teachers. Parents can say that their children are good at vocabulary, however, it may be viewed differently by their teachers. Teachers have standardized tools to measure the reading skills of their pupils which are different from parents' standards. While parents' appreciation is satisfactory of the reading skills of the pupils in terms of vocabulary the teachers' appreciation in terms of vocabulary is moderate. This means that parents think that their children are learning well in school, but teachers' assessments of their children need more follow-up and support to attain a satisfactory or high level of reading proficiency.

Lastly, the best practices were done by the parents and teachers such as repeated reading, showing stories/videos on YouTube, remedial reading, and reading different sentences and passages that can develop their reading skills. The challenges encountered by the teachers and parents such as parents' lack of support in reading, lack of pupil retention, learners' lack of interest in reading, external factors like household duties and responsibilities, gadgets addiction, lack of finances in providing reading materials, lack of time due to work are the factors which affect the pupils' reading level. If these problems are not adequately handled; they might cause learners' reading abilities to deteriorate.

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