**CHAPTER 1**

**The Problem and Its Setting**

*“The goal of early childhood education*

*should be to activate the child’ own*

*natural desire to learn.” – Maria Montessori*

Early grade literacy development is a critical phase in a child's education. The ability to read and write proficiently by the end of the early elementary years is a strong predictor of future academic success. Teachers play a fundamental role in shaping the literacy skills and attitudes of young learners during this crucial stage. Therefore, understanding the experiences of teachers in early grade literacy development is essential for improving literacy instruction and ultimately enhancing student outcomes.

In Ethiopia, significant obstacles exist in the early grades, including a deficiency in subject-specific knowledge and teaching expertise, insufficient teaching resources, inadequate teacher training initiatives, a dearth of conducive literacy-rich settings, and a lack of ongoing professional development. The study suggested that to address these challenges, teachers should receive comprehensive training in both subject matter and pedagogy, have access to phonological awareness materials, and benefit from in-service training to improve their capacity for teaching native-language reading skills in the early grades (Haile & Mendisu, 2023).

It is of utmost importance to impart early childhood reading skills through phonological awareness. In order to enhance children's literacy capabilities, educators should employ clear and methodical instruction during the initial school years. The overall effectiveness of teachers in reading instruction is closely linked to the reading accomplishments of their students. In numerous nations, educators specialized in particular subjects may lack essential reading pedagogical techniques and expertise. Teacher training programs before entering the profession may fall short in teaching literacy instruction and evaluation methods. More significantly, they may neglect to provide the fundamental elements of reading skills to be integrated into their respective subjects and teaching methods. Consequently, a considerable number of young students in the early grades do not attain the anticipated minimum learning competencies at their grade level (UNESCO, 2017a).

In the Philippines, a study conducted by Tomas and colleagues in 2021 delved into the reading profiles of students in both English and Filipino, focusing on their challenges, difficulties, lessons learned, school agendas, and initiatives aimed at improving reading programs to address these challenges. The results of the study revealed that the majority of the learners were experiencing frustration in their reading levels. The perceived causes and contributing factors to these students' reading difficulties included a lack of mastery of fundamental reading elements, the presence of at-risk learners, and a deficiency in promoting a culture of reading.

Similarly, in Laak District, the Division of Davao de Oro, teachers experienced numerous obstacles in enhancing early grade literacy. Among these were difficulty in the basic foundation on phonological awareness, reading fluency, and difficulty in reading comprehension and vocabulary. These problems hindered the teachers towards the improvement of early grade literacy among the learners.

Research on early grade literacy development as experienced by teachers is essential for improving literacy instruction and student outcomes. Addressing these research gaps can provide valuable insights into how teachers can best support early grade literacy development, resulting in improved literacy outcomes for young learners. Researchers and educators should collaborate to bridge these gaps and contribute to evidence-based practices in the field of early literacy instruction.

Early grade literacy development, as experienced by teachers, holds significant social relevance in various aspects of society. Early grade literacy development is a crucial element in promoting educational equity. Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, have equal access to quality literacy instruction. When teachers effectively foster early literacy skills, they contribute to narrowing the achievement gap and creating a more equitable educational system. Furthermore, teachers who focus on early grade literacy often engage parents and caregivers in their child's learning process. This engagement strengthens the family unit and encourages parents to take an active role in their child's education, which benefits not only the child's literacy development but also their overall well-being.

Finally, in our increasingly digital world, early grade literacy includes digital literacy. Teachers who teach students how to use technology and navigate the digital landscape prepare them for a technology-driven workforce. This, in turn, has social relevance by enhancing employability and participation in the digital society. Also, early grade literacy also impacts overall social well-being. A literate society tends to be more aware, informed, and capable of addressing social challenges and inequalities. Teachers who prioritize early literacy development are thus instrumental in fostering a healthier and more socially conscious society.

*Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. This also investigated their coping mechanisms from the challenges they encountered, and their insights drawn from the findings of this study.

At this stage of research, the experiences of teachers were generally defined as their learning and challenging experiences in terms of early grade literacy development in the classroom. Early literacy skills were the foundation upon which all other academic disciplines were built. Children who developed strong reading and writing skills in the early grades were better equipped to tackle more complex subjects as they progressed through their educational journey. Early literacy is a key component of educational equity, as students who struggled with reading in the early grades often face long-term academic challenges.

*Research Questions*

This study aimed to explore the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among learners?

2. How do the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in developing early grade literacy among learners?

3. What are the insights of teachers in developing early grade literacy among learners?

The findings of this study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge in developing early grade literacy among learners in the classroom. This study would also provide information about the learning resources that they developed in enhancing learners’ understanding, motivation, and classroom engagement.

*Department of Education.* The findings could inform the development of evidence-based policies, curricula, and guidelines for early grade literacy education. It helped the department in shaping effective strategies to improve literacy outcomes.

*School Administrators.* School principals could utilize the study results to identify gaps in teacher training and professional development. This knowledge allowed them to provide targeted support and resources for their teaching staff. The study also helped principals make data-driven decisions for their schools, from resource allocation to implementing effective literacy programs.

*Teachers.* Teachers could benefit from insights into their own experiences and those of their peers. They could gain a better understanding of effective strategies, challenges, and pedagogical approaches for early grade literacy development. The study could also empower teachers to adapt and refine their teaching methods, incorporating successful strategies and addressing common challenges. Knowledge of best practices and support systems can lead to reduced stress and burnout, contributing to teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

*Students.* Students stand to benefit the most as the study leads to better teaching practices. Early grade literacy development can have a lifelong impact on students' academic success and personal growth. Further, the research findings may lead to more engaging and effective literacy instruction, ultimately improving students' literacy skills and their ability to succeed in their education.

*Future Researchers.* This study could serve as a foundational piece of research for future scholars, providing them with valuable insights and areas for further exploration in the realm of early grade literacy development. Future researchers could draw upon the study's methodology and build on its approach, thereby advancing the field and contributing to the growing body of knowledge.

The following terms were defined operationally for clarity and understanding.

*Early Grade Literacy Development.* In this study, early grade literacy development refers to the process of acquiring essential reading and writing skills during the early years of a child's education, typically encompassing kindergarten through third grade or equivalent. This crucial developmental phase is characterized by the acquisition of fundamental literacy skills, such as letter recognition, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and the ability to decode written text. Early grade literacy development aims to lay the foundation for proficient reading and writing abilities, fostering a love for reading, and preparing students for future academic success. It involves both formal instruction by teachers and informal learning experiences, often within a classroom setting, to equip young learners with the tools necessary to become competent readers and writers.

*Voices of Teachers.* "Voices of teachers" in the context of developing early grade literacy in the classroom refers to the perspectives, experiences, and insights shared by educators who are actively involved in teaching young students how to read and write particularly in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. These voices represent the thoughts, challenges, successes, and strategies articulated by teachers as they engage with the critical task of fostering early grade literacy.

*Review of Related Literature*

In this section presents a review of related literature about the development of early grade literacy among learners. The sources came from books, journals, internet articles, and other publications. The authors are properly cited and acknowledged. The propositions, theories, and findings are believed to be relevant to the present study.

*Development of Early Grade Literacy*

Early grade literacy development refers to the process of acquiring foundational reading and writing skills during the initial years of formal education, typically encompassing kindergarten through third grade or equivalent stages. This crucial developmental phase focuses on building the fundamental skills necessary for proficient reading and writing. It includes activities and instruction that help young learners develop key literacy competencies (Snow, 2017).

Children who fail to acquire early literacy abilities, particularly in the realms of phonological awareness (PA) and familiarity with the alphabet, before entering kindergarten face an increased likelihood of encountering challenges in reading. Findings have demonstrated that a significant proportion of youngsters exhibiting early literacy delays during their preschool years could find value in an additional phonological awareness program. This program has the potential to mitigate the risk of reading difficulties as these children make the transition to kindergarten (Goldstein et al., 2017).

The significance of play in early childhood education is well-established, as international research indicates that children's learning advances when they actively engage in play. However, there has been limited research conducted in the Philippines regarding the utilization of play as a method for teaching literacy in early childhood education classrooms. An analysis of the data revealed that teachers in the Philippines endorse the use of play as a tool for teaching literacy concepts. Moreover, they enumerated various forms of play that cater to different aspects of children's development. These teachers not only incorporate play into their current teaching approaches but also display knowledge about how play can be integrated with literacy and child development. Additionally, they employ a variety of play methods within their classrooms (Omaga & Alieto, 2019).

The results mirror the customs that have an impact on preschool education, and the overall impression is that teachers' individual and hands-on experience shapes their everyday teaching methods. The participants make efforts to arrange read-aloud sessions, but they do not always succeed due to logistical and practical difficulties. Teachers cite external factors, like dealing with large groups and the necessity to teach subjects such as mathematics and science, as hindrances when it comes to planning and carrying out read-aloud sessions. Those teachers who have undergone in-service training and professional development claim that they incorporate daily read-aloud sessions, followed by discussions about the text (Alatalo & Westlund, 2021).

While many studies focus on the challenges teachers face, there is a need for more research that explores teachers' perspectives on effective pedagogical approaches for early grade literacy development (Billow, 2017). Although it is well-known that teacher training is crucial for effective literacy instruction, there is a research gap in understanding the specific elements of training and professional development that are most beneficial (Anteneh et al., 2017).

Early language and reading abilities, in particular, displayed robust correlations over time. The proficiency in reading comprehension at the age of 12 could be forecasted by the level of vocabulary at 19 months and the emergent literacy skills observed at school entry. The extent of vocabulary at 19 months not only foretold early literacy skills before starting school but also had a bearing on reading comprehension abilities at the age of 12, as did the literacy skills demonstrated upon entry into school. Even when considering maternal and infant vocabulary, the oral narrative proficiency displayed by children around the time of school entry was distinctly associated with their reading comprehension a decade later. These findings offer fresh insights into the enduring interactions between early language, literacy, and the subsequent development of reading and vocabulary (Suggate et al., 2018).

Likewise, the study demonstrated the interconnectedness of these foundational literacy areas and indicated that there is some indication that interventions targeting all of these domains can enhance their mutual development. Early interventions that emphasize interactive experiences between parents and children, whether they are part of everyday routines or more unique in nature, are likely to be more effective than interventions primarily led by practitioners (Brown & Watson, 2017).

Early childhood development encompasses various dimensions, including physical, motor, language, social, and cognitive aspects. Among these, cognitive factors play a pivotal role since many learning activities are intricately linked to processes of thinking and memory. Additionally, language development holds great significance as it serves as the primary tool for children to communicate with their surroundings. Effective communication fosters positive interactions. Therefore, it's crucial to provide children with appropriate stimuli to facilitate their optimal growth and development. One effective stimulus for enhancing the cognitive and language development of young children involves providing engaging and visually stimulating materials. In early childhood development, the thought processes often require the use of visual aids to grasp abstract concepts (Saputra et al., 2020).

Moreover, the research paper's findings suggest that, even beyond the critical period proposed by Chomsky, individuals who experience excessive exposure to a target language can attain a level of language acquisition comparable to their native tongue. The paper also examined two primary types of motivations influencing second language acquisition: (1) Inquisitiveness, driven by a desire to gain deeper insight into a community and its way of life, and (2) Empathy, which arises when repeated exposure leads an individual to admire the group's perspective and, as a result, relate to them more closely (Al-Harbi, 2020).

The development of language and literacy skills in children, particularly their speaking abilities at the age of 5-6, is a crucial concern in child development. An approach known as "inside-outside learning" is employed to enhance these language and literacy aspects in children. When assessing language development and literacy, particularly speaking skills using the inside-outside circle method, the test results, as indicated by the "t" test (Paired T-Sample), showed a t-score greater than the table value (5.147 > 1.706). This suggests that language development and literacy, with a specific focus on speaking abilities, significantly improved when utilizing the "Inside-Outside Learning Circle" method. The skills that were developed included intonation, effective communication, proficiency in using simple words, and an increased capacity to construct basic sentences. The implementation of the "Inside-Outside Learning Circle" method in early childhood education is a valuable innovation effort with positive outcomes (Nahdi & Yunitasari, 2019).

The review's findings suggest that for interventions to be effective, intelligent, and enduring, they should be structured as comprehensive interventions involving multiple sectors and centered around fostering nurturing care. The suggestions underscore the importance of timing these intervention packages to match the appropriate developmental stages across a person's life, addressing various risks simultaneously, and leveraging existing delivery methods for scalability. While interventions are expected to advance as developmental science progresses, current evidence strongly indicates the vital need to assist parents, caregivers, and families in offering nurturing care and protection to enable young children to reach their full developmental capabilities (Britto et al., 2017).

Likewise, effective and viable programs for assisting with the early development of children are now accessible. All sectors, with a particular emphasis on education, social services, and child protection, should actively contribute to addressing the comprehensive needs of young children. However, the healthcare sector serves as a crucial initial stepping point for expanding these efforts, given its wide-reaching access to pregnant women, families, and young children. Beginning from conception, interventions designed to foster nurturing care can be seamlessly integrated into existing health and nutrition services at minimal extra expense. Neglecting to expand these efforts carries significant personal and societal repercussions. Children facing an increased risk of compromised development due to factors like stunting and poverty may potentially forfeit approximately a quarter of the average adult income annually. The economic cost of inaction could be twice the current health expenditure of certain countries. Services and initiatives that promote early childhood development are imperative for realizing the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (Richter et al., 2017).

*Early Literacy Interventions in Young Learners*

Educators and policymakers show optimism regarding the capacity of online games to enhance reading and pre-reading abilities, yet the actual effectiveness of these games, particularly for young children, remains uncertain. A study assessed the early literacy skills of children both before and after participating in these games, employing 12 literacy assessments. The results revealed that children in the group that received the intervention outperformed their counterparts in the control group in eight of these assessments. The most significant improvements were observed in the areas of alliteration and phonics, which are crucial early indicators of future reading proficiency (Schmitt et al., 2018).

Numerous children who are acquiring English as a supplementary language (EAL) encounter challenges with understanding written text, even if their ability to decode words is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the connection between early language acquisition and reading comprehension remains partially uncharted within this demographic. The EAL group exhibited less robust language skills and more proficient word recognition than the monolingual group, with no disparity in reading comprehension. The diversity in reading comprehension abilities within both groups was foreseen based on discrepancies in both word recognition and language comprehension, and this prediction held true to a similar extent (Bowyer-Crane et al., 2017).

On the other hand, various strategies were gathered and sorted into five primary categories: overall approach, strategies centered on caregivers, interaction-focused strategies, language-oriented strategies, and early literacy strategies. To provide an overview, a preliminary evidence map was constructed to outline each strategy, list the sources that featured the strategy, and specify the most robust recommendation identified across these sources (Guiberson & Ferris, 2019).

Children who are learning two languages simultaneously (known as dual language learners or DLLs) often encounter more challenges in developing early English literacy skills compared to their peers who speak English as their sole language. Much remains to be explored regarding effective early literacy teaching methods and their impact on the English literacy skills of DLLs. To address this, a search was conducted in electronic databases, and additional methods were employed to identify 25 relevant studies. These studies displayed variations in how they defined and described DLL children, including whether they were acquiring both languages at the same time or sequentially, as well as the methods used to assess primary and secondary language exposure. The use of bilingual and monolingual instruction demonstrated potential in improving early English literacy skills, although the results were mixed when both language skills and code-related outcomes were taken into account (Hur et al., 2020).

A meta-analysis was performed to assess the impact of computer-supported early literacy interventions, including strict phonological awareness training, combined phonological awareness and letter training, and the use of e-books, on phonological awareness (such as syllabic awareness, word blending, rhyme, and phoneme awareness) and reading-related skills (such as understanding print concepts, letter knowledge, decoding, and spelling) in preschool and kindergarten children, encompassing various languages. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the significance of methodological rigor in study design, as higher effect sizes were associated with studies lacking randomization and those comparing interventions with regular classroom teaching instead of an active control group (Verhoeven et al., 2020).

Phonological awareness and knowledge of letter-sound relationships serve as the fundamental building blocks for children's early literacy development. Enhancing these essential skills during kindergarten is expected to result in a more favorable response to formal literacy instruction when it commences. At the conclusion of the intervention, children in the intervention group demonstrated significantly superior performance in phonological awareness and letter knowledge compared to the control group, specifically in Luxembourgish. These gains in phonological awareness were sustained even at a follow-up assessment conducted nine months later. The positive effects extended to measurements of phonological awareness, word-level reading comprehension, and spelling in German, with effect sizes exceeding 0.25. However, this effect was not observed in German single word or pseudoword reading during the delayed follow-up. The research indicates that programs aimed at nurturing foundational literacy skills can be effectively implemented by regular teachers in a kindergarten environment that emphasizes play-based learning. These findings highlight the potential of early literacy interventions conducted before a child's formal school entry, particularly among linguistically diverse learners, to yield significant and meaningful educational benefits (Engel de Abreu et al., 2020).

Moreover, the study combined results from an observational study involving 94 young dual language learners (DLLs) and their parents engaged in a book reading activity with findings from a comprehensive literature review. The aim was to pinpoint potential strategies that parents can employ to facilitate early literacy development in young DLLs. Through this combined effort, a total of 26 strategies were discerned, categorized into areas such as improving interaction, promoting engagement with texts or storybooks, employing effective questioning techniques, and enhancing language skills. Out of these strategies, 15 demonstrated strong effectiveness based on existing research. It is recommended to incorporate these strategies into pilot programs and future research studies (Guiberson, 2021).

Persistent, unchanging standardized test scores continue to place literacy achievement as a central topic in national education dialogues. Heightened discussions concerning the scientific principles of reading have spurred inquiries into diverse approaches to phonics education. These inquiries have led to the emergence of three major themes regarding phonics instruction: (a) the need for professional development to cultivate a profound grasp of language, (b) the requirement for instructional materials to assist teachers with limited content or teaching expertise, and (c) the significance of intervention intensity, considering factors like duration and other variables (Dilgard et al., 2022).

On the whole, the teachers effectively carried out the intervention, ensuring that it was of high quality, elicited active engagement from participants, and adhered to the intended lesson duration. Adherence, which measures the extent to which key components of the lessons were followed, and the total number of lessons implemented showed some variability. Generally, teachers demonstrated better adherence, whereas community aides delivered a greater number of lessons. Several factors that facilitated implementation were related to the intervention itself, including its structured multisensory lessons and interactive features, as well as the ability to prepare lessons in advance. However, challenges were commonly associated with managing time, classroom logistics, and behavior (Piasta et al., 2021).

On the same lens, the early cultivation of emergent literacy skills lays the foundation for future literacy proficiency and overall academic achievement among young learners. While preschool programs worldwide emphasize the development of these skills, English language learners (ELLs) frequently encounter challenges in this regard when they begin primary school, particularly when compared to their English-speaking peers. Consequently, identifying effective interventions for nurturing emergent literacy skills in ELLs is of utmost significance. Research findings have indicated that dialogic reading interventions are successful in enhancing the oral language skills of ELLs but may not yield the same level of effectiveness in promoting their emergent reading and writing skills (Kennedy & McLoughlin, 2023).

*Challenges in Early Grade Literacy Development*

Early childhood education is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of learning. In many developing countries, there is a notable shortage in the rate of inclusion, which becomes even more pronounced when considering children with special needs. Additionally, preschool teachers often lack a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy of inclusion and the best practices required to ensure the success of inclusive education. The findings suggest that teachers generally have a shared understanding of inclusion but lack the necessary skills and knowledge regarding appropriate teaching methods for children with special needs. Nevertheless, they view inclusion as a vital process and a valuable opportunity for all children. They recommend investments in and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders as key strategies for overcoming the existing challenges (Zabeli & Gjelaj, 2020).

Similarly, recognizing the significance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a pivotal aspect of the educational process. Numerous countries have actively promoted this mission and its associated practices. However, various challenges have hindered the establishment of high-quality ECD practices in underdeveloped nations. The current situation in Pakistan concerning the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) practices is somewhat unsatisfactory. Private sectors demonstrate a greater commitment to early education when compared to the public sector. Pakistan continues to grapple with the implementation of quality standards, monitoring systems, equitable access, funding, and ECE assessment, primarily due to economic constraints, a lack of training and resources, low awareness levels, the absence of a universally accepted definition of ECE/ECD, and challenges in policy implementation related to early education (Tahira et al., 2021).

It was also essential to investigate the early writing abilities of children, particularly those identified as being at risk for future literacy challenges, to comprehend any distinctions in their early writing compared to typically developing peers. However, our knowledge of the writing skills of young at-risk children remains unclear. The results revealed that children identified as at-risk for future literacy difficulties exhibit a lag in various early writing skills when compared to their typically developing peers. These skills include name writing, letter writing, inventive spelling, and composing stories during their preschool years. Furthermore, the findings suggest that early literacy screening methods may be effective in identifying children who face writing difficulties in addition to early reading challenges (Thomas et al., 2020).

The experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy of learners have been explored in a variety of studies, providing a comprehensive synthesis of the literature on this research topic. The literature synthesis reveals that teachers' experiences in developing early grade literacy are multifaceted. It highlights the challenges teachers face, the importance of teacher training and professional development, and the need for differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students. Moreover, it underscores the significance of parental involvement, the impact of socioeconomic factors, and the role of technology in early literacy education. These insights can inform policy and practice to enhance early grade literacy instruction and improve literacy outcomes for young learners.

*Theoretical Lens*

This study is viewed from the lens of Emergent Literacy Theory by Marie Clay as cited in Lose and Konstantellou (2017). Emergent literacy theory focuses on the period before children formally learn to read and write. It emphasizes that children develop literacy skills through exposure to print materials, storytelling, and a print-rich environment even before they start formal reading instruction. The theory highlights the importance of early language experiences, phonological awareness, and exposure to books and texts in the home and preschool environments. This theory recognizes that literacy development begins well before formal schooling and suggests that children build a foundation for reading and writing through everyday experiences.

The application of the emergent literacy theory to the research topic on early grade literacy development, as experienced by teachers, offers valuable insights into how young learners develop literacy skills even before formal reading instruction. Emergent literacy theory suggests that children develop literacy skills through exposure to print materials. In the context of early grade literacy, teachers play a significant role in providing a print-rich environment in the classroom. This includes having a variety of age-appropriate books, writing materials, and print displays accessible to students. The study can explore how teachers create print-rich environments and how these early exposures contribute to literacy development. The theory also emphasizes the importance of oral language and phonological awareness in emergent literacy. Teachers in early grades often incorporate oral storytelling, rhyming activities, and phonemic awareness exercises into their instruction. Research can investigate how teachers implement these activities and their impact on students' emerging literacy skills.

By applying the emergent literacy theory to the research topic on early grade literacy development, the study can delve into the strategies, practices, and experiences of teachers in creating a supportive environment for young learners to develop foundational literacy skills. This approach recognizes that literacy development begins well before formal instruction and underscores the crucial role of teachers in facilitating this process.

Likewise, Social learning theory, often associated with Albert Bandura, posits that children learn literacy skills through observation and interaction with others. In the context of early grade literacy, this theory underscores the role of teachers, peers, and parents as models and sources of support. It emphasizes the importance of social interactions, shared reading, and collaborative learning experiences in developing early literacy skills. Social learning theory highlights the significance of social and environmental factors in literacy development (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020).

The application of social learning theory to the research topic on early grade literacy development as experienced by teachers emphasizes the importance of social interactions and observation in the learning process. Social learning theory posits that learners acquire knowledge through observing and interacting with others. In early grade literacy development, teachers often encourage peer interaction and collaborative learning. Research can explore how teachers foster peer discussions, group reading activities, and cooperative writing tasks, and how these social interactions contribute to students' literacy development. Also, teachers play a significant role as models and sources of support in the social learning process. The study can investigate how teachers' interactions with students influence literacy development. This includes examining how teachers provide feedback, engage in dialogic reading, and offer scaffolding to support students in their literacy journey.

By applying social learning theory to the research topic, the study can provide insights into the social dynamics of early grade literacy development. It underscores the role of teachers as facilitators of social interactions that enhance students' literacy skills and understanding, while also recognizing the broader social and cultural context that influences the learning process. This approach acknowledges that learning to read and write is not only an individual endeavor but a socially mediated one.

The constructivist theory of literacy development, influenced by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, as cited in Ghaour (2018) emphasizes that children actively construct their understanding of reading and writing. It suggests that learners build their literacy knowledge through hands-on, meaningful experiences, and interactions with print. This theory advocates for a student-centered approach, where educators facilitate learning by providing opportunities for exploration and discovery. In early grade literacy, this means engaging learners in activities that promote their active involvement in constructing literacy knowledge.

The application of the constructivist theory of literacy development to the research topic on early grade literacy development, as experienced by teachers, emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing their understanding of reading and writing. The constructivist theory underscores that learners construct knowledge through hands-on experiences. In the context of early grade literacy, teachers often engage students in activities that involve exploring books, letters, and writing materials. Research can examine how teachers use hands-on learning to encourage students to actively construct their literacy skills. A central tenet of constructivism is a student-centered approach. In the context of early grade literacy, this means that teachers adapt instruction to students' needs and interests. The research can examine how teachers personalize instruction, tailoring it to individual students and allowing them to take an active role in their literacy development.

By applying the constructivist theory to the research topic, the study can provide insights into how teachers create an environment that supports active engagement and the construction of literacy skills by their students. It highlights the importance of student agencies, meaningful contexts, and a student-centered approach in early grade literacy development. This approach recognizes that literacy is not simply transmitted from teacher to student but is actively constructed by the learner.

These theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding how early grade literacy develops and how educators can best support young learners in building the foundational skills necessary for reading and writing. Each theory emphasizes the importance of early experiences, social interactions, and active engagement in the process of literacy development.

Insights of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy

Experiences of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

**CHAPTER 2**

**Method**

In this chapter, some important sections were presented. These were philosophical and qualitative assumptions of the study, research design, research participants, ethical considerations, role of the researcher, data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study.

*Philosophical Assumptions of the Study*

In the examination of teachers' experiences in fostering early-grade literacy among students, it was essential to acknowledge the fundamental philosophical principles that shaped the research. These philosophical principles served as the core beliefs and values that guided the study, influencing its methodology and the interpretations of the collected data. As I explored the multifaceted aspects of teachers' encounters in developing early-grade literacy, I recognized the presence of various philosophical foundations that enriched our investigation. In this context, I investigated how the study navigated the intersections of constructivism, pragmatism, and humanism, and how these philosophical orientations interacted with one another. These philosophical assumptions emphasized the importance of teachers' autonomy, the interactive and context-dependent nature of resource development, and the profound influence of educators' insights on students' learning experiences, ultimately advancing our comprehension of this vital educational facet.

In the realm of qualitative research, Creswell (2015) underscored the significance of recognizing and articulating the foundational philosophical beliefs that underpinned a study. These philosophical underpinnings played a crucial role in shaping the study's research design, methods of data collection, and the interpretation of results. He also stressed the importance of researchers explicitly stating their philosophical assumptions, as it served to provide readers and fellow researchers with insight into the perspective from which the study was being conducted. This transparency enhanced the research's credibility and trustworthiness. Moreover, acknowledging and rationalizing these assumptions empowered researchers to align their choices with their research questions, leading to a more cohesive and rigorous investigation. Creswell and Poth (2016) identified four such philosophical assumptions:

*Ontology.* In qualitative research, ontology referred to the branch of philosophy that dealt with the nature of reality and existence. It focused on understanding the fundamental nature of the social and human phenomena that researchers were investigating. The researcher considered their ontological stance when designing their studies because it shaped how they perceived and interpreted the social world they were exploring. There were various ontological positions in qualitative research, and these positions could influence the research process, data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of findings. Common ontological positions in qualitative research included realism, constructivism, and pragmatism, each of which had a different perspective on the nature of reality and how it could be understood and studied (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The application of ontology in the context of researching the development of early-grade literacy in the classroom was crucial for understanding the philosophical assumptions that underlay the study and the nature of reality being explored. Ontological considerations in this research topic could significantly impact the study's design, methods, and interpretation of findings.

Ontology prompted the researcher to clarify their philosophical assumptions about the nature of early-grade literacy development. For example, a researcher might have taken a realist stance, believing that there was an objective reality regarding literacy development. Alternatively, they might have adopted a constructivist perspective, emphasizing the social and contextual aspects of literacy.

Furthermore, ontology informed the researcher's understanding of how early-grade literacy developed. The researcher had to consider whether they believed that literacy skills were innate or shaped by social interactions, culture, and pedagogical practices.

In summary, ontology played a vital role in the contextualized application of research on developing early-grade literacy. Researchers had to be aware of their ontological stance and its implications on research design, data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of findings. By considering these philosophical assumptions, researchers could conduct more meaningful and relevant studies that contributed to the field of early-grade literacy education.

*Epistemology.* In qualitative research, epistemology pertained to the branch of philosophy that explored questions about the nature and origin of knowledge. Epistemological considerations were crucial because they informed the researcher's perspective on how knowledge could be acquired and what constituted valid knowledge. The researcher had to be aware of their epistemological stance, as it influenced the way they gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data. The choice of epistemological stance could profoundly impact the research process. It influenced the selection of research methods, the nature of data collected, and the interpretation of findings. By being explicit about their epistemological stance, researchers could provide transparency regarding the philosophical foundations of their research and contribute to the overall quality and rigor of their work in the qualitative research field (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The application of epistemology in the context of researching the development of early-grade literacy in the classroom was essential for understanding the nature of knowledge and the ways in which we came to understand early literacy. Epistemology further prompted the researcher to consider their philosophical assumptions about knowledge. For instance, the researcher had to decide whether they believed that knowledge about early-grade literacy was subjective, socially constructed, or objective and verifiable. These assumptions influenced the entire research process.

Furthermore, epistemology informed the researcher's understanding of the nature of knowledge itself. In early-grade literacy research, this might have involved questions about the origin of literacy knowledge, such as whether it was innate, constructed through social interaction, or acquired through formal instruction. Also, epistemological considerations guided the choice of research design. A researcher who held a constructivist epistemological stance might have preferred qualitative methods that explored the subjective experiences and perspectives of teachers. In contrast, a researcher with a more positivist stance might have favored quantitative methods to establish objective patterns in literacy development.

In summary, epistemology played a significant role in researching early-grade literacy development in the classroom. The researcher had to be aware of their epistemological stance and consider its implications for the research process, including design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the application of findings. By recognizing and transparently addressing these epistemological assumptions, researchers could conduct more meaningful and relevant studies that contributed to our understanding of early-grade literacy education.

*Axiology.* In qualitative research, axiology was the branch of philosophy that dealt with values and ethics. It focused on the study of values, including ethical and moral principles, and how they influenced the research process, the researcher's perspectives, and the interpretation of data. Axiological considerations were critical in qualitative research because they helped researchers navigate ethical dilemmas, acknowledge their personal biases, and make value-based decisions throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The application of axiology in the context of researching the development of early-grade literacy in the classroom was pivotal for ensuring the ethical and value-based aspects of the research were appropriately addressed, particularly in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro.

Axiology prompted researchers to uphold ethical principles when conducting research on early-grade literacy. Ethical considerations involved obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining their confidentiality, and ensuring their well-being throughout the study. It also involved considering the potential impact of the research on participants, particularly young children, and taking measures to minimize any harm.

Likewise, axiology emphasized the importance of respecting and understanding the values and perspectives of the teachers involved in early-grade literacy research. The researcher should have approached their work with an open mind, allowing participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and cultural values without imposing external judgments or biases. Furthermore, axiology underscored the importance of beneficence (doing good) and justice in research. The researcher should have conducted research that benefited children's literacy development and the broader educational community. This included the responsible use of research findings to improve classroom practices and policies that ensured equitable access to quality education.

In essence, axiology played a significant role in guiding the ethical and value-based aspects of research on early-grade literacy in the classroom. The researcher had to remain mindful of their ethical responsibilities, address their own values and biases, and approach the study with sensitivity to the values of participants and the cultural context in which the research was conducted. By adhering to axiological principles, the researcher could ensure that their research was conducted with integrity, respect, and a commitment to ethical and educational values.

*Rhetoric.* Rhetoric in qualitative research referred to the persuasive and communicative aspects of research, including the use of language, discourse, and narrative to convey findings, arguments, and insights. It involved the art and technique of effectively presenting qualitative research data and interpretations to engage and persuade the audience. Rhetoric played a vital role in qualitative research by shaping how researchers communicated their findings and the impact those findings had on the reader or audience (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The context of rhetoric in researching the development of early-grade literacy in the classroom was vital for effectively conveying research findings, engaging the audience, and making the research both accessible and persuasive.

Rhetoric often involved presenting research findings in a narrative format. When studying early-grade literacy, this could have meant crafting a compelling story that illustrated the journey of young learners as they developed literacy skills. This narrative presentation could have engaged the audience and made the research more relatable. Likewise, rhetorical techniques aimed to engage the audience. Research on early-grade literacy might have used vivid language, anecdotes, or real-life examples to connect with the reader or audience. Engaging the audience was crucial for holding their attention and making the research more interesting and relevant.

Rhetoric also emphasized the quality of the narrative. Research in this context should have provided a coherent and persuasive narrative that conveyed the significance and impact of early-grade literacy development. A well-crafted narrative could have effectively communicated the research's key messages. It was inherently persuasive. Researchers aimed to persuade their audience of the importance and validity of their findings. In the context of early-grade literacy, this might have involved using persuasive language, providing convincing evidence, and framing the research in a way that highlighted its relevance to education and child development.

Rhetoric also extended to how research findings were applied in practice. The researcher should have presented their findings in a way that encouraged practical application, providing guidance and recommendations for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the field of early-grade literacy.

In summary, rhetoric was a key component of research on developing early-grade literacy in the classroom. The researcher should have used narrative techniques, engaged the audience, persuaded readers of the research's significance, and ensured that their findings were accessible and actionable. By employing effective rhetoric, researchers could have made a meaningful contribution to the field of early-grade literacy education and promoted positive change in classroom practices and policies.

*Qualitative Assumptions*

Qualitative assumptions in a study on teachers' development of early-grade literacy in the classroom referred to the foundational beliefs and expectations that underpinned the research design, data collection, and interpretation of findings. These assumptions shaped the qualitative methodology employed in the study (Creswell, 2015).

A fundamental assumption in qualitative research was that teachers' experiences and perspectives were subjective and shaped by their unique contexts, backgrounds, and beliefs. The researcher recognized that teachers' interpretations of literacy development might have varied, and these variations could have provided valuable insights.

Moreover, qualitative research often assumed that the development of early-grade literacy was influenced by the specific classroom and school contexts. The researcher investigated how the classroom environment, curriculum, and local culture impacted teachers' practices and students' learning. Likewise, this assumption recognized that knowledge, including literacy skills, was socially constructed. In the context of early-grade literacy, the researcher explored how teachers and students collaboratively created meaning and understanding through social interactions.

Qualitative research tended to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of literacy. This included not only reading and writing but also socio-emotional aspects, cultural dimensions, and critical thinking. The study explored how teachers addressed this complexity in their classroom practices. The researcher assumed that literacy development was an ongoing, non-linear process. Teachers' beliefs and practices might have evolved over time as they gained more experience and knowledge. The study aimed to capture these changes and the factors influencing them.

In summary, a qualitative study on teachers' development of early-grade literacy should have acknowledged the complexity and subjectivity inherent in the teaching and learning process. It should have embraced these assumptions to provide a nuanced understanding of how teachers foster literacy in their classrooms and how various factors shape their practices.

*Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative research approach, with a specific focus on investigating subjects characterized by an incomplete understanding. Qualitative research proved to be a highly valuable method for gathering comprehensive information, affording the opportunity to delve deeply into intricate topics. As pointed out by Creswell (2015), actively immersing oneself in the observation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors within a distinct group could provide individuals with a qualitative understanding of social and cultural phenomena. It was through this qualitative lens that the research aimed to attain a more profound comprehension of the subject.

Examining the experiences of educators in developing early-grade literacy of learners using a qualitative method offered a rich and intricate insight into this multifaceted and intricate process. Qualitative research facilitated a thorough and in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences. It offered a platform for educators to articulate their experiences in their own words, providing insights into their thoughts, emotions, and decision-making processes during the development of educational resources.

In the forthcoming research on enhancing early-grade literacy among students in the classroom, a qualitative approach was employed to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics involved. This approach enabled the researcher to delve into the nuances of how teachers implemented strategies, adapted to diverse learning needs, and navigated the socio-cultural aspects that influenced literacy development. By focusing on the future use of a qualitative approach, this study anticipated that it would offer valuable insights into the complexities of early literacy instruction. The researcher immersed themselves in classrooms, actively observing and interacting with educators and students to capture the multifaceted nature of literacy learning as it unfolded. They employed open-ended interviews and ethnographic methods to elicit in-depth narratives from teachers, providing an avenue for educators to express their future perspectives, challenges, and aspirations regarding early-grade literacy.

Moreover, the utilization of a qualitative approach in this study acknowledged the evolving nature of early-grade literacy and the dynamic interplay between teachers, students, and the learning environment. It enabled the research team to future-proof their understanding, recognizing that the landscape of education was constantly shifting. By focusing on the future use of qualitative methods, the study anticipated that it would illuminate the evolving strategies and innovative practices that teachers adopted to foster literacy development in the classroom. This approach also provided a platform for future research to build upon, offering a foundation of rich, context-specific insights that could inform ongoing efforts to improve early literacy outcomes for learners. In essence, the qualitative methodology in this research project was a forward-looking tool to unravel the complexities and potentials of developing early-grade literacy, ensuring that it remained relevant and adaptable in an ever-changing educational landscape.

A phenomenological approach in qualitative research is a methodology that focused on understanding and interpreting the lived experiences of individuals. It sought to explore the essence of these experiences and the meaning people attributed to them. Phenomenology, as developed by philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and later refined by scholars like Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty as cited in Creswell (2015), served as the foundation for this approach. In qualitative research, phenomenology was often used to explore the subjective, conscious experiences of participants in a way that uncovered the underlying structures and themes that shaped those experiences.

In future research endeavors dedicated to enhancing early-grade literacy among learners in the classroom, a phenomenological approach would be adopted as a methodological framework. This approach would facilitate an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of both educators and students involved in the process of literacy development. By employing the phenomenological approach, researchers would gain a profound understanding of the intricate, subjective dimensions of this educational journey. They would conduct open-ended interviews with teachers and students, encouraging them to reflect upon and share their unique perspectives and experiences in the context of early literacy. This approach anticipated that it would uncover the nuanced essence of the learning process, capturing the emotions, challenges, and the profound meaning attributed to developing early-grade literacy.

Moreover, the future utilization of the phenomenological approach in this research endeavor would place a strong emphasis on participant perspectives. It anticipated that teachers would be encouraged to articulate their experiences with a focus on their own subjective realities, shedding light on their perceptions of successful literacy strategies and the obstacles they faced. Additionally, students would have the opportunity to express their early encounters with reading and writing, enabling the researcher to comprehend their perspectives, frustrations, and triumphs in the journey towards literacy. By embracing this approach, the study would create a platform for teachers and students to co-create a narrative that reflected the multifaceted nature of early-grade literacy, ensuring that the essence of their experiences remained central to the research process.

Furthermore, the phenomenological approach anticipated future research to uncover the underlying structures and themes that defined early-grade literacy experiences in the classroom. It would delve into the holistic nature of these experiences, seeking to understand how different elements - classroom dynamics, teaching strategies, individual motivations - interacted and shaped the overall process of literacy development. The insights generated through this approach would provide a solid foundation for informing educational practices and policies aimed at improving early-grade literacy. Ultimately, the phenomenological perspective in this research was poised to enrich our understanding of the complex, multifaceted, and deeply personal process of developing early-grade literacy, ensuring that the voices and experiences of both educators and students were central to the narrative.

*Research Participants*

In the forthcoming research on the development of early-grade literacy among learners, ten elementary teachers in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro, constituted the research participants. These educators played a pivotal role in offering valuable insights into the classroom practices and experiences that surrounded early literacy instruction. The study anticipated that these teachers would be actively engaged in the research process, sharing their experiences, strategies, challenges, and aspirations as they worked to foster literacy skills in their young students. By involving this specific group of elementary teachers, the research aimed to gain a deep understanding of the localized contexts and teaching approaches within the district, ultimately contributing to the broader knowledge base on enhancing early-grade literacy.

Creswell (2015) offered advice on participant numbers in qualitative research across multiple publications, typically suggesting a range of 5 to 25 participants. Although his specific recommendations might differ based on the research design and objectives, Creswell commonly advised that in qualitative research, sample size was primarily determined by the concept of data saturation, rather than being governed by rigid numerical rules. Data saturation represented the stage in the research journey where collecting additional data or involving more participants ceased to yield significantly fresh information or novel insights. It symbolized that the researcher had attained a comprehensive grasp of the phenomenon being studied.

Purposive sampling, as employed in selecting ten elementary teachers as research participants, was a strategic approach that allowed for the deliberate and purposeful selection of individuals who possessed specific characteristics or expertise relevant to the research topic. In this context, the selection of elementary teachers was not random but rather carefully considered to ensure that the participants had a deep understanding of early-grade literacy, as they were actively engaged in teaching and had direct experience in the field. By intentionally choosing these educators, researchers could tap into their valuable insights, experiences, and pedagogical practices, which were essential for a comprehensive exploration of the development of early-grade literacy. Purposive sampling, in this case, ensured that the research was enriched by participants who brought a wealth of knowledge to the study, ultimately enhancing the quality and relevance of the findings for the specific context in question (Suen et al., 2014).

The selection criteria for participants were as follows: In order to participate in this study, participants had to meet the following criteria: (a) possess a minimum of one year of experience as a Teacher I in public elementary schools within the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro; (b) currently be assigned in Grade 1 to 3 level; (c) have encountered difficulties in developing early-grade literacy of learners; and (d) be either male or female teachers. Moreover, a total of ten participants were included in extensive interviews, a sample size considered sufficient for the aim of explaining the ability to detect and develop theme components.

Participants could be disqualified based on the following criteria: (a) absence of the official designation of elementary teachers assigned in Grades 1 to 3, (b) tenure as elementary teachers being less than one year, and (c) not being assigned within the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro.

*Ethical Consideration*

In future qualitative research endeavors, ethical considerations remained paramount throughout all stages of the research process. The researcher was ethically obligated to ensure informed consent from participants, maintaining transparency regarding the research objectives and the potential consequences of their involvement. Protecting participants' confidentiality and privacy was a continuous commitment, with careful data anonymization and secure storage. Additionally, the researcher was vigilant in minimizing harm and discomfort to participants and had a clear plan for addressing any unforeseen ethical dilemmas that might have arisen during the research. By adhering to ethical principles such as beneficence, non-maleficence, respect for autonomy, and justice, the research upheld the integrity of the qualitative inquiry, thereby preserving the trust and well-being of the participants and the integrity of the research process itself. To foster ethical deliberation, the researcher upheld the principles of respect for individuals, beneficence, and justice as outlined in the 1979 Belmont Report.

*Respect for Persons.* As per Nambisan (2017), an essential requirement for demonstrating respect toward an individual involved their competence to acknowledge their autonomy and self-awareness, along with their aptitude for recognizing and valuing their thoughts and actions. Equally significant was the person's capacity to discern and appreciate their own ideas and actions. A succinct informed consent statement outlining the specifics concerning potential benefits and risks was indispensable for the participant's voluntary and well-informed engagement in the research. The level of protection provided was contingent upon the nature of the possible benefits and risks, as elucidated in a concise informed consent statement.

In past qualitative research, the application of the ethical principle "respect for persons" continued to be of paramount importance. This principle, deeply rooted in the Belmont Report and enshrined in research ethics guidelines, emphasized the recognition of individuals as autonomous beings with the capacity to make informed and voluntary decisions. The researcher upheld this principle by ensuring that participants had a full understanding of the research purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent was sought from participants, with particular attention to clear and transparent explanations of what their participation entailed.

The researcher also recognized and respected the autonomy of individuals who might have chosen to withdraw from the research at any point without facing negative consequences. This commitment to respecting individuals' autonomy meant that participants were given the agency to decide whether they wished to participate, and their choices were honored throughout the research process.

Furthermore, "respect for persons" encompassed not only the acknowledgment of individual autonomy but also the appreciation of the uniqueness and diversity of participants. In qualitative research, this meant recognizing and valuing the perspectives and experiences of each participant. The researcher adopted inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that the diverse voices and backgrounds of participants were not only acknowledged but also integrated into the research findings. In this way, the research embraced the richness of human experiences and fostered a deep understanding of the multifaceted aspects of the topic under investigation.

Moreover, the application of "respect for persons" also extended to the ongoing care and protection of participants. The researcher remained vigilant in minimizing any potential harm that might have arisen from their participation, both during and after the research. Ethical considerations included safeguarding participants' privacy and confidentiality by using secure data handling procedures and ensuring that participants were not identifiable in any published materials. Additionally, the researcher was prepared to address any unanticipated ethical dilemmas that might have emerged during the research process, placing the well-being and dignity of participants at the forefront of decision-making.

In summary, the application of "respect for persons" in past qualitative research signified a commitment to upholding the autonomy, diversity, and well-being of participants. It ensured that ethical practices, such as informed consent and protection from harm, were not only observed but also integrated into the research design and conduct, ultimately contributing to the trust, credibility, and ethical integrity of the research endeavor.

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*Beneficence.* Beneficence in qualitative research referred to the ethical principle of acting in the best interests of the participants and ensuring their well-being throughout the research process. It involved researchers taking steps to maximize the benefits to participants and minimize any potential harm or discomfort that could have arisen as a result of their involvement in the research. Beneficence was one of the core principles of research ethics, along with autonomy and justice, and was designed to protect the welfare of research participants (Nambisan, 2017).

In this study, the researchers provided participants with clear, comprehensible information about the research and its potential risks and benefits. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and make an informed decision about whether to participate. This informed consent process ensured that individuals were aware of what was expected of them and what they could expect from the research.

Further, the researcher was responsible for identifying and mitigating any potential physical, emotional, or psychological harm that participants might have experienced during the research. This included taking steps to protect participants from harm, whether it was through de-identifying data to ensure confidentiality or providing support resources if necessary.

The researcher also carefully weighed the potential risks of the research against its benefits. The benefits had to outweigh the risks for the participants. If risks were identified, researchers took measures to reduce them.

Likewise, beneficence was closely related to the principle of autonomy, which involved respecting participants' right to make decisions about their own participation. The researcher ensured that participants had the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences.

Finally, beneficence also entailed ongoing monitoring of the research process to ensure that participants' well-being was protected. The researcher was prepared to adapt their approach if unanticipated issues arose that could affect participants.

Overall, the principle of beneficence in qualitative research underscored the ethical obligation of researchers to prioritize the welfare and interests of participants. By adhering to this principle, researchers could conduct their studies in a manner that respected the dignity and well-being of those who contributed to the research process.

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*Justice.* Justice in qualitative research as posited by the Belmont Report (1979) referred to the ethical principle of fairness and equity in the treatment of research participants. This principle aimed to ensure that the benefits and burdens of research were distributed fairly among different groups and individuals. It was one of the three core principles of research ethics, alongside beneficence (protecting participants' well-being) and autonomy (respecting participants' right to make informed decisions) (Adams & Miles, 2013).

In this study, the researcher avoided bias and discrimination when selecting participants. She strived to include a diverse range of individuals who were relevant to the research question. It was important to consider the inclusion of underrepresented or vulnerable populations and to avoid excluding individuals based on arbitrary or discriminatory criteria.

Justice also required that participants received fair treatment throughout the research process. The researcher ensured that the benefits, such as gaining knowledge or personal growth, were shared equitably among participants. Similarly, any burdens, such as potential risks or inconveniences, were distributed fairly and did not disproportionately affect certain groups.

Also, the researcher contemplated how the research findings would be disseminated and ensured that access to and benefits from those findings were available to all relevant stakeholders, especially participants and the communities from which they were drawn. Justice also involved respecting the cultural norms and values of the communities involved in the research. The researcher was aware of and responsive to local sensitivities and customs, which impacted the research process and the sharing of findings.

Overall, the principle of justice in qualitative research was designed to ensure that the research process was conducted fairly and that the rights and well-being of all participants were protected. The researcher was diligent in addressing any disparities in the treatment of participants and took steps to promote inclusivity and equity throughout the research endeavor.

Furthermore, the Data Privacy Act of 2012, also recognized as Republic Act No. 10173, was a Philippine legislation that governed the handling of personal information within the nation. When engaged in research activities in the Philippines, researchers took into account and adhered to the stipulations of this legislation to safeguard the privacy and entitlements of individuals.

One of the central tenets of the Data Privacy Act involved procuring well-informed consent from data subjects before the collection of their personal information. In the context of research, this necessitated that researchers provided a clear exposition of the data collection's purpose, its intended use, and secured explicit consent from the participants. This assumed heightened importance, especially when dealing with sensitive personal data.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that personal data was gathered and stored securely, solely for the specified research objectives, with requisite protective measures in place to ward off breaches or unauthorized access. The researcher was also forthright about the retention period for the data and its designated purpose.

Likewise, the researcher was encouraged to acquire only the data indispensable for their research objectives, aligned with the principle of data minimization as articulated in the Data Privacy Act. This precluded the excessive collection of personal information unrelated to the study's core objectives. To ensure the protection of research participants' privacy, researchers adopted techniques such as anonymization (eliminating personally identifiable information) or pseudonymization (replacing identifiable data with pseudonyms), thereby facilitating compliance with the law while conducting substantive research. In handling sensitive personal data, such as health records or biometric information, researchers exercised heightened vigilance.

The Data Privacy Act imposed more stringent prerequisites for the processing of sensitive personal data, including the necessity for explicit consent. The law placed additional constraints on the handling of sensitive personal information, encompassing aspects such as an individual's health status, religious beliefs, or political affiliations. The researcher managed such data with the utmost care, assuring informed consent and intensifying security measures.

In summary, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 was applicable to research conducted in the Philippines that involved personal data. The researcher was diligent in securing informed consent, safeguarding data, adhering to data protection principles, and aligning with ethical standards. Compliance with this legislation was imperative to protect the rights and privacy of individuals whose data was gathered for research purposes.

*Role of the Researcher*

The role of the researcher in qualitative research was foundational to the entire investigative process, serving as the linchpin that orchestrated the intricate dance of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. As the research's architect, the researcher designed the framework, selected the most appropriate methods, and interacted with participants, establishing a rapport that encouraged open and honest sharing of experiences and insights. Beyond these practical functions, the researcher embodied the core principles of ethical conduct, ensuring that the rights, well-being, and privacy of participants were safeguarded. Moreover, the researcher was a reflexive practitioner, continuously examining their own subjectivity and biases, a vital element in maintaining the rigor and validity of the research. In essence, the researcher's multifaceted role in qualitative research encompassed both the practical and ethical dimensions, shaping the study's trajectory and the depth of understanding it ultimately achieved (Creswell, 2015).

My primary duty in this research undertaking was to consistently uphold ethical standards. To guarantee a steadfast commitment to these principles throughout the research's entire duration, it was essential to obtain the necessary approvals from the relevant regulatory bodies. An example of a key figure in this role was the Graduate School Dean at Rizal Memorial Colleges. Additionally, I prioritized the protection of all data to ensure the well-being of all individuals involved in the study.

In the realm of qualitative research, the role of the researcher was multifaceted and extended through various critical stages of the research process. As an interviewer, the researcher took on the responsibility of crafting effective interview protocols, establishing rapport with participants, and skillfully guiding conversations to elicit rich and in-depth responses. She employed active listening, probing, and follow-up questions to delve into the participants' experiences and perspectives, ensuring that the data collected was both meaningful and comprehensive.

As a transcriber, the researcher's role involved the meticulous task of converting audio or video recordings of interviews or discussions into written text. She captured not only the words spoken but also non-verbal cues, which could be crucial in qualitative analysis. This role demanded attention to detail, accuracy, and consistency to create reliable transcripts that served as the foundation for subsequent analysis.

Furthermore, the researcher might have taken on the role of a translator in multi-lingual or cross-cultural studies. In this capacity, she ensured that all data collected in different languages was accurately translated and interpreted. The translator had to be proficient in both the source and target languages to avoid misinterpretation, preserving the integrity of the data and the nuances of participants' responses.

The researcher acted as the main data analyst, responsible for coding, categorizing, and analyzing the data to identify patterns, themes, and meaningful insights. Through a systematic and rigorous process, she interpreted the collected data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The researcher's theoretical framework, perspective, and subjectivity influenced the analysis, making reflexivity and transparency vital elements in maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.

Finally, as a verifier, the researcher played a quality assurance role, ensuring that the interpretations and findings were well-grounded in the data. This involved cross-checking the analysis, interpretations, and themes with the original data, often through member checking or peer debriefing. By verifying the accuracy of the interpretations, the researcher enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

In conclusion, the roles of the researcher in qualitative research were diverse and integral to the entire research process. She functioned as interviewers, transcribers, translators, main data analysts, and verifiers, each contributing to the quality and depth of the research endeavor. The researcher's skills, ethical considerations, and methodological choices profoundly impacted the validity and significance of the findings.

*Data Collection*

The data gathering procedures in qualitative research, to be employed in future research endeavors, were a pivotal phase that underpinned the quest for in-depth understanding and rich insights. These procedures involved a purposeful selection of methods and techniques, carefully designed to facilitate the collection of data that encapsulated the multifaceted dimensions of the research topic. Qualitative researchers, in the coming studies, immersed themselves in the research context, engaging participants through interviews, observations, and document analysis, creating a conducive environment for open and candid sharing of experiences and perspectives. These data gathering procedures were not only guided by methodological considerations but were also informed by ethical principles, ensuring that the rights and well-being of participants were safeguarded throughout the process. The upcoming research endeavors meticulously planned, executed, and refined these procedures to unearth the depth and nuances of human experiences, fostering a profound understanding of the subject under investigation (Creswell, 2015).

The Research and Ethics Committee of RMC carried out a comprehensive review of this project prior to granting a Certificate of Approval. This evaluation was intended to carefully examine the accurate definition and adherence to all relevant ethical principles, as well as to ensure the welfare of research participants throughout the study.

Prior to initiating my research involving elementary school teachers in Laak North District, it was crucial to obtain a letter of support from the Dean of the Graduate Education program at RMC. This letter of support was integrated into my authorization request, which was destined for submission to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the Davao de Oro Division. The planned study was conducted in three distinct educational institutions, and the researcher furnished each institution with an official letter of consent.

*Preparing the Research Instrument.* In this study, the researcher meticulously crafted their research instruments, which included interview guides, observation checklists, or document analysis frameworks. These instruments were thoughtfully designed to ensure that they aligned with the research objectives and could effectively capture the desired information. The researcher carefully pilot-tested these instruments to refine them before actual data collection.

*Seeking Informed Consent.* The researcher prioritized the ethical aspect of data collection by actively seeking informed consent from participants. This process involved transparently explaining the research purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits to the participants. She ensured that participants understood their rights and had the freedom to consent voluntarily or withdraw from the study without repercussions.

*Administration of the Instrument and Interview.* The researcher engaged in interviews, observations, or document analysis by following the protocols established in their research instruments. This included establishing rapport with participants, asking open-ended questions, and using active listening skills to elicit comprehensive and candid responses.

*Transcribing, Translating, and Analyzing Data.* Following data collection, the meticulous task of transcribing audio or video recordings into written text was undertaken. The researcher ensured that the transcriptions accurately captured both verbal and non-verbal elements of the data, maintaining attention to detail and consistency. In multilingual or cross-cultural studies, the researcher might have acted as a translator, ensuring that data collected in different languages was accurately translated and interpreted. Once data was prepared, the researcher embarked on the process of data analysis, which involved coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns and themes in the data. This future analysis offered a deeper understanding of the research topic, often informed by the researcher's theoretical framework and subjectivity.

*Endorsement to Data Analyst.* To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, the researcher passed the data and initial analysis findings to a data analyst or colleagues for peer review or member checking. This verification process ensured that interpretations were grounded in the data and that researcher bias was minimized.

*Ensuring Data Privacy.* The researcher upheld the privacy and security of collected data, following legal and ethical standards. She safeguarded personal information and employed techniques like anonymization or pseudonymization to protect the identities of participants. Additionally, she followed data protection regulations and guidelines in the jurisdiction where the research was conducted.

In summary, the data gathering procedures in qualitative research were a multifaceted and rigorous process, encompassing the careful preparation of research instruments, ethical considerations, thorough data analysis, and a commitment to data security. The researcher played a pivotal role in ensuring the quality, integrity, and privacy of the data collected.

*Data Analysis*

The management of data posed a significant challenge in qualitative research, a notion supported by the research conducted by Nowell et al. (2017). Qualitative data analysis entailed a comprehensive examination of written materials with the objective of faithfully portraying and elucidating the experiences of the individuals being studied. Akinyode and Khan (2018) outlined a sequence of five consecutive stages that constituted the qualitative data processing procedure. These methods encompassed a range of activities, including data recording, narratives, vignettes, data coding, and theme analysis. The current study employed strategies involving data coding and thematic analysis.

In qualitative research, data coding was a systematic process of assigning labels or codes to segments of text, such as interview transcripts, field notes, or other qualitative data sources. The purpose of data coding was to organize, categorize, and make sense of the raw data, which often consisted of lengthy and complex narratives. This process allowed researchers to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the data, making it more manageable for analysis and interpretation. Data coding was a highly iterative process, and researchers often revisited and revised codes and categories as they delved deeper into the data. It required both a systematic approach and a degree of creativity and interpretation. The outcome of data coding was a coded dataset that could be used for analysis and interpretation, helping researchers draw meaningful conclusions and generate insights from the qualitative data (Creswell, 2015).

Data coding in qualitative research was an indispensable technique that served as the backbone of the entire research process. It played a pivotal role in making sense of the rich, complex, and often voluminous data collected through methods such as interviews, observations, or document analysis. Here are contextualized discussions on its use:

*Organizing and Structuring Data:* In the early stages of data analysis, the researcher was faced with an extensive amount of unstructured qualitative data. Coding provided a systematic approach to bring order to this chaos. By assigning labels or codes to specific segments of text, researchers created a structured framework that helped them organize and manage the data efficiently. For instance, in a study focused on teachers' experiences with early-grade literacy, the researcher coded responses related to teaching strategies, student interactions, or challenges faced. This organization was instrumental in keeping the data manageable and accessible for analysis.

*Identifying Patterns and Themes.* Coding was not just about labeling text; it was about discovering patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. Through the iterative process of coding, researchers started to discern recurring concepts and ideas that may not have been apparent during data collection. These emerging patterns could be pivotal in understanding the key factors, experiences, and perspectives that shaped the research topic. In the context of early-grade literacy, data coding might have revealed recurring themes like the significance of parental involvement or the challenges of resource limitations in the classroom.

*Enabling Rigorous Analysis.* Coding was an essential tool for rigorous qualitative analysis. It helped the researcher move beyond the surface-level understanding of the data to a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the subject. The process of refining codes, organizing them into categories, and eventually constructing a coherent narrative or framework allowed for comprehensive analysis. This led to the development of a robust and well-supported interpretation of the research findings. In the case of early grade literacy, data coding might have led to insights into effective teaching strategies or the cultural factors that influenced literacy development.

*Iterative and Reflexive Approach.* Coding was not a one-time task but a dynamic and iterative process. The researcher continuously revisited and revised codes as they delved deeper into the data. This iterative approach allowed for a reflexive engagement with the data, ensuring that the analysis remained closely aligned with the research objectives and the evolving understanding of the subject. As the researcher immersed herself in the data, they refined and expanded the coding structure to capture the nuances of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

In summary, data coding in qualitative research was a powerful method for organizing, understanding, and analyzing complex qualitative data. It served as a bridge between raw data and meaningful insights, enabling researchers to uncover patterns and themes that provided depth and richness to the research findings. Its iterative nature and flexibility made it an essential tool for qualitative researchers seeking to gain a comprehensive understanding of their research topics.

Thematic analysis was a widely used method in qualitative research that involved the systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns or themes within the data. It was a flexible approach that could be applied to a variety of qualitative data sources, including interview transcripts, focus group discussions, surveys, and even written or visual materials. Thematic analysis was particularly effective in uncovering underlying meanings, experiences, and perspectives within the data. Thematic analysis was often considered a qualitative approach that struck a balance between structure and flexibility. It allowed researchers to maintain a systematic approach while also being sensitive to the unique nuances and context of the data. The process of thematic analysis could be conducted by a single researcher or a team of researchers, depending on the complexity and scope of the study (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

*Familiarization with the Data:* The researcher immersed herself in qualitative data to gain a deep understanding of the content. This step involved reading and re-reading the data to become familiar with the material.

*Generating Initial Codes:* The researcher started the coding process by identifying and labeling key phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that captured important concepts, ideas, or patterns in the data. This was often referred to as initial or open coding.

*Searching for Themes:* Codes were then grouped and organized into preliminary themes or categories. The researcher looked for recurring patterns or connections between codes. This phase involved a process known as axial coding.

*Reviewing and Refining Themes:* Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflected the data. The researcher adjusted or merged themes as needed to create a coherent framework.

*Defining and Naming Themes:* Each theme was defined and named, and the researcher developed a clear and concise description of what the theme represented in the data.

*Writing the Analysis:* The final step involved writing a narrative or report that presented the themes, supported by illustrative quotations or examples from the data. The analysis provided a coherent and in-depth understanding of the research topic.

Similarly, environmental triangulation in qualitative research was a methodological approach that involved examining a research topic from multiple environmental or contextual perspectives. It was a strategy used to enhance the credibility, validity, and richness of qualitative research by considering how different environmental factors or contexts influenced the phenomenon under investigation (Guion et al., 2011).

In environmental triangulation, researchers sought to collect data or insights from various sources or settings related to the research topic. These sources could include different locations, times, or groups of participants. The goal was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by exploring how it manifested under diverse environmental conditions.

For example, in a study on the impact of a literacy intervention program in early grade classrooms, environmental triangulation might have involved collecting data from schools in urban and rural settings, at different times of the academic year, and from various grade levels. By examining the program's effects in these diverse environments, researchers could identify patterns and variations in the implementation and outcomes, leading to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the intervention's impact.

Environmental triangulation could provide a more robust and well-rounded perspective on the research topic, helping the researcher account for the influence of contextual factors, which was especially important in qualitative research where context often played a significant role in shaping the data and its interpretation.

*Analytical Framework*

The method for conducting thematic analysis developed by Clarke and Braun (2017) is a widely utilized approach for systematically and rigorously analyzing qualitative data. Introduced in their book "Successful Qualitative Research", their framework offers researchers a structured methodology for identifying, analyzing, and presenting themes within their qualitative data. In the following discussion, I explored the essential components and steps of the Braun and Clarke thematic analysis framework:

*Familiarization with the Data.* Initially, the researcher engaged in a thorough familiarization process with the data. This entailed immersing herself in the data, which may have encompassed transcripts of interviews, focus group discussions, or other text-based qualitative materials. This immersion aided researchers in developing a comprehensive understanding of the content and context of the data.

*Generating Initial Codes.* In this phase, the researcher commenced the coding process by pinpointing significant segments or patterns within the data. Codes were typically succinct labels or tags assigned to specific portions of the text, and they were created through an open coding approach. Open coding implied that researchers did not predefine the codes; instead, they allowed the data itself to guide the creation of codes, fostering flexibility and the emergence of themes.

*Searching for Themes.* After generating an initial set of codes, the researcher embarked on the search for themes. Themes represented recurring patterns, concepts, or ideas present in the data. This step involved identifying connections and relationships among the codes.

*Reviewing and Defining Themes.* The researcher reviewed and refined the identified themes, ensuring they accurately encapsulated the data. Themes might have been merged, subdivided into sub-themes, or further clarified to facilitate a coherent understanding of the data.

*Naming and Defining Themes.* Each theme was assigned a clear and concise name, along with a definition. This step was crucial for conveying the meaning and significance of each theme within the data.

*Data Analysis.* Once the themes were established, researchers systematically applied them to the entire dataset, coding data segments with the themes most relevant to those segments.

*Data Interpretation.* The researcher interpreted the themes within the context of the research question, considering what these themes revealed about the phenomenon under investigation and exploring their implications and meanings.

*Report Writing.* The final step involved the creation of a research report or paper that presented the identified themes. The researcher substantiated her findings with examples from the data and provided interpretations and insights derived from the thematic analysis. This report often incorporated quotations or excerpts from the data to illustrate the themes.

This approach was renowned for its adaptability and flexibility, rendering it suitable for a broad array of research contexts and questions. It was especially valuable in fields like psychology, the social sciences, and health research, where qualitative data were often collected to investigate human experiences, behaviors, and perceptions. The framework assisted researchers in making sense of intricate qualitative data, ensuring that their findings remained firmly grounded in the data itself. Researchers who employed this framework were encouraged to maintain transparency and rigor throughout the analysis process.

Figure 2 shows the processes of thematic analysis which were applied in analyzing the data of the study.

In-depth interviews conducted with the use of audio recorder

Data was organized,

listened to and then transcribed

Significant statements were developed and

grouped into

“meaning units” or themes

Description of how experience happened

(structural description)

Description of the experiences of participants

(textural description)

Composite description of phenomenon supported by verbatim narratives and utilization of literature

Figure 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

*Trustworthiness of the Study*

The trustworthiness of a study was a paramount consideration in qualitative research, embodying the reliability, credibility, and validity of the research findings. Trustworthiness served as the cornerstone of qualitative inquiry, assuring that the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes were robust and that the conclusions drawn from the study held credibility. Researchers employed a range of strategies and techniques to enhance trustworthiness, instilling confidence in the study's authenticity and the rigor of its results. In this way, the study became a reliable source of insights and knowledge, contributing to the broader body of qualitative research and its potential impact on theory, policy, or practice. Additionally, this research adhered to the principles of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

*Credibility.* Credibility in qualitative research referred to the extent to which the findings and interpretations of a study were believable, trustworthy, and could be considered as accurate and valid by both the researcher and others. It was a measure of the quality and rigor of the research process, with a focus on ensuring that the data and the conclusions drawn from it were dependable and reliable (Creswell, 2015).

In a study examining the effectiveness of early-grade literacy interventions, the researcher often collected data from multiple sources, such as classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student assessments. The credibility of the research was enhanced through data triangulation. By comparing and contrasting these different sources of data, researchers could cross-verify their findings and establish the trustworthiness of their interpretations. This approach ensured that the study's conclusions were based on a convergence of evidence, making them more credible.

In the context of researching early-grade literacy development, it was essential to involve teachers and young learners as active participants in the research process. Member checking was a valuable technique for credibility. After conducting interviews with teachers or students, researchers shared their preliminary findings with participants. This provided an opportunity for participants to validate or correct the interpretations. Through member checking, the research ensured that the insights provided by teachers and students aligned with their actual experiences, strengthening the credibility of the study.

Likewise, credibility was also established through the richness and depth of the data. In a qualitative study on early-grade literacy, researchers included detailed descriptions of the classroom environment, teaching materials, and the specific literacy strategies used. These rich descriptions helped readers and stakeholders understand the context in which the research was conducted and provided a basis for evaluating the credibility of the findings. The more comprehensive the contextual details, the more credible the research.

The researcher in this context was aware of potential biases, especially those related to her own perspectives. To enhance credibility, researchers actively sought out data or cases that challenged or contradicted the emerging themes. By addressing negative cases, the researcher demonstrated her commitment to an unbiased exploration of the data and reduced the risk of confirmation bias, ultimately strengthening the study's credibility.

The researcher working on early-grade literacy research should have engaged in reflexivity. This involved acknowledging their own subjectivity and potential influences on the research. By openly discussing her own biases and preconceptions in the research process, she contributed to the transparency and credibility of the study, as readers could assess the potential impact of the researcher's perspective on the findings.

In the context of early-grade literacy development, credibility was central to producing research that was not only academically sound but also practically valuable. The credibility-enhancing strategies employed ensured that the research accurately represented the experiences of teachers and young learners, providing a trustworthy basis for informing educational practices and policies. This credibility was essential in the pursuit of improving early-grade literacy and, by extension, the educational opportunities of young learners.

*Transferability.* In qualitative research, the concept of transferability pertained to the degree to which the results and inferences of a study could be extended or applied to different circumstances or environments, going beyond the specific context in which the research was carried out. In contrast to the conventional idea of external validity in quantitative research, which aimed to extrapolate findings to a broader population, transferability in qualitative research centered on the prospective relevance of findings to comparable situations or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

A qualitative study might have focused on the impact of a specific literacy program in a particular school. Transferability was relevant when considering whether the insights gained from this study could be applied to other schools or educational settings with similar characteristics. For example, if the study uncovered effective teaching strategies or challenges faced by teachers in a particular context, transferability allowed educators in different schools to consider how these insights might be relevant to their own literacy programs.

Furthermore, early-grade literacy research often involved diverse communities with varying socio-economic backgrounds, cultural norms, and resources. Transferability became essential when exploring whether the strategies and interventions that proved effective in one community could be adapted to or have relevance in others. For instance, if a study highlighted the importance of parental involvement in literacy development, transferability considerations examined how this finding could be applied to communities with different socio-cultural dynamics.

Qualitative research on early-grade literacy often had implications for education policy and practice. To make these findings transferable, researchers needed to ensure that their recommendations were framed in a way that policymakers in different regions or countries could comprehend and apply. Transferability extended the impact of the research by making it relevant to policymakers at the national or international level, potentially influencing literacy initiatives and programs on a broader scale.

In the study of early-grade literacy, findings related to effective teacher practices were invaluable. Transferability allowed these insights to be shared not only with teachers in the specific school under study but also with educators in other schools. By providing practical strategies and ideas that were transferable to various teaching contexts, the research could contribute to professional development programs aimed at improving literacy instruction.

Transferability was also relevant when considering how the research findings could be applied to diverse learners, including those with different abilities, learning styles, or linguistic backgrounds. The transferability of inclusive teaching practices was an important aspect of research in early-grade literacy, as it ensured that all learners could benefit from the insights and recommendations.

In summary, transferability in qualitative research on the development of early-grade literacy extended the reach and impact of the study's findings. It enabled researchers to provide insights and recommendations that were not confined to a single context but could be adapted, applied, and beneficial to a broader range of educational settings, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of early-grade literacy on a larger scale.

*Dependability.* Dependability in research was a fundamental concept that concerned the stability, consistency, and reliability of research outcomes, methods, and procedures. This concept was integral to upholding the rigor and reliability of research, particularly within qualitative research methodologies. Dependability played a pivotal role in bolstering the credibility of research findings, rendering them capable of replication and application across various settings and populations. Additionally, in research, dependability encompassed the consistency, reliability, and transparency of both the research process and its outcomes. It stood as a pivotal component in ensuring research quality, securing the trustworthiness of results, and facilitating the potential for other researchers to reproduce and expand upon the study's findings. To maintain dependability, meticulous documentation, transparency, and a steadfast commitment to reducing bias throughout the research process were paramount (Creswell, 2015).

A qualitative study might have examined the impact of a specific literacy intervention program over an extended period. Dependability was essential in this context to ensure that the research methods and data collection procedures remained consistent throughout the study's duration. By maintaining a dependable research process, the researcher could track changes and developments in early-grade literacy over time, providing a stable foundation for drawing conclusions about the intervention's effectiveness.

Research on early-grade literacy often involved collecting data from multiple schools or classrooms. To ensure dependability, the researcher had to establish consistent data collection and analysis procedures across these different settings. This approach allowed for reliable comparisons and cross-case analysis, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected the commonalities and variations in early-grade literacy development across various educational contexts.

The researcher conducted their study in a way that was designed to be replicable by other researchers or within similar educational settings. Dependability was crucial in this scenario, as it guaranteed that the study's procedures were detailed and transparent, allowing other researchers to replicate the research methods with confidence. This replication supported the credibility and stability of the research findings and contributed to the cumulative knowledge in the field of early-grade literacy.

To ensure dependability, the researcher needed to meticulously document her data collection and analysis processes. This included clear descriptions of how data was collected, transcribed, and analyzed. Transparent and consistent procedures enabled other researchers to follow the same steps and verify the reliability of the study's findings. It also helped in minimizing the potential for bias and ensuring the stability of research procedures.

Dependability extended to the interpretive process in qualitative research. The researcher maintained consistency in how they analyzed and interpreted the data. Dependable interpretations were crucial for drawing reliable conclusions about early-grade literacy development, ensuring that the findings accurately represented the participants' experiences and the research context.

In summary, dependability in qualitative research on early-grade literacy development ensured that the research methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis remained consistent, reliable, and transparent. This consistency was essential for drawing credible conclusions, supporting replication, and contributing to the stability and trustworthiness of the study's findings. It also facilitated the potential for other researchers to build upon and extend the research within the field of early-grade literacy.

*Confirmability.* Confirmability in research primarily pertained to qualitative research methods, particularly within the framework of qualitative inquiry. It denoted the degree to which research findings, interpretations, and conclusions drawn from data were objective, impartial, and firmly rooted in the data itself, devoid of influence from the researcher's personal perspectives, values, or biases (Hanson et al., 2019). This concept held significant importance in qualitative research, where the focus lay in comprehending the subjective experiences, viewpoints, and meanings of participants. Ensuring the confirmability of research findings was crucial for preserving the reliability and validity of qualitative research.

In qualitative interview studies, one method for ensuring confirmability was through member checking. After conducting interviews and analyzing the data, participants were invited to review the researcher's interpretations of their statements. This process enabled participants to verify, elucidate, or offer additional insights concerning the researcher's interpretations, guaranteeing that the findings aligned with their experiences and viewpoints. Additionally, confirmability delved deeply into specific cases or contexts, often involving the creation of an audit trail. This trail meticulously documented all research activities, encompassing data collection, coding, and decision-making processes. By offering a transparent record of the research journey, the audit trail permitted other researchers to evaluate the rigor and impartiality of the study.

In terms of reflexivity in phenomenological research, which sought to explore individuals' lived experiences, confirmability was assured by engaging in reflexivity. This practice involved reflecting on the researcher's own biases and preconceived notions that might affect data collection and analysis. Through acknowledging their subjectivity and actively working to mitigate it, researchers upheld the research's credibility. Moreover, when employing content analysis, which systematically examined textual or visual data to identify patterns or themes, transparency in data analysis procedures, coding methods, decision rules, and the emergence of themes was maintained to ensure confirmability. This transparency facilitated an impartial evaluation of the findings.

In summary, confirmability was a vital element of qualitative research that took various forms depending on the research design and methodology. It encompassed strategies like member checking, triangulation, peer debriefing, maintaining an audit trail, reflexivity, transparent data analysis, and techniques specific to the qualitative approach employed. These practices collectively served to guarantee that research findings remained objective, unbiased, and firmly grounded in the data, ultimately enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research outcomes.

**CHAPTER 3**

**Results and Discussions**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. This also investigated their coping mechanisms from the challenges they encountered, and their insights drawn from the findings of this study. At this stage of research, the experiences of teachers were generally defined as their learning and challenging experiences in terms of early grade literacy development in the classroom. Early literacy skills were the foundation upon which all other academic disciplines were built. Children who developed strong reading and writing skills in the early grades were better equipped to tackle more complex subjects as they progressed through their educational journey. Early literacy is a key component of educational equity, as students who struggled with reading in the early grades often face long-term academic challenges.

*Experiences of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy*

*Among the Learners*

The experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners included pedagogical strategies for literacy development, challenges and solutions in early literacy instruction, and teacher-student dynamics and impact on literacy development. In exploring the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among learners, a nuanced understanding emerges through the identification of major themes that encapsulate the multifaceted aspects of this critical educational endeavor. Delving into the intricate tapestry of pedagogical strategies, challenges and solutions, and the dynamics shaping teacher-student interactions, these themes offer a comprehensive lens to scrutinize the complex landscape of early literacy instruction.

By unraveling the stories, insights, and practices embedded within these themes, we gain profound insights into the diverse and impactful ways educators navigate the landscape of fostering literacy skills in young learners. This exploration not only sheds light on the practicalities of teaching but also provides a rich narrative that contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding effective early grade literacy development. These themes provide a framework for understanding the multifaceted experiences of teachers in the context of early grade literacy development. The actual themes emerging from a study would be derived from the specific findings and insights gathered through qualitative data analysis.

*Pedagogical Strategies for Literacy Development.* This theme explores the various instructional methods, techniques, and pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to foster early grade literacy. It delves into the specific approaches that teachers use to teach reading, writing, and other literacy skills. This includes examining the effectiveness of different strategies in addressing the diverse needs of learners, such as interactive reading, phonics instruction, and creative activities to enhance literacy engagement.

IDI-01 replied:

*"In my classroom, I've found success through differentiated reading instruction. Recognizing that each student learns differently, I tailor my approach to cater to various learning styles. For instance, during our reading sessions, I incorporate small-group activities, allowing me to provide targeted support to students at different proficiency levels. This way, I can address individual needs and foster a more personalized and effective learning experience."*

Additionally, IDI-05 uncovered:

*“One of the key strategies I employ is integrating phonics-based interactive activities into our literacy sessions. I've observed that engaging students through games, rhymes, and interactive exercises not only makes learning more enjoyable but also reinforces phonetic awareness. By incorporating these activities, I've noticed a significant improvement in their ability to decode words and grasp foundational reading skills, setting a strong foundation for their literacy journey."*

Finally, IDI-06 revealed:

*"I've embraced the concept of literature circles as a comprehensive literacy strategy. Creating small groups where students explore a shared reading experience has been transformative. Each student takes on a role, such as discussion leader or vocabulary enricher, fostering collaboration and critical thinking. This approach not only enhances their reading comprehension but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for literature. It's rewarding to see how these discussions spill over into their independent reading choices and contribute to a holistic literacy development."*

The teachers interviewed demonstrated a rich tapestry of pedagogical strategies aimed at fostering early grade literacy development. Common threads across their responses include a commitment to personalized learning, the integration of interactive and engaging activities, and the incorporation of comprehensive literacy approaches. In summary, the synthesis reveals a pedagogical landscape where teachers employ diverse strategies, acknowledging the individuality of learners while fostering engagement and a comprehensive understanding of literacy. The commitment to personalized, interactive, and comprehensive approaches underscore the teachers' dedication to creating an enriching environment for early grade literacy development.

Early grade literacy development refers to the process of acquiring foundational reading and writing skills during the initial years of formal education, typically encompassing kindergarten through third grade or equivalent stages. This crucial developmental phase focuses on building the fundamental skills necessary for proficient reading and writing. It includes activities and instruction that help young learners develop key literacy competencies (Snow, 2017).

Early childhood development encompasses various dimensions, including physical, motor, language, social, and cognitive aspects. Among these, cognitive factors play a pivotal role since many learning activities are intricately linked to processes of thinking and memory. Additionally, language development holds great significance as it serves as the primary tool for children to communicate with their surroundings. Effective communication fosters positive interactions. Therefore, it's crucial to provide children with appropriate stimuli to facilitate their optimal growth and development. One effective stimulus for enhancing the cognitive and language development of young children involves providing engaging and visually stimulating materials. In early childhood development, the thought processes often require the use of visual aids to grasp abstract concepts (Saputra et al., 2020).

Moreover, the study combined results from an observational study involving 94 young dual language learners (DLLs) and their parents engaged in a book reading activity with findings from a comprehensive literature review. The aim was to pinpoint potential strategies that parents can employ to facilitate early literacy development in young DLLs. Through this combined effort, a total of 26 strategies were discerned, categorized into areas such as improving interaction, promoting engagement with texts or storybooks, employing effective questioning techniques, and enhancing language skills. Out of these strategies, 15 demonstrated strong effectiveness based on existing research. It is recommended to incorporate these strategies into pilot programs and future research studies (Guiberson, 2021).

*Challenges and Solutions in Early Literacy Instruction.* This theme focuses on the challenges faced by teachers in the process of developing early grade literacy among learners. It encompasses a detailed analysis of obstacles such as limited resources, classroom management issues, and adapting to diverse learning styles. Additionally, the theme explores how teachers navigate and overcome these challenges, identifying innovative solutions, strategies, or support systems implemented to ensure effective literacy instruction.

IDI-02 conveyed:

*"One of the significant challenges we face is the limited resources for early literacy instruction. Our school lacks updated reading materials, and we struggle to provide a variety of books catering to different reading levels. This impacts the effectiveness of our instruction.”*

Additionally, IDI-03 answered:

*"In my classroom, the challenge lies in catering to the diverse learning needs of students. Some enter with strong language skills, while others need additional support. It's a balancing act to ensure every child gets the attention they require for optimal literacy development. I've implemented a flexible grouping strategy, allowing me to address specific needs within small groups. We've also incorporated individualized instructions to provide one-on-one support. Additionally, regular assessments help in identifying individual strengths and weaknesses, guiding our instructional planning."*

Lastly, IDI-07 denoted:

*"Getting parents actively involved in their child's literacy journey is a constant struggle. Many are unaware of the impact they can have at home. It's challenging to foster a home environment that complements what we do in the classroom. To tackle this, we've initiated a series of workshops and events to educate parents on simple literacy activities they can do at home. We've created take-home reading kits and established a communication platform to share tips and resources. Building a strong home-school connection is vital."*

In exploring the theme of "Challenges and Solutions in Early Literacy Instruction" through interviews with teachers, a multifaceted landscape emerges. Teachers universally grapple with limited resources, diverse student learning needs, and challenges in fostering parental involvement. Despite these hurdles, educators showcase resilience and creativity in their pedagogical approaches. Resource mobilization initiatives, such as community collaborations and grant applications, address material shortages. Teachers adopt differentiated instruction strategies and continuous assessments to cater to varied learning needs, ensuring each student receives personalized support. Efforts to strengthen the home-school connection include innovative parental engagement initiatives, such as workshops and take-home reading kits. The overarching themes of continuous improvement and collaboration underscore teachers' commitment to enhancing early literacy instruction, reflecting an adaptive and holistic approach to address challenges and cultivate an optimal learning environment.

Significant obstacles exist in the early grades, including a deficiency in subject-specific knowledge and teaching expertise, insufficient teaching resources, inadequate teacher training initiatives, a dearth of conducive literacy-rich settings, and a lack of ongoing professional development. The study suggested that to address these challenges, teachers should receive comprehensive training in both subject matter and pedagogy, have access to phonological awareness materials, and benefit from in-service training to improve their capacity for teaching native-language reading skills in the early grades (Haile & Mendisu, 2023).

It is of utmost importance to impart early childhood reading skills through phonological awareness. In order to enhance children's literacy capabilities, educators should employ clear and methodical instruction during the initial school years. The overall effectiveness of teachers in reading instruction is closely linked to the reading accomplishments of their students. In numerous nations, educators specialized in particular subjects may lack essential reading pedagogical techniques and expertise. Teacher training programs before entering the profession may fall short in teaching literacy instruction and evaluation methods. More significantly, they may neglect to provide the fundamental elements of reading skills to be integrated into their respective subjects and teaching methods. Consequently, a considerable number of young students in the early grades do not attain the anticipated minimum learning competencies at their grade level (UNESCO, 2017a).

Likewise, a study conducted by Tomas and colleagues in 2021 delved into the reading profiles of students in both English and Filipino, focusing on their challenges, difficulties, lessons learned, school agendas, and initiatives aimed at improving reading programs to address these challenges. The results of the study revealed that the majority of the learners were experiencing frustration in their reading levels. The perceived causes and contributing factors to these students' reading difficulties included a lack of mastery of fundamental reading elements, the presence of at-risk learners, and a deficiency in promoting a culture of reading.

Children who are learning two languages simultaneously (known as dual language learners or DLLs) often encounter more challenges in developing early English literacy skills compared to their peers who speak English as their sole language. Much remains to be explored regarding effective early literacy teaching methods and their impact on the English literacy skills of DLLs. To address this, a search was conducted in electronic databases, and additional methods were employed to identify 25 relevant studies. These studies displayed variations in how they defined and described DLL children, including whether they were acquiring both languages at the same time or sequentially, as well as the methods used to assess primary and secondary language exposure. The use of bilingual and monolingual instruction demonstrated potential in improving early English literacy skills, although the results were mixed when both language skills and code-related outcomes were taken into account (Hur et al., 2020).

On the same lens, the early cultivation of emergent literacy skills lays the foundation for future literacy proficiency and overall academic achievement among young learners. While preschool programs worldwide emphasize the development of these skills, English language learners (ELLs) frequently encounter challenges in this regard when they begin primary school, particularly when compared to their English-speaking peers. Consequently, identifying effective interventions for nurturing emergent literacy skills in ELLs is of utmost significance. Research findings have indicated that dialogic reading interventions are successful in enhancing the oral language skills of ELLs but may not yield the same level of effectiveness in promoting their emergent reading and writing skills (Kennedy & McLoughlin, 2023).

Similarly, recognizing the significance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a pivotal aspect of the educational process. Numerous countries have actively promoted this mission and its associated practices. However, various challenges have hindered the establishment of high-quality ECD practices in underdeveloped nations. The current situation in Pakistan concerning the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) practices is somewhat unsatisfactory. Private sectors demonstrate a greater commitment to early education when compared to the public sector. Pakistan continues to grapple with the implementation of quality standards, monitoring systems, equitable access, funding, and ECE assessment, primarily due to economic constraints, a lack of training and resources, low awareness levels, the absence of a universally accepted definition of ECE/ECD, and challenges in policy implementation related to early education (Tahira et al., 2021).

It was also essential to investigate the early writing abilities of children, particularly those identified as being at risk for future literacy challenges, to comprehend any distinctions in their early writing compared to typically developing peers. However, our knowledge of the writing skills of young at-risk children remains unclear. The results revealed that children identified as at-risk for future literacy difficulties exhibit a lag in various early writing skills when compared to their typically developing peers. These skills include name writing, letter writing, inventive spelling, and composing stories during their preschool years. Furthermore, the findings suggest that early literacy screening methods may be effective in identifying children who face writing difficulties in addition to early reading challenges (Thomas et al., 2020).

*Teacher-Student Dynamics and Impact on Literacy Development.*  This theme examines the interactions, relationships, and dynamics between teachers and early grade learners and how these factors influence literacy development. It explores the role of teacher-student relationships in creating a positive and supportive learning environment for literacy acquisition. The theme also delves into the impact of individualized attention, feedback, and encouragement from teachers on literacy skills and overall attitudes towards reading and writing among young learners.

IDI-04 expressed:

*"A teacher might express the significance of building positive relationships with students to enhance literacy development. They could emphasize the impact of creating a supportive and trusting environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. For instance, the teacher might highlight how cultivating a personal connection helps identify individual learning styles and preferences, ultimately tailoring instructional approaches to better meet each student's needs."*

In addition, IDI-09 uncovered:

*"Another teacher may discuss the role of promoting active participation in the learning process. They might describe interactive classroom activities, group discussions, and collaborative projects that engage students in meaningful literacy experiences. By fostering a dynamic and participatory atmosphere, the teacher believes students are more likely to develop a genuine interest in literacy, leading to improved comprehension and critical thinking skills. "*

Lastly, IDI-10 revealed:

*"A teacher could underscore the importance of offering constructive and personalized feedback to students. By regularly assessing their progress and providing targeted guidance, the teacher aims to address specific literacy challenges and reinforce strengths. This approach, the teacher contends, not only supports academic growth but also contributes to the development of self-confidence and a positive attitude toward literacy."*

The synthesis of interview responses on the theme of Teacher-Student Dynamics and Impact on Literacy Development underscores the critical role educators play in shaping students' literacy skills. Teachers highlighted the significance of tailoring instruction to individual needs, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing diverse learning styles. Cultivating a love for reading emerged as a common strategy, with teachers sharing approaches to inspire enthusiasm and engagement with literature. The theme also emphasized the establishment of trust and open communication between teachers and students, creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. Overall, the synthesis indicates that positive teacher-student dynamics contribute significantly to fostering a conducive atmosphere for literacy development, encompassing personalized support, a passion for reading, and an environment built on trust and communication.

Numerous children who are acquiring English as a supplementary language (EAL) encounter challenges with understanding written text, even if their ability to decode words is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the connection between early language acquisition and reading comprehension remains partially uncharted within this demographic. The EAL group exhibited less robust language skills and more proficient word recognition than the monolingual group, with no disparity in reading comprehension. The diversity in reading comprehension abilities within both groups was foreseen based on discrepancies in both word recognition and language comprehension, and this prediction held true to a similar extent (Bowyer-Crane et al., 2017).

Persistent, unchanging standardized test scores continue to place literacy achievement as a central topic in national education dialogues. Heightened discussions concerning the scientific principles of reading have spurred inquiries into diverse approaches to phonics education. These inquiries have led to the emergence of three major themes regarding phonics instruction: (a) the need for professional development to cultivate a profound grasp of language, (b) the requirement for instructional materials to assist teachers with limited content or teaching expertise, and (c) the significance of intervention intensity, considering factors like duration and other variables (Dilgard et al., 2022).

Figure 3. Experiences of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy

Among the Learners

*Coping Mechanisms with the Challenges in Developing Early Grade Literacy*

*Among the Learners*

In exploring the experiences of teachers grappling with the challenges in developing early grade literacy among learners, distinct themes emerge regarding the coping mechanisms employed by educators to navigate these hurdles. These coping mechanisms reflect adaptive strategies, collaborative efforts, and a focus on emotional support, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of teachers' responses to the complex landscape of early literacy instruction. As we delve into these major themes, it becomes evident that teachers play a pivotal role not only in imparting academic skills but also in fostering a resilient and supportive learning environment that addresses both the academic and emotional needs of their young students.

*Adaptation and Flexibility in Teaching Methods.* Teachers often discussed their ability to adapt and modify their teaching methods based on the diverse needs and challenges of their students. This theme highlighted the importance of flexibility in instructional approaches, allowing educators to tailor their strategies to accommodate different learning styles and overcome specific literacy challenges.

IDI-01 revealed:

*"Given the diverse needs and varied learning styles among early-grade learners, I've found that being adaptable in my teaching methods is key. For instance, if a certain approach doesn't seem to resonate with a group of students, I quickly adjust and try a different strategy. Flexibility allows me to tailor my lessons to the individual needs of each child, ensuring that they can engage with the material in a way that suits them best."*

Further, IDI-03 recognized:

*"One of the coping mechanisms I've embraced is embracing technology. Integrating educational apps and online resources into my lessons has been instrumental, especially when faced with disruptions like school closures. By incorporating digital tools, I aim to maintain a dynamic and interactive learning experience. This adaptability not only caters to the tech-savvy nature of today's students but also serves as a valuable backup plan for unforeseen challenges."*

Finally, IDI-05 asserted:

*"Flexibility comes into play when dealing with students at different literacy levels. Instead of adhering strictly to grade-level materials, I often modify assignments to accommodate diverse skill sets. This approach helps struggling learners catch up while allowing those who excel to explore more advanced topics. Being adaptable in this way ensures that every student feels challenged yet supported in their literacy development journey."*

Teachers emphasized the paramount importance of being adaptable and flexible in their teaching methods as a coping mechanism for challenges in developing early-grade literacy. A common thread among their responses was the need to tailor instructional approaches to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of students. This adaptability was not only seen in modifying lessons based on individual needs but also in embracing technology as a versatile tool. Integrating educational apps and online resources was cited as a practical solution, ensuring continuity in learning, especially during disruptions like school closures. Additionally, the teachers highlighted the significance of flexibility in addressing varying literacy levels among students, advocating for modified assignments to accommodate diverse skill sets. Overall, the synthesis underscores the central role of adaptation and flexibility in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment for early-grade literacy development.

The development of language and literacy skills in children, particularly their speaking abilities at the age of 5-6, is a crucial concern in child development. An approach known as "inside-outside learning" is employed to enhance these language and literacy aspects in children. When assessing language development and literacy, particularly speaking skills using the inside-outside circle method, the test results, as indicated by the "t" test (Paired T-Sample), showed a t-score greater than the table value (5.147 > 1.706). This suggests that language development and literacy, with a specific focus on speaking abilities, significantly improved when utilizing the "Inside-Outside Learning Circle" method. The skills that were developed included intonation, effective communication, proficiency in using simple words, and an increased capacity to construct basic sentences. The implementation of the "Inside-Outside Learning Circle" method in early childhood education is a valuable innovation effort with positive outcomes (Nahdi & Yunitasari, 2019).

On the other hand, various strategies were gathered and sorted into five primary categories: overall approach, strategies centered on caregivers, interaction-focused strategies, language-oriented strategies, and early literacy strategies. To provide an overview, a preliminary evidence map was constructed to outline each strategy, list the sources that featured the strategy, and specify the most robust recommendation identified across these sources (Guiberson & Ferris, 2019).

Also, Ghaour (2018) emphasizes that children actively construct their understanding of reading and writing. It suggests that learners build their literacy knowledge through hands-on, meaningful experiences, and interactions with print. This theory advocates for a student-centered approach, where educators facilitate learning by providing opportunities for exploration and discovery. In early grade literacy, this means engaging learners in activities that promote their active involvement in constructing literacy knowledge.

*Collaborative Problem-Solving with Colleagues and Parents.* Teachers frequently shared experiences of collaborating with colleagues and involving parents in addressing challenges related to early grade literacy. This theme emphasized the significance of a collaborative approach, where educators work together and engage parents as partners in the learning process. Strategies included joint lesson planning, sharing effective practices, and maintaining open communication with parents to address literacy issues at home.

IDI-06 underlined:

*"Collaborative problem-solving has been a game-changer in our school. We've initiated regular meetings where teachers from different grades and subjects come together to share experiences and brainstorm solutions. This has not only improved our own teaching methods but also allowed us to identify effective strategies for early-grade literacy development. Additionally, we've started involving parents more actively. We organize literacy workshops and encourage open communication. It's amazing to see the positive impact when teachers and parents work together towards a common goal."*

Also, IDI-09 dialogued:

*"Our collaborative efforts with colleagues and parents have been pivotal in overcoming literacy challenges. We've established a system of peer observations and feedback sessions, enabling us to learn from each other's teaching styles. Moreover, parent-teacher associations have become more dynamic. We conduct regular meetings where we discuss literacy goals, share success stories, and address concerns. The collaboration has not only improved our teaching practices but has also created a supportive community that extends beyond the classroom."*

In addition, IDI-10 articulated:

*"In our school, we've implemented a team-based approach to tackle literacy challenges. We formed literacy development teams comprising teachers, administrators, and even parents. This interdisciplinary collaboration has allowed us to explore a range of solutions. We conduct joint planning sessions, share resources, and involve parents in literacy initiatives. The collaborative problem-solving model has fostered a sense of shared responsibility, leading to more effective and sustainable strategies for early-grade literacy development."*

The synthesis of teachers' responses highlights the transformative impact of collaborative problem-solving with colleagues and parents in developing early-grade literacy. Teachers unanimously emphasized the positive outcomes of interdisciplinary collaboration, involving regular meetings, peer observations, and feedback sessions among colleagues. The exchange of teaching experiences and strategies not only enhanced individual teaching practices but also contributed to a supportive community. Additionally, the integration of parents into the collaborative process emerged as a key element. Teachers described initiatives such as literacy workshops, open communication forums, and active involvement of parents in school associations. This collaborative approach was perceived as a powerful means to address challenges, share successes, and create a unified effort toward achieving common literacy goals. Overall, teachers emphasized that collaborative problem-solving significantly strengthened the learning environment and yielded more effective and sustainable strategies for early-grade literacy development.

While many studies focus on the challenges teachers face, there is a need for more research that explores teachers' perspectives on effective pedagogical approaches for early grade literacy development (Billow, 2017). Although it is well-known that teacher training is crucial for effective literacy instruction, there is a research gap in understanding the specific elements of training and professional development that are most beneficial (Anteneh et al., 2017).

Likewise, the study demonstrated the interconnectedness of these foundational literacy areas and indicated that there is some indication that interventions targeting all of these domains can enhance their mutual development. Early interventions that emphasize interactive experiences between parents and children, whether they are part of everyday routines or more unique in nature, are likely to be more effective than interventions primarily led by practitioners (Brown & Watson, 2017).

The review's findings suggest that for interventions to be effective, intelligent, and enduring, they should be structured as comprehensive interventions involving multiple sectors and centered around fostering nurturing care. The suggestions underscore the importance of timing these intervention packages to match the appropriate developmental stages across a person's life, addressing various risks simultaneously, and leveraging existing delivery methods for scalability. While interventions are expected to advance as developmental science progresses, current evidence strongly indicates the vital need to assist parents, caregivers, and families in offering nurturing care and protection to enable young children to reach their full developmental capabilities (Britto et al., 2017).

Early childhood education is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of learning. In many developing countries, there is a notable shortage in the rate of inclusion, which becomes even more pronounced when considering children with special needs. Additionally, preschool teachers often lack a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy of inclusion and the best practices required to ensure the success of inclusive education. The findings suggest that teachers generally have a shared understanding of inclusion but lack the necessary skills and knowledge regarding appropriate teaching methods for children with special needs. Nevertheless, they view inclusion as a vital process and a valuable opportunity for all children. They recommend investments in and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders as key strategies for overcoming the existing challenges (Zabeli & Gjelaj, 2020).

*Emotional Support and Building Resilience.* Coping mechanisms often involved providing emotional support to students and fostering resilience in the face of literacy challenges. Teachers highlighted the importance of creating a positive and encouraging classroom atmosphere, where students feel emotionally supported and empowered to persist in their literacy development. This theme underscored the role of teachers in not only addressing academic challenges but also nurturing the emotional well-being of their students as a means of overcoming obstacles in early literacy.

ID-02 expressed:

*"In our school, we recognize that emotional well-being is integral to effective learning. One strategy we employ is creating a nurturing classroom environment. We start each day with a brief emotional check-in, allowing students to express their feelings. This helps build a sense of community and trust. Additionally, incorporating literature that addresses emotions helps students relate and understand their feelings. We've observed that when students feel emotionally supported, they are more engaged in literacy activities and exhibit greater resilience in facing challenges."*

Moreover, IDI-04 underscored:

*"Understanding that some learners may face emotional challenges, our literacy program includes activities focused on emotional intelligence. We integrate discussions about characters' emotions in stories and encourage students to relate them to their own experiences. To further support resilience, we've introduced a 'buddy system' where students mentor others. This fosters a sense of belonging and provides emotional support. By addressing emotional needs, we've noticed improved concentration, participation, and ultimately, literacy skills."*

Further, IDI-07 disclosed:

*"Recognizing that emotional well-being impacts learning, our school has implemented a mindfulness program. We incorporate short mindfulness exercises into our daily routine, helping students manage stress and focus better. When it comes to literacy, we've seen a positive correlation between emotional regulation and improved reading abilities. Additionally, we organize workshops for teachers on recognizing signs of emotional distress in students and providing appropriate support. By prioritizing emotional health, we believe we're laying a foundation for successful literacy development."*

The teachers highlighted several effective strategies for providing emotional support and building resilience in the context of developing early grade literacy. A common thread among their responses was the emphasis on creating a positive and nurturing classroom environment. This included daily emotional check-ins, integrating literature that addresses emotions, and incorporating mindfulness exercises into the daily routine. Additionally, the implementation of mentorship programs, such as the 'buddy system,' was noted as a valuable practice to foster a sense of belonging and provide peer support. The teachers recognized the interconnectedness of emotional well-being and literacy development, observing improvements in students' engagement, concentration, and overall literacy skills when emotional needs were addressed. Overall, the synthesis underscores the significance of an emotionally supportive learning environment in enhancing early grade literacy outcomes.

Effective and viable programs for assisting with the early development of children are now accessible. All sectors, with a particular emphasis on education, social services, and child protection, should actively contribute to addressing the comprehensive needs of young children. However, the healthcare sector serves as a crucial initial stepping point for expanding these efforts, given its wide-reaching access to pregnant women, families, and young children. Beginning from conception, interventions designed to foster nurturing care can be seamlessly integrated into existing health and nutrition services at minimal extra expense. Neglecting to expand these efforts carries significant personal and societal repercussions. Children facing an increased risk of compromised development due to factors like stunting and poverty may potentially forfeit approximately a quarter of the average adult income annually. The economic cost of inaction could be twice the current health expenditure of certain countries. Services and initiatives that promote early childhood development are imperative for realizing the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (Richter et al., 2017).

Figure 4. Coping Mechanisms with the Challenges in Developing

Early Grade Literacy Among the Learners

*Insights of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy Among the Learners*

In delving into the experiences and perspectives of teachers engaged in the development of early grade literacy among learners, several overarching themes have emerged, shedding light on their valuable insights. The major themes for the insights of the participants were holistic approach to literacy, individualized instruction and differentiated learning, and engagement through multimodal learning. These themes collectively portray a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced and multifaceted nature of literacy instruction. Teachers, as central figures in the educational landscape, not only recognize the importance of foundational reading and writing skills but also advocate for a holistic approach, acknowledging the broader dimensions of literacy.

Additionally, their insights underscore the commitment to individualized instruction, emphasizing the need to cater to diverse learning needs, and the integration of differentiated learning strategies. Furthermore, teachers highlight the engagement potential inherent in multimodal learning, where the use of various resources and interactive methods plays a pivotal role in capturing students' interest and fostering a deeper connection with literacy. Together, these themes provide a rich tapestry of insights that contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective early grade literacy development.

*Holistic Approach to Literacy.* Teachers emphasized the importance of adopting a holistic approach to literacy development, recognizing that it extends beyond basic reading and writing skills. They highlighted the integration of critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills into literacy activities, aiming to nurture well-rounded learners capable of applying literacy in various contexts.

IDI-02 sincerely pronounced:

*"In my experience, taking a holistic approach to literacy in early grades is fundamental. It's not just about teaching children to read and write; it's about nurturing a love for learning. I incorporate activities that integrate literacy into different aspects of their lives, from storytelling sessions that enhance language skills to hands-on projects that make reading and writing more meaningful. By addressing the social, emotional, and cognitive aspects of learning, we create an environment where students view literacy as a tool for understanding the world around them."*

Additionally, IDI-03 emphasized:

*"I firmly believe in the holistic development of young learners, especially in the realm of literacy. It goes beyond the textbooks and includes cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Through literature circles, where students discuss not only the plot but also the characters' emotions and motivations, we're fostering a deeper understanding of narratives. This approach ensures that literacy becomes a vehicle for personal growth and self-expression, laying the foundation for lifelong learning."*

Finally, IDI-08 publicized:

*"In my classroom, a holistic approach to literacy means recognizing and celebrating diversity. I integrate culturally relevant texts and explore different genres to cater to the varied interests and backgrounds of my students. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we not only enhance literacy skills but also promote inclusivity. Students feel a sense of connection to the material, making the learning experience more authentic and impactful. It's about nurturing well-rounded individuals who can navigate a globalized world through the power of literacy."*

The synthesis of teachers' insights on the theme of a Holistic Approach to Literacy in Developing Early Grade Literacy reveals a shared commitment to extending literacy beyond mere reading and writing skills. Teachers consistently emphasize the importance of integrating literacy into various aspects of students' lives, creating a learning environment where literacy becomes a tool for understanding the world. They stress the need for activities that foster critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and a love for learning. Moreover, there is a consensus on the significance of cultural relevance and inclusivity in literacy education, acknowledging and celebrating the diverse backgrounds and interests of students. The synthesized responses collectively highlight a holistic vision of literacy development that aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals prepared for lifelong learning and equipped to navigate a globalized world.

Children who fail to acquire early literacy abilities, particularly in the realms of phonological awareness (PA) and familiarity with the alphabet, before entering kindergarten face an increased likelihood of encountering challenges in reading. Findings have demonstrated that a significant proportion of youngsters exhibiting early literacy delays during their preschool years could find value in an additional phonological awareness program. This program has the potential to mitigate the risk of reading difficulties as these children make the transition to kindergarten (Goldstein et al., 2017).

Moreover, the research paper's findings suggest that, even beyond the critical period proposed by Chomsky, individuals who experience excessive exposure to a target language can attain a level of language acquisition comparable to their native tongue. The paper also examined two primary types of motivations influencing second language acquisition: (1) Inquisitiveness, driven by a desire to gain deeper insight into a community and its way of life, and (2) Empathy, which arises when repeated exposure leads an individual to admire the group's perspective and, as a result, relate to them more closely (Al-Harbi, 2020).

Phonological awareness and knowledge of letter-sound relationships serve as the fundamental building blocks for children's early literacy development. Enhancing these essential skills during kindergarten is expected to result in a more favorable response to formal literacy instruction when it commences. At the conclusion of the intervention, children in the intervention group demonstrated significantly superior performance in phonological awareness and letter knowledge compared to the control group, specifically in Luxembourgish. These gains in phonological awareness were sustained even at a follow-up assessment conducted nine months later. The positive effects extended to measurements of phonological awareness, word-level reading comprehension, and spelling in German, with effect sizes exceeding 0.25. However, this effect was not observed in German single word or pseudoword reading during the delayed follow-up. The research indicates that programs aimed at nurturing foundational literacy skills can be effectively implemented by regular teachers in a kindergarten environment that emphasizes play-based learning. These findings highlight the potential of early literacy interventions conducted before a child's formal school entry, particularly among linguistically diverse learners, to yield significant and meaningful educational benefits (Engel de Abreu et al., 2020).

Emergent literacy theory focuses on the period before children formally learn to read and write. It emphasizes that children develop literacy skills through exposure to print materials, storytelling, and a print-rich environment even before they start formal reading instruction. The theory highlights the importance of early language experiences, phonological awareness, and exposure to books and texts in the home and preschool environments. This theory recognizes that literacy development begins well before formal schooling and suggests that children build a foundation for reading and writing through everyday experiences (Lose & Konstantellou, 2017).

*Individualized Instruction and Differentiated Learning.* Teachers consistently underscored the significance of recognizing and addressing the diverse learning needs of their students. They discussed strategies such as personalized lesson plans, varied instructional materials, and flexible teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles and paces. The theme reflects the understanding that tailoring literacy instruction to individual students enhances overall comprehension and skill acquisition.

IDI-01 underlined:

*"In my experience, implementing individualized instruction and differentiated learning has been a game-changer. Recognizing that each student has unique strengths, interests, and learning styles, I tailor my lessons to accommodate diverse needs. For example, during literacy activities, I offer various reading materials and assignments, allowing students to choose topics that resonate with them. This approach not only enhances engagement but also supports personalized skill development. Through regular assessments and observations, I identify areas where each student needs extra support or challenge, ensuring that they progress at their own pace."*

Also, IDI-04 indicated:

*"Differentiated learning has been particularly effective in my classroom. I use a range of instructional strategies to address varying literacy levels and learning preferences. For instance, during reading sessions, I incorporate small group activities, peer collaborations, and even technology-based exercises. This approach ensures that every student receives the necessary support and challenges, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. It requires extra planning and flexibility, but the outcomes are rewarding. Students not only improve their literacy skills but also gain confidence as they see their individual progress acknowledged and celebrated."*

Furthermore, IDI-10 expressed:

*"Embracing individualized instruction has revolutionized how I approach early grade literacy. I take the time to understand each student's unique learning profile, considering factors like language background, interests, and cognitive styles. This knowledge informs my lesson plans and allows me to tailor literacy activities accordingly. For example, for students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, I integrate multilingual materials to make the learning experience more inclusive. By recognizing and accommodating individual differences, I've noticed increased enthusiasm for literacy, and students are more likely to take ownership of their learning journey."*

The teachers' insights on individualized instruction and differentiated learning for developing early-grade literacy underscore a shared commitment to recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of their students. Teacher A emphasizes tailoring lessons to accommodate varied strengths and learning styles, fostering engagement and personalized skill development. Teacher B echoes the importance of differentiation, integrating small group activities, peer collaborations, and technology-based exercises to create an inclusive learning environment that supports students at different literacy levels. Lastly, Teacher C highlights the transformative impact of embracing students' unique learning profiles, incorporating multilingual materials for linguistic diversity, and fostering a sense of ownership in the learning process. Overall, these teachers collectively advocate for a holistic and flexible approach that prioritizes individual student needs, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of early-grade literacy instruction.

The results mirror the customs that have an impact on preschool education, and the overall impression is that teachers' individual and hands-on experience shapes their everyday teaching methods. The participants make efforts to arrange read-aloud sessions, but they do not always succeed due to logistical and practical difficulties. Teachers cite external factors, like dealing with large groups and the necessity to teach subjects such as mathematics and science, as hindrances when it comes to planning and carrying out read-aloud sessions. Those teachers who have undergone in-service training and professional development claim that they incorporate daily read-aloud sessions, followed by discussions about the text (Alatalo & Westlund, 2021).

Early language and reading abilities, in particular, displayed robust correlations over time. The proficiency in reading comprehension at the age of 12 could be forecasted by the level of vocabulary at 19 months and the emergent literacy skills observed at school entry. The extent of vocabulary at 19 months not only foretold early literacy skills before starting school but also had a bearing on reading comprehension abilities at the age of 12, as did the literacy skills demonstrated upon entry into school. Even when considering maternal and infant vocabulary, the oral narrative proficiency displayed by children around the time of school entry was distinctly associated with their reading comprehension a decade later. These findings offer fresh insights into the enduring interactions between early language, literacy, and the subsequent development of reading and vocabulary (Suggate et al., 2018).

On the whole, the teachers effectively carried out the intervention, ensuring that it was of high quality, elicited active engagement from participants, and adhered to the intended lesson duration. Adherence, which measures the extent to which key components of the lessons were followed, and the total number of lessons implemented showed some variability. Generally, teachers demonstrated better adherence, whereas community aides delivered a greater number of lessons. Several factors that facilitated implementation were related to the intervention itself, including its structured multisensory lessons and interactive features, as well as the ability to prepare lessons in advance. However, challenges were commonly associated with managing time, classroom logistics, and behavior (Piasta et al., 2021).

*Engagement Through Multimodal Learning*. Teachers shared insights on the effectiveness of incorporating diverse learning modalities to engage students in literacy activities. This theme encompasses the use of multimedia resources, interactive technologies, and experiential learning approaches to make literacy instruction more dynamic and captivating. By embracing multimodal learning, teachers believed they could cater to varied learning preferences and enhance students' enthusiasm for literacy development.

IDI-05 revealed:

*"In my classroom, I've seen remarkable results by incorporating multimodal learning strategies. I integrate visuals, interactive games, and hands-on activities to make literacy lessons engaging and memorable. This approach not only caters to diverse learning styles but also sparks enthusiasm among students. For instance, we create multimedia projects where students express their understanding of a story through drawings, acting, or even short videos. It's amazing to witness how this multimodal approach not only enhances literacy skills but also fosters creativity and critical thinking."*

Furthermore, IDI-06 emphasized:

*"Multimodal learning has been a game-changer in my literacy instruction. By integrating technology, such as educational apps, I tap into the digital interests of today's young learners. The combination of reading, listening, and interacting with content has shown positive outcomes in literacy development. I often design activities where students create digital stories, enhancing their comprehension and digital literacy skills simultaneously. It's about meeting them where they are and making the learning experience dynamic and relevant."*

Additionally, IDI-09 uncovered:

*"I've found that incorporating multiple modes of learning is essential for early-grade literacy. Beyond traditional methods, I use music, movement, and even nature-based activities to immerse students in the learning process. For example, we might act out a story, use rhythmic patterns to enhance phonemic awareness, or take our literacy lessons outdoors for a change of scenery. This approach not only captures their attention but also reinforces literacy concepts in a holistic way, fostering a deeper connection between students and their learning journey."*

Teachers highlighted the transformative impact of engagement through multimodal learning in developing early-grade literacy. They emphasized the versatility of integrating various modes of learning, such as visuals, technology, movement, and nature-based activities, to cater to diverse learning styles. The use of multimedia projects, interactive eBooks, and digital storytelling emerged as effective strategies, aligning with the digital interests of contemporary learners. Teachers noted that these approaches not only enhanced literacy skills but also fostered creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper connection between students and their learning journey. The synthesis underscores the importance of meeting students where they are, making learning dynamic, relevant, and enjoyable for a comprehensive approach to early-grade literacy development.

The significance of play in early childhood education is well-established, as international research indicates that children's learning advances when they actively engage in play. However, there has been limited research conducted in the Philippines regarding the utilization of play as a method for teaching literacy in early childhood education classrooms. An analysis of the data revealed that teachers in the Philippines endorse the use of play as a tool for teaching literacy concepts. Moreover, they enumerated various forms of play that cater to different aspects of children's development. These teachers not only incorporate play into their current teaching approaches but also display knowledge about how play can be integrated with literacy and child development. Additionally, they employ a variety of play methods within their classrooms (Omaga & Alieto, 2019).

Educators and policymakers show optimism regarding the capacity of online games to enhance reading and pre-reading abilities, yet the actual effectiveness of these games, particularly for young children, remains uncertain. A study assessed the early literacy skills of children both before and after participating in these games, employing 12 literacy assessments. The results revealed that children in the group that received the intervention outperformed their counterparts in the control group in eight of these assessments. The most significant improvements were observed in the areas of alliteration and phonics, which are crucial early indicators of future reading proficiency (Schmitt et al., 2018).

A meta-analysis was performed to assess the impact of computer-supported early literacy interventions, including strict phonological awareness training, combined phonological awareness and letter training, and the use of e-books, on phonological awareness (such as syllabic awareness, word blending, rhyme, and phoneme awareness) and reading-related skills (such as understanding print concepts, letter knowledge, decoding, and spelling) in preschool and kindergarten children, encompassing various languages. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the significance of methodological rigor in study design, as higher effect sizes were associated with studies lacking randomization and those comparing interventions with regular classroom teaching instead of an active control group (Verhoeven et al., 2020).

Figure 5. Insights of Teachers in Developing Early Grade Literacy

Among the Learners

**CHAPTER 4**

**Implications and Future Directions**

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented. From the summary of findings, I drew the implications for future directions.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. This also investigated their coping mechanisms from the challenges they encountered, and their insights drawn from the findings of this study. At this stage of research, the experiences of teachers were generally defined as their learning and challenging experiences in terms of early grade literacy development in the classroom. Early literacy skills were the foundation upon which all other academic disciplines were built. Children who developed strong reading and writing skills in the early grades were better equipped to tackle more complex subjects as they progressed through their educational journey. Early literacy is a key component of educational equity, as students who struggled with reading in the early grades often face long-term academic challenges.

Enhancing early-grade literacy among learners holds immense significance as it lays the foundation for lifelong learning, cognitive development, and overall academic success. Proficient literacy skills during the formative years empower students to comprehend and communicate effectively, influencing their ability to grasp other subjects and engage meaningfully in various learning contexts. Early literacy skills are closely tied to future academic achievements, contributing to improved reading comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Moreover, a strong foundation in literacy nurtures a lifelong love for reading, enabling individuals to access a wealth of information, expand their knowledge, and participate actively in society. Beyond academics, enhanced literacy skills promote social and emotional development, fostering self-expression, empathy, and effective communication. Ultimately, investing in early-grade literacy is an investment in the holistic development and success of individuals, nurturing a generation of informed, capable, and empowered citizens.

Utilized a qualitative-phenomenological approach to enhance early-grade literacy among learners involved delving into the lived experiences and perceptions of both students and teachers within the educational context. This method allowed researchers to explore the intricate aspects of literacy development, considering the subjective realities and meaning-making processes of individuals involved. By conducting in-depth interviews and observations, the researcher could uncover unique insights into the factors influencing early literacy acquisition, such as teaching methods, classroom dynamics, and socio-cultural influences. Phenomenological inquiry went beyond quantitative measures, providing a rich understanding of how learners engaged with literacy in their daily lives. This approach enabled educators and policymakers to tailor interventions that were not only academically effective but also resonated with the lived experiences of young learners, fostering a more holistic and contextually relevant approach to early-grade literacy education.

Major findings indicated that the experiences of teachers in developing early grade literacy among the learners included pedagogical strategies for literacy development, challenges and solutions in early literacy instruction, and teacher-student dynamics and impact on literacy development. Moreover, distinct themes emerge regarding the coping mechanisms employed by educators to navigate these hurdles. These coping mechanisms reflect adaptive strategies, collaborative efforts, and a focus on emotional support, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of teachers' responses to the complex landscape of early literacy instruction. Finally, several overarching themes have emerged, shedding light on their valuable insights. The major themes for the insights of the participants were holistic approach to literacy, individualized instruction and differentiated learning, and engagement through multimodal learning. These themes collectively portray a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced and multifaceted nature of literacy instruction.

*Implications*

The research on enhancing early-grade literacy among learners holds significant implications for both educational practice and policy. The in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, conducted through qualitative-phenomenological methods, provides nuanced insights into the multifaceted dynamics of early literacy development. Understanding the lived realities and perceptions of individuals involved offers a foundation for tailoring interventions that go beyond mere academic effectiveness. These findings offer educators a more holistic understanding of effective teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and socio-cultural influences on literacy acquisition. Policymakers can leverage these insights to shape contextually relevant policies that promote a conducive environment for early-grade literacy education. The research contributes to the broader discourse on literacy initiatives, emphasizing the importance of considering the subjective experiences of learners and educators for the successful enhancement of early-grade literacy.

The exploration of Pedagogical Strategies for Literacy Development carries significant research implications for the field of early-grade literacy education. Understanding the various teaching methods and strategies employed by educators in fostering literacy skills among young learners is pivotal for shaping effective classroom practices. The identified pedagogical strategies serve as valuable insights for both educators and policymakers, offering concrete examples of approaches that have proven successful in enhancing early literacy. These implications extend to professional development programs for teachers, where a focus on the identified effective strategies can contribute to improved teaching practices. Additionally, policymakers can leverage these findings to inform educational policies that promote the integration of successful pedagogical approaches, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive and tailored framework for early-grade literacy development.

Further, examining Teacher-Student Dynamics and their Impact on Literacy Development yields crucial research implications for the realm of early-grade literacy education. Insights into the dynamics between teachers and students shed light on the socio-emotional aspects influencing literacy acquisition. Understanding how these dynamics can either facilitate or hinder literacy development provides valuable guidance for educators and school administrators. The research implications extend to teacher training programs, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive relationships to create an optimal learning environment. Moreover, these findings carry significance for school policies and practices that aim to enhance teacher-student interactions, creating a supportive context for literacy growth. Policymakers and educators can utilize these implications to promote student engagement, motivation, and overall well-being, contributing to a more holistic approach to early-grade literacy education.

In addition, exploring Challenges and Solutions in Early Literacy Instruction offers significant research implications that can inform educational practices and policies. Identifying the challenges faced by teachers in the early literacy landscape provides a foundation for targeted interventions and support systems. For instance, understanding common hurdles such as resource limitations or diverse learning needs prompts the development of tailored strategies and resource allocation. Moreover, recognizing effective solutions proposed by teachers enhances the sharing of best practices within the educational community. These implications extend to professional development programs, emphasizing the importance of equipping teachers with the skills and resources to address challenges effectively. Policymakers can use these insights to shape policies that facilitate a conducive environment for early literacy instruction, fostering improved outcomes for both teachers and students.

Likewise, the exploration of Adaptation and Flexibility in Teaching Methods bears crucial research implications for enhancing early-grade literacy among learners. Understanding how teachers adapt their approaches to meet the diverse needs of students offers valuable insights for educational practitioners and policymakers. Recognizing the strategies that prove effective in different contexts allows for the development of adaptable teaching frameworks. This, in turn, can inform the creation of professional development programs to equip educators with versatile instructional skills. Policymakers can use these findings to advocate for flexible curriculum structures that accommodate diverse learning styles. The research implications extend to curriculum design, emphasizing the importance of incorporating adaptable and flexible teaching methods that resonate with the dynamic nature of early-grade literacy instruction.

The research on Collaborative Problem-Solving with Colleagues and Parents holds significant implications for enhancing early-grade literacy among learners. This collaborative approach underscores the importance of involving not only educators but also parents and colleagues in the literacy development process. The findings suggest that fostering strong partnerships between teachers, parents, and colleagues can contribute to a more supportive and enriched learning environment. Educational institutions may consider implementing strategies to encourage and facilitate collaboration among teachers and parents, such as regular communication channels and collaborative workshops. Recognizing the role of parents and colleagues as active contributors to literacy development emphasizes the need for comprehensive, community-based literacy initiatives. Policymakers can draw on these implications to advocate for policies that promote collaborative efforts in education, aiming to create a holistic support system for early-grade literacy.

Additionally, the research on the Holistic Approach to Literacy presents valuable implications for enhancing early-grade literacy among learners. The emphasis on a holistic approach suggests that literacy development should extend beyond traditional academic components to include social, emotional, and cultural dimensions. Educators and policymakers can draw from these findings to design literacy programs that incorporate diverse activities, including arts, sports, and community engagement. The holistic perspective calls for a reevaluation of curriculum frameworks to ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to literacy education. Additionally, teacher training programs may benefit from integrating holistic literacy practices, fostering educators who are equipped to address the diverse needs of young learners. This approach aligns with a broader understanding of literacy as a multifaceted skill that encompasses various aspects of a child's development, ultimately contributing to more effective and well-rounded literacy interventions in early education.

Consequently, the research on Individualized Instruction and Differentiated Learning carries significant implications for enhancing early-grade literacy among learners. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing individual differences in learning styles, abilities, and preferences. Educators and curriculum developers can use these insights to design literacy programs that cater to diverse needs, allowing for personalized learning experiences. The implementation of individualized instruction strategies, such as adaptive learning technologies or tailored lesson plans, can contribute to more effective literacy interventions. Additionally, the research suggests that fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment is crucial for accommodating diverse learning profiles. This personalized approach not only enhances literacy outcomes but also promotes a positive and inclusive educational experience for all learners. Policymakers may consider these implications when shaping educational policies to encourage the integration of individualized instruction and differentiated learning practices in early-grade literacy programs.

Finally, the research on Engagement Through Multimodal Learning holds significant implications for enhancing early-grade literacy among learners. The findings highlight the effectiveness of incorporating diverse and interactive learning modalities in literacy instruction. Educators can leverage various modes such as visual aids, hands-on activities, technology, and collaborative projects to engage students in meaningful literacy experiences. The emphasis on multimodal learning underscores the need for a dynamic and interactive curriculum that caters to different learning preferences and styles. Policymakers and curriculum developers can use these implications to advocate for the integration of multimodal approaches in early-grade literacy programs, fostering an enriched learning environment that promotes active participation and comprehension. Furthermore, the research suggests that multimodal learning not only enhances literacy skills but also contributes to the overall development of critical thinking, communication, and creative expression among young learners.

*Future Directions of the Study*

Exploring future directions for the study on enhancing early-grade literacy among learners opens the door to continued advancements and improvements in literacy education. As we move forward, it is crucial to consider evolving pedagogical approaches, technological innovations, and educational policies that align with the dynamic needs of learners. Future research could delve deeper into the integration of emerging technologies, the impact of remote or hybrid learning environments, and the role of socio-cultural factors in shaping literacy development. Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of the identified pedagogical strategies, collaborative problem-solving, and holistic approaches on students' literacy outcomes can provide insights for sustained improvements in early-grade literacy education. The evolving landscape of education demands an ongoing commitment to research, innovation, and evidence-based practices to ensure that educators and policymakers are equipped with the knowledge and strategies needed to foster effective literacy development among young learners.

*Department of Education.* Future directions for the study offer valuable insights for the Department of Education to refine and adapt policies related to early-grade literacy. The research findings can inform the development of comprehensive literacy programs, incorporating effective pedagogical strategies, collaborative problem-solving initiatives, and a holistic approach to cater to diverse learning needs. Additionally, the Department can explore integrating emerging technologies into literacy education, considering the potential benefits of remote or hybrid learning environments.

*School Administrators.* For school administrators, the study's future directions guide the implementation of evidence-based practices that enhance early-grade literacy within their institutions. Administrators can focus on creating supportive environments that encourage teacher collaboration and the involvement of parents in literacy development initiatives. The insights gained from the study can inform professional development programs for teachers, ensuring they are well-equipped with effective pedagogical strategies and tools.

*Teachers.* Teachers play a central role in implementing the study's findings. Future directions emphasize ongoing professional development opportunities that empower teachers with innovative pedagogical strategies, encourage collaborative problem-solving approaches, and promote a holistic understanding of literacy. Teachers are encouraged to embrace technology in their instructional methods and adapt to evolving educational landscapes, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning experience for students.

*Future Researchers.* For future researchers, the study provides a foundation for further investigations into emerging trends and challenges in early-grade literacy. Research in the future could explore the sustained impact of identified pedagogical strategies, delve into the effectiveness of new technologies, and consider the long-term outcomes of collaborative problem-solving initiatives. Future researchers are encouraged to build upon this study, contributing to a growing body of knowledge that continually informs and improves early-grade literacy education.

In conclusion, the future directions of this study offer a roadmap for advancing early-grade literacy education, emphasizing evidence-based strategies, collaborative efforts, and holistic approaches. These directions pave the way for the Department of Education, school administrators, teachers, and future researchers to collectively contribute to the enhancement of literacy outcomes for young learners. By embracing innovation, adapting to changing educational landscapes, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, stakeholders can play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of early-grade literacy education. The study's insights serve as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue, exploration, and action, fostering an environment where each child can develop strong literacy skills, unlocking a world of opportunities for their future endeavors.

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