

Catch-up Friday implementation: teachers' perception and scholastic development of learners in Tupi South District

Renelyn R. Herado

Graduate School of Sultan Kudarat State University

EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Philippines

Email: renelyn.herado@deped.gov.ph

Abstract: DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2024, introduced "Catch-Up Fridays," a nationwide initiative addressing learning gaps in Philippine schools. This study examines the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of the initiative and students' scholastic development in the Tupi South District. Using a descriptive correlational design, data were gathered from 132 teachers across 14 public schools through a stratified random sampling method. Statistical tools, including mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation, were applied for analysis. Findings indicate that teachers perceive the initiative positively, with strong agreement on its implementation and effectiveness. Academic achievement and learning outcomes received high ratings. A statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.830$, $p = 0.000$) was found between teacher perceptions and student development, suggesting that favorable views align with improved academic performance. These insights highlight the initiative's potential impact and the importance of continued support and refinement to enhance educational outcomes.

Keywords: Catch-up Friday, Implementation, Teacher's Perception

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INTRODUCTION

DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2024 introduces the "Catch Up Friday" program in Tupi South District to address academic gaps by dedicating one day weekly for students to review and reinforce lessons. Teachers' perceptions and engagement are critical to its success, influencing student performance and highlighting areas for improvement. In an International setting, similar initiatives, such as in South Korea, demonstrate the importance of teacher buy-in for alleviating academic pressures and enhancing student outcomes (Kim, 2022). By examining both local and global experiences, this study underscores the need for contextualized strategies and active teacher involvement to optimize program effectiveness and provide scalable recommendations for similar educational settings.

In the Philippine setting, the "Catch Up Friday" initiative enhances student learning by dedicating one day weekly for academic review, addressing gaps, and reinforcing key concepts. De la Cruz (2023) highlights that teachers' perceptions and integration of the program are crucial to its success, directly influencing student engagement and outcomes. Understanding these perceptions helps identify needed support, such as training or resources, ensuring effective implementation. Examining its impact in Cebu offers evidence-based insights for scaling the program, emphasizing the importance of contextualized strategies to strengthen the Philippine education system.

The "Catch Up Friday" initiative in Tupi South District offers insights into how academic interventions can be adapted to local contexts. Morales (2023) provides clarity on how school heads and teachers' perceptions influence the program's effectiveness in the scholastic development of learners in the implementation of Catch-up Friday guiding necessary

refinements. This research also examines the program's impact on student achievement, offering recommendations for improvement. Garcia (2024) further supports this by highlighting the need for contextualized educational strategies to enhance learning outcomes in similar settings. By providing insights into the interplay between teacher perceptions, program implementation, and student outcomes, this research contributes to the broader goal of improving educational quality and addressing learning gaps in diverse contexts.

While previous studies, such as Morales (2023) and Garcia (2024), have explored the role of teachers' perceptions in educational interventions like "Catch Up Friday," there remains a limited understanding of how these perceptions directly influence the scholastic development of learners in specific local contexts, such as Tupi South District. Existing research has yet to establish a clear association between teachers' attitudes and actual student outcomes during program implementation. This leaves a gap in identifying factors that enhance or hinder its effectiveness.

This study addresses this gap by examining the direct relationship between teachers' perceptions and learners' academic development, providing localized insights and actionable recommendations for program improvement. By focusing on this localized setting, the research not only seeks to offer a clearer picture of how teacher attitudes impact educational outcomes but also intends to provide actionable recommendations that can inform and improve future interventions, ensuring they are more effective and better tailored to the needs of the learners.

This study was significant as it sought to determine the association between teachers' perceptions and the scholastic development of learners during the implementation of "Catch Up Friday" in Tupi South District. By understanding how teachers' attitudes influence the program's effectiveness, the study provides valuable insights that can help improve its implementation. It benefited school heads, educators, and policymakers by identifying key factors that contribute to or hinder the program's success, ensuring it effectively addresses academic gaps and enhances learning outcomes. The study's findings will guide educators and school heads in aligning teaching practices with program goals, while policymakers can use the results to make evidence-based decisions to refine and scale the program in other districts. Additionally, the study aims to optimize the "Catch Up Friday" initiative to enhance student outcomes by more effectively addressing their academic needs.

Statement of the problem

The study determined the relationship between teachers' perceptions and the scholastic development of learners during the Implementation of Catch-Up Friday in Tupi South District. In particular, it answers the following questions:

1. What is the profile of elementary public school teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. Gender;
 - 1.2. Age;
 - 1.3. Length of service; and
 - 1.4. Educational attainment?
2. To what extent do teachers' perceptions of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative in Tupi South District affect its implementation and effectiveness in terms of:
 - 2.1. Attitude toward the program;
 - 2.2. Implementation practices; and
 - 2.3. Perceived effectiveness;

3. What is the level of impact of the initiative on the scholastic development of learners in Tupi South District in terms of:

3.1. Academic achievement;

3.2. Learning outcomes; and

3.3. Comparative impact?

4. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and the scholastic development of learners in Tupi South District?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study examined the association between teachers' perceptions and students' scholastic development during the implementation of Catch-Up Friday in Tupi South District, a descriptive correlational research design proved to be appropriate. This design allows the assessment of the relationship between variables without manipulating them, making it suitable for understanding how teachers' perceptions correlate with student outcomes in a natural educational setting. By employing surveys or questionnaires to gather data on teachers' perceptions and analyzing students' academic performance records, researchers can identify potential associations between these variables.

Supporting this approach, Brandmiller, Schnitzler, and Dumont (2023) conducted a study examining teacher perceptions of student motivation and engagement and their longitudinal associations with student outcomes. Their research utilized a descriptive-correlational design to explore how teacher perceptions influenced student achievement over time, highlighting the effectiveness of this methodology in educational research.

Respondents and locale of the study

Selecting Tupi South District as the study locale for examining the association between teachers' perceptions and learners' scholastic development during the implementation of "Catch-Up Fridays" was strategic for several reasons. First, as part of the Schools Division of South Cotabato, Tupi South District actively participates in the Department of Education's initiatives, including "Catch-Up Fridays," which focus on enhancing reading proficiency and reinforcing values, health, and peace education among students. This active participation provides a relevant context to assess the program's impact on educational outcomes.

The study assessed the relationship between teachers' perceptions and students' academic development during the implementation of "Catch-Up Friday" in Tupi South District, the study involved teachers as primary respondents. Teachers were the key implementers of educational programs, and their attitudes, instructional strategies, and engagement directly influence student learning outcomes (Van Uden, Ritzen, and Pieters, 2020). Selecting teachers who are currently employed in the district and actively engaged in the "Catch-Up Friday" program ensures that the study gathers relevant and experience-based insights. Additionally, requiring a minimum of one year of teaching experience allows respondents to provide well-informed perspectives, as longer exposure to the program enables a more comprehensive evaluation of its impact.

Research instrument

The study assessed the association between teachers' perceptions and students' scholastic development during the implementation of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative in Tupi South

District. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was utilized to gather relevant data. Surveys are structured tools designed to capture educators' perspectives on various aspects of teaching and learning. These instruments provide valuable insights into teachers' beliefs regarding student engagement, motivation, and the effectiveness of instructional strategies.

Data analyses procedure

Frequency Distribution and Percentage were used to determine the demographic profile of the Tupi, South District teachers, including gender, age, length of service, and educational attainment.

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to assess the level of perception regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative, as well as its impact on the scholastic development of learners.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the association between teachers' perceptions and students' scholastic development, addressing the fourth hypothesis.

To measure the perception of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative and its impact on student development, a five-point Likert scale was used. The results were interpreted using mean ranges and qualitative descriptions. According to Creswell (2020), Likert scales are widely used in educational research to assess attitudes and perceptions, offering valuable insights into program effectiveness and the correlation between teacher perceptions and student outcomes.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

DepEd Order No. 1, s. 2024 introduces "Catch-Up Fridays," a nationwide initiative implemented every Friday starting January 12, 2024, across Philippine elementary and secondary schools, including community learning centers. This program aims to address learning gaps and strengthen foundational skills by dedicating half of each Friday to reading interventions and the other half to values, health, and peace education. Strategies such as "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) sessions, read-a-thons, and forums are employed to engage students, while teachers participate in collaborative Learning Action Cells (LACs) to share effective practices. The success of "Catch-Up Fridays" relies on active teacher involvement and the use of contextualized strategies to enhance program effectiveness and contribute to a stronger Philippine education system.

This study investigates the relationship between public elementary school teachers' perceptions of the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative and their students' scholastic development in the Tupi South District. Specifically, it aims to: (1) profile teachers based on gender, age, length of service, and educational attainment; (2) assess their attitudes toward the program, implementation practices, and perceived effectiveness; (3) evaluate the initiative's impact on students' academic achievement and learning outcomes; and (4) determine any significant associations between teachers' perceptions and student development. Understanding these dynamics is crucial, as teachers' expectations and beliefs can significantly influence student outcomes. By examining these factors within the context of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program, this study seeks to offer insights that could enhance the program's implementation and promote improved educational outcomes in the district.

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered using a checklist for respondents' profiles and an adopted survey questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale for various indicators. The study was conducted in 14 public elementary schools in

the Tupi South District, Municipality of Tupi, Division of South Cotabato: Polonuling Central Elementary School, Simbo Elementary School, Kablon Elementary School, Balisong Elementary School, Glandang Elementary School, Miasong Elementary School, Kalkam Elementary School, Acafaon Elementary School, Upper Tupi Elementary School, Emilio B. Escobillo Elementary School, Ricardo O. Avila Memorial Elementary School, Benigno Aquino Integrated School, and Juan-Loreto Tamayo Integrated School. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the perceptions of teachers across different grade levels and subject areas were represented, drawing a sample of 132 teachers from public central elementary schools. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, based on a 5% margin of error: $n = N/(1 + N \cdot e^2)$.

The data were collected, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Several statistical methods were used to analyze the data. Frequency distributions and percentage analyses described the teachers' demographic profiles (gender, age, length of service, and educational attainment). Mean and standard deviation were used to assess teachers' perceptions of the program's implementation and its perceived effectiveness, as well as its impact on students' scholastic development. Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to examine the association between teachers' perceptions and student academic performance, addressing the study's fourth hypothesis.

A key finding from the demographic data reveals notable trends among elementary public school teachers in the Tupi South District. The teaching workforce is predominantly female, with 88% of respondents being women. The largest age group falls within the 25–30 age range (30%), while teachers aged 56–60 comprise the smallest group (5%). Most teachers (60%) have 3 to 10 years of teaching experience, indicating a relatively young workforce, with only 1% having more than 30 years of service. Regarding educational attainment, 60% have taken master's degree units, 8% have completed a master's degree, and 33% hold only a bachelor's degree. Notably, no teachers have pursued doctoral studies. These findings highlight a gender imbalance, a predominantly young teaching force, and a strong commitment to further education, although advanced degrees beyond the master's level remain absent.

Additionally, the findings show that teachers in the Tupi South District hold positive perceptions of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative across three key dimensions. The highest mean score was observed in their attitude toward the program ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.72$), indicating strong agreement and favorable views. Implementation practices followed with a mean score of ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.80$), and perceived effectiveness received ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.75$). The overall combined mean score was ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.75$), underscoring a consensus on the program's value.

Furthermore, results indicate that teachers believe the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative positively influences students' scholastic development. Academic achievement received the highest mean score ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.71$), followed closely by learning outcomes ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.70$), and comparative impact ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.76$). All scores fall within the "Agree" range, suggesting uniformly positive perceptions of the program's impact.

Conversely, the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.830 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative and students' scholastic development. This suggests that more favorable teacher perceptions are associated with enhanced student academic performance. However, while a low p-value indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, it does not reflect the size or practical significance of the effect.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the demographic profile of elementary public school teachers in the Tupi South District reflects a workforce that is predominantly female, aligning with national trends in the teaching profession. The teaching population is relatively young, with most educators possessing only a few years of experience in the field. Despite this, a notable number of teachers have pursued further studies, particularly at the master's level, although none have yet attained doctoral degrees. These findings indicate a clear commitment to professional development while also highlighting areas for further academic advancement and raising discussions on gender balance in the education sector.

Furthermore, the findings show that teachers in the Tupi South District generally hold positive perceptions of the "Catch-Up Friday" initiative. Their attitudes toward the program are marked by high levels of agreement and support, suggesting that they see the initiative as valuable. While their perceptions of the actual implementation practices are slightly lower, these remain within the positive range, reflecting a generally favorable view of how the program is carried out. Teachers also perceive the initiative as effective in meeting its goals, which suggests a collective recognition of its potential to improve teaching and learning experiences in the district.

In addition, teachers believe that the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative contributes positively to learners' scholastic development. Among the key areas evaluated, academic achievement and learning outcomes received the highest ratings, followed closely by the program's comparative impact on student progress. Although there were slight differences in the mean scores across these indicators, all consistently fell within the "High" range. This reinforces the belief that the initiative is effective in supporting students' academic success and overall learning growth.

Finally, the study establishes a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative and students' scholastic development. This indicates that more favorable teacher perceptions are associated with higher student academic performance. However, while the low p-value supports the reliability of this relationship, it is important to recognize that statistical significance does not necessarily reflect the practical significance or the magnitude of the effect. This calls for further exploration to determine how these perceptions translate into concrete improvements in student outcomes.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the implementation and impact of the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative. First, it is recommended to encourage teachers to pursue doctoral studies by providing access to scholarship programs, research grants, and other professional development opportunities. This effort should also be accompanied by initiatives that promote gender diversity in the teaching workforce, ensuring a more balanced representation in the education sector. To improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative, it is important to address areas identified through teacher feedback and research. While the program shows potential in addressing learning gaps, its success depends on providing adequate resources, continuous teacher training, and sustained institutional support. Given that teachers in the Tupi South District view the initiative positively, particularly in terms of improving academic achievement, it is recommended to sustain and expand the program by continuously integrating teacher insights and experiences into its development. Additionally, enhancing the initiative is crucial, as findings indicate a positive correlation between teacher support and student academic growth. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of the "Catch-Up

Fridays” initiative on student learning outcomes and explore its practical significance beyond statistical results. Further studies may also consider investigating other contributing factors, such as specific teaching strategies and levels of student engagement, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how to maximize the program’s effectiveness.

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