

## Practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading: basis for an action plan

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**Abstract:** The study determined the practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading among the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers of South Butuan District of Butuan City Division. The study used descriptive-correlational design since it looked into the teachers' level of manifestation of the practices and the extent of the challenges in teaching beginning reading. Analysis of the data showed that the teachers face similar levels of challenges in teaching beginning reading, regardless of variations in their profile. The results showed that the pupils' different learning styles and learning needs, high teacher – pupil ratio, lack of training that focused on how to teach beginning reading, and parents' limited knowledge and skills related to the teaching of reading were the most common challenges which the teachers faced which significantly hinder their teaching in beginning reading. Further analysis showed that teachers' profile did not significantly have an association with their instructional practices and challenges encountered in teaching reading. These findings imply that other factors may play more prominent roles in shaping teaching practices, highlighting the need for further investigation into the determinants of instructional approaches in reading education. An action plan was formulated in response to the study's findings for the enhancement of the quality of teaching for beginning reading in the South Butuan District.

Keywords: Beginning reading, Challenges, Practices

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the cornerstone of any society's progress and development. Because it establishes the foundation for a child's academic journey, the foundational stage of reading instruction is crucial to the quest of quality education. Early acquisition of strong reading abilities promotes both academic success and the capacity to participate meaningfully in the world around oneself. Early childhood education is a crucial time in a child's educational career since it signals the change from learning to read to reading to learn.

Moats (2023) cited that teaching reading is a complex process that draws upon an extensive knowledge base and repertoire of strategies. Teaching beginning reading can be challenging for teachers due to various factors such as lack of preparation and training, large class sizes, lack of supplementary materials, mismatch between students' readiness and teaching methods, lack of student interest, and language barriers.

Despite the evolving technology and upgraded strategies in teaching reading, it is undeniable how the lockdown situation greatly affected Filipinos' mental health and fitness, especially the learners in the early grades (Tugade, 2022). In fact, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) regards students in the Philippines as having poor reading skills. Less than 15% of schoolchildren in the Philippines can read simple texts — about three children out of every 20.

Also, at least nine out of 10 children aged 10 struggle to read and write simple text, according to the World Bank's latest statistics on learning poverty in 2021.

Based on the National Report of the Philippines on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in 2022, the Philippines ranked 77th out of 81 participating countries and economies in reading. The average reading score for 15-year-old students in the Philippines was 347 points, which increased from 340 points in the 2018 assessment but remained significantly below the global average reading score of 476 points. Despite this improvement, the Philippines still scored lower than the OECD average in reading, reflecting the ongoing challenges in student performance in this subject area.

Furthermore, Chi (2023) stated in her report in the PhilStar Global in April 2023 that the country, Philippines ranked the lowest among 79 countries that participated in a 2018 international reading literacy assessment conducted by the World Literacy Foundation. Thus, this information emphasizes how urgently substantial educational reforms and focused initiatives are needed to address the serious literacy issues the Philippines is facing on a worldwide basis.

In view of the challenges in Philippine education system, the Department of Education conducted a nationwide Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) in October 2023 to help identify each child's reading profile which will tell who is on track and who needs to review concepts from the previous grade among the grades 1-3 pupils.

In South Butuan District (SBD), Division of Butuan City, composed of 12 elementary schools, Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment revealed that among the 963 grades 1-3 pupils, only 370 or 38% are grade ready, and the 593 learners or 62% needs refresher in reading. Because of this alarming result, this research was conceptualized.

This study aimed to delve into the practices and challenges encountered by teachers in South Butuan District (SBD) along teaching beginning reading. By examining their instructional approaches and the hurdles they face, this study sought to provide insights that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of reading instruction at this level. The overarching goal is to contribute to the development of an action plan that will address the specific needs and concerns of the teachers in their endeavor to teach reading.

### *Problem Statement*

The primary goal of this study was to determine the practices and challenges of the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers in teaching beginning reading among the elementary schools of South Butuan District of Butuan City Division. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the teachers in terms of: experience in teaching reading; highest educational qualification; and number of relevant trainings attended?
2. What is the level of manifestation of the practices of the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers in teaching beginning reading terms of: letter recognition; word recognition; and reading sentences and paragraphs?
3. What is the extent of the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching beginning reading in terms of: pupil's behavior; reading resources; classroom atmosphere; teacher's proficiency; and parent's involvement?
4. Is there a significant difference in the challenges in teaching reading when the teachers are grouped according to profile? Is there a significant relationship between the profile and the teachers' practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading?

### *Theoretical framework*

The primary goal of this study was to determine the practices and challenges of the South Butuan District beginning reading teachers. Thus, this study was anchored on Self-Efficacy Learning Theory by Albert Bandura in 1977.

Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Learning Theory provides a thorough support for examining the practices and challenges teachers face in teaching beginning reading. According to this theory, individuals' actions, and persistence in the face of adversity are strongly influenced by their belief in their own skills. Teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy as teachers of reading have a direct bearing on the ways in which they carry out their lessons and deal with difficulties.

Teacher self-efficacy is an important motivational factor in determining teachers' effort in their professional practice, particularly in the domain of teaching reading. By understanding and addressing the practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading, this can contribute to the development of the teachers' reading self-efficacy, which in turn can positively impact their motivation and reading achievement.

Let's consider the profile of the teachers, which includes their experience, educational qualifications, and participation in relevant training. Bandura contended that those who have higher levels of self-efficacy are more inclined to take on difficulties and endure in the face of failure. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs in reading instruction are therefore likely to be stronger in teachers with greater experience, advanced credentials, and a history of relevant training. As such, teachers might use more efficient teaching techniques and show more flexibility when faced with challenges.

On to the manifestation of teaching practices, Bandura's theory suggests that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to employ effective instructional practices. Teachers who have confidence in their competence to teach reading skills are more likely to utilize engaging instruction that meets the needs of the pupils.

Regarding the challenges faced by teachers, Bandura's theory predicts that self-efficacy beliefs influence how teachers perceive and respond to difficulties. Teachers who have a strong sense of their own abilities are more inclined to see obstacles as chances for improvement and to persevere through them. For example, teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to use proactive techniques, look for more resources, and work with stakeholders to effectively resolve problems with pupil behavior, resource constraints, or parental participation.

In summary, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Learning Theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for comprehending the interactions that occur between teachers' methods of instruction, and difficulties that arise while teaching beginning readers. Through the examination of aspects including experience, training, educational attainment, and self-efficacy beliefs held by teachers, the researcher can learn more about the elements that impact resilience and instructional effectiveness when faced with difficulties in early literacy education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Teachers' practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading*

It is commonly acknowledged that teaching reading in schools is essential. Teaching reading is not simple, though. According to Lynch (2021), reading is a difficult learning skill that requires several approaches and a protracted process to master. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching reading, and it cannot be completed in a few lessons. Despite this intricacy, teaching

reading is a common assignment assigned to novice teachers, which may lead to the misunderstanding that it is a simple undertaking. This emphasizes how important it is to have extensive training in order to give effective reading teaching.

Building on this, Moats (2023) highlighted the need for extensive knowledge and expertise that come from years of concentrated study and supervised practice to teach reading. She contends that schools and those who approve licensing programs have greatly underestimated the requirements for adequate reading instruction and the required training experiences.

Teachers work with a wide range of pupil demands in the classroom. In accordance with Ferrell (2019), varied instruction is crucial because it allows teachers to modify their classes to fit the unique needs, interests, and abilities of every pupil. This method helps teachers adjust their lesson by giving pupils flexibility and choice in how they learn. Teachers need to modify their approaches for pupils who have difficulty reading, even if they have good reading content.

Regarding early reading education, Endo (2024) identified a series of useful strategies that are critical to developing young readers. The core reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension should all be explicitly taught by teachers. In order to ensure pupils understand the complexity of expressive reading, this educational strategy is strengthened by modeled fluent oral reading, either by the teacher or through audio. A comprehensive approach to reading fluency is ensured by clear instruction on pronunciation development, which focuses on intonation, stress, and phrasing.

In contrast, Galman et al. (2021) clarified the several challenges that prevent reading instruction from being effective. The lack of understanding and expertise among teachers in basic reading education, such as phonics, is an important challenge. This is made worse by a lack of reading resources and the packed classrooms that make it difficult to receive one-on-one attention. A lack of parental support and involvement at home also makes these issues worse. Reading challenges and struggling readers add an additional level of intricacy. In addition, schools need to maintain reduced class sizes, offer a wealth of reading materials, and cultivate solid home-school collaborations. For pupils who struggle with reading, targeted interventions are essential for ensuring that no pupils fall behind in the development of their literacy.

Furthermore, Niklas et al. (2020) pointed out that parental support and the home literacy environment are crucial for the development of early literacy. If parents are not involved in literacy-related activities and if pupils do not come from a home which encourages literacy, teachers may find it difficult to teach beginning reading. According to Amponsah (2018), pupils who do not have literacy experiences at home may perform less well than their classmates in reading, comprehension, and vocabulary development.

The efficiency of reading instruction is also significantly influenced by the level of expertise of the teachers. The research of Sahardin et al. (2018), using effective teaching strategies adapted to the specific needs of the classroom can produce outstanding outcomes. To engage pupils and meet learning objectives, teachers must use unique and new teaching strategies. According to Porter et al. (2023), pupils who have more knowledgeable teachers also get better reading outcomes.

In the landscape of early reading instruction, Aggabao (2020) emphasized the main challenges that teachers have to overcome in order to provide specific focus and effective training, such as a lack of resources for teaching and learning and crowded classrooms. She stressed how important it is to provide pupils with specific intervention activities, particularly those who are struggling with reading. These initiatives are regarded as crucial for offering the extra assistance required to narrow the achievement gaps in reading among younger pupils.

Building on these findings, Lu (2022) pointed out other difficulties that make teaching reading to elementary school pupils more difficult. The study identified teachers' limited understanding of effective reading instruction strategies and their lack of access to enough reading materials. According to Lu, it is critical that teachers have the resources, approaches, and diagnostic abilities needed to properly track and support children's reading growth.

Tomas (2021) provided further detail on the difficulties, pointing out that things like a lack of interest in reading, imprecise reading goals, and a shortage of resources have a negative influence on pupils' literacy development. Tomas cited programs like the 3Bs (Books, Brains, and Behavior) program, which evaluates students' reading proficiency and applies specialized reading programs to address certain challenges, as a means of addressing these problems. Tomas contended that pupils' reading abilities can be greatly enhanced by promoting a holistic strategy that combines well-designed reading programs with a supportive family and nurturing environment, laying a solid basis for their academic success.

However, challenges nevertheless persist. According to Lu (2022), major challenges faced by teachers include a lack of resources for reading education, a lack of expertise about reading instruction, and structural flaws in the way reading is taught. These difficulties are extensive and multifaceted, affecting teachers as well as pupils.

Teaching reading effectively requires considering many perspectives of how reading should be taught. In accordance with Schwartz et al. (2019), there are several ways to encourage pupils to predict strategically depending on context, such as surrounding them with books. Making sense of print when reading necessitates a wide vocabulary, background knowledge, fluency, and attention to language, punctuation, and sentence structure.

How beginning readers are taught and the difficulties they face have a big influence on what pupils learn in the early grades. Pupils' reading performance are influenced by teachers' previous educational experiences, language and literacy proficiency, and teaching strategies. Early readers require both a supportive home literacy environment and a rich, meaningful, and engaging learning environment, all of which are supported by trained teachers, in order to promote early literacy development. The early grades are crucial for the development of literacy, as Desta (2020) and Mader (2021) emphasize. For elementary pupils, first grade is crucial because it is when their literacy skills start to develop.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

This research used a descriptive-correlational design. Descriptive correlational design in research is a method to explain the relationship between two or more variables without making any claims about cause and effect. In the study, it was descriptive since it determined the practices and challenges of the teachers in teaching beginning reading. Also, it was correlational because it determined the difference and relationship between the practices and challenges of teachers based on their profile in terms of their teaching reading experience, highest educational qualification, and relevant training attended.

### *Research Locale*

This study was conducted in South Butuan District, Division of Butuan City. It has twelve elementary schools situated in the different barangays of Butuan City namely barangay Amparo,

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Brgy. Bitan-agan, Brgy. MJ Santos, Brgy. Manila De Bugabus, and Brgy. Nong-nong. The location can be reached through public or private vehicles. Figure 2 shows the research locale.

### *Respondents of the study*

This study involved the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 elementary school teachers of South Butuan District, Division of Butuan City as participants of the study.

### *Research instrument*

This study used a researcher-made questionnaire in gathering the data. It had three (3) parts; namely, questionnaire of the teachers' profile of the reading teachers, questionnaires of the practices of the teachers in teaching beginning reading, and questionnaires of the challenges of the teachers in teaching beginning.

Part I contained the items on the checklist of the profiles of the reading teachers. The first part was the checklist in terms of the teachers' teaching reading experience; the second part was the checklist of the teachers' highest educational qualification; and the third part contained the teachers' relevant training attended.

Part II contained the practices of the teachers in teaching beginning reading, a list of the practices of the teachers in teaching beginning reading in terms of letter recognition, word recognition, and reading sentences and paragraphs, and the options of strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the practice in each item.

Part III contained the challenges of the teachers in teaching beginning reading, the list of the challenges of the teachers in teaching beginning reading in terms of pupils' behavior, reading resources, classroom atmosphere, teacher's proficiency, and parent's involvement, and the options of strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the challenge in each item.

### *Validity and reliability of the research instrument*

The researcher used a researcher-made questionnaire that suited the objectives of the study. The said instrument was submitted to the thesis adviser for content validation and was thoroughly validated by three experts.

The instrument was tried out among thirty (30) Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers. The responses of the participants that were gathered in the tryout were statistically treated to find out whether the items in the questionnaire were reliable. The result of the test came out with a Cronbach's alpha index of 0.944, which suggested that all the items were internally consistent and reliable.

### *Data Gathering Procedure*

A letter of permission was secured to conduct the study. The said letter, along with an appearance was signed and approved by the District Supervisor of South Butuan District for permission to conduct the study.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the teacher participants showing the approved letter to the principals and schools heads in every school. After filling-out, instruments were retrieved and checked for possible missing information.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

This study employed descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and weighted mean, Kruskal Wallis Test, and Correlation Analysis to answer the problem of the study.

Frequency counts was utilized to determine the profile of the participants.

Weighted mean was used to describe the level of manifestation of the practices and the extent of challenges of the teachers in teaching beginning reading.

Kruskal Wallis Test was used to determine the significant difference in the challenges in teaching beginning reading when the teachers are grouped according to profile.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### *Profile of the teachers in terms of experience in teaching reading, highest educational qualification, and number of relevant trainings attended*

Findings of the study show that 16 of the participants or 40% of the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers of South Butuan District has 0-5 number of years of experience in teaching reading, and only 4 of them or 10% have 10-15 number of years experience in teaching beginning reading. This implies that many of the participants have less experience in terms of teaching beginning reading.

In addition, 28 or 70% of the participants are unit earners of Master's Degree and none of the beginning reading teachers had earned yet their doctorate degrees. Also, in terms of the relevant trainings attended by the South Butuan District beginning reading teachers, there are 6 of them or 15% have not attended any training yet, and majority of them which is 21 of them or 52.5% have attended at least 1-3 trainings. The data imply that there are many teachers who are teaching beginning reading who have only attended a limited number of relevant trainings, and some of them have not ever attended a single training. The data show a significant diversity in the educational backgrounds and experience levels of the Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers in South Butuan District, especially when it comes to teaching beginning reading.

The data imply that among the participants, there are disparities in the teaching and reading experience, likely due to a mix of newly hired participants and those with long teaching tenures who continue to teach at the same grade level because they have lived in the community for an extended period. The differences in the highest education attainment may be due to some teachers choosing not to pursue their graduate studies, while only a few are motivated to complete them. The variances in the amount of involvement in relevant training among beginning reading teachers may be due to the differing number of years of experience the participants have in teaching beginning reading.

In view of the findings agree with the study of Hafeez (2021) which he mentioned that teachers have a significant impact on how kids will develop in the future. Teachers' academic training for literacy instruction is vital for their ability to teach reading effectively.

### *Level of manifestation of the practices of the kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers in teaching beginning reading*

Findings of the study show that Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers employ a variety of highly manifested strategies to teach beginning reading, particularly in the areas of letter

recognition, word recognition, and reading sentences and paragraphs. For letter recognition, teachers overwhelmingly focus on frequently used letters such as “m,” “a,” and “s” and actively use materials like flashcards, with both indicators receiving the highest mean of 4.85. This reflects their understanding that foundational skills are crucial for literacy development. However, the use of materials like magazines had the lowest mean (3.59), suggesting moderate usage likely due to limited access in rural areas. Despite this, the overall weighted mean of 4.51 indicates that teachers display extreme engagement in varied strategies to address pupil needs. These findings align with LeVos (2023), who emphasized the importance of letter recognition for literacy advancement, and Beck (2022), who highlighted the role of multisensory approaches in strengthening early literacy skills. Furthermore, Voyager Sopris Learning (2022) supports the practice of prioritizing frequently used letters over alphabetical sequences in reading instruction.

In terms of word recognition, teachers most frequently use the strategy of combining pictures with actions to enhance engagement and deepen understanding, reflected by the highest weighted mean of 4.82. While assigning reading buddies had the lowest mean (4.65), it still shows strong use, though slightly less frequent, due to considerations around pairing maturity and reading ability. The overall weighted mean of 4.73 reflects an extremely high level of strategy use, underscoring teachers’ efforts to adapt their practices for maximum effectiveness. These findings are reinforced by Hitzman (2022), who emphasized that strong word recognition training, including activities like word families and phonemic awareness, is foundational for academic success, and Chamba (2021), who highlighted the role of strategies like skimming and scanning in improving reading comprehension.

For reading sentences and paragraphs, the practice of reading aloud to share stories emerged as the most frequently used strategy, achieving the highest mean of 4.85. This suggests that teachers recognize the multifaceted benefits of read-aloud sessions, including improved comprehension, pronunciation, fluency, expression, and intonation. Overall, the synthesis underscores that despite variations in teacher backgrounds and pupil needs, educators actively implement diverse and research-backed strategies to foster literacy, reflecting a strong commitment to effective and inclusive early reading instruction.

#### *Extent of the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching beginning reading*

Findings of the study reveal that teachers encounter a variety of significant yet varying challenges in teaching beginning reading, shaped by pupil needs, classroom conditions, teacher proficiency, and parental involvement. First, in terms of pupils’ behavior and readiness, teachers reported that managing different learning styles and needs is the most severe challenge (mean 4.52), while addressing poor reading habits, though rated slightly lower (mean 4.29), remains an essential concern. These findings suggest that the diversity of pupil needs makes reading instruction more complex, aligning with Haile et al. (2018), who stressed the importance of improving classroom environments and resources to meet varied learner demands.

Regarding classroom atmosphere and reading resources, the high teacher-pupil ratio (mean 3.88) emerged as the most challenging factor, reflecting difficulties in addressing individual learner needs, while poor lighting was perceived as a relatively normal challenge (mean 3.42). This resonates with Dagada’s (2022) work, which highlighted how overcrowded classrooms undermine dedicated reading instruction and reduce opportunities for individualized support. Notably, variation in teacher responses was influenced by differences in educational background,

training, and teaching experience, indicating that personal teacher profiles shape perceptions of challenges.

In terms of teacher proficiency, the lack of specific training on teaching beginning reading (mean 3.28) was the most notable challenge, though overall, these were viewed as manageable (mean 3.20). This aligns with Gündoğmuş (2018) and Mendisu et al. (2023), who emphasized the need for adequate pedagogical training, subject knowledge, and instructional resources to enhance reading instruction efficacy. Without sufficient preparation, teachers may struggle to support struggling readers effectively, impacting broader academic progress.

Finally, challenges related to parental involvement were rated moderately high (overall mean 4.10), with limited parental knowledge and skills (mean 4.15) and lack of cooperation (mean 4.05) both seen as barriers to literacy development. These findings echo Çalışkan (2022) and Dagada (2022), who underscored that active home literacy engagement significantly boosts reading outcomes, language comprehension, and positive attitudes toward learning. Together, these insights suggest that addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a comprehensive approach: improving classroom conditions, strengthening teacher training, and fostering stronger school-home partnerships to support young readers' success.

#### *Significant difference in the challenges in teaching reading when the teachers according to profile*

The result shows that there are no significant differences in the extent of challenges encountered by the teachers despite the variations in the different profile groupings. This is evidenced by the p-values that are beyond the .05 level of significance set for analysis. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that the profile variables that were investigated did not matter in the way teachers perceive the challenges that they encountered in the teaching of reading. Those who are novice in the teaching profession and those who have already gained some years in the teaching of reading have similar perceptions about the challenges in the teaching of reading. Moreover, those who had already gained the Master's degree perceive similar challenges as those who have yet to pursue graduate studies. The training also did not matter in the perception of the challenges that the teachers encountered in the teaching of reading.

It implies that all reading teachers encounter the same challenges, no matter how diverse their backgrounds are, the challenges they encountered do not significantly affected by their profile such as experience, training, or educational background. This implies that there will continually continue to be challenges and obstacles in the classroom, and it is the teacher's responsibility to figure out how to overcome over difficulties. At that point, the most effective approaches for every challenge will become apparent.

As what Moats (2023) emphasized in her study, for many children require effort and incremental skill development. The difficulty of teaching reading has been underestimated. Teaching reading requires considerable knowledge and skill, acquired over several years through focused study and supervised practice. No one can develop such expertise by taking one or two college courses or attending a few one-shot in-service workshops.

Education's unwavering objective is to produce proficient readers, which inspires teachers to keep going despite whatever challenges they may face in order to give kids the priceless gift of reading.

*Significant relationship between the profile and the teachers practices and challenges in teaching beginning reading*

The correlation analysis between teachers' profiles and their practices in teaching reading revealed p-values beyond the .05 level of significance, indicating no statistically significant relationship between these variables and confirming that the null hypothesis is not rejected. While negative correlation values were observed—suggesting, for example, that newer teachers tend to increase their focus on practices such as reading sentences and paragraphs, or that teachers with fewer trainings may devote more attention to word and letter recognition—these trends were not significant. Classroom observations complement these findings, showing that newer or less formally trained teachers often gravitate toward comprehension-focused or foundational reading exercises, potentially drawing from personal experience or conventional teaching approaches. This aligns with Torres (2021), who emphasizes the importance of collective readings and discussion to boost student engagement and suggests that teachers' strategies may reflect the literacy elements they are most familiar with.

Similarly, the analysis between teachers' profiles and the extent of challenges they encounter in teaching reading yielded p-values beyond the 0.05 significance level, again indicating no significant relationships and supporting the null hypothesis. However, interesting tendencies emerged: more experienced teachers perceived fewer challenges related to reading resources and teaching proficiency, likely due to the resourcefulness and skills honed through years of practice. Teachers with higher educational attainment reported fewer challenges with classroom atmosphere and proficiency, suggesting that graduate education may enhance their classroom management and instructional strategies. Likewise, teachers who had attended more training perceived fewer challenges in proficiency and parent involvement, implying that continuous professional development equips them to handle these areas more effectively.

Overall, these patterns suggest that while the statistical relationships are not significant, experience, education, and training contribute meaningfully to how teachers perceive and navigate challenges in beginning reading instruction. As Kempf (2018) notes, experienced and highly qualified teachers are often better positioned to set high expectations, apply effective strategies, and promote stronger student outcomes, especially in inclusive classroom settings. For new teachers, recognizing the value of mentorship, continued education, and professional development offers a reassuring path forward, helping them build confidence and expertise in early literacy instruction.

## CONCLUSION

In light of the findings of the study, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, there is a notable pattern among Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 teachers in the South Butuan District regarding their experience, educational qualifications, and training in teaching beginning reading. Although disparities exist in terms of the teachers' profiles — particularly in the level of education attained, the number of trainings attended, and the length of teaching experience — each teacher strives to be effective in their role and aims to produce competent readers despite these differences. It can be inferred that to further enhance their proficiency, skills, and expertise in teaching beginning reading, teachers would benefit from pursuing graduate education and attending more targeted and relevant professional trainings.

Second, the teachers across the South Butuan District's Kindergarten, Grades 1, and 2 levels apply common, effective practices and techniques in teaching beginning reading. These strategies focus on helping pupils recognize letters and words and gradually advance to reading sentences and paragraphs. The use of approaches such as letter casing, sight word introduction, and phonics instruction reflects alignment with research-based best practices, and the high degree of consistency among teachers suggests a strong shared understanding of what constitutes effective literacy instruction. The findings highlight that both classroom practices and teachers' literacy expertise play a crucial role in nurturing pupils' reading development.

Third, despite these common strategies, teachers face significant challenges, particularly related to pupil behavior, limited reading resources, classroom atmosphere, teacher proficiency, and parental involvement. These challenges emphasize the urgent need for additional support, targeted training, and resource allocation to help teachers create supportive, effective literacy environments. Addressing these issues is critical for maintaining successful reading instruction and ensuring that all pupils receive the support they need to thrive.

Fourth, the study reveals a uniformity in how teachers perceive the challenges they encounter, regardless of their individual profiles. This suggests that broad, systemic solutions may be more effective than highly specialized interventions tailored to specific teacher characteristics, pointing toward the need for general, school-wide or district-wide strategies to improve reading instruction.

Lastly, the study found that newer teachers often emphasize comprehension-focused activities, while teachers with less formal training tend to concentrate on fundamental skills such as word identification and basic text comprehension, often relying on conventional methods. This underscores the complex relationship between teacher characteristics and instructional strategies, reinforcing the importance of continuous professional development and ongoing support to ensure that all teachers, regardless of background, are equipped to deliver high-quality literacy instruction that meets the diverse needs of their pupils.

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