

Teaching Competence and Academic Performance of Grade 3 Non-Reader Students

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Abstract

Reading is a fundamental skill that unlocks a world of knowledge and opportunity. However, a significant challenge in many educational systems is the presence of students who struggle with reading, sometimes to the point of being classified as non-readers. This study investigated the teaching competence of teachers and the academic performance of Grade 3 non-reader students in the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City during the School Year 2022-2023. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather data from teachers and students, including questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The findings revealed that while teachers demonstrated high levels of perceived teaching competence, they faced significant challenges in teaching non-readers, such as lack of resources, inadequate support, and difficulty in differentiating instruction. Additionally, the study identified several student factors that influenced academic performance, including age, nutritional status, family background, and attitude toward schooling. Recommendations based on these findings include providing targeted professional development for teachers, ensuring adequate resources, implementing early intervention programs, and addressing socioeconomic disparities. By implementing these recommendations, schools and districts can improve the teaching and learning experiences for non-reader students, helping them to achieve their full potential.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Non-Readers, Teaching Competence

1. Introduction

Reading is a fundamental pillar of basic education, serving as a gateway to other disciplines. It's rightly considered the primary avenue to knowledge, the cornerstone of education, and the foundation of lifelong learning. By unlocking the unknown and transporting readers to new discoveries, reading equips individuals with diverse knowledge applicable to daily life. Avid readers develop a keen understanding of phenomena, become well-informed and educated, and are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the world around them. However, in today's world, many students face significant challenges in reading, hindering their academic progress and overall development.

Edward William Dolch (1951, p. 9) defines reading as a cognitive process involving the imagination, thought, and emotion evoked by printed words. This process draws upon past experiences and perceptions to construct meaning. As Dolch highlights, reading is a multifaceted activity that demands the reader's cognitive abilities to decode words and comprehend their significance.

Moreover, Dolch (1951, p. 329) emphasizes the crucial role of reading skill development. A basic level of reading proficiency is insufficient for mastering the complex texts encountered in specialized college courses. Moreover, fluency in reading is particularly essential for subjects like English Literature. Beyond academic pursuits, reading offers numerous benefits. As Dolch (1951, p. 303) explains, it fosters empathy and understanding by exposing readers to the diverse lives, feelings, and experiences of people from various backgrounds and cultures.

Additionally, Aikat (2007) underscores the pivotal role of reading in nurturing young minds, fostering focused attention, and stimulating imaginative growth. Research has consistently shown a positive correlation between reading habits and active engagement in various endeavors.

Rosenblatt's (1978) seminal work, "The Reader, The Text, The Poem," posits that reading is a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. This interaction can manifest in two primary forms: aesthetic reading, undertaken for pleasure and emotional connection, and efferent reading, pursued for information and knowledge acquisition. While efferent readers focus on factual content, aesthetic readers delve into the textual experience, forging deeper emotional bonds (Umali, 2016).

In a child's life, reading serves as a fundamental tool for exploring the world. However, reading is not an innate ability but a skill that develops gradually through formal education. Children who struggle to develop their reading skills at a foundational level often find reading tedious and challenging. If these difficulties persist beyond the third grade, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to succeed academically in subsequent grades and to keep pace with their peers. This reading failure can lead to inattention, irritability, and a passive attitude, hindering academic progress in other subjects and potentially fostering negative feelings toward schooling (Umali, 2016). The undeniable significance of reading to academic success has prompted schools and educational institutions to prioritize its development. The Department of Education (DepEd), recognizing this need, has implemented Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) through DepEd Order No. 50, s. 2012. This initiative aims to cultivate a nation of literate and numerate citizens by allocating additional time to the foundational skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic in the early grades. ECARP is underpinned by Republic Act No. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Department of Education, 2013), which mandates a K to 12 curricula with a strong emphasis on reading and literacy. Additionally, various DepEd Orders provide specific guidelines for ECARP's implementation, including resource allocation and strategic approaches.

Furthermore, to assess reading proficiency, DepEd mandated the use of the Philippine-Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) test through Department Order No. 14, s. 2018. This classroom-based assessment tool measures oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension in both English and Filipino. Unfortunately, national assessments have revealed that a significant portion of elementary graduates are classified as "frustrated" or "instructional" readers, falling short of desired reading levels.

Consequently, DepEd has extended the duration of Communication Arts periods to integrate more reading activities. Private elementary schools often dedicate separate subject time to reading, emphasizing the importance of developing foundational reading skills.

Moreover, a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning is the quality of instruction. To optimize learning outcomes, two critical factors must be addressed: ongoing professional development for educators

and the cultivation of teacher competence. As Birch and Ladd (1997) assert, skilled and knowledgeable teachers are instrumental in creating positive learning environments.

In addition, teacher competence, encompassing both cognitive and motivational factors (Baumert & Kunter, 2013), is directly linked to student success, particularly in reading. Effective teachers can significantly mitigate the risk of reading difficulties. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), outlined in Department Order No. 42, s. 2017 (Department of Education, 2017), provides a framework for assessing and developing teacher competence.

Subsequently, Grade 3 marks a pivotal transition in a child's education, as students are expected to consolidate foundational reading skills and progress to more complex texts. At this stage, reading difficulties become evident, and timely intervention is crucial. Third-grade students typically exhibit characteristics such as developing a sense of self, forming social groups, and honing cognitive and independence skills (McInerney & McInerney, 1994).

Therefore, a lack of foundational skills can hinder third-grade students' ability to engage with grade-level reading materials independently. This study aims to investigate the relationship between teacher competence and reading difficulties among Grade 3 students in the District of Catbalogan X Schools Division of Catbalogan City.

1.1. Research Questions

This study determined the teachers' teaching competence and the academic performance of Grade 3 non-reader students of the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City during the School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of teacher-respondents in terms of the following personal characteristics:
 - 1.1 age and sex;
 - 1.2 civil status;
 - 1.3 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.4 gross monthly family income;
 - 1.5 performance rating based on the latest IPCRF;
 - 1.6 relevant in-service trainings; and
 - 1.7 problems toward teaching non-readers?
2. What is the profile of the student-respondents in terms of the following personal characteristics:
 - 2.1 age and sex;
 - 2.2 nutritional status;
 - 2.3 parents' highest educational attainment;
 - 2.4 parents' occupation;
 - 2.5 gross monthly family income;
 - 2.6 socio-economic status; and
 - 2.7 attitude toward schooling?

3. How do the teacher-respondents perceive their teaching competence in teaching non-readers in terms of the following:
 - 3.1 pedagogical knowledge and skills, and
 - 3.2 professional Disposition?
4. What is the level of academic performance of student-respondents?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the academic performance of student-respondents and the following:
 - 5.1 teacher-related variates;
 - 5.2 student-related variates; and
 - 5.3 teacher-respondents' teaching competence?
6. What intervention program may be evolved based on the findings of the study?

1.2. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents how the study was conducted. As reflected in the diagram, the study made an attempt to determine the teachers' teaching competence and the academic performance of Grade 3 non-reader students of the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City during the School Year 2022-2023.

The said figure shows the conceptual framework of the study. At the bottom of the diagram is the research environment which is the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City involving the Grade 3 non-reader students and teacher-respondents. The next frame enclosing four smaller frames reflects the dependent and independent variables. The frame at the right side contains the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age and sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, gross monthly family income, performance rating based on the latest IPCRF, relevant in-service training, and problems toward teaching the non-readers.

The frame at the left side reflects the profile of the student-respondents in terms of age and sex, nutritional status, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, gross monthly family income, socio-economic status, and attitude toward schooling. The frame at the middle reflects the level of students' academic performance based on the mean grade during the first and second quarters and the lower frame at the middle contains the perceived teachers' teaching competence in teaching the non-readers.

Furthermore, the level of students' academic performance is correlated with the teacher-related variates, student-related variates, and perceived teachers' teaching competence in teaching non-readers. These relationships are represented by the two-headed arrows connecting these variables.

The end result of the foregoing process drew findings and implications of the study that provided feedback mechanism to the research environment and led to the attainment of intervention program, and finally lead to the ultimate goal of the study which is the improved academic performance of non-reader students.

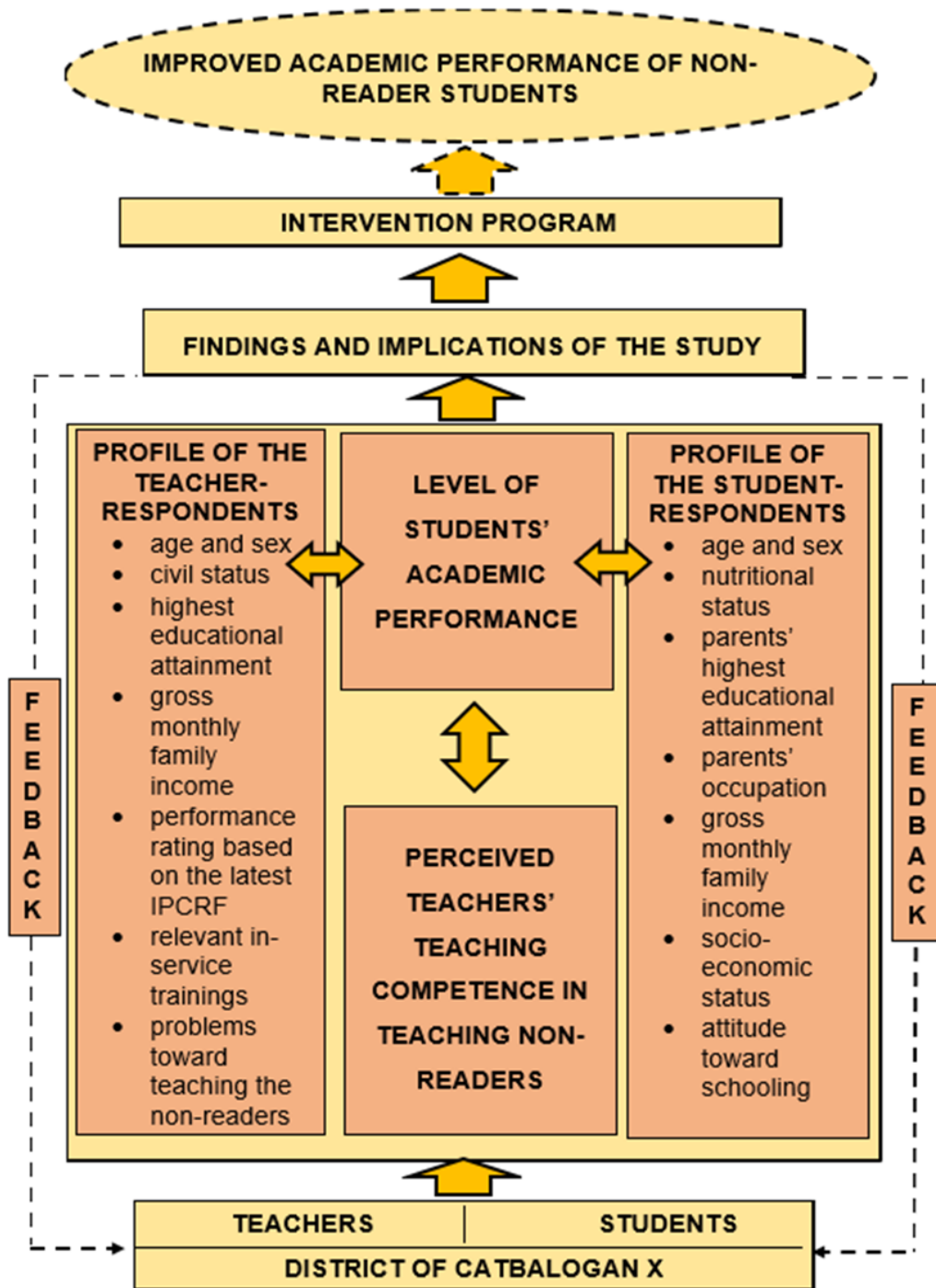


Fig. 1. Research Paradigm

1.3. Theoretical Framework

This study was basically anchored on the following theories, namely: Schema Theory by Bartlett (1932), Language Acquisition Theory by Piaget (1936), Behaviorism Theory by Skinner (1938), Scaffolding Theory by Bruner (1976), and Medley's Model of Teacher Competence (1977).

The Schema Theory is a process of using reader's existing knowledge (schemata) to interpret texts in order to construct meaning. Many reading experts agree that this theory is one of the reasonable theories of human information processing. The Schema Theory was one of the leading cognitivist learning theories and was introduced by Bartlett in 1932 (Teachonline, 2022) and further developed in the '70s by Richard Anderson (Investopedia, 2022). Bartlett advanced this concept to provide a basis for a temporal alternative to traditional spatial storage theories of memory, since Schema Theory describes the way knowledge is acquired, processed and cerebrally organized.

There are four key elements of Schema Theory, the practical aspects of the theory and the way it has been applied in various ways within learning and instructional design (AsuEduc., 2022), viz: 1) an individual can memorize and use a schema without even realizing of doing so, 2) once a schema is developed, it tends to be stable over a long period of time, 3) human mind uses schemata to organize, retrieve, and encode chunks of important information, and 4) Schemata are accumulated over time and through different experiences.

Furthermore, the Language Acquisition Theory by Piaget (Montsaye, 2022) supports the study which suggests that children learn a language much like they learn to tie their shoes or how to count; through repetition and reinforcement. When babies first learn to babble, parents and guardians smile, coo, and hug them for this behavior. Language acquisition is the process by which we are able to develop and learn a language. This generally includes speaking, listening, writing, and overall communication. Our ability to acquire language is a uniquely human trait because although bonobos, a species of primate, can produce vocalizations with meaning, birds can produce songs, and whales have their own version of a language, no species on Earth that we know of can express an unlimited number of abstract ideas with a limited set of symbols through gestures, words, and sounds.

The term language acquisition often refers to the first-language acquisition, which simply means that it is the first language learned as an infant, unless the child learns two or more languages at the same time. However, there is also the term second-language acquisition, which refers to the process in both children and adults when they learn additional languages apart from their native one. Each of these terms has at least one language acquisition theory behind them which seeks to answer the big question of "how do we learn a language?".

As with much of history, it all begins with some philosophers in ancient societies who were interested in how the world worked—in this case, how humans were able to develop language. Using "armchair psychology" (sitting and thinking about the problem), these philosophers came to the conclusion that people were able to learn languages due to the subset of a human's ability to gain knowledge and learn concepts. They believed that language was an innate ability that all were born with. Plato, for example, felt that word-meaning mapping was also innate in one way or another. Scholars who studied Sanskrit—an ancient language used over 3,000 years ago in what is now India—debated for over 12 centuries about whether or not a human's ability to recognize and use the correct meaning of words in Sanskrit was something passed down by generations and learned from pre-established conventions for example, a child learns the word for horse

because he hears older speakers talking about horses or whether it was innate God-given. Later, philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes got in on the language party and argued that knowledge and language, in Locke's case come from abstracted sense impressions. What does that mean? They argue that language comes from a sensory experience.

The behaviorist-psychologists (Montsaye, 2022) developed their theories while carrying out a series of experiments on animals. They observed that rats or birds, for example, could be taught to perform various tasks by encouraging habit-forming. Researchers rewarded desirable behavior. This was known as positive reinforcement. Undesirable behavior was punished or simply not rewarded - negative reinforcement. The behaviorist B. F. Skinner then proposed this theory as an explanation for language acquisition in humans. In *Verbal Behaviour* (1957), he stated: The basic processes and relations which give verbal behaviour its special characteristics are now fairly well understood. Much of the experimental work responsible for this advance has been carried out on other species, but the results have proved to be surprisingly free of species restrictions. Recent work has shown that the methods can be extended to human behavior without serious modifications (cited in Lowe and Graham, 1998, p68). Skinner suggested that a child imitates the language of its parents or carers. Successful attempts are rewarded because an adult who recognizes a word spoken by a child will praise the child and/or give it what it is asking for. Successful utterances are therefore reinforced while unsuccessful ones are forgotten.

Also, the study is supported by the Scaffolding Theory by Bruner (Academy, 2022) which advocates that when students are given the support they need while learning something new, they stand a better chance of using that knowledge independently. First, a teacher begins teaching at the level the students can understand, and then builds on that understanding. The teacher then presents the problem and thinks aloud as they go about solving it. In the process, they show how a solution is arrived at by combining actions, images, and language. They then do the following, repeat this process two more times, asking questions of the students along the way, each answer, right or wrong, receives a positive response to encourage participation, more students are asked to respond to the question each time it is repeated, correction is provided as needed but reinforced positively, when understanding appears to be achieved, students join in solving a new problem, understanding is checked as they solve problems. If more instruction is needed, more modeling is provided, and if students then demonstrate knowledge, the teacher fades, or steps away, and allows students to work independently, offering support as needed.

Furthermore, the study was also anchored on Medley's Model of Teacher Competence, proposed in 1977, identifies five key components that contribute to effective teaching. First, planning involves developing instructional plans, selecting appropriate materials, and organizing the learning environment. Second, instructional strategies encompass the use of various teaching methods to engage students actively. Third, classroom management focuses on creating a positive learning environment, managing student behavior, and maintaining classroom organization. Fourth, evaluation involves assessing student learning through various methods to monitor progress and provide feedback. Finally, personal qualities such as enthusiasm, patience, empathy, and a strong work ethic are essential for inspiring and motivating students. By focusing on these five components, teachers can strive to improve their practice and enhance student learning outcomes (Medley, 1977).

Medley's Model of Teacher Competence provides a relevant framework for analyzing the findings of the study on the teaching competence of Grade 3 non-reader students in Catbalogan City. The model's focus on planning, instructional strategies, classroom management, evaluation, and personal qualities aligns with the

key areas that may influence a teacher's effectiveness in teaching reading. By examining the teachers' performance in these areas, the study can identify potential strengths and weaknesses that may contribute to the academic performance of non-reader students.

The foregoing theories strengthen the concept of the study and the link between teachers' teaching competence and academic performance specifically for the Grade 3 non-reader student-respondents.

2. Methodology

This section discusses the method used by the researcher in the conduct of the study. It includes among others research design, locale of the study, instrumentation, validation of instrument, sampling procedure, and data gathering procedure.

2.1. Research Design

The study utilized the mixed research approaches which assessed the teachers' teaching competence and its influence to the academic performance of Grade 3 non-reader students as well as the factors that influence it.

The profile of the teacher- and student-respondents in terms of their personal characteristics were determined.

Furthermore, the teachers' teaching competence was elicited in the light of the academic performance and the factors affecting it. Qualitative information was gathered and analyzed to come up with the emerging realities.

Moreover, a correlation analysis was undertaken to look into the linear association between the performance of the student-respondents and their personal characteristics as well as the linear association between academic performance and the teaching competence of teachers among Grade 3 non-reader students.

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used in the treatment of the data that were gathered which included the following: Frequency Count, Percentage, Median, Mean Absolute Deviation, Mode, Chi-Square Test, Cramer's V Test, Spearman's Rank Coefficient of Correlation, and Fisher's t-Test.

2.2. Locale of the Study

Figure 2 shows the map of the locale of the study.

The study was conducted in the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City involving the different elementary schools, namely: Buluan Elementary School, Canhawan Elementary School, Bagongon Elementary School, Cinco Elementary School, Cagutsan Elementary School, Mombon Elementary School and Rama Elementary School. This involved the Grade 3 teachers in the afore-cited district.

Catbalogan is officially named as the City of Catbalogan, the capital of the Province of Samar. According to the 2020 census (PSA, 2021), it has a population of 106,440 people. It is Samar's main commercial, trading, educational, financial and political center which is the gateway to the region's three Samar provinces.

Catbalogan was founded in October 1596 by Spanish Jesuit priests and became the capital of the entire island of Samar. Friar Francisco de Otazo, S.J., who arrived in the Philippines in 1596, founded the Catbalogan Mission and was thus the first missionary to bring the Catholic faith to the people of Catbalogan.

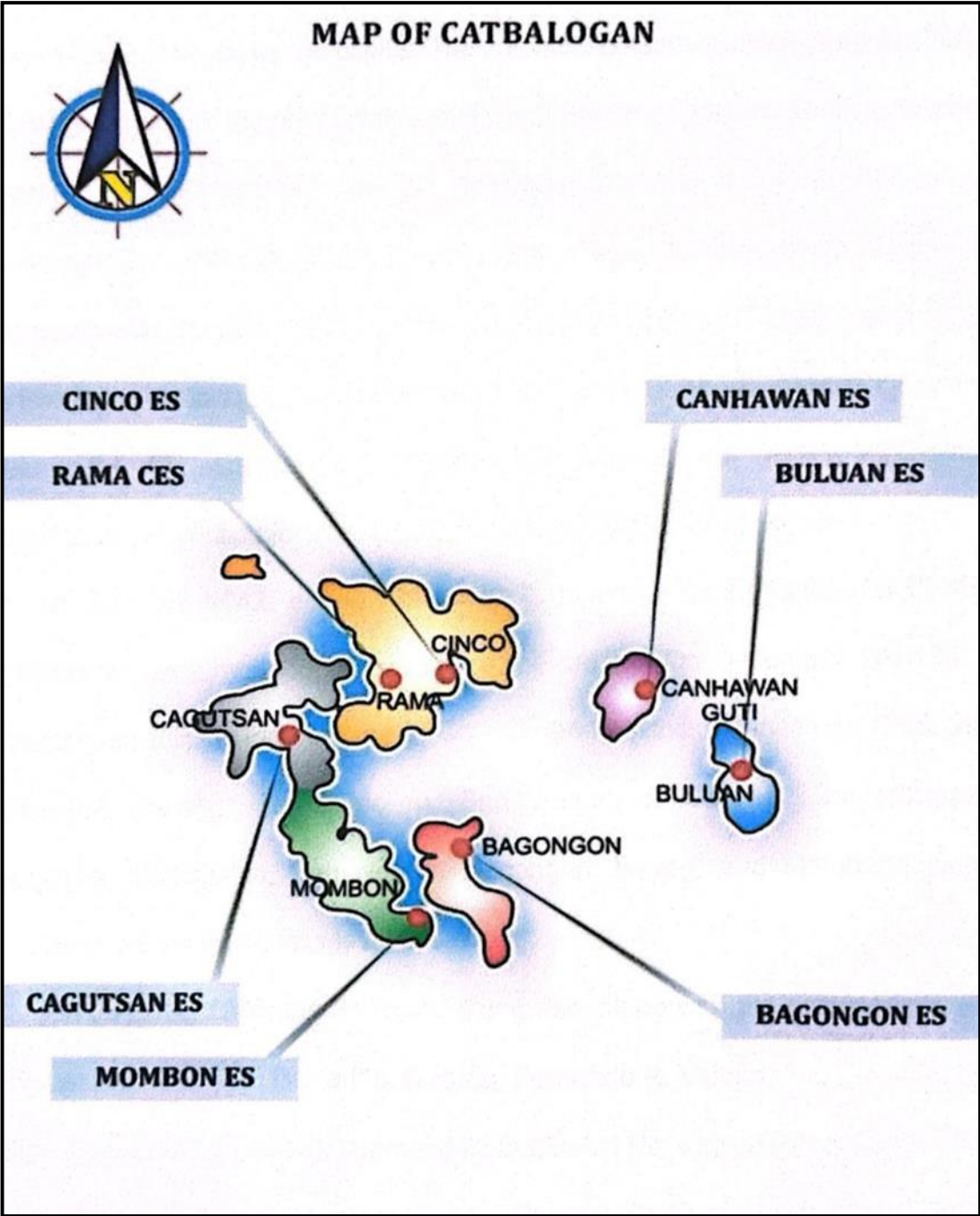


Fig. 2. Map Showing the Locale of the Study

2.3. Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed the universal sampling method. That is, all the Grade 3 teachers in the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City composed the respondents of the study. There were eight teachers and a total of 150 enrolled Grade 3 students. Using the Slovin's Formula, the sample size was calculated at 109 students which were proportionately stratified among the elementary schools covered by the District of Catbalogan X, Schools Division of Catbalogan City.

Table A
The Number of Respondents by School

School	Teachers	Students	
		N	N
Buluan ES	1	20	15
Canhawan ES	1	4	3
Bagongon ES	1	11	8
Cinco ES	1	16	12
Cagutas ES	1	32	23
Rama ES	2	40	29
Monbon ES	1	27	19
Total	8	150	109
Response Rate	100.00	100.00	

2.4. Instrumentation

In order to gather the needed data of this study, the researcher used the questionnaire and school form to capture data on the quantitative side of the study while an in-depth interview was employed for the qualitative side.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to capture the descriptive part of the study. Two sets of questionnaires were crafted by the researcher. Set 1 was intended for the teacher-respondents while set 2 was for the students. Both sets of questionnaires gathered information on the profile of the respondents.

Part I. This part of the questionnaire gathered demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, such as their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, income level, performance rating, and relevant training. This information can help identify potential factors influencing teacher competence and effectiveness in teaching non-reader students. Moreover, the part I of the student-respondents' questionnaire gathered the demographic profile such as age and sex, nutritional status, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, gross monthly family income, socio-economic status, and attitude toward schooling.

Part II. This section employed a Likert scale to gauge teachers' perceptions of teaching non-readers. Ten attitude statements were used to assess their attitudes. By understanding teachers' perspectives on the

challenges they encounter, this research aims to identify specific areas where targeted support and professional development can be provided.

Part III. This part of the questionnaire measures teachers' self-perceived competence in teaching non-readers. The Likert scale allows respondents to rate their competence on various indicators, such as knowledge of reading instruction, classroom management skills, and assessment techniques. This information can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in teacher preparation and professional development.

In-Depth Interview. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives on teaching non-reader students. These one-on-one conversations allowed for open-ended questioning and flexible probing, uncovering underlying beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. To establish rapport and encourage honest responses, a comfortable and trusting environment was created. Nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, were observed and noted to further enrich the qualitative data.

To conduct the IDIs, a structured approach was followed. Participants were selected based on their experience teaching non-reader students. An interview guide was developed, outlining key topics and open-ended questions. Interviews were scheduled at a time and location convenient for the participants. The interviews were conducted in a private setting to ensure confidentiality and focused discussion. Active listening techniques were employed to probe for deeper insights, and nonverbal cues were observed to complement verbal responses. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the process, safeguarding participant confidentiality and well-being. Following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify key themes and patterns.

The interview guide focused on two primary areas: pedagogical knowledge and skills, and professional disposition. Questions explored challenges in motivating and engaging non-reader students, differentiating instruction, effective teaching strategies, assessment practices, addressing emotional and behavioral challenges, building positive relationships, maintaining a positive attitude, and self-perceived competence. To ensure the effectiveness of the interviews, several considerations were taken into account, including preparing follow-up questions, maintaining flexibility, and expressing gratitude to participants.

2.5. Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire being adapted from a source underwent expert validation only. No pilot testing was required in as much as the questionnaire had been used already by the original proponent. The expert validation through the members of the panel of oral examiners focused on the following areas, namely: face, content, construct, pragmatic and convergent-discriminant validity with consideration on the cognitive and situational perspectives of the respondents. Comments and suggestions for improvement of the members of the panel of oral examiners considered for the revision and finalization of the questionnaire for data collection.

2.6. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher initiated the study by obtaining necessary approvals from key educational authorities. First, permission was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent of Catbalogan City to conduct the research within the District of Catbalogan X. Subsequently, the Public Schools District Supervisor's approval was

secured to administer the study among Grade 3 teachers in the district. Finally, letters were sent to the heads of various elementary schools within the district, requesting their cooperation in fielding the questionnaire and administering the reading test to Grade 3 students.

To ensure data quality and accuracy, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires through face-to-face interviews. This method allowed for probing vague responses and clarifying any ambiguities. Additionally, documentary analysis was employed to supplement the qualitative data collected from the interviews.

Once the data was gathered, it was meticulously tabulated using appropriate software to maintain accuracy and precision. A 100% retrieval rate was targeted to ensure a sufficient sample size for robust analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study:

1. Two or 25.00 percent of the teachers were aged 27 years old while one or 12.50 percent each fell within the ages of 58, 38, and 28. Majority of the teacher-respondents were females accounting for four or 50.00 percent.
2. Half of the teacher-respondents, that is, four or 50.00 percent were married.
3. Half of the teacher-respondents, that is, four or 50.00 percent were with master's units while two or 25.00 percent were master's degree holders.
4. The teacher-respondents registered an income whereby one or 12.50 percent each received 40,000, 31,000, 30,000, 29,000, 27,000, 26,000, and 14,000 based on the salary structure of the DepEd.
5. Half of the teacher-respondents, that is, four or 50.00 percent obtained a rating of 5 while two or 25.00 obtained a rating of 4.
6. The teacher-respondents manifested exemplary performance based on the latest IPCRF. This meant that they were able to accomplish very satisfactorily their targets which they committed at the beginning of the school year.
7. They even surpassed their targets.
8. The teacher-respondents attended sometimes in the division level training and they oftentimes attended district and school levels training.
9. The findings reveal that teachers perceive significant challenges in teaching non-reader students. The grand weighted mean of 4.39 for the problems toward teaching non-readers indicates that teachers generally agree with the statements presented.

10. The median age of the student-respondents was posted at 9 years old with a mean absolute deviation (MAD) of one year. Moreover, majority of the student-respondents were females accounting for 78 or 71.56 percent.
11. Majority of the student-respondents were in normal nutritional status accounting for 85 or 77.96 percent.
12. Of the fathers of the student-respondents, 53 or 48.63 percent reached the elementary level while 42 or 38.54 percent of the mothers reached the elementary level.
13. The fathers of the student-respondents were mostly fishermen accounting for 87 or 78.82 percent while the mothers of the student-respondents were laundry woman (11 or 10.09%) and housewife (10 or 9.17%).
14. Forty-one or 37.61 percent of the student-respondents earned a gross monthly family income of 4,000 only while 33 or 30.28 percent registered an income of 4,000, and 13 or 11.93 percent earned 5,000.
15. Majority of the student-respondents belonged to the low-income generating families accounting for 99 or 90.83 percent.
16. The student-respondents agreed on their attitude toward schooling being supported by the grand weighted mean of 4.41.
17. The study revealed that the teacher-respondents possess a high level of perceived teaching competence in instructing non-readers. This competence is evident in their pedagogical knowledge and skills, as well as their professional disposition. The grand weighted mean of 4.26, interpreted as "highly competent," underscores this overall proficiency.
18. In terms of pedagogical knowledge and skills, the teachers demonstrated exceptional competence in content expertise, receiving the highest weighted mean of 4.50. This indicates that they possess a deep understanding of the subject matter they teach. While their planning and assessment of instruction was also rated highly (3.99), it was the lowest among the pedagogical knowledge and skills indicators, suggesting that there might be room for improvement in this area.
19. Regarding professional disposition, the teachers exhibited a strong appreciation of diversity (4.45), a crucial skill for effective teaching, particularly in a diverse classroom. They also demonstrated a high level of professional responsibility (4.30), indicating their commitment to their role as educators.
20. The thematic analysis has revealed that teaching Grade 3 non-readers presents significant challenges for teachers in the domain of pedagogical knowledge and skills. The findings highlight the need for professional development opportunities that address specific areas such as differentiated instruction, effective teaching strategies, and emotional and behavioral support. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of providing teachers with adequate resources, time, and support to effectively address the unique needs of non-reader students. By addressing these challenges and providing appropriate support, educators can enhance their teaching practices and improve the learning outcomes of non-reader students.

21. The median academic performance of the students was posted at 82 with a MAD of two points.
22. In associating academic performance with the teacher-related variates, it was not significant in terms of age, sex, civil status, gross monthly family income, highest educational attainment, relevant in-service training, performance rating based on the latest IPCRF, and attitude toward teaching non-readers.
23. In associating academic performance of the students and their profile variates, it was significant in terms of age, nutritional status, gross monthly family income, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, socio-economic status, and attitude toward schooling while sex was not significant.
24. The findings suggest a significant positive correlation between the teacher-respondents' teaching competence and the academic performance of the student-respondents. Specifically, the results indicate a strong relationship between both pedagogical knowledge and skills (Spearman's $Rho = 0.709$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) and professional disposition (Spearman's $Rho = 0.711$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) and the students' academic performance. This suggests that teachers with strong pedagogical knowledge, skills, and positive professional dispositions are more likely to have students who achieve higher academic outcomes.

4. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The teacher-respondents were relatively young, with a majority aged 27 and below. The majority of the respondents were female.
2. Marriage status was evenly distributed, with half of the respondents being married.
3. Most respondents held master's degrees or were pursuing master's units.
4. The income distribution among respondents was relatively varied, reflecting the salary structure of the DepEd.
5. The respondents demonstrated exemplary performance based on their IPCRF ratings. They actively participated in professional development activities at the division, district, and school levels.
6. The respondents identified significant challenges in teaching non-reader students. The grand weighted mean of 4.39 suggests a general consensus among the respondents regarding the challenges faced.
7. The student-respondents were primarily young children, with a median age of 9. The majority of respondents were female.

8. Most of the respondents were in normal nutritional status. The educational attainment of parents was relatively low, with a majority having only completed elementary education.
9. The fathers of the respondents were predominantly fishermen. The mothers were primarily involved in household chores.
10. The students generally expressed a positive attitude toward schooling, as indicated by the grand weighted mean of 4.41.
11. The teacher-respondents demonstrated a high level of perceived teaching competence in instructing non-reader students. The grand weighted mean of 4.26 indicates a general consensus among the respondents regarding their proficiency.
12. The teachers exhibited exceptional content expertise, suggesting a deep understanding of the subject matter. While planning and assessment of instruction were rated highly, there might be room for improvement in this area.
13. The teachers demonstrated a strong appreciation of diversity, a crucial skill for effective teaching. They exhibited a high level of professional responsibility, indicating their commitment to their role as educators.
14. Teaching Grade 3 non-readers presents significant challenges for teachers. Professional development opportunities should focus on differentiated instruction, effective teaching strategies, and emotional and behavioral support. Teachers need adequate resources, time, and support to effectively address the unique needs of non-reader students.
15. The median academic performance of the students was 82, with a relatively small mean absolute deviation.
16. The teacher-related variables were not significantly associated with student academic performance.
17. Several student profile variables were significantly associated with academic performance, including age, nutritional status, gross monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, parents' occupation, socioeconomic status, and attitude toward schooling. Sex was not found to be a significant predictor of student performance.
18. There was a significant positive correlation between the teacher-respondents' teaching competence and the academic performance of their students. Both pedagogical knowledge and skills, and professional disposition were strongly associated with student academic outcomes.

5. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Encourage students to develop effective study habits such as time management, organization, and active learning techniques.
2. Create a supportive learning environment that fosters curiosity, engagement, and a growth mindset.
3. Develop and implement targeted interventions for students who are at risk of academic failure, particularly those from low-income families, with poor nutritional status, or with parents who have low educational attainment.
4. Implement programs that address the socioeconomic factors affecting student performance, such as providing financial assistance, nutritional support, and access to quality healthcare.
5. Provide targeted instruction and additional support for non-reader students, including small-group instruction, individualized attention, and specialized interventions.
6. Provide professional development programs specifically designed to address the challenges of teaching non-reader students, focusing on differentiated instruction, effective teaching strategies, and emotional and behavioral support.
7. Prioritize professional development programs that focus on enhancing teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills, as well as their professional disposition. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs of teachers working with non-reader students.
8. Use positive reinforcement techniques to motivate and engage students.
9. Provide school-based support services, such as counseling, tutoring, and mentoring, to help students overcome academic and social challenges.
10. Review and revise the curriculum to ensure that it is accessible and engaging for all students, including non-readers.
11. Ensure that teachers have access to adequate resources, including high-quality instructional materials, technology, and professional development opportunities.
12. Foster partnerships with families to support their children's learning and with community organizations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families.
13. Advocate for policies that address systemic inequalities and provide equitable opportunities for all students.
14. For future researchers, conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of various interventions on the academic and social-emotional development of non-reader students. Also, investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and their classroom practices, particularly in relation to non-reader students.

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