



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Unraveling the challenges: An in-depth examination of reading and writing difficulties in kindergarten learners

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### Abstract

This study investigated the lived experiences of teachers on the reading and writing difficulties of kindergarten learners. Using a phenomenological research design, the study involved eight (8) teacher-participants that are purposively selected as informants. The data gathering of information in this phenomenological inquiry had employed in-depth interview of participants through face-to-face interview to uncover challenges, coping mechanisms and educational management insights. Using thematic analysis, the following key themes for lived experiences of teacher participants were gathered: Socioeconomic Disparities, Challenges in Phonemic Awareness, and Parental Involvement. The coping mechanisms to address the struggles of kindergarten teachers were Multisensory Learning Approaches, Thorough practice and Targeted reading and writing intervention programs. The insights of the participants were Enhanced Educational infrastructure and Evaluation and Adjustment of the Curriculum. The findings of the study aims to improve the quality of education delivered in schools specifically in terms of reading and writing difficulties of learners.

**Keywords:** Reading; Writing; Difficulties; Kindergarten learners; Early Literacy

### 1. Introduction

“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one.” -George R.R.

Difficulty in reading and writing among kindergarten students is a topic of growing concern in early childhood education. Kindergarten is a crucial stage in a child's educational journey, where they begin to acquire foundational literacy skills. However, some children may face challenges in developing these skills, which can have long-lasting implications for their academic success. Proficiency in reading and writing is not only critical for scholastic achievement but also for fostering lifelong learning. However, it is increasingly evident that a significant number of kindergarten students worldwide encounter formidable obstacles on their path to mastering these essential skills.

Globally, literacy difficulties among kindergarten students are a widespread concern. These early developmental years are crucial for building a strong foundation in literacy skills, and encountering difficulties at this stage can have long-term consequences for a child's academic success. According to Mohammed and Vaughn (2010), the beginning reading stage is perhaps the most pivotal point in a young child's school career. During the earliest grades, students build the foundation for reading and establish learning trajectories that are remarkably stable throughout schooling. Kindergarten classrooms around the world are often filled with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Students may be exposed to languages at home that differ from the language of instruction in school. This linguistic diversity can pose challenges for children as they navigate the complexities of learning to read and write in a language that may not be their first. Moreover, in many parts of the world, especially in low-income countries or underprivileged communities, access to quality educational resources is limited. This lack of access to books, writing materials, and well-trained educators can significantly hinder a child's early literacy development. This widespread issue became even more

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prominent during the onslaught of the pandemic. The UNESCO (2020) initially reported that, due to the global emergency that forced schools to close down, there are nearly 1.5 billion children and 60 million teachers in almost 165 countries around the world who were affected of which learners in their early childhood stage were one of the most vulnerable groups affected.

According to a 2022 World Bank report, 9 out of 10 Filipino children at late primary age are not proficient in reading. Based on World Bank estimates, as many as 91 percent of children in the Philippines at late primary age are not proficient in reading. This is a significant concern, as reading is a fundamental skill that is essential for success in school and in life. As in other nations, the COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated reading difficulties among young learners in the Philippines. School closures and disruptions to learning have led to a loss of learning time and opportunities for students to practice their reading skills. Reading difficulties can have a number of negative consequences for young learners. Students who struggle to read may fall behind in their studies, experience low self-esteem, and be more likely to drop out of school. They may also have difficulty finding and keeping a job as adults.

In the local scenario particularly in Sta. Ana, Davao City, kindergarten teachers have personally seen how Filipino children struggle with reading comprehension due to factors such as limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding figurative language, or poor attention skills. It is for this reason that the researcher's interest has been piqued to deeply understand the extent of reading and writing difficulties among kindergarten students and how teachers may intervene.

### 1.1. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand the nature of reading and writing difficulties in this age group, as well as the factors that contribute to these difficulties. The study also aims to identify effective interventions for helping kindergarten students who are struggling with reading and writing.

### 1.2. Research Questions

- What are the challenges teachers face related to reading and writing difficulties among kindergarten learners?
- What are the coping mechanisms of teachers to the challenges they faced?
- What educational management insights can be drawn from the experiences and challenges of teachers?

To clearly determine the outcome of this study and to whom the findings are addressed, the following persons or agencies were the beneficiaries.

- Department of Education Personnel. The DepEd, particularly the District of Sta. Ana, Davao City, to use information from this study to develop evidence-based policies and strategies for early literacy education.
- The School Principals and Head teachers. For the school principals and school heads to make informed decisions about resource allocation, teacher training, and the implementation of targeted interventions to support students with reading and writing difficulties.
- The Teachers. The findings of this study shall benefit the teachers as they gain a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to reading and writing difficulties. This knowledge can help them tailor their instruction to meet the specific needs of their kindergarten students.
- The Future Researchers. For the future researchers to consider this study a foundation for future research on early literacy difficulties among kindergarten students, inspiring further investigations into this critical area.

The following terms are operationally defined to make this study more comprehensive.

- *Reading difficulties*- characterized by persistent and significant problems in acquiring the essential skills needed for proficient reading.
- *Writing difficulties*- encompass challenges related to the physical act of writing and the cognitive processes involved in generating coherent written content.

### 1.3. Review of Significant Literature

To provide the background and framework of the investigation, selected significant literature and readings related to the study were obtained in this section. This section includes principles, theories, concepts and views regarding the area under study which is reading and writing difficulties among young learners.

#### **1.4. Behavioral Factors**

According to Luo et. al. (2009), students who are at risk for reading challenges are more likely to do better during the early stages of reading if they are cooperative and engages enthusiastically compared to those who are not at risk for reading issues but are not as cooperative and have a hard time engaging. This is true especially at the beginning stage.

Morgan et. al (2017) agreed and said that students who have issues with their behaviour are more likely to have reading problems and are most likely to have slow progress at school. This can begin at kindergarten and last through their elementary years. Because of this, elementary school teachers have the unique task of guiding learners through different academic and non-academic activities throughout the day. This allows teacher to have a deep understanding of the students' learning and achievement. The perceptions of teachers are usually accurate to the actual performance of the students in school. Morgan and his colleagues posited that the perceptions of teachers on the behavior of their students is connected to how teachers control the opportunities for academic participation during classroom instruction, as well as the students' overall performance at the end of the school year.

Brady (2011) examined the nature of reading and writing difficulties in a sample of 101 kindergarten students. The students were assessed on a variety of reading and writing skills, including word recognition, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. The researchers also collected data on the students' cognitive skills, language skills, and social-emotional development. The findings of the study revealed that there is a wide range of reading and writing skills among kindergarten students. Some students are already proficient readers and writers, while others are struggling to learn these basic skills. The study also found that there are a number of factors that contribute to reading and writing difficulties in kindergarten students, including phonological awareness, vocabulary, and cognitive skills. They also identified a number of effective interventions for helping kindergarten students who are struggling with reading and writing. These interventions include providing explicit instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary. It is also important to provide students with opportunities to practice their reading and writing skills in a supportive and engaging environment.

#### **1.5. Early detection of Reading and writing difficulties**

Al Otaiba et al. (2011) posits that the use of universal screening and progress monitoring within an RTI approach for the early identification of Reading difficulties. The researchers demonstrated that universal screening as early as the beginning of kindergarten can accurately identify children at risk for RD.

A study conducted by Catts et al. (2008) found that early kindergarten assessments of letter naming, phonological awareness, fast object naming, and nonword repetition were strong indicators of first grade reading proficiency. Vellutino and colleagues added that identifying students who are at risk early on and analyzing their response to supplemental intervention allow teachers to mitigate the reading issues of students during their kindergarten years.

A solid predictor of future word reading abilities is the capacity to identify individual letters during their early years, added Vellutino et al. (2008). While most kids have already have a basic understanding of letter names when they start kindergarten, they learn a lot more thanks to the classroom teacher's hands-on approach. So, while pre-school screenings can help with some word reading skill prediction, it's much more useful to measure students' variable growth in response to instruction.

While writing-strategy instruction has shown some success, Wissinger et al. (2020) argue that further methods are needed to fully understand the pros and cons of each. As an alternative, reading-to-write training takes the premise that the knowledge bases for reading and writing are same, including information about domains, text properties, and procedures.

#### **1.6. Impact of socioeconomic factors**

A home literacy environment is one in which children engage in literacy-based interactions and where adults model appropriate attitudes toward reading and writing (Hamilton et al., 2016). These exchanges can be either formal or informal—with an emphasis on teaching written word skills or with an emphasis on other topics. In addition to fostering a love of reading in children, informal activities like reading aloud to them from picture books can help them develop their vocabulary and sense of print.

Similarly, Yarosz and Barnett as cited by Ferreira et.al in 2021, postulated that children who come from low-income families are less likely to be exposed to having storybooks read to them compared to their middle-class counterparts.

Due to their less exposure, students who attend kindergarten fall far behind their classmates on their academic achievement. They struggle on being able to acquire new words and information.

Previous studies found the effect of low socioeconomic status on academic development, specifically literacy skills, significant and unyielding (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; O’Korat, 2005). Nores and Barnett (2014) reported that children in households with incomes in the lowest 20 percent are 20 months behind children from the top 20 percent when entering kindergarten. These achievement gaps lead to increased high school dropout rates, decreased college attendance, and lower wages in adulthood.

Owodally (2014) revealed that some families bond over reading time while other families have no regard for reading at all. They said that the culture practiced at home plays a huge factor on their exposure to literacy. Doing literacy activities are very different from one family to another. Some children may have limited exposure to home libraries while others may have a diverse home library.

According to research by Bobalik, Toon, and Scarber (2017), children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds did better on pre-instruction tasks than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. On the other hand, after receiving literacy instruction in the classroom, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds outperformed their high-status classmates. According to these findings, the achievement gap narrows when children enrolled in pre-kindergarten receive more significant benefits from the program than their more literate peers when they start school. When kids are old enough to attend school, everyone must provide a welcoming atmosphere encouraging reading and writing.

### **1.7. Teacher preparedness**

Every educator has a role to play in keeping track of pupils who struggle with reading and writing, as Alatalo & Westlund noted in their research in 2021. Their study show that early intervention to address students’ special education requirements can be done if teachers thoroughly document student progress. Conversely, students who do not genuinely have reading issues may be incorrectly classified as having reading issues since teachers do not have proper documentation. Students who are multilingual are likely to experience this.

In addition, educators need special needs competency in recognizing reading and writing challenges; this increases the likelihood that they will miss these literacy issues. These pupils' low reading comprehension scores are hard to make sense of which is why teachers miss these cues sometimes. According to Miller Guron and Lundberg (2003), teachers must be prepared and are professionally trained in order for them to be able to detect these cues timely and therefore intervene much earlier to resolve said issues.

### **1.8. Global literacy by the numbers**

As of 2021, global literacy stands at 86%, revealing higher illiteracy rates among women compared to men. East Asia and the Pacific boast the world’s highest literacy rate at 95.7%, while Sub-Saharan Africa reports the lowest at 65.47%. First-world nations, including Luxembourg, Andorra, and Norway, continue to observe rising literacy rates, approaching nearly 100%. Conversely, countries such as Guinea, Niger, Djibouti, Kiribati, and Niue rank among the least literate nations. Africa faces persistent challenges in literacy, with one in three adults unable to read, and a striking 48 million individuals aged 15-24 grappling with illiteracy.

According to OECD (2014), when viewed historically, global literacy levels have witnessed a remarkable ascent over the past centuries. In 1820, a mere 12% of the world's population possessed the ability to read and write. Contrastingly, as of 2016, the scenario has undergone a significant transformation, with only 14% of the global population being classified as illiterate. This positive trend is further evidenced by a consistent increase in the global literacy rate over the last 65 years, progressing by 4% every 5 years – from 42% in 1960 to 86% in 2015. Despite commendable strides in expanding basic education and reducing educational disparities, substantial challenges persist. Particularly in the world's poorest nations, where access to basic education often serves as a limiting factor for development, significant proportions of the population still lack literacy skills. A case in point is Niger, where the literacy rate among the youth (15-24 years) stands at a mere 36.5%.

According to Our World in Data (2018), Europe took the lead in advancing basic education, but the significant surge in global literacy rates occurred primarily in the latter half of the 20th century when the expansion of basic education gained worldwide prominence. This presentation highlights noteworthy recent accomplishments in Latin America, where literacy has experienced a remarkable upturn over the past century. Despite these advancements, noticeable disparities persist among nations. As of the early 21st century, a substantial portion of the population in impoverished countries like Haiti, for instance, still grapples with illiteracy, accounting for half of the population.

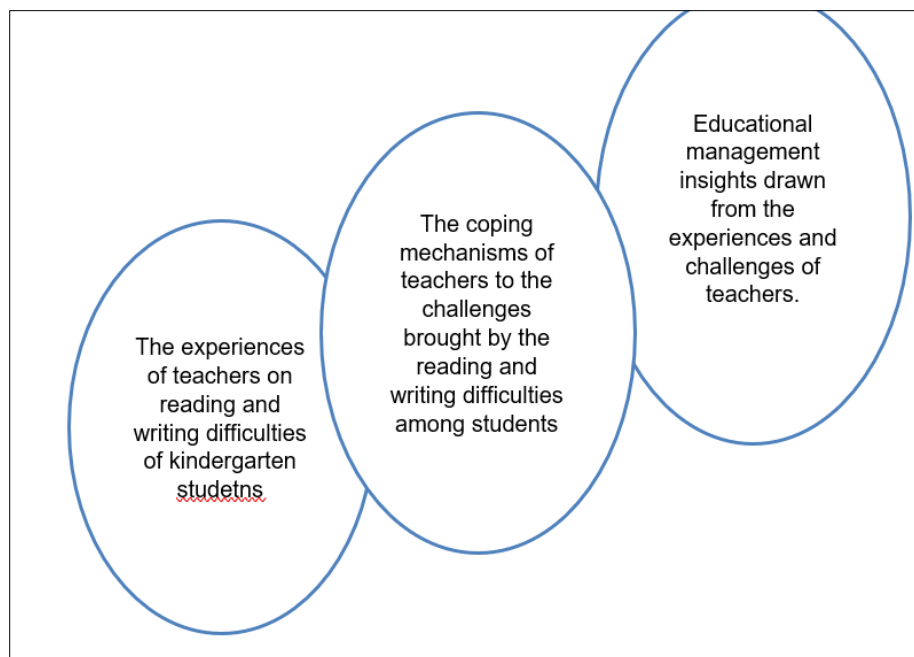
UNESCO (2018) revealed that younger generations globally tend to exhibit higher levels of literacy compared to their older counterparts. Notably, these disparities are particularly pronounced in certain nations. Take Algeria, for instance, where the literacy rate among the youth (15-24 years) stands at an impressive 97%, in stark contrast to the older population (65+ years) where it is merely 28%. This stark contrast underscores a generational shift in literacy rates and highlights the evolving educational landscape across different age groups in the country.

### 1.9. Theoretical Lens

In this study, we adopt an integrated theoretical framework that draws upon the principles of ecological systems theory, cognitive developmental theory, socio-cultural theory, transactional reading theory, and bioecological systems theory to comprehensively examine the complexities of reading and writing difficulties in kindergarten students. Ecological systems theory provides a foundation by highlighting the impact of microsystems (immediate environments), mesosystems (interactions between these environments), and exosystems (external influences) on literacy development. We consider how the child's interactions with family, teachers, peers, and community resources shape their experiences with reading and writing. Cognitive-developmental theory, with its focus on cognitive stages and emergent literacy, informs our understanding of how a child's cognitive development influences their readiness and abilities in the realm of literacy. We explore the progression from sensorimotor to preoperational thinking and the emergence of literacy skills.

Socio-cultural theory, rooted in Vygotsky's work, emphasizes the role of social interactions, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and cultural tools in literacy development. We examine the dynamic interplay between educators, peers, and parents as mediators of literacy skills within the ZPD. The transactional model of reading underscores the interactive nature of reading and writing, considering the reader's background, the text, and the contextual factors in literacy activities. We delve into how these interactions contribute to reading and writing difficulties. Bioecological systems theory, particularly the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model, allows us to analyze individual characteristics, such as learning disabilities and language abilities, within the broader context of the child's environment and developmental stages. Lastly, social-cognitive theory's concept of self-efficacy informs our exploration of how kindergarten students' beliefs in their own abilities influence their motivation and persistence in acquiring reading and writing skills.

By integrating these theories, our study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing reading and writing difficulties in kindergarten students, considering the child's environment, cognitive development, social interactions, and self-beliefs.



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework of the study

## 2. Methodology

In this research study, a multi-method approach was employed to gather rich and nuanced data on the experiences and perspectives of participants. Three primary data collection methods were used: focus groups, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. These methods were chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to triangulate data from multiple sources, enhancing the validity and depth of our findings.

The three methods used in this research is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation was a critical component of our research, as it provided an immersive and firsthand perspective on the daily lives and practices of our study participants. By embedding ourselves within the educational settings, we were able to observe classroom dynamics, instructional methods, and the interactions between teachers and students. This method enabled us to contextualize our findings and gain a holistic understanding of the factors contributing to reading and writing difficulties in kindergarten students. In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to delve deeper into their individual experiences and perceptions. Semi-structured interviews allowed for personalized, in-depth exploration of each educator's journey in implementing inclusive practices. Focus groups were utilized to facilitate group discussions and elicit collective insights and opinions on the topic of interest. This method allowed for the exploration of shared experiences and perspectives among participants.

### 2.1. Philosophical Assumptions

Qualitative research is inherently guided by philosophical assumptions that underpin the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the study. These assumptions lay the foundation upon which the entire research process is built, influencing the researcher's perspective and shaping the study's conclusions and decisions.

- *Ontological Assumption.* One of the fundamental philosophical assumptions in qualitative research is related to ontology, which deals with the nature of reality. Qualitative researchers often embrace constructivism, suggesting that reality is subjective and socially constructed. In this perspective, researchers recognize that individuals interpret and create their own realities. For example, in a study on reading and writing difficulties among kindergarten students, the ontological assumption might acknowledge that children's experiences with literacy are shaped by their social and cultural contexts.
- *Epistemological Assumption.* The epistemological assumption pertains to how knowledge is acquired and understood. Qualitative research often aligns with interpretivism, which posits that knowledge is context-dependent and that understanding is gained through the interpretation of individual experiences and perspectives. In a study on reading and writing difficulties, researchers adopting an interpretive epistemological stance would seek to understand the meaning participants attach to their experiences and how these meanings contribute to the construction of knowledge about literacy challenges.
- *Axiological Assumption.* Axiological assumptions in qualitative research concern values and the role of researcher values in the research process. Qualitative researchers acknowledge their own subjectivity and the potential for their values to influence the research. They strive for transparency and reflexivity in addressing their biases and values. In the context of studying kindergarten students' literacy difficulties, researchers would be aware of their own beliefs and biases related to education and literacy and take steps to minimize their impact on data collection and analysis.
- *Methodological Assumption.* The methodological assumption involves the choice of research methods and approaches. Qualitative research embraces flexibility and a holistic perspective. Researchers often use methods like interviews, observations, and document analysis to gather rich, contextually situated data. In a study on reading and writing difficulties, the methodological assumption would involve selecting methods that allow for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, such as conducting semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and parents and conducting classroom observations.

Afzal-os-sadat Hossieni (2011) advocated for post modernism philosophy and it is one with which I concur as a researcher. Education fosters critical thinking, knowledge generation, self- and social-identity development, and creative expression. Postmodern pedagogy entails little more than guiding pupils toward self-discovery. They present opportunities to discuss various topics and come up with new solutions. Listening to other perspectives is a skill that students develop in this setting. They try to think critically and are tolerant of criticism from others. Respect for other cultural backgrounds is taught in them. In addition to cooperative and individual learning, debate, critical, and linguistic approaches are highly valued. Based on this reasoning, postmodern education is a product of the idea that postmodernism and creativity are inseparable.

## 2.2. Qualitative Assumptions

Using Social Constructivism as a framework for interpreting qualitative assumptions, individuals want to understand their reality and create distinct meanings that connect to their experiences (Creswell, 2013). These interpretations are hardwired into some individuals. Rather, meanings are constructed via engagement with other people (Creswell, 2013). Researchers seek out complicated perspectives rather than reducing their meanings to a few categories or ideas because of how varied and multiple they are. Moreover, my goal as a researcher is to value the participants' opinions highly. Disputes over these subjective interpretations are common in historical and social settings. Instead of being imprinted on people, they are formed via their relationships with others and how historical and cultural conventions impact their lives.

## 2.3. Design and procedure

This study used qualitative research employing phenomenology. Interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. The interview(s) attempts to answer two broad questions (Moustakas, 1994). The data was then read and reread and culled for like phrases and themes that are then grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013). Through this process the researcher constructed the universal meaning of the event, situation or experiences and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

In this study phenomenology attempts to extract the most pure, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing is used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing is memoing (Maxwell, 2013).

## 2.4. Research Participants

The participants in this study were composed of eight (8) informants. The selected informants were the kindergarten teachers coming from Sta. Ana, Davao City. All the teacher participants were coming from the who handled classes last school year 2023-2024. The participants must have at least 3 years' experience in teaching. The participants were further selected regardless of their age, sex and marital status.

Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size the quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25 and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990).

## 2.5. Ethical Consideration

Considering the nature of qualitative studies, the interaction between researchers and participants can be ethically challenging for the former, as they are personally involved in different stages of the study. Therefore, formulation of specific ethical guidelines in this respect is essential.

The relationship and intimacy that is established between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns, and qualitative researchers face dilemmas such as respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentations.

Scientific rigor is an essential condition for any research to be considered ethical, according to Richards and Schwartz (2002). Research needs to be well-planned and executed by researchers with sufficient training and oversight. It ought to be worthwhile if it produces measurable advantages.

Also, as Sanjari (2014) pointed out, research ethics in many domains now include obtaining participants' informed consent. It is crucial for qualitative researchers to clearly define in advance the data that will be collected and how it will be used. According to him, informed consent must be obtained from any identifiable subject before any research can be conducted, except in situations where an ethical committee determines that this cannot be done. The advantages of the research are considered to exceed the risks. Participants should be informed verbally and in writing about the following issues before giving their written consent for an interview study: the study's purpose and scope, the types of questions that will likely be asked, the use of the results, the method of anonymization, and the extent to which their

utterances will be used in reports. Also, make sure to give participants plenty of time to think about participating and ask any questions they may have.

In this study, the researcher would follow the ethical considerations as part of the process in a qualitative research. Researchers must prioritize ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy. In the context of a study on kindergarten students, ethical considerations would involve obtaining informed consent from parents or guardians and ensuring that the research does not harm or exploit the participants.

The needed clarifications include the following issues: nature of the study, the participants' potential role, the identity of the researcher, the objective of the research, and how the results will be published and used.

In same manner, this study will be submitted to the ethics committee of the Rizal Memorial College, graduate school for verification and approval.

## **2.6. Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's role in this study was to get a hold of the participants' emotions and ideas. This method requires interviewees to open up about sensitive topics close to their hearts. At other times, it may be challenging for the person to relive previous experiences, even when they are still very much fresh in their mind. Ensuring the safety of participants and their data should be a top priority for any researcher conducting data collection. Before the commencement of the research, a pertinent research ethical review board must approve the measures for participant protection and ensure that they are adequately explained to participants.

## **2.7. Data Collection**

Finding people or locations to study, gaining access to, and developing rapport with participants to ensure they offer acceptable data is a key phase in the process, according to Creswell (2013). Developing a plan for the targeted sampling of people or locations is an integral part of the process. After the inquirer chooses the locations or individuals, choices must be made regarding the best data collection methods. Interview or observational protocols are examples of written forms that researchers use to get this information. Additionally, the researcher needs to be prepared for potential problems during data collecting, sometimes known as "field issues." These problems could include insufficient data, leaving the field or location too soon, or even contributing to lost information. Last but not least, a qualitative researcher has to figure out how to keep data safe and easily retrievable.

In this study, there are seven steps in the process of data collection.

First is the site or individual; the participants were the kindergarten teachers from Sta. Ana, Davao City.

Second is the access and rapport; letter from the Dean of the Graduate School is given to the graduate student for the approval of the division superintendent; letter of permission for the Schools Division Superintendent, the school Principal and the concerned Kindergarten teachers were prepared for easy collection of data.

The third is the purposeful sampling strategy; all participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied. There were eight (8) informants selected in this study. The qualified Kindergarten teachers were considered group of individuals who can best inform the researcher about the research problem. They were also considered as individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and can facilitate the collection of data.

The fourth is the forms of data; the process of collecting information involved primarily in the Virtual In-Depth Interview (IDI) with the eight (8) informants.

The fifth is the recording procedures; the use of a protocol was used in the observation and interviewing procedures. A predesigned form used to record information collected during an observation or interview.

The sixth was the field issues; limited data collection was engaged in this study.

The last or the seventh step was the storing of data; Davidson's (1996) suggested the use of database in backing up information collected and noting changes for all types of research studies.



## 2.8. Data Analysis

In this study all the data collected were carefully examined and thoughtfully analysed. The researcher first described personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher began with full description of her own experience of the phenomenon. This is an attempt to set aside the researcher's personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants. She developed a list of significant statements. She then finds statements about how individual were experiencing the topic, lists these significant statements as having equal worth, and works to develop a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping, statements. The researcher took the significant statements and then grouped them into larger units of information, called "meaning units" or themes. She wrote a description of "what" the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. Next, she wrote a description of "how" the experience happened. This was called "structural description," and the inquirer reflects on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced. Finally, she wrote a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions. This passage is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study.

- *Thematic Content Analysis.* A thematic analysis strives to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it's a flexible method which can be used both for explorative studies, where the researcher do not have a clear idea of what patterns is being searched for, as well as for more deductive studies, where the researcher know exactly what he or she is are interested in. No matter which type of study is being done and for what purpose, the most important thing in the analysis is that the researcher respects the data and try to represent the results of the interview as honestly as possible (Montensen, 2020).
- *Document analysis.* Document analysis is a form of qualitative research that uses a systematic procedure to analyze documentary evidence and answer specific research questions. Similar to other methods of analysis in qualitative research, document analysis requires repeated review, examination, and interpretation of the data in order to gain meaning and empirical knowledge of the construct being studied. Document analysis can be conducted as a stand-alone study or as a component of a larger qualitative or mixed methods study, where it is often used to triangulate findings gathered from another data source (e.g., interview or focus group transcripts, observation, surveys). When used in triangulation, documents can corroborate or refute, elucidate, or expand on findings across other data sources, which helps to guard against bias (Frey, Bruce B., 2018).

## 2.9. Analytical framework

There are two main approaches to analyzing qualitative data, as stated by Braun and Clark (2006). Conversation analysis (CA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) are examples of theoretically or epistemologically driven methods and have limited flexibility in their application within their respective frameworks. On the other hand, grounded theory (GT), discourse analysis (DA), and narrative analysis (NA) are examples of methods that are situated within a more general theoretical framework and can be used in various ways within that framework.

The second set of tools consists of procedures not dependent on any particular theory or system of epistemology; these procedures are particularly adaptable because they can be used with various theoretical and systemic frameworks. Thematic analysis is one approach; it offers theoretical leeway, making it a versatile and practical research tool that can give a deep and intricate description of data (Braun and Clark, 2006).

I observed several steps in conducting thematic analysis. The first stage in extracting qualitative data for analysis from the tape recordings was transcription. This was done to gain greater familiarity with the data and deeper insight. I relied on my own resources to do the transcription with the use of my personal computer and some reliable headphones. I use several nights to listen to the interviews to deepen my understanding on the nuances of the language and semantics of the participants.

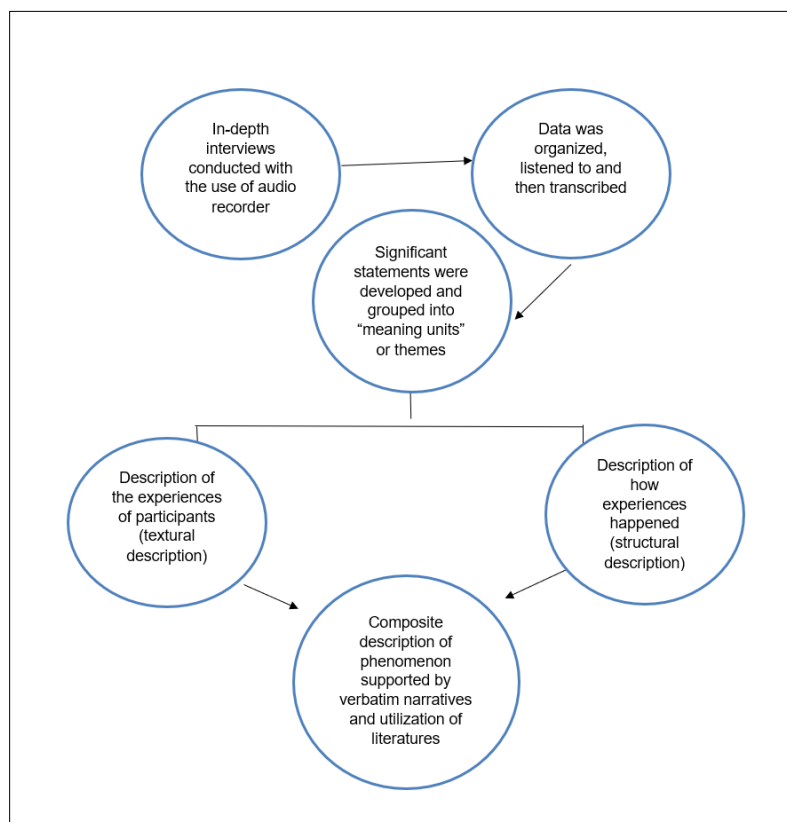
In terms of consensus on transcribing standards, practice differed greatly. Researchers seeking conversational or narratively suitable level of detail in their transcriptions negotiated for themselves with the necessary lay-out and standards. Others were less hands-on but yet followed the norms established by the transcriber.

Data extraction and analysis are the subsequent steps. While listening to the tapes, I utilized manual procedures that relied on taking notes and summarizing what I heard. Generally, when I used a manual technique, it involved transcribing specific terms word by word. When something looked particularly noteworthy or intriguing, especially when it pertained to major themes, I chose to paraphrase.

Following my thesis advisor's advice, I employed various methods. Using colored pens or copying and pasting, I annotated transcripts and organized data. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), I followed the framework method developed by the National Centre for Social Research and utilized thematic grids and charts. Coding, categorizing, and gathering data for interrogation were all facilitated by this method. This method was a lifesaver when trying to make sense of interconnected problems. As part of this process, we saved the exact words from the transcripts to compare them to the themes on the screens or the locations on the maps.

To summarize, the thematic analysis method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) which consisted of six (6) phases used in analyzing the data.

- Phase 1. I familiarized myself with the data by reading the whole data set and noting down initial ideas;
- Phase 2. I generated initial codes, with coded being the most basic segments of the raw data that can identify a feature of the data that appears interesting;
- Phase 3. I searched for themes by sorting different codes into potential themes and collated all data extracts within identified themes;
- Phase 4. I reviewed the themes and refined them further (at the level of coded data extracts and the entire data set) and produced a thematic map showing relationships between themes and sub themes;
- Phase 5. I defined and named themes, making sure they give the reader immediate sense of what the theme is all about.
- Phase 6. I wrote the report to convince the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis (within and across the themes), used data extracts embedded within an analytic narrative to make arguments in relation to the research questions.



**Figure 2** Analytical Framework of the Study

## 2.10. Trustworthiness of the study

*Credibility* is a fundamental element of trustworthiness in a study, representing the extent to which the research findings are believable and accurate. It hinges on the soundness of the research design, data collection, and analysis. To establish credibility, researchers must employ rigorous methodologies, maintain consistency in data collection, and engage in transparent and systematic data analysis. Additionally, ensuring inter-rater reliability, triangulating data sources, and

using member checks or peer debriefing are strategies that bolster the credibility of findings. The goal is to demonstrate that the study's conclusions are grounded in empirical evidence, reducing the potential for bias or error and thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the research. Lincoln and Guba (2000) state that credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the main issue is "how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so."

*Transferability* is a vital aspect of trustworthiness in a study, emphasizing the degree to which the research findings can be applied or generalized to other contexts or populations beyond the specific study sample. It extends the relevance of the research beyond its immediate setting and participants. To enhance transferability, researchers should provide rich, contextually rich descriptions of the research setting, participants, and data collection methods. This enables readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their own situations. While complete generalization might not always be possible in qualitative research, careful consideration of the context and population under study, as well as the transparent documentation of research processes, increases the likelihood that others can judge the relevance of the findings to their specific contexts, thus contributing to the trustworthiness of the study. Gasson (2004) emphasizes transferability as the extent to which the reader is able to provide generalization of the study based on his own context and can be able to address that core issue of "how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of the theory."

*Confirmability* is the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on participants' responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. This involves making sure that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative. The information using the audit trail in this situation is thoughtfully recorded by the researcher which highlights every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. This helps establish that the research study's findings accurately portray participants' responses. Gasson (2004) states that confirmability is based on the acknowledgement that research is never objective.

*Dependability* is the extent that the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher can use inquiry audit in order to establish dependability which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. In this component, the use of database is very important in backing up information collected and noting changes for all types of research studies. All the data collected must be properly kept for future use as references. Gasson (2004) states that dependability deals with the core issue that "the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques."

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### 3. Results And Discussions

In this part, the findings from the interviews with the subjects are discussed. During the interviews, their verbal comments were analyzed and summarized.

#### 3.1. Reading and writing difficulties of Kindergarten students

It is commonly asserted that proficiency in reading and writing serves as the fundamental foundation for an individual's success throughout their life. Hence, one of the primary objectives for every educator is to ensure that their students acquire strong reading and writing abilities. Nevertheless, numerous children encounter challenges in developing these essential literacy skills. The study participants observed that a significant number of students have experienced a decline in their reading and writing proficiency, with some younger learners exhibiting no literacy skills whatsoever. This trend has raised concerns among teachers, prompting a sense of urgency to promptly address this escalating issue.

#### 3.2. Disparities in Literacy Abilities by Socioeconomic Status

Participants have voiced apprehension regarding not just the general literacy proficiency of students but also the disparities between more and less privileged children. The inequalities linked to family income have significantly widened during the pandemic, as observed by the teachers. This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that parents with lower incomes had to intensify their time and efforts to meet financial obligations during the pandemic, consequently having less time to instruct their children in fundamental literacy skills.

Some of the participants' comments were as follows:

*I have noticed that Children from lower-income families might have limited access to books, educational materials, and experiences that foster language development. In my experience, this can manifest as reading and writing difficulties among some students. (T1)*

*In my role as a teacher, I've noticed a correlation between students' literacy skills upon returning to school and their financial backgrounds. It appears that parents with higher incomes tend to have more time to dedicate to supporting their children's studies, which I think could influence their literacy development. (T2)*

*I think the students who struggle the most with reading and writing are the ones coming from families who struggle financially. I think the lack of access to foundational reading and writing experiences plays a huge part. (T7)*

T1, T2, and T7 collectively highlight the impact of socioeconomic factors on literacy development among students. T1 observes that children from lower-income families may face limited access to books, educational materials, and experiences fostering language development, which can contribute to reading and writing difficulties. T2 notes a correlation between students' literacy skills and their financial backgrounds, suggesting that parents with higher incomes may have more time to support their children's studies, potentially influencing literacy development. T7 reinforces this perspective, emphasizing that students who struggle with reading and writing often come from financially struggling families, attributing their difficulties to a lack of access to foundational literacy experiences. Together, these responses underscore the interconnectedness of economic circumstances and literacy outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support to address disparities in educational resources and opportunities.

According to research from Stanford University, the racial and social disparities in literacy that have emerged over the last four decades are startling (Reardon et al., 2021). There is a bigger wealth discrepancy (10th vs. 90th percentile of family income), a black-white and Hispanic-white gap of around 0.6 standard deviations, and a persistent gender gap of about 0.2 standard deviations between girls and boys throughout middle and elementary school. Although there has been some narrowing of the black-white and Hispanic-white divides in the last forty years, the gender gap has remained unchanged, and the socioeconomic disparity has grown. Schools have had reasonable success in improving literacy abilities, and racial gaps have narrowed. This suggests that literacy skills can be changed with proper funding.

According to research by McIntyre et al. (2007), families with more financial means were more likely to participate in activities that helped their children be ready for kindergarten than those with less.

People with lower literacy levels have fewer employment possibilities, worse job outcomes, and lower incomes, according to WLF (2018). This leads to increased criminal activity, poor self-esteem, and welfare dependency. Furthermore, due to difficulties with tasks such as filling out forms and applications, comprehending government regulations, reading prescription or nutritional labels, and more, people with a poor literacy level have limited ability to make key informed decisions in everyday life. In addition, parents who lack basic literacy skills tend to put work before school, have lower expectations for their children's academic performance, and are more likely to drop out of school themselves. This perpetuates a downward spiral that affects subsequent generations. Conversely, when parents are literate, they are more equipped to support their children academically, communicate with teachers, and improve their children's lives.

McLanahan (2019) reported that high rates of intergenerational mobility have always been central to the distinctive belief that opportunity, and education is the primary mechanism driving upward mobility. This implies that low literacy levels among children from less advantaged families dramatically reduce the potential for upward mobility. The Brookings Institution Social Genome Model backs this. It demonstrates that if elementary school academic success rates were approximately equal for children from lower- and higher-income families, the lifetime incomes of children from lower-income families could increase by about 8 percent, or about \$83,000.

### **3.3. Challenges on Phonemic Awareness**

Phonemic awareness, the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words, is crucial for reading. Students who struggle with phonemic awareness may encounter difficulties in decoding words, which can impact both reading and spelling. Frequently, many poor readers have not consistently engaged in the language play that develops an awareness of sound structure and language patterns. They have limited exposure to bedtime and laptime reading.

Some of the participants' comments were as follows:

*Siguro tungod kay lisod ang pagpanimuyo sa mga bata nga galisod ang pamilya mao limitado kayo ang ilahang exposure sa sound of letters atong mga bata pa sila. (Maybe it's because of the household struggles that led to the limited exposure of children to sound structure and patterns.) (T3)*

*One thing I noted is that activities such as rhyming games, storytelling, and exposure to nursery rhymes and songs contribute to the development of phonemic awareness. Without these experiences, children may exhibit lower phonemic awareness.. (T4)*

*There are some students who come in to school with zero background on sounds and letters and i feel like they are the ones who struggle the most in learning how to read and write throughout the school year. Activities such as rhyming games, storytelling, and exposure to nursery rhymes and songs contribute to the development of phonemic awareness. Without these experiences, children may exhibit lower phonemic awareness. (T6)*

T3 suggests a connection between difficulties in exposing children to sound structures and the challenges faced in early literacy development, potentially linked to household struggles. T4 emphasizes the significance of activities such as rhyming games, storytelling, and exposure to nursery rhymes and songs in fostering phonemic awareness. This is reiterated by T6, who notes that some students entering school without a background in sounds and letters tend to struggle more with reading and writing throughout the year. The shared emphasis on the role of rhyming games and exposure to language-rich activities highlights the importance of early, positive experiences with language in the home environment for the development of crucial literacy skills, particularly phonemic awareness. These responses collectively underscore the need for targeted interventions and support to address gaps in foundational literacy experiences, especially for children facing household challenges.

Dewle (2018) noted three levels of reading comprehension activities: literal, inferential, and assessment. All three tasks contribute to students' ability to understand what they read. Students may also find that it helps them improve their listening and public speaking abilities. Learners are expected to possess strong comprehension skills to decipher texts containing messages or information. Understanding literature written in English necessitates a solid foundation in reading abilities.

Mattingly (1984) argued that to help their pupils develop phonemic awareness, classroom teachers should use activities such as word games, rhymes, riddles, and stories. The joyful language activities highlighted by Adams and Bruck (1995) will yield the best results when employed to enhance phonemic awareness. Consequently, teaching phonemic awareness should be age-appropriate, purposeful, and appropriate. Activities designed to increase phonemic awareness will only be effective, according to Griffith and Olson (1992), if integrated into authentic reading and writing tasks. Teachers also need to be aware that being cognizant of linguistic soundness is both a prerequisite for and a result of literacy instruction. Kids will only have a chance for well-rounded literacy development if this part of reading teaching is emphasized in the first few years of school.

According to Share (2008), developing phonemic awareness leads to reading proficiency, and training in phonological awareness beforehand leads to reading proficiency. Research with beginning readers, individuals without literacy skills, adults with disabilities, adults learning to read, and poor readers in general has shown that phonological awareness skills develop as a person learns to read. Thus, exposure to alphabetic systems improves phonological awareness, and phonics-based reading instruction fosters the ability to manipulate phonemes purposefully.

### **3.4. Parental Involvement and Support**

Participants of this study have noted the level of parental involvement among kindergarten students and how it directly impacts the literacy skills of a child. Teachers observe that students whose parents actively engage in literacy activities at home often exhibit enhanced reading and writing skills compared to those with limited parental involvement.

Some of the participants' responses were noted as follows:

*When parents actively engage in reading and writing activities at home, it creates a supportive foundation for the child. Conversely, limited involvement may lead to reading and writing difficulties, as students may miss out on essential language-rich experiences. Regular communication with parents about the importance of literacy activities, providing resources, and encouraging a positive home learning environment are key strategies to address these challenges. (T3)*

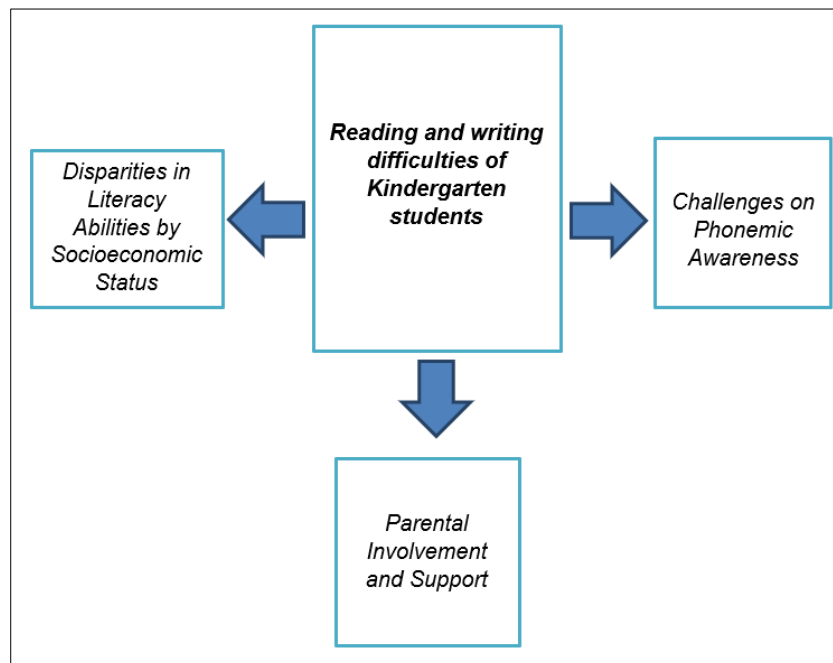
*Some parents are not aware of the significance of education so they don't care much for it. They didn't prioritize teaching their kids to read or write. (T4)*

*I work on building a strong partnership with parents, offering workshops on effective literacy support, and providing resources that empower them to engage in meaningful reading and writing experiences with their children. This connection between home and school is instrumental in addressing and preventing literacy challenges in kindergarten.*  
(T7)

Freeman (2017) found that there are many outside factors and activities that help students show their enthusiasm and focus in school. A good mix of schoolwork and extracurricular activities, with strong support from parents or guardians, is essential for success. If one or the other is missing, it can lead to poor grades and stress. Personal traits, like instincts and emotions, and social aspects, such as cooperation and rivalry, also play a role in motivation. People respond differently to various stimuli; some responses are helpful, others not so much. Sometimes, students may dislike a subject because they don't see its value or have a weak foundation in it, leading to a negative emotional state. Feeling inferior to others can cause social discontent.

Bassok et al. (2016) observed that parents are more involved with their young children across all backgrounds. Particularly during the pandemic. This is beneficial to students since home activities and cognitive stimulation during early childhood are linked to success in middle childhood. However, the frequency of these activities varies widely. This directly affects children's development and readiness for kindergarten. These variations also depend on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Pinquart (2017) emphasized that parents play a crucial role in their children's lives and significantly impact their learning and academic success. Researchers have noted the positive effects of parental involvement, and this is also reflected in Western education policies. However, many studies only consider teacher or parent ratings of involvement, ignoring the students' views. This study addresses that gap by considering both students' and parents' perspectives. It found that students' perceptions of parental involvement have a bigger influence on their school performance than the actual activities of the parents.



**Figure 3** The reading and writing difficulties of Kindergarten students

### 3.5. The coping mechanisms of the teachers on reading and writing difficulties of kindergarten learners

The coping mechanisms of teachers in addressing reading and writing difficulties among kindergarten learners are crucial for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Teachers serve as the primary facilitators in a child's early literacy journey, and their ability to implement effective coping mechanisms directly influences students' academic success and overall well-being. By employing strategies to address difficulties, such as differentiated instruction, targeted interventions, and collaboration with parents, teachers can create tailored approaches that accommodate diverse learning needs. This proactive and adaptable approach not only aids in overcoming immediate challenges but also promotes a positive and empowering atmosphere, encouraging a lifelong love for learning in young

students. Additionally, teachers' coping mechanisms contribute to building resilience in students, instilling confidence and a sense of accomplishment as they navigate the complexities of early literacy development.

### 3.6. Multisensory Learning Approaches

Teachers incorporate multisensory learning experiences to engage different modalities, making the learning process more accessible for students. Hands-on activities, visual aids, and interactive exercises can enhance reading and writing skills for kindergarten learners.

Some of the participants' comments were noted as follows:

*I have learned how effective the use of tactile materials for letter formation or incorporating interactive games that involve movement is and how much it helps to make literacy activities more accessible. (T3)*

*As a teacher, I must be creative in helping my students overcome their struggles. I use games, visual aids and other fun materials. This not only makes learning more enjoyable but also allows me to adapt to the individual strengths and preferences of each child, facilitating a more effective and personalized learning experience. (T6)*

*In the face of reading and writing difficulties, multisensory learning have become a must of my teaching strategy. By integrating auditory, visual, and kinesthetic elements, I can address diverse learning needs of my students. This is particularly effective on their reading problems. (T8)*

Multi-sensory learning, as the name implies, means using more than one sense to learn. Combining smell, hearing, sight, touch, and/or movement may be one way to do this (Scott, 1993). Multisensory teaching can be used in basic classes as illustrated on the theories by Piaget, Bruner, and Vygotsky. These ideas about learning stages and readiness can help teachers understand how students grow and change. Different stages of development mean that kids are ready to learn different kinds of things at each stage. These steps are linked to age, but don't necessarily depend on it. These methods can help students at slightly different stages of mental development interact with information they need to learn and get used to the ideas behind it.

The NCTM Standards (2000) advocate for the use of tangible, interactive resources in the classroom to improve students' learning. This also applies to virtual, interactive materials. Suydam and Higgins (1984) found that students performed better in classes that used manipulatives compared to those that did not. It is not necessary for students to handle the manipulatives directly for all of the lessons for them to be effective. This is supported by Hiebert (1989) who said counting craft sticks can help young children understand numerical symbols through manipulation.

According to Thornton (2020), manipulatives and other multi-sensory materials can help a child build the foundation to understand more complex mathematical ideas. Additionally, the youngster can move through these stages more quickly with the help of these technologies. According to Taljaard (2016), elementary school math teachers increasingly include manipulatives and other multi-sensory objects in their lessons. Kelly, Durham, and Rains highlighted this trend. Using multi-sensory teaching strategies, teachers can more effectively introduce new mathematical concepts to their students. This helps with "translating" abstract ideas to younger students.

### 3.7. Thorough practice

Though it may appear simplistic, participants in the study emphasized that consistent practice serves as an exceptionally effective coping mechanism. Allocating dedicated time each school day to engage in reading and writing activities has proven to be a gradual yet impactful means of enhancing literacy skills over time. The regular and intentional commitment to these practices reflects a recognition of the cumulative benefits that accrue from sustained effort, demonstrating that even small, daily actions can lead to noticeable improvements in literacy proficiency.

*Practice! Practice! Practice! Works like a charm and doesn't take a lot of effort too. All you need is a lot of patience and a lot of time. (T4)*

*I believe in the saying that practice makes perfect. Which is why I make my students practice everyday. Sometimes on their own, sometimes in groups. (T7)*

*Reading aloud and writing activities is now part of our everyday schedule and although it's not magic, I can already see improvements on my students. It's also fun for them (T8)*

According to the International Literacy Association (2013), the adage "practice makes perfect" is particularly applicable to the realm of reading. The association emphasizes the crucial role of educators in effectively engaging and instructing students. To foster regular reading habits, teachers across the United States commonly utilize reading logs and calendars as tools to encourage daily or nightly reading. Research findings indicate a noteworthy correlation: children who engage in at least twenty minutes of nightly reading often perform at or above grade level in language arts. This daily practice is viewed as essential for nurturing both the intellectual and emotional facets of a child's development. The association underscores the significance of extending such practice beyond the classroom by involving parents in the process. They identify specific techniques that have proven to be most effective for practicing at home, recognizing the collaborative efforts between educators and parents as instrumental in promoting successful literacy outcomes for students.

*Echo reading* is a type of format that engages learners. This is done by parents reading aloud to their child. The next step is for the learner to repeat back what they heard in the book. The objective is to set a good example for the child to follow or imitate. Common examples of the simple but effective format of repetitive text include children's songs and nursery rhymes such as "Down by the Bay" and "Old MacDonald."

*Choral reading* is another home reading practice activity for kids of all ages. This is especially effective for those who are having difficulty with reading on their own. Because the adult and child are reading aloud at the same time, the learner can follow along when they encounter a term they don't know.

*Speed reading* is for improving reading speed. Learners practice reading aloud passages multiple times. Given that some kids are just naturally more competitive than others, it can be helpful for adults to set individual goals for each child and then make a bar or line graph to track their progress. Parents may use this at home as well and teachers may also use this method in the classroom. It's a great tool for monitoring student progress. Reading aloud every day is a great way for kids to work toward a goal.

### **3.8. Targeted reading and writing intervention programs**

One coping mechanism that most of the participants have in common is conducting reading and writing intervention programs to help address the literacy issues of the learners on an individual scale. There also have been activities that the school has implemented aimed to assess the literacy skills of the students.

Some of the participants' comments were as follows:

*Intervention is key. It's a must for us teachers to eradicate the struggles head on. Specific approached for specific issues kind of approach. (T1)*

*I organize additional sessions specifically aimed to enhance the reading and writing abilities of students facing challenges in these areas.. (T3)*

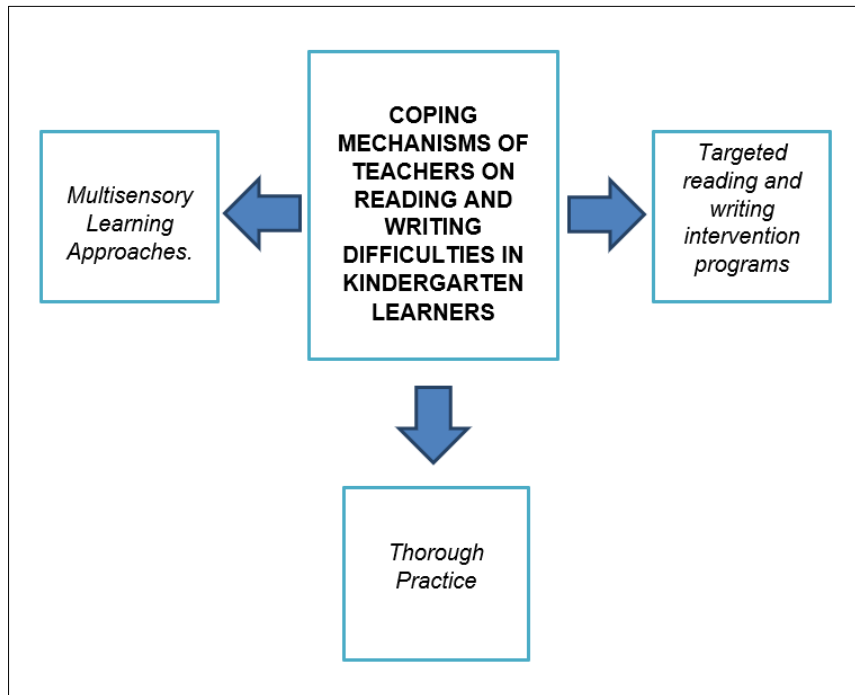
*As a teacher you must always go the extra mile to help your students especially when they are really struggling over something. For me in particular, I like to make it my goal that all my students who are moving up are already able to read and write. So early in the year I always make sure to identify those who are struggling and to help them out with their specific areas of struggle. (T8)*

According to Dugger (2018), targeted intervention refers to a systematic approach that involves a structured sequence of steps integrating instructional practices specifically tailored to address a child's identified areas of need. The publication underscores the significance of early and focused interventions for children at risk of reading difficulties. Research findings suggest that early intervention, coupled with explicit and intensive reading instruction, can be particularly effective in supporting struggling readers. The emphasis on explicit and intensive instruction implies a detailed and concentrated effort to address specific challenges in reading. The ultimate goal is to facilitate rapid progress, with the hope that early interventions will contribute to closing the literacy gap for struggling readers by the time they reach the critical stage of third grade. This approach aligns with the understanding that timely and targeted interventions can significantly impact a child's reading outcomes and foster a positive trajectory in their literacy development.

Ortiz-Espina (2018) highlights the diverse backgrounds and experiences that children bring to schools, leading to variations in their literacy abilities. Notably, some students may face challenges in acquiring reading and writing skills, necessitating additional support. The author emphasizes the importance of assessing students' reading proficiency



through attentive observations, listening to their reading, and employing strategic questioning to gauge comprehension levels. Recognizing that identification is the first step, Dugger underscores the necessity of devising a tailored plan and targeted intervention methods if a problem is identified. These interventions may encompass the use of leveled books and engaging reading comprehension activities designed to address specific challenges and enhance overall literacy proficiency.



**Figure 4** Coping mechanisms of teachers on reading and writing difficulties in Kindergarten learners

### 3.9. Educational management insights drawn from the experiences and challenges of teachers

Understanding the reading and writing difficulties of kindergarten students is paramount as it forms the foundation for tailored and effective educational interventions. By gaining insight into the unique difficulties faced by kindergarten students, educators can design differentiated instruction, provide appropriate resources, and offer timely interventions to mitigate obstacles in literacy development. This understanding not only promotes academic success but also contributes to the overall well-being of students, ensuring that they embark on their educational journey with a solid foundation in essential literacy skills.

### 3.10. Enhanced Educational Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure encompasses a variety of components that directly influence the learning environment and support systems for young learners. First and foremost, well-equipped classrooms with age-appropriate materials, books, and literacy resources are essential. Additionally, access to technology, such as interactive whiteboards or educational software, can enhance engagement and provide multimedia learning opportunities.

Some of the participants' comments were as follows:

*The department of education must provide initiatives for reading and writing. Beyond physical resources, qualified teachers and support staff, along with effective professional development programs, contribute significantly to addressing reading and writing difficulties. (T1)*

*School initiated programs like safe and conducive learning spaces, including libraries and reading corners, create an atmosphere that fosters a love for reading and writing. (T4)*

*I strongly believe that a good institution ensures that the necessary tools, personnel, and support systems are in place to address the specific needs of kindergarten students, fostering an environment conducive to literacy development.. (T5)*

Cohen (2023) delves into a comprehensive exploration of school-based initiatives and reforms aimed at addressing literacy needs. The discussion highlights a generally accepted knowledge base regarding reading instruction, particularly in the primary grades. However, Cohen also highlights organizational features within American schools that hinder the implementation of best practices. Despite the challenges, the introduction of accountability through standards-based reform has initiated potentially productive initiatives. These include comprehensive school reform designs, charter networks that focus on building educational infrastructure (such as curriculum development, professional development, quality control, and data utilization), programs designed to attract, reward, and advance high-quality teachers, and the Common Core State Standards—an initiative establishing learning goals for reading/English language arts and mathematics at each grade level.

Cohen further acknowledges the challenges associated with developing and responsibly implementing these standards but proposes that well-structured and well-resourced organizations, such as comprehensive school reform groups, charter networks, and high-capacity school districts, could potentially serve as the educational infrastructure necessary for effective standards implementation. This perspective emphasizes the complex interplay between standards, organizational structures, and educational initiatives in the ongoing efforts to enhance literacy education in schools..

### **3.11. Evaluation and Adjustment of the Curriculum.**

Curriculum review and adaptation play an important role in addressing the reading and writing difficulties of kindergarten students. By regularly evaluating the curriculum, educators can ensure that it aligns with the latest educational research and caters to the evolving needs of young learners. Tailoring the curriculum to emphasize language-rich activities, phonemic awareness, and foundational literacy experiences can directly address challenges faced by students in reading and writing.

Some of the participants' comments were as follows:

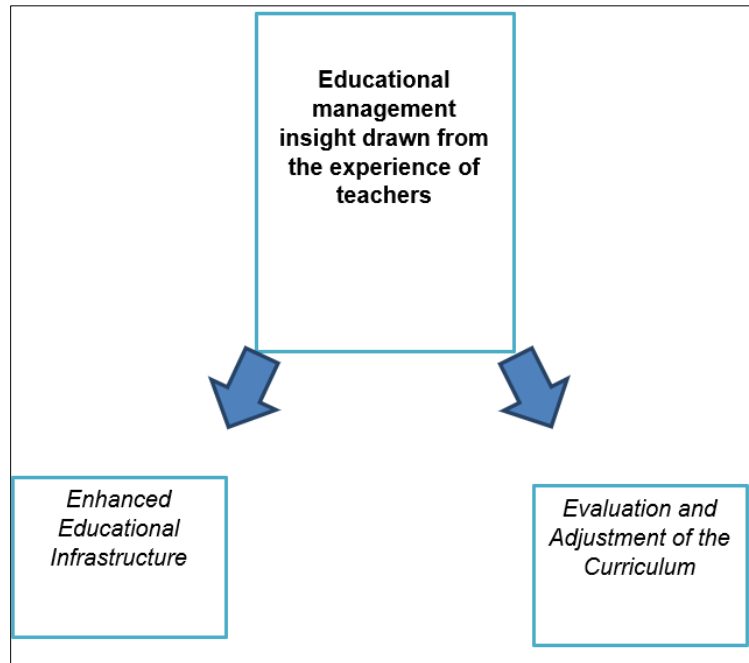
*Leaders ought to examine the curriculum's current timeliness and relevance. I also would like to stress the need for educational resources that reflect the changing times. (T5)*

*DepEd should make sure that the present curriculum allows educators to incorporate effective strategies, such as rhyming games, storytelling, and exposure to nursery rhymes, which are crucial for developing phonemic awareness. (T7)*

*Managements and leaders should stay current with educational best practices through curriculum review ensures that the resources provided are relevant, accurate, and up-to-date, creating a more conducive learning environment for kindergarten students and fostering their literacy development. (T8)*

An effective curriculum functions as a guiding framework, offering a structured path to attain educational goals and outcomes. Regular and systematic reviews of the curriculum are crucial for educational institutions to ascertain its ongoing effectiveness in addressing desired learning objectives. This continuous evaluation enables the identification of potential gaps or areas requiring improvement, facilitating the implementation of targeted and impactful instructional strategies. The curriculum review process is instrumental in ensuring that educational content and materials remain current and pertinent to the evolving needs and interests of learners. By adapting the curriculum, institutions can align their educational offerings with the dynamic demands of society, workforce requirements, and emerging fields of knowledge. This adaptability ensures that students acquire skills and knowledge that are not only relevant within the classroom but also valuable in their lives beyond, equipping them for success in a rapidly changing world.

According to Penuel (2021), adapting the curriculum is a vital angle of professional development that fosters endorsement, enhances comprehension of key learning and teaching components, and ultimately advances student learning. In light of evolving educational practices and teaching methodologies, the curriculum should align with these progressions. This alignment allows for the infusion of innovative and efficacious instructional approaches, including project-based learning, experiential learning, and technology integration, thereby elevating student engagement and cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the continuous review and adaptation of the curriculum contribute to the ongoing process of educational improvement. Through regular assessments and updates, educational institutions can pinpoint areas for refinement, incorporate evidence-based practices, and ensure the curriculum remains dynamic and responsive to evolving educational landscapes. This commitment to regular review and adaptation ultimately upholds the overall quality of education delivered to students.



**Figure 5** Educational management insight drawn from the experience of teachers

#### 4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the implications that were derived from the results and discussions in the previous chapter are presented. Future directions are also forwarded. The purpose of my study was to find out the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of Kindergarten teachers on Reading and Writing issues in Kindergarten. The participants were coming from Baliok, Davao City.

This study utilized a qualitative-phenomenological approach using an interview guide. Open ended questions for the interview were applied to get authentic feedback from the teacher participants. This follows Creswell's (2006) guidelines. During the interview, I encouraged the participants to freely open up about their personal experiences to get deeper meaning of the phenomenon being explored.

#### 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the responses from the participants of the study, the following findings and their corresponding themes were revealed: The experiences of teachers on Reading and Writing difficulties in Kindergarten were mainly: Disparities in Literacy Abilities by Socioeconomic Status, Challenges on Phonemic Awareness and Parental involvement and Support. The coping mechanisms to address the struggles of kindergarten teachers were Multisensory Learning Approaches, Thorough practice and Targeted reading and writing intervention programs. The insights of the participants were Enhanced Educational infrastructure and Evaluation and Adjustment of the Curriculum.

##### 5.1. Implications

The results of my analysis revealed the significant findings. The following themes emerged after consolidating all the responses gathered from the participants of the study.

Early literacy poses a lot of challenges for the teachers and learners alike. This study has shown a link between the socioeconomic disparities and lack of parental involvement are some of the factors that hold back children from doing well in terms of literacy. First, children from lower-income families have limited access to resources. This is why they fall behind on developing foundational reading and writing skills. Phonemic awareness, for example, is not honed for students who do not have strong access to educational materials. This is why teachers push for phonemic awareness to be a core component of the curriculum. Additionally, Parental Involvement and Support was a significant theme that emerged from this study. School should extend the efforts they make in getting parents engaged in the educational

process. This way, learning is extended onto the homes of the children. This can lead to better exposure to literacy activities.

The coping mechanisms to address the struggles of kindergarten teachers were Multisensory Learning Approaches, Thorough practice and Targeted reading and writing intervention programs. The educational management insights drawn from the participants were Enhanced Educational infrastructure and Evaluation and Adjustment of the Curriculum. The participants collectively revealed that the present curriculum must undergo certain changes in order to improve the support that young learners get in terms of literacy. Reading and writing difficulties among kindergarten learners is rampant in the country especially in underprivileged areas. This is especially felt in Public Schools of the country where many of the students come from lower-economic backgrounds. Thus, teachers believe that improvements must be made not just on their teaching methods but to the school curriculum as well. They also advocated for enhancing the educational infrastructure as a whole. Teachers, school leaders and the Department of education must work together to create a more equitable and effective educational environment for young learners to address reading and writing difficulties head on.

## 5.2. Future Directions

Based on the findings of the study, it is important that the findings are properly relayed and used by the significant people whom this research was intended for.

- For the principals or school heads may prioritize professional development opportunities for teachers. They may promote Parental Involvement and Support programs to get parents more involved in learners' education. They may also review and improve the current school curriculum and improve aspects that support early literacy.
- The teachers may incorporate approaches and strategies into their teaching practices. They may engage in diverse learning modalities. They may foster better.
- For the learners to benefit from targeted intervention programs tailored to their specific needs, fostering a more personalized approach to literacy development.
- For the future researchers, they may delve deeper into the effectiveness of coping mechanisms and intervention programs, examining long-term outcomes and sustainability. The concept of Enhanced Insights can be explored through qualitative research methods to gain a more nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics in kindergarten literacy education.

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