

## Lived experiences of senior high school learners with reading difficulties: A case in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** This phenomenological study delves into the lived experiences of learners struggling with frustration levels in reading. Recognizing the significance of aiding such individuals, and comprehending the multifaceted impacts of their difficulties on emotional, social, cultural, and academic domains becomes imperative, thereby necessitating a tailored reading intervention program. Employing a mixed-methods approach integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, data were collected through questionnaires and guided interviews, and then analyzed through a comprehensive six-phase method. The study encompassed 15 learner-participants and 10 teacher-participants. Results highlighted the diverse challenges encountered by these learners in reading-related tasks, with consequential results across aspects. Furthermore, the findings emphasized the adoption of coping mechanisms by learners and highlighted the indispensable support systems from parents, peers, teachers, and the educational institution. In conclusion, the implementation of a reading intervention program emerged as pivotal in empowering learners with a frustration level of reading and fostering their holistic development.

**Keywords:** *Lived experiences; Reading difficulties; Senior high school learners.*

### 1. Introduction

Reading difficulties, encompassing a range of challenges garnered increasing attention in recent years. This surge in interest can be attributed to several prominent trends that have emerged in the field. Through heightened awareness, advances in research, and evolving educational practices, teachers, parents, and researchers are forging new paths toward addressing reading difficulties and supporting struggling readers.

The way that reading issues are understood and addressed in schools has undergone a radical change in recent years. Presently, there is a focus on moving away from conventional, one-size-fits-all teaching strategies and toward a more inclusive, tailored framework. These patterns recognize that many different types of reading challenges result from a wide range of circumstances and call for specialized interventions. Change has been largely fueled by the increased understanding of reading issues. With time, educators and the general public have come to comprehend these challenges' complexity and the potential effects they can have on a learner's academic path. Because of this increased awareness, there has been a trend toward early detection and intervention, which guarantees that struggling readers get the help they need right away (Smith et al., 2022).

Teachers and experts can now employ more focused ways to meet the various requirements of learners with reading difficulties since a growing corpus of research is revealing the underlying reasons and cognitive processes involved (Johnson & Thompson, 2021). Moreover, the way reading challenges are addressed in educational settings has changed dramatically with the introduction of assistive technologies and tailored training. Simultaneously, the trend towards tailored education has accelerated, acknowledging the distinct learning preferences and aptitudes of every individual. Based on individualized instruction and evidence-based techniques, this strategy seeks to meet the unique needs of

struggling readers and make sure they get the help they need to overcome obstacles (Jones & White, 2020).

Recognizing and proactively addressing reading challenges is critical for building an inclusive learning environment in the current state of academic growth within the fast-paced digital age. Teachers and other pillars of education can create an educational environment where learners struggling with reading not only overcome obstacles but flourish in the digital age by combining technical advancements with pedagogical insights (Brown et al., 2022; Turner, 2019). It is now high time to devise a reading tasks in assisting the learners who face difficulties in terms of reading.

The idea of inclusive education has gained prominence as the profession develops. Regardless of a learners' reading challenges, efforts are being made to establish inclusive environments that support learning and growth. According to Anderson et al., (2023), this recognizes the value of providing equal access to high-quality education and cultivates settings that not only address obstacles but also capitalize on the abilities of people who struggle with reading. Strengths-based approaches are becoming more popular since they highlight the special skills and capabilities of these learners, increasing their desire and self-confidence to overcome reading obstacles (Robinson et al., 2021).

Undeniably, learners with reading difficulties face numerous challenges in their educational journey, impacting their academic performance, self-esteem, and overall well-being. As educators and researchers strive to develop effective intervention programs, it is crucial to understand the lived experiences of these learners, acknowledging the diverse factors that contribute to their struggles and triumphs in the realm of reading. This dissertation delves into the rich and multifaceted narratives of learners who struggle with reading, aiming to establish a strong framework for the development of a comprehensive and empowering reading intervention program. As a language teacher, the researcher often observed the struggles faced by the said learners and it is indeed very alarming.

Furthermore, learners with reading difficulties often suffer from emotional challenges such as low self-esteem (Smith, 2018) and heightened frustration and anxiety in academic settings (Brown et al., 2020). In terms of social aspects, these difficulties may lead to social isolation (Johnson, 2016) and instances of bullying and stigmatization from peers (Thomas, 2019). Culturally, learners may face stigma associated with learning difficulties (Chen & Wang, 2017), and cultural differences may exacerbate misunderstandings (Kim, 2018). Academically, the problems in reading often translate into academic underachievement (Doe & Roe, 2015) and limited access to appropriate learning resources (Smith & Jones, 2022), contributing to educational inequalities (Williams, 2018). Undeniably, emotional, social, cultural, and academic aspects in the learner's lives are being affected.

Unquestionably, the current educational discourse has brought attention to important problems associated with reading challenges and emphasized the need for focused intervention. These problems go beyond traditional teaching strategies and highlight how urgent it is to deal with the complex concerns that slow readers, non-readers, and learners under the frustration level of reading encounter. Also, Smith and Baker (2019) identified a pervasive issue of misdiagnosis of learning disabilities, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of individual learning profiles to inform effective interventions. More so, Garcia et al., (2020) delved into the issue of limited access to diverse reading materials, especially for learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, highlighting the role of equitable resource distribution in addressing reading difficulties. Looking at all of these, it is indeed important to look into a greater perspective to help the abovementioned learners.

Despite significant strides in understanding reading processes and addressing reading difficulties, there exist several critical research gaps that warrant attention. Early identification of reading difficulties is crucial for timely and effective interventions. However, there is a research gap in the development and validation of reliable screening tools for identifying at-risk individuals in the early stages of their educational journey. Moreover, there is a need for longitudinal studies assessing the sustained effectiveness of early interventions over time.

Furthermore, although the body of research on successful teaching methods for learners with reading challenges is expanding, more studies are still needed to examine how these methods are applied in various classroom environments. Studies want to focus on how teaching preparation

programs might better prepare teachers to assist learners with different reading characteristics. Very few studies trace the lives of readers who struggle. Examining these various paths and aspects throughout time will shed light on the long-term effects of reading challenges and the efficacy of interventions for them.

One of the authors of this research is a proponent of Project TURO, “Tutoring Learners towards the understanding of Reading materials for Optimal Development”, one of the programs recognized in the region, the researcher has facilitated the conduct of reading assessment among the Senior High School students through PHIL-IRI. There she found out that there are still learners who are considered to be under frustration reading level. She has also observed learners facing various difficulties. The traditional approach to addressing reading difficulties has often focused solely on remediation techniques and skill-based interventions. While these methods have proven beneficial for many learners, they may overlook the individual experiences and needs of those with reading difficulties.

By centering the voices of these students, their stories become a powerful resource for developing intervention programs that are meaningful, comprehensive, and empowering. Within the educational landscape, learners facing reading difficulties, navigate a complex journey that warrants a profound understanding of their lived experience. Taking also into consideration that English is the second language among learners. Also, determining the observations and experiences of the language teachers can be of great help in crafting a reading intervention program.

This study endeavors to shed light on these experiences, focusing on specific objectives that form the bedrock for the development of targeted intervention programs. By delineating clear objectives, the research sought to create a framework that not only captures the nuanced challenges faced by these struggling learners but also informs the strategic design of interventions tailored to their unique needs and interests.

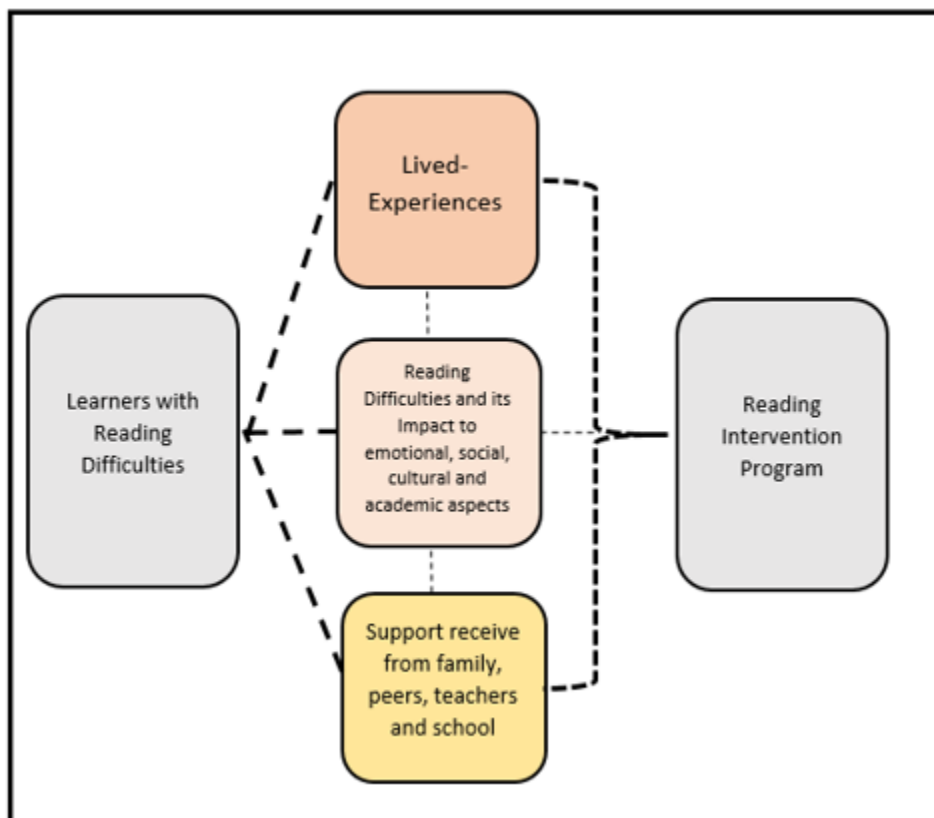
By conducting qualitative research, including interviews, observations, and personal narratives, this dissertation aimed to unveil the lived experiences of learners with reading difficulties. By exploring their emotional challenges, social interactions, academic struggles, and coping strategies, a comprehensive understanding of their unique journeys emerges. This exploration enables educators, researchers, and policymakers to gain insights into the barriers and facilitators that impact learners’ reading abilities and overall educational experiences. A quantitative method was also employed which allowed for objective and standardized measurement of various aspects of the learning experiences. This objectivity is crucial in capturing specific details and patterns related to reading difficulties.

Moreover, by recognizing and valuing these experiences of learners with reading difficulties, language teachers can develop an intervention program that addresses their individual needs, fosters their strengths, and empowers them to overcome challenges. It can be a way to bridge the gap between research and practice, using the learners’ narratives as the framework for designing evidence-based and student-centered intervention strategies that promote improved reading skills, self-confidence, and educational success.

This study was anchored to the phenomenological study of Johnson and Christensen (2008) as cited by Ziegler (2020) which stated that teaching learners who struggle with reading has given the researcher an opportunity to reflect upon how the entire experience of school may be affected by students’ lack of skill regarding reading. Many of these learners struggle with information and assignments in their English classes, and through talking to other teachers and working directly with these learners, it has become apparent that these students have trouble understanding information across content areas.

Figure 1 illustrates the study's conceptual model for determining the lived experiences of learners with reading difficulties. By identifying and sharing their experiences, coping strategies, self-esteem and confidence, interactions and reactions, educational support they received, and their future outlook, the researcher can devise a Reading Intervention Program. The said program was crafted based on the needs of the learners and the ways that they want to be taught in terms of reading. This will lessen their disinhibitions and shyness as they undergo this kind of program.

The researchers aimed to uncover and understand the lived experiences of learners with reading difficulties. The study focused on exploring the day-to-day realities, challenges, and subjective experiences of individuals who encounter difficulties in reading. By delving into these lived experiences, the researcher sought to establish a framework for designing and implementing effective interventions tailored to address the specific needs and contexts of learners facing reading difficulties.



**Figure 1.**  
Study paradigm.

With the above context, the researchers were able to identify the following research problems. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What reading difficulties do learner-participants experience?
2. How do the learner-participants and teacher participants describe the impact of the learners' reading difficulties?
3. What strategies and techniques do the learner-participants employ to cope with their reading difficulties and how may the teacher-participants describe these?
4. How do the learner-participants and teacher participants describe the support received by the learners with reading difficulties?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Reading Difficulties Among Senior High School Learners

Understanding why reading difficulties persist among Senior High School students despite educational interventions involves exploring relevant literature and studies that delve into the complexities of reading challenges.

Vaughn et al., (206) compare different reading interventions and find that significant reading difficulties persist even when interventions are implemented, suggesting the need for tailored and

sustained support. Also, Parrila et al., (2017) study focuses on phonological awareness interventions for struggling adolescent readers. The findings suggest that specific challenges, like phonological awareness deficits, may contribute to the persistence of reading difficulties.

Additionally, Cirino et al., (2018) explore factors influencing reading skill growth, emphasizing the roles of autonomy support and student engagement. Lack of these elements may contribute to the continuation of reading difficulties into the Senior High School level. The effectiveness of the interventions and instruction designed to address the various requirements of the learners is one of these factors. Fostering reading proficiency requires the use of effective instructional tactics, such as specific instruction in phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension techniques. Targeted reading procedures such as small group and individualized tutoring, can also help struggling readers overcome their challenges and improve their skills.

Still, there are learners struggle with reading frustration even in the Senior High school level. This is a complicated problem that results from a number of variables. Others suffer because they don't have enough exposure to a wide variety of vocabulary or have not developed good reading habits and techniques. Furthermore, learners may find it difficult to relate to the content if they have no prior knowledge or context. The issue is exacerbated by low motivation since indifference frequently results in less effort and interaction with texts. The problem is made worse by inadequate teaching of fundamental reading abilities including phonics and comprehension techniques. Non-native speakers face difficulties due to language obstacles, which impair their understanding of syntax, sentence structure, and vocabulary.

The recent literature suggests that reading difficulties among Senior High School learners persist due to a combination of factors, including the developmental nature of reading challenges, the effectiveness of interventions, specific skill deficits, and the need for tailored approaches. These findings underscore the complexity of reading difficulties and emphasize the importance of continuous, targeted support throughout a learners' educational journey, particularly as they transition into Senior High School. The studies suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be sufficient, and tailored, research-based interventions are crucial for addressing the diverse needs of learners with persistent reading difficulties.

## *2.2. Factors Affecting Reading Difficulties Among Senior High School Learners*

The persistence of reading difficulties among readers at these levels of education raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of reading programs implemented at the lower levels. This discussion aims to highlight the underlying factors or encounters in the implementation of reading programs at lower levels that contribute to untreated reading difficulties, subsequently impacting learners in higher education.

One key factor contributing to the persistence of reading difficulties in higher education is the failure to identify and address these challenges early on. Research indicates that early intervention is crucial for mitigating reading difficulties (Fletcher et al., 2020). If reading problems go unnoticed or untreated during the formative years of education, they can escalate and have a lasting impact on reading proficiency at higher levels. The choice of educational approaches has a significant impact on how effective reading programs are. Choosing research-based strategies that are tailored to each learner's needs is crucial. If this is not done, there may be a mismatch between the different learning styles and talents of the students, which would eventually hinder their progress in reading. Poor teaching practices can lead to untreated reading issues, which exacerbates problems as learners advance into higher level environments.

Lower-level reading curricula occasionally give fundamental decoding abilities precedence over critical thinking and higher-order comprehension. While decoding is necessary, learners may find it difficult to understand complicated texts in higher education if they fail to address higher-order skills. Both basic and advanced reading skills should be covered in a thorough reading curriculum. Moreover, sociocultural and linguistic factors can also significantly impact the effectiveness of reading programs. Learners from diverse backgrounds may face unique challenges, including language barriers and

cultural differences. If reading programs do not account for these factors, untreated reading difficulties may persist and manifest more prominently in higher education environments. Therefore, it is imperative for reading programs to acknowledge and integrate sociocultural and linguistic considerations to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness across diverse learner populations, safeguarding against the escalation of reading challenges as students advance into higher education.

To treat reading challenges, intervention measures must be consistent. Learners may encounter disruptions in their support networks if interventions are not implemented consistently across grade levels. As they move through their academic journeys, untreated reading problems may be exacerbated by the lack of a well-thought-out and ongoing intervention strategies.

It is often heard that when learners are found out to be not a good reader during high school years, teachers may say, they should be returned to elementary. This should not always be the mentality. There is no room for blaming. Clearly, the need to advance research on reading challenges in readers stems from the complex interactions that take place during the execution of reading programs at lower levels. The persistence of untreated reading challenges is mostly due to a variety of variables, including sociocultural issues, ineffective instructional approaches, inadequate early identification, and a lack of resources. To create focused treatments and redesign reading programs that guarantee a smooth continuity of support for learners at all educational levels, it is imperative to comprehend these underlying problems.

### *2.3. Individual Perspectives*

The experiences of learners labeled as slow readers, non-readers, or learners with frustration levels of reading, represent a significant and often challenging aspect of the educational landscape. This review explores the literature surrounding the individual perspectives of these learners, shedding light on the unique challenges they face and providing insights into developing targeted interventions.

The study by Brown and Lee (2020) highlights the significant impact that reading frustration levels can have on learners' engagement and motivation in reading activities. When learners encounter material that is beyond their current comprehension level, they may experience frustration, which can hinder their willingness to persist in reading and learning. This frustration may stem from various factors, such as complex vocabulary, syntactic structures, or unfamiliar content. They emphasize the importance of identifying these frustration levels early on and implementing appropriate strategies to address them. Providing scaffolded education, in which students receive progressively more support to advance their reading abilities, is one such strategy. Providing glossaries or vocabulary guides, dividing difficult materials into smaller, more digestible portions, and providing guided practice exercises are some examples of this kind of support.

Furthermore, Williams (2019) contributes to the understanding of non-readers in "Beyond Words: Exploring the Experiences of Non-Reading Students." This qualitative study explores the daily experiences of learners struggling with fundamental reading skills, revealing the multifaceted challenges they face. He elucidates the intricacies of their challenges using comprehensive interviews and observations, accentuating the diverse elements that contribute to their challenges in achieving literacy. To meet the various needs of non-reading individual, the findings highlight the significance of personalized interventions and support systems, which in turn support inclusive educational methods that place a high priority on individualized learning strategies.

While Gomez et al., (2020) explored the experiences of non-readers in inclusive classrooms are discussed in "Navigating Literacy Instruction: Perspectives of Non-Readers." The study provides valuable insights into the social and academic struggles of students labeled as non-readers in mainstream educational settings. Both slow-readers and non-readers commonly experience emotional challenges related to their struggles with reading (Smith & Johnson, 2017; Thompson & Davis, 2018; Williams, 2019). Additionally, it draws attention to the social dynamics that non-readers face in inclusive classrooms and emphasizes the significance of comprehending the larger context of their experiences.

More so, Vaughn and Fletcher (2012) clarified in the study, "Response to Intervention with Students with Reading Difficulties: Comprehensive Approaches to Intervention," a foundational understanding of evidence-based practices for developing interventions that cater to the diverse needs of slow-readers and non-readers. By conducting a thorough analysis of intervention options, the researchers shed light on practical methods for addressing reading issues across a range of severity levels. Their research highlights the significance of continuous evaluation, tailored instruction, and early identification in helping struggling readers become proficient readers. Furthermore, regardless of a learner's reading level, they support a comprehensive strategy that incorporates behavioral, instructional, and environmental elements to create a supportive learning environment. Their observations provide a substantial contribution to the field of education by providing educators and legislators with useful advice on how to adopt inclusive practices and enhance the academic performance of learners who struggle with reading.

Additionally, Torgesen (2009) worked on the study, "Recent Discoveries on Remediation of Reading Difficulties: Implications for Practice and Policy," which offers practical implications for interventions that go beyond conventional approaches, acknowledging the unique challenges faced by both slow-readers and non-readers. He provides evidence-based solutions for effectively addressing reading challenges by synthesizing recent study findings. This study emphasizes the significance of early intervention, clear instruction, and tailored assistance for struggling readers. It also highlights the vital role that educators, legislators, and stakeholders have in supporting the literacy development of struggling readers. He also stresses how important it is to match interventions with the most recent best practices and modify teaching strategies to meet the various requirements of learners. The study's observations are a useful tool for guiding governmental initiatives and instructional strategies that aim to improve reading results for all learners.

#### *2.4. Family Dynamics*

The role of family in supporting learners with different reading difficulties has garnered attention. Brown and Miller (2016) investigated "Parental Perspectives on Supporting Children with Reading Difficulties," emphasizing the pivotal role parents play in supporting and coping with children experiencing challenges in reading. The researchers investigated parental viewpoints, experiences, and methods for helping learners who struggle with reading through qualitative interviews and surveys. The research highlights the significance of parental engagement, motivation, and support in cultivating literacy abilities and advocating for favorable perspectives toward reading. They also stress how important it is for parents and teachers to communicate well to create integrated support networks for struggling readers. This study emphasizes the collaborative effort needed to address reading challenges comprehensively and improve academic achievements for all learners by acknowledging the distinct insights and contributions of families.

Supporting this claim, Garcia and Rodriguez (2019) extended this perspective with their study, "The Role of Family Literacy Practices in Alleviating Reading Difficulties," highlighting the importance of family engagement in addressing the needs of struggling readers across diverse categories of reading challenges (Brown & Miller, 2016; Garcia & Rodriguez, 2019). Family relationships have a significant impact on the experiences of learners who are classified as slow readers, non-readers, readers who are under reading frustration level, or those who have reading difficulties. The literature on how families shape these learners' lived experiences is examined in this review to highlight the vital support networks that have a positive effect on students' emotional and intellectual well-being.

While Thompson and Davis (2018) focused on the emotional impact of reading difficulties, they acknowledge the influence of familial emotional support on slow readers. Their research sheds light on how family dynamics contribute to or mitigate the emotional challenges faced by these learners. Researchers have discovered that having a supportive home environment might help lessen the negative emotional repercussions of reading difficulties, like frustration and embarrassment. On the other hand, a lack of support might make these difficulties worse and impede academic advancement. To effectively treat reading issues, the researchers emphasize the importance of family involvement in literacy

activities and educational interventions. This involvement strengthens good emotional experiences associated with reading and encourages a team approach to overcoming obstacles. For struggling readers to improve academically and develop resilience, this involvement is essential. Through the identification and utilization of family dynamics, educators and policymakers can customize interventions to address the distinct requirements of these students. All things considered, they emphasize the critical influence that familial emotional support has on learners' emotional experiences and academic paths.

Meanwhile, Williams (2019) explores the experiences of non-readers in "Beyond Words: Exploring the Experiences of Non-Reading Students." The study underscores the significance of family involvement in the development of fundamental reading skills and highlights the role of familial encouragement in overcoming challenges faced by non-reading students. It also shows that a family's constant support and provision of resources foster an atmosphere that is favorable to the development of reading confidence. On the other hand, non-reading individuals may feel even more frustrated and inadequate in the lack of familial support. To effectively address literacy issues, he says that focused interventions engaging individuals and their families are necessary. Working together, families and educators can provide non-reading learners with complete support. Learning how important family factors are to the development of literacy can help educators adopt more inclusive teaching practices. This research suggests that to enhance educational outcomes for learners who do not read well, there should be more family involvement in literacy activities.

This was supported by Gomez et al., (2020) in "Navigating Literacy Instruction: Perspectives of Non-Readers," provides insights into the role of the family in supporting non-readers within inclusive classrooms. The study emphasizes the importance of family engagement in navigating the literacy challenges faced by these learners. He emphasizes how crucial family involvement is to helping non-reading students in inclusive settings. The study supports a comprehensive strategy that values the various roles that families play and encourages cooperative relationships between teachers and parents/guardians. Through the creation of an inclusive and supportive educational environment that is marked by mutual respect, understanding, and collaborative decision-making, teachers can successfully guide children who are not readers through the literacy problems they confront and help them towards literacy competency.

Furthermore, Garcia and Rodriguez (2019) contribute to the understanding of family literacy practices in "The Role of Family Literacy Practices in Alleviating Reading Difficulties." Their research emphasizes the positive influence of family engagement in addressing the needs of learners with reading difficulties, providing a holistic view of familial contributions. To sum up, their research advances the knowledge of family literacy practices and supports a more inclusive and team-based strategy for resolving reading challenges. Their findings provide important insights for policymakers, educators, and practitioners working to promote equitable and empowering learning environments for all learners by recognizing the crucial role that families play as partners in the educational process.

Thus, the literature by Williams (2019), Gomez et al., (2020), and Garcia and Rodriguez (2019) collectively emphasize the role of families in shaping literacy practices, with a particular focus on non-readers and students with reading disabilities. The literature reviewed highlights the indispensable roles and contributions of families in the lived experiences of learners facing reading difficulties. Recognizing the impact of family dynamics on slow readers, non-readers, and those with reading disabilities is crucial for developing effective and inclusive interventions. By understanding the various ways in which families contribute to the academic and emotional well-being of these students, educators and policymakers can design targeted interventions that harness the positive influence of familial support.

The examined literature emphasizes the variety of approaches and methods that can be used to teach slow readers, nonreaders, as well as individuals with reading challenges. Learning environments can be made more productive and encouraging by taking an individualized approach that takes into account learners' learning preferences, uses technology, integrates multisensory experiences, encourages inclusive practices, prioritizes phonics, supports peer-assisted learning, and involves families. Through the integration of perspectives derived from the personal experiences of these individuals, educators can



customize interventions that not only tackle reading challenges but also foster a constructive and inclusive learning environment.

### *2.5. Teachers as Support Mechanism*

The experiences of learners labeled as slow readers, non-readers, readers under frustration level, and or those with reading disabilities are profoundly influenced by the interactions within their educational environments. This review delves into the literature surrounding the roles and contributions of teachers and peers in shaping the lived experiences of these learners, shedding light on the pivotal role these stakeholders play in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Anderson and Wilson (2020) in their qualitative study, "Teacher Perceptions of Students with Reading Difficulties," explore how teachers' perceptions influence the experiences of students labeled as slow readers. The study emphasizes the need for educators to adopt supportive attitudes and strategies to address the challenges faced by these learners. They interviewed a wide range of teachers in-depth to learn more about their perspectives on struggling readers. The researchers discovered a variety of attitudes and beliefs, including stereotypes and misconceptions, held by teachers toward these learners through thematic analysis. The study emphasizes how important teachers' attitudes are in determining the nature of the classroom and, ultimately, how well those who struggle with reading learn.

With these, educators may foster more inclusive and supportive learning environments where all learners can succeed by identifying and correcting negative views. The results highlight how crucial it is for educators to continue their professional growth and training to foster empathy, comprehension, and successful teaching methods for children with a variety of learning challenges.

Vaughn and Fletcher (2012) in their study, "Response to Intervention with Students with Reading Difficulties: Comprehensive Approaches to Intervention" provide insights into evidence-based practices for teachers in supporting students with diverse reading challenges. The comprehensive approaches discussed in the study serve as a framework for effective teacher interventions. The study emphasizes how important evidence-based strategies are for promoting reading achievement, including tailored training, explicit instruction, and continuous progress monitoring. They emphasize that to establish a nurturing atmosphere that promotes learning, educators, experts, and families must work together. According to their findings, teachers may successfully address the specific needs of struggling readers and foster literacy development by putting these all-encompassing techniques into practice.

### *2.6. Peer as Support System*

Peer support systems are groups of people who, because of their similar experiences and backgrounds, provide empathy, understanding, and support to one another. Peers in this system provide one another with emotional support, direction, and useful advice, which promotes a feeling of community and belonging. Peer support can take place in a variety of contexts, including casual get-togethers, internet forums, and support groups. Because it offers distinct viewpoints and firsthand experiences, it frequently enhances professional mental health care. In the end, peer support helps individuals feel less alone, more powerful, and validated as they work through their difficulties.

Wang and Chen (2018) in the study "Peer Support in the Classroom: Enhancing Reading Experiences for Students with Learning Disabilities" explores the impact of peer support on non-readers in the classroom. The research underscores the positive role peers can play in fostering a supportive learning environment for students facing reading difficulties. Learners with reading difficulties got individualized attention and support from their peers through activities like peer tutoring and collaborative reading sessions, which helped them overcome barriers in their reading development. As learners developed strong bonds and cooperated to achieve shared objectives, the peer support program also helped to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging in the classroom. All things considered, the results demonstrate how peer support interventions can help establish a welcoming and encouraging learning environment for students with learning impairments.

While, Gomez et al., (2020) in "Navigating Literacy Instruction: Perspectives of Non-Readers," shed light on the experiences of non-readers in inclusive classrooms, emphasizing the importance of

positive peer interactions. The study highlights how peers contribute to the social dynamics that influence the academic experiences of non-reading students. This interactions' influence on non-reading learners' academic experiences is one of the study's main points. Good peer relationships can create a welcoming and inclusive environment in the classroom where those who do not read can feel appreciated and accepted. Learners who do not read well may get more involved in class activities and feel more like they belong as a result of these interactions. On the other hand, non-reading learners may find it difficult to learn due to unfavorable peer interactions. For those who do not read, experiences like bullying, social isolation, or a lack of understanding from classmates can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. This can therefore impede their overall academic achievement and the development of their literacy.

More so, Dolmans et al., (2015) on "Researching the 'Group Effect' in Peer Assessment: Role of Peer Feedback," delves into the challenges of peer-assisted learning, particularly in the context of peer assessment. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to take peer feedback dynamics into account when trying to maximize the learning process. Slow readers and nonreaders face particular difficulties that have their roots in scholastic and personal circumstances. Consequently, peer instruction—which has its roots in collaborative learning—offers a framework of assistance for attending to the particular requirements of slow readers and non-readers.

Furthermore, topping (2017) conducted a meta-analysis on peer tutoring, emphasizing its positive impact on academic achievement, particularly for individuals with varying reading paces. While, Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the role of social interaction in cognitive development, providing a theoretical framework for the effectiveness of peer instruction. Indeed, peer instruction has demonstrated positive effects on various reading skills, including comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Numerous studies have shown that peer tutoring has a variety of positive effects on reading abilities. These advantages cover more ground in terms of literacy development than just academic success.

Peer education, for example, has been shown to enhance reading comprehension by giving students the chance to participate in debates, explain ideas, and get feedback from their peers. Students can also improve their reading fluency and become more proficient at decoding and understanding texts by practicing often and receiving feedback from their peers. Furthermore, as peer instructors actively participate in the learning process and encourage one another's advancement, the collaborative character of peer instruction can promote learners' motivation and engagement.

Likewise, Johnson et al., (2014) conducted a longitudinal study on peer-assisted learning programs, showcasing improvements in reading comprehension and self-efficacy among slow readers. As Alvermann and Phelps (2011) discussed the integration of peer-led discussions to enhance critical thinking skills and reading comprehension. This literature review highlights the importance of peer instruction for non-readers and slow readers, emphasizing the need for personalized, collaborative approaches based on their lived experiences.

Therefore, all of these collectively emphasize the positive impact peers can have on the academic and social experiences of students facing reading challenges their findings suggest that incorporating peer support strategies into inclusive education practices can enhance the reading experiences of students with learning disabilities. The literature reviewed underscores the significant roles and contributions of teachers and peers in shaping the lived experiences of students with reading difficulties. Recognizing the impact of these stakeholders on slow readers, non-readers, and those with reading disabilities is crucial for fostering inclusive educational environments. The insights from these studies provide a framework for developing teacher training programs and inclusive practices that promote positive learning experiences for all students.

### 2.7. School's Support

School support is instrumental in the early identification of reading difficulties. Timely identification allows for targeted interventions that can significantly impact a learner's reading proficiency (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Teachers, experts, and parents work together to provide school support by identifying

the reading strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. This method makes it possible to share tactics and communicate effectively. Interventions that are customized to meet specific requirements include tutoring, structured literacy programs, and assistive technology. To stop reading challenges from getting worse and having an impact on academic achievement and self-esteem, early intervention is essential. Schools enable learners to become proficient readers by quickly addressing difficulties, which promotes academic accomplishment and lifetime learning.

Also, school support for learners with reading difficulties involves providing individualized instruction and intervention strategies. According to Johnson et al., (2019), tailoring teaching methods to the specific needs of each learner is essential. Learners with reading challenges have different learning styles, and individualized training takes that into account. Schools can create focused intervention techniques by pinpointing the exact areas in which a learner has difficulties. This could involve phonics training, comprehension techniques, or needs-specific multimodal approaches. Frequent evaluation and tracking of progress enable interventions to be modified as necessary to guarantee ongoing progress. The ultimate objective is to enable struggling readers to develop into self-assured, autonomous readers who can succeed academically.

This may include personalized reading plans, small group instruction, and the integration of assistive technologies to enhance reading skills (Brown & White, 2021). In order to properly adapt instruction to each learner's needs and make sure that every learner has the tools and support they need to improve their reading abilities, personalized reading plans are essential. Small group education encourages cooperation and peer learning among participants by enabling teachers to focus on particular areas of student growth and to provide students more individualized attention. By providing extra tools and resources, such text-to-speech software or specialized reading apps, to fit a range of learning styles and abilities, the integration of assistive technologies significantly improves reading skills. Schools may establish an engaging and inclusive learning environment that equips learners to become proficient readers and lifelong learners by utilizing a mix of these tactics.

Additionally, effective school support extends to the continuous professional development of educators. Smith (2021) suggests that teachers should be equipped with the latest research and instructional techniques to address the diverse needs of learners with reading difficulties. Regular workshops and training programs can empower educators to implement evidence-based practices in their classrooms (Jones et al., 2019). School should continue to provide for teachers, ongoing professional development is advantageous for all individual in the classroom, not just those who struggle with reading. Teachers can stay current on developing best practices in education and improve their pedagogical skills by taking part in workshops and training programs.

Consequently, educators can modify their teaching strategies to suit different learning styles and aptitudes through this continuous learning process, which eventually boosts learners' engagement and academic success. Additionally, encouraging a culture of lifelong learning among educators can help create a more supportive and cooperative school environment where teachers exchange ideas and methods for better meeting the varied needs of learners. In the end, supporting educators' professional growth is an investment in every learner's achievement and well-being, fostering a more inclusive environment.

Thus, creating a supportive learning environment is crucial for learners facing reading difficulties. Smith and Brown (2017) highlight the significance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships, promoting a growth mindset, and providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages risk-taking and persistence. School administrators can play a role in establishing a culture of inclusivity and support (Clark & Robinson, 2020).

Thus, the endeavor to establish a nurturing educational setting for learners with reading challenges is complex and necessitates cooperation between teachers, administrators, and the whole school community. Teachers may greatly improve the learning experience for struggling readers by emphasizing excellent teacher-student connections, encouraging a development attitude, and creating an environment that rewards patience and risk-taking. In addition, school officials must be actively

involved in fostering inclusivity and support so that each learner feels respected and empowered throughout their educational experience.

### *2.8. Understanding Individual Reading Learning Styles*

Teaching individuals with reading difficulties demands a nuanced understanding of their lived experiences. This review explores the literature regarding effective strategies and techniques employed in education to cater to the needs of non-readers, slow readers, and those with reading difficulties. By incorporating insights from their lived experiences, educators can tailor interventions that foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Lyon and Chhabra's (2018) work on "Effective Instruction for Struggling Readers: A Research Synthesis" offers valuable insights into effective instructional methods tailored to slow readers. The research emphasizes the importance of individualized teaching that takes into account the diverse learning needs within this demographic. They stress the value of creating a welcoming learning atmosphere where reluctant readers are inspired to take chances and participate fully in the educational process. They stress how important it is for teachers to develop a relationship and earn students' trust to help them feel like they belong and can do anything. All things considered, the research conducted by them provides educators and experts with a thorough manual for creating and implementing instructional strategies that will help struggling readers succeed academically.

Similarly, Simmons and Singleton (2013) delve into the efficacy of multisensory strategies in their study titled "Multisensory Strategies in the Classroom." They explore how such approaches can significantly impact reading instruction, especially for non-readers, by involving multiple senses in the learning process and accommodating various learning styles. These strategies, seek to enhance reading outcomes, such as comprehension, fluency, and phonemic awareness, by accommodating a variety of learning styles. The study highlights how crucial it is to establish inclusive learning settings for struggling readers by utilizing multimodal techniques.

### *2.9. Phonics and Phonological Awareness*

Phonics and phonological awareness have long been recognized as fundamental components of early literacy instruction, essential for proficient reading and spelling. Recent studies have delved deeper into understanding the efficacy of various phonics instruction methods and their impact on literacy outcomes.

For instance, a study by Torgesen et al., (2014) investigated the effects of a systematic phonics program on the reading development of at-risk learners, demonstrating significant gains in phonemic awareness and decoding skills among participants. The study's conclusions imply that enrolling in a structured phonics program helped the at-risk students' phonemic awareness and decoding abilities to significantly improve. These improvements are significant since decoding and phonemic awareness are fundamental abilities required for competent reading comprehension. The phonics program probably assisted the participants in becoming more proficient readers by improving these skills.

Similarly, a meta-analysis by Ehri et al., (2019) examined the effectiveness of phonics instruction across diverse learner's populations and instructional settings, concluding that systematic and explicit phonics instruction consistently yields superior reading outcomes compared to whole language or other approaches. Consistent evidence was discovered by them to bolster the advantages of explicit and systematic phonics instruction over other approaches, like whole language.

While explicit instruction requires providing straightforward and understandable explanations of these correlations, systematic phonics training refers to a controlled, sequential teaching of letter-sound relationships. In comparison to learners taught using whole language methods or other approaches, the meta-analysis showed that learners who received systematic and explicit phonics teaching consistently had improved reading outcomes. These results covered comprehension, fluency, and decoding abilities, among other reading-related topics.

### *2.10. Philippine Informal Reading Inventory as Assessment Tool*

Every Child a Reader Program, which seeks to develop reading and writing skills in every Filipino child at the grade level, is supported by the Department of Education (DepEd). As a result, beginning with the 2018–2019 school year, the DepEd continuously administers the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) exam to students in public schools across the country (DepEd, 2018). One of the most important skills a youngster can learn is literacy. All academic learning is built on reading. To succeed in school and life, a kid must learn to read, write, and count.

The Department of Education's top priority is to enhance literacy (DepEd). It is based on the Department's flagship initiative, the "Every Child A Reader Program," which seeks to develop reading and writing skills in every Filipino child at the grade level appropriate for their age. One of the main issues in education has been the low reading achievement of students in elementary schools. With the use of several reading interventions, students showed some gains in reading, reading pace, and reading comprehension (Horca et al., 2018).

The purpose of the PHIL-IRI is to assist public learners, self-sufficient readers and writers by giving them systematic instruction in reading and writing. The PHIL IRI is then improved by being implemented in all public schools across the nation. Its goal is to give every child sufficient reading instruction so they can converse in both Filipino and English. The PHIL IRI is an assessment tool that measures the reading competency of elementary school students more thoroughly. This standard test was also modified for use in high schools. It is the first instrument that has been independently tested to gauge pupils' reading comprehension skills. The teacher formally assesses the student's word recognition, comprehension, and reading speed using stories and passages. Although it is intended for elementary, high schools within the Division of Nueva Ecija also adopted, it since it was found out that it is still effective among high school learners. With the mere fact that there are still slow readers and learners under frustration level when it comes to reading.

While speed and comprehension measure the learners' learning over time, the tool's primary goal is to assess the student's fluency in understanding within the context of oral evaluation (Pado et al., 2018). This is a tried-and-true assessment instrument for figuring out a learner's reading comprehension and proficiency level. It is imperative to concentrate on resolving reading difficulties among senior high school pupils for multiple reasons. First off, if their reading issues are not resolved right away, these pupils run the imminent risk of falling behind academically and becoming disinterested in studying. Early intervention can prevent further academic challenges and foster a more positive learning experience. Additionally, strong reading skills are essential for success in higher education and the workforce. By tackling reading issues in senior high school, educators can better prepare students for the demands they will face in college, vocational training, or employment.

Furthermore, reading materials for senior high school are more difficult and demand sophisticated comprehension abilities. Learners can more easily handle the difficult academic material they come across when reading difficulties are addressed at this stage. Due to a variety of developmental variables, some of them may also experience reading challenges during adolescence; therefore, intervention efforts must target this age range. Lastly, given the limited resources available to schools, senior high school students who struggle with reading may need to receive priority support. Even though early intervention is preferable, older adolescents need continued help to succeed academically and in the future. Thus, to ensure ongoing success and improvement, reading problem interventions should ideally be comprehensive, starting early, and continuing throughout a learner's educational path.

Finally, the multifaceted nature of reading difficulties among learners, emphasizing the necessity for personalized interventions informed by individual narratives, familial dynamics, and evidence-based practices. It highlights the critical role of early identification and intervention in mitigating reading challenges and preventing long-term academic repercussions. Additionally, the review emphasizes the importance of integrating diverse strategies, such as phonics instruction, technology utilization, and inclusive classroom practices, to address the varying needs of struggling readers effectively. Furthermore, it stresses the significance of collaborative efforts among educators, family, peers and school communities to create supportive environments conducive to academic and social success.

Overall, these advocates for a holistic approach that considers emotional, social, cultural, and educational dimensions to ensure that individuals with reading difficulties receive the necessary support to thrive.

### 3. Methods and Techniques Used

This study employed mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative. For qualitative, phenomenological research was used. This is an approach that aims to explore and understand the essence and meaning of lived experiences as described by individuals who have directly experienced a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2017). This research method focuses on uncovering the subjective perspectives, interpretations, and reflections of participants to gain insight into the nature of their experiences. Phenomenological research on the lived experiences of students with reading difficulties would involve exploring and understanding their subjective experiences, perceptions, and meanings related to their reading difficulties. This approach aimed to uncover the essence of their experiences and gain insights into how reading difficulties impact the emotional, social, cultural and academic aspects in their lives.

Moreover, this context employed methods such as in-depth interviews, observations, and analysis of their experiences. These methods allowed learners to share their experiences, thoughts, emotions, and coping strategies related to their reading difficulties. The analysis of data in phenomenological research involves identifying common themes, patterns, and structures that emerge from participants' descriptions of their experiences. Researchers aimed to capture the essence and meaning of these experiences and provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of the subjective reality of learners with reading difficulties. Language teachers also served as participants in the study. A semi-structured interview guide was administered to them to determine their observations on the experiences, strategies, and techniques used in by learners with reading difficulties. From all these, a reading intervention program was devised.

For the quantitative research, a survey questionnaire was employed. A survey questionnaire is a structured set of questions designed to gather data from participants for research or information-gathering purposes. It included statements where the learner-participants will rate based on a 4-point Likert scale. These comprised statements relevant to their experiences and its impact on their emotional, social, cultural, and academic aspects. The coping mechanisms, the strategies and the techniques they wanted to use to help them with their difficulties in reading, are also part of the questionnaire. This was used to validate whether or not the learners were experiencing reading difficulties and whether such difficulties impacted the above-mentioned aspects.

#### 3.1. Participants of the Study

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the participants. The participants were the Senior High School students within the Sto. Domingo District, Philippines ages 15-20 years old, who were categorized as learners under frustration level in terms of reading.

Moreover, the language teachers within the said district also served as the participants of the study. The total population was employed. All language teachers who are handling English subjects with five or more teaching experiences were interviewed.

The following procedures were undertaken in identifying learners with reading difficulties:

1. Screening Assessments: Schools often administer screening assessments to identify learners who may be at risk for reading difficulties. These assessments may include measures of basic reading skills, such as letter recognition, phonological awareness, and word reading fluency. PHIL-IRI Philippine Informal Reading Inventory was used to determine the learners with reading difficulties. Phil-IRI is an assessment tool used in the Philippines to evaluate the reading skills of learners. It aims to determine a learners' reading level and identify areas where they may need additional support or intervention.

2. Diagnostic Assessments: If a learner is identified as potentially having reading difficulties through screening assessments, further diagnostic assessments are conducted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their reading abilities. This may involve more in-depth evaluations of

specific reading skills, such as phonemic awareness, decoding, reading comprehension, and oral reading fluency. These assessments can help pinpoint the areas in which students are struggling and provide insights into the nature and severity of their reading difficulties.

3. Individualized Assessments: These assessments are often conducted by specialists, such as reading specialists, educational psychologists, or speech-language pathologists. These assessments may include a combination of standardized tests, informal observations, interviews, and checklists to gather information about the student's reading abilities, cognitive processing skills, and other relevant factors. These assessments provide a more detailed profile of the learner's strengths, weaknesses, and specific needs.

4. Progress Monitoring: Once a learner has been identified as having reading difficulties, ongoing progress monitoring is crucial to assess their response to interventions and track their growth over time. Progress monitoring involves regularly assessing the student's reading skills and comparing their performance to expected benchmarks. This helps determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategies and enables adjustments to be made as needed.

5. Inclusion Criteria. Senior High School students who were categorized as learners under frustration level (based on Phil-IRI assessment), served as the respondents of the study.

### *3.2. Language Teachers as Informants in the Study*

Interviews and Focus Groups: Semi-structured interview guide questions were administered among teacher-participants during the interview. More so, focus group discussions with language teachers was also employed to explore their observations, experiences, and strategies in addressing the reading difficulties of learners. By incorporating them into the study, the researcher was able to gather diverse perspectives that enrich the overall understanding of the challenges and potential interventions for learners with reading difficulties in the context of language education.

### *3.3. Instruments of the Study*

In gathering the data needed for the lived experiences of the learners with reading difficulties the following instruments were employed:

1. Semi-structured interviews: Conducting one-on-one or group interviews with learners who have reading difficulties was indeed a valuable research instrument. Open-ended questions were utilized to allow participants to share their experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and any other relevant information. Interviews provide an opportunity to delve deeply into participants' perspectives and gain a rich understanding of their lived experiences. There are also ten (10) items where the learners need to rate each statement on a 4-point Likert scale.

2. Focus Group Discussion: This kind of discussion brings together a small group of learners with reading difficulties to engage in a guided discussion. This instrument enabled participants to share their experiences while also interacting with and building upon each other's insights. FGD can uncover shared themes, common challenges, and diverse perspectives within the group.

3. Observations: Observing learners with reading difficulties in natural settings, such as classrooms or learning support environments, can yield valuable data. By observing their behaviors, interactions with peers and teachers, and engagement with reading materials, researchers gained a deeper understanding of the challenges and strategies used by learners with reading difficulties.

4. Document analysis: Researcher analyzed relevant documents such as learners' academic records, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), progress reports, or teacher evaluations and Reading Coordinators. These documents can provide insights into the formal assessments, interventions, and support systems in place for learners with reading difficulties, as well as the impact of these measures on their experiences.

5. Audio or video recordings: With participants' consent, audio or video were used during interviews, Focus Group Discussion, or observations. This instrument allowed for more accurate capturing and later analysis of participants' responses, non-verbal cues, and interactions.

6. Survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire consisted of 10 items were utilized to understand the experiences of learners with reading difficulties, the strategies they employ, the support they receive, and their perspectives on potential reading intervention programs.

### 3.4. For the Language-Teacher

1. Semi-structured interviews: Conducting one-on-one or group interviews with language teachers who have observed learners reading difficulties can be a valuable research instrument. Open-ended questions were utilized to allow participants to share their experiences, observations, strategies/techniques, and any other relevant information. Interviews provided an opportunity to delve deeply into participants' perspectives and gain a rich understanding of their lived experiences.

**Validity.** Questions were comprehensively covering the range of experiences these learners face, including emotional, social, cultural, and educational dimensions. Collaborating with experts in special education, literacy, and psychology can enhance the content validity of the interview.

**Reliability.** If the study involves repeated interviews, the researcher ensured that learners' responses are consistent over time. This may involve piloting the interview questions initially to identify and address any issues. Maintaining consistency in the wording and structure of questions to avoid variations that could impact the reliability of responses is also necessary.

**Practicality.** In considering the attention spans and potential fatigue of learners with reading difficulties, it is essential to keep the interview length reasonable. Structuring the interview in a way that is engaging and accommodating to the needs of the participants contributes to the practicality of the study.

### 3.5. Data Gathering Procedure

Pilot testing was conducted among Senior High School students in the Talavera District, Philippines. The questionnaire and the interview guide questions were also validated by the language experts. They are Doctoral Degree holders in English. This is essential for ensuring the quality, reliability, and validity of the data collected. It enhances the credibility of research findings and contributes to the overall rigor of the study.

The researcher sought written permission to conduct the study to the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) in Sto. Domingo District. Upon the approval of the PSDS, these approved letters were sent to the school principals to formalize the request. The researcher then talked and coordinated with the Reading Coordinators. Results of the assessment among the learners who were considered readers under frustration level served as the participants of the study. The researcher also sent letters to the target participants for interview sessions. The purpose of the study was also explained during the Focused-group discussion.

When the target participants approved the request letter, she/he then signed the consent form that contains the approval to record the interview session. If the participants declined to record the interview, still the researcher considered the participants. After the participants agreed on the provisions of the consent form the researcher asked the schedule of the interview session based on the availability of the participants. Before the start of the actual interview the researcher started with a light conversation and shared her narratives as a language teacher, when the researcher felt that there was rapport and openness the semi-structured interview was conducted. While the interview is conducted the researcher will take note of important observation/s

Other methods such as document analysis were employed to deepen their lived experiences. An interview was also conducted among the language teachers. The researcher ensured the protection of the participants' identities and rights by the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The researcher utilized the six-phase process for thematic analysis based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2012). As cited by Smith and Jones (2019), thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning (or "themes") within qualitative data.



### 3.6. Statistical Treatment

**Quantitative data.** A weighted mean is a kind of average. Instead of each data point contributing equally to the final mean, some data points contribute more “weight” than others. If all the weights are equal, then the weighted mean equals the arithmetic mean.

**Qualitative Data.** For questions 1 to 5 the researcher narrated the result of data gathered by using the focus group discussion, interviews, and observation. Creswell (2017) described three kinds of collecting qualitative data from interviews, observation, and documents to gather necessary data.

Transcribing interview responses was done by the researcher in two ways: first word-for-word transcription which is probably better but laborious. But there is value in listening to an interview while transcribing, as a researcher she figured out a muffled word. Also, the researchers learned how to improve the later interviews. The use of word-for-word transcriptions of some sections in the interview, and the summary of others during the note-taking and typing was another method that the researcher applied for the next and succeeding participants.

Since there is no one style for reporting the findings for qualitative research, the researcher’s basis of choosing her style depended not only on what “story” the participants told but also on how they related it. As text and image data are so dense and rich, not all of the information can be used in a qualitative study. Thus, in the analysis of the data, researcher need to “winnow” the data, a process of focusing on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it (Guest et al., 2012). This process, too, is different from quantitative research in which researchers go to great lengths to preserve all of the data and reconstruct or replace missing data. In qualitative research, the impact of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes, something like five to seven themes (Creswell, 201).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Quantitative Phase

For clarity of presentation and consistency in the discussion, the data were presented following the order and sequence of the questions raised in the first chapter, to wit: (1) the learner-participants’ profile in terms of sex, age, grade level and track; and the profile of teacher-participants in terms of their sex, age, and years of teaching experience, educational background and grade level taught; (2) the lived-experiences of the learners with reading difficulties that affect their emotional, social, cultural and academic aspect validated with the observations of the language-teachers; (3) the coping strategies and techniques employed by the learners together with the observations of the language-teachers; (4) the support or assistance they received from their family, peers, teachers, and the school to help with their reading difficulties aligned also with the observation of the teacher-participants; (5) and the suggested reading intervention programs both by the learner-participants and the teacher-participants.

### 4.2. Phase 1 – Quantitative Data

#### 4.2.1. Indicators of Reading Difficulties and Associated Mean Scores

Learner-participants strongly relate to statements reflecting experiences with reading difficulties, as evidenced by an average mean of 3.16. They strongly agree that academic performance is affected by reading difficulties, with an average mean of 3.40. Coping mechanisms are acknowledged as necessary aids, averaging 3.20. Also, respondents indicate agreement regarding support from family, with a mean of 2.53. Overall, there is a strong consensus among participants that a reading intervention program is crucial to address their difficulties. These findings resonate with existing research emphasizing the intricate relationship between reading proficiency, academic success, and the need for tailored support strategies.

**Table 1.**  
Indicators of reading difficulties and associated mean scores.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Reading difficulties significantly impact my emotional well-being.	3.27	Strongly agree
2. My social interactions are affected by my reading difficulties.	2.73	Agree
3. My cultural background affects my reading abilities resulting in reading difficulties.	2.93	Agree
4. My academic performance is affected by my reading difficulties.	3.40	Strongly agree
5. I use strategies or techniques to cope with my reading difficulties.	3.20	Agree
6. I receive support from my family to address my reading difficulties.	2.53	Agree
7. Teachers provide assistance in managing my reading difficulties.	3.73	Strongly agree
8. The school offers support to help with my reading difficulties.	3.20	Agree
9. My friends or classmates help me with my difficulties in reading.	3.27	Strongly agree
10. Reading intervention programs can be helpful in terms of my reading difficulties.	3.53	Strongly agree
Average mean	3.16	Agree

#### 4.3. Phase 2 – Qualitative Data

##### 4.3.1. Profile of the Participants

Table 2 comprises of 15 learners all categorized as readers under frustration level, predominantly male, with a mix of ages ranging from 16 to 18 years old. Most students are in Grade 11, with only a few in Grade 12. The academic programs pursued by the learners are split between Academic and TechVoc. Among the Grade 11 students, a significant portion are enrolled in TechVoc programs, while Grade 12 students are evenly distributed between Academic and TechVoc. On the otherhand, teacher-participants have varying years of teaching experience, ranging from 5 to 16 years. The majority are pursuing a Masteral degree, indicating a commitment to furthering their education while already in the field of teaching. There is a diverse range of ages and genders represented, with females comprising the majority of the data.

**Table 2.**  
Profile of the participants.

Pseudonym of learner-participants	Sex	Age	Grade level	Track
1. SHSL1	M	18	Grade 12	Academic
2. SHSL2	M	16	Grade 11	TechVoc
3. SHSL3	M	16	Grade 11	Academic
4. SHSL4	M	16	Grade 11	Academic
5. SHSL5	M	16	Grade 11	TechVoc
6. SHSL6	F	16	Grade 11	TechVoc
7. SHSL 7	M	16	Grade 11	TechVoc
8. SHSL 8	M	16	Grade 11	Academic
9. SHSL 9	M	16	Grade 11	TechVoc
10. SHSL10	M	16	Grade 11	Academic
11. SHSL11	M	17	Grade 11	Academic
12. SHSL12	F	17	Grade 11	Academic
13. SHSL13	M	17	Grade 12	TechVoc

14. SHSL14	F	16	Grade 11	Academic
15. SHSL15	M	18	Grade 12	TechVoc
Pseudonym of teacher-participants	Sex	Age	Years of teaching experience	Educational background
1. SHST1	F	40	16	Masteral
2. SHST2	F	28	5	Bachelor
3. SHST3	F	32	11	Masteral
4. SHST4	F	27	5	Bachelor
5. SHST5	F	31	10	Masteral
6. SHST6	F	33	7	Masteral
7. SHST7	F	30	11	Masteral
8. SHST8	M	38	14	Masteral
9. SHST9	M	35	13	Masteral
10. SHST10	F	28	5	Masteral

#### 4.4. Problem 1: Experiences of Learner-Participants with Reading Difficulties

Result shows that when it comes to phonological and phonemic awareness challenges, learners struggle with distinguishing and manipulating individual sounds in spoken language, impacting reading abilities. They express difficulty in reading aloud and feel embarrassed or nervous when asked to read in front of others. In terms of vocabulary depth and comprehension difficulties, they face challenges in understanding and comprehending texts due to limited vocabulary. They find it difficult to grasp nuanced meanings and make connections within the text, leading to lower comprehension scores. As to fluency and decoding issues, some learners struggle with reading accurately, smoothly, and with expression, which hampers their overall reading fluency. They feel pressure to learn quickly and express nervousness about their slower reading pace.

Lastly, as to limited metacognitive awareness, there is a deficiency in understanding one's cognitive processes while reading, hindering effective monitoring and self-regulation during reading tasks. Learner-participants expressed difficulty in comprehending texts and resort to guessing rather than understanding what they read. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions and instructional strategies such as explicit phonological and phonemic awareness instruction, vocabulary-building activities, structured phonics instruction, repeated reading practice, and explicit instruction on metacognitive strategies.

#### 4.5. Problem 2: The Impact of the Reading Difficulties on Emotional, Social, Cultural, and Academic Aspects

Learners with reading difficulties experienced a range of negative emotions, including social discomfort, vulnerability, emotional distress, isolation, loneliness, pressure overwhelm, self-evaluation, and doubt. These emotions, such as frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem, significantly impact academic progress and well-being. Reading difficulties affect social interactions, leading to social anxiety, avoidance, introversion, and self-consciousness. Seeking support and connection from understanding peers becomes crucial, but feelings of embarrassment or inadequacy may hinder these efforts. While cultural factors play a role in how reading difficulties are perceived and addressed. Alienation, language barriers, socioeconomic status, and cultural backgrounds can influence students' experiences.

Additionally, reading difficulties often result in poor academic performance, reflected in low quiz scores and difficulties comprehending and retaining academic material. Thereby resulting in academic underachievement and struggles. Interventions such as targeted literacy support are essential for addressing these challenges and improving outcomes. These were supported by the statements of the language teachers who have observed similar ideas.

#### 4.6. Problem 3. Coping Strategies and Techniques of Learners with Reading Difficulties

Learners expressed seeking help from teachers, peers, and family members to improve their reading skills. Peer collaboration and cooperative learning were highlighted as beneficial strategies, along with seeking extra help from others. Students emphasized the importance of practice and guidance from those they perceive as more skilled readers.

Also, learners and teachers mentioned utilizing tangible resources such as books and other available materials reinforces learning. Practices like reading English books in the library, using English-Tagalog dictionaries, and reading during break times were common among learners.

#### 4.7. Problem 4: Support or Assistance Received from Their Family, Peers, Teachers, and the School to Aid Reading Difficulties

Learners emphasized the significant impact of parental and family guidance and encouragement in overcoming reading challenges. Parents and family members actively engage in reading activities with learners, providing assistance and encouragement. This involvement fosters a positive learning environment and correlates with improved literacy skills. Moreso, in the reliance on the extended family theme, learners mentioned seeking support from extended family members, such as cousins, aunts, and grandparents, when parental support may be limited due to various reasons. Extended family members assist in reading tasks, offer encouragement, and provide emotional support, contributing to the learners' literacy development.

In terms of peer support, mutual assistance and collaboration foster personalized support and create a supportive learning environment, enhancing comprehension and critical thinking skills. Learners expressed how their peers help them with unfamiliar words or pronunciations, emphasizing the importance of supportive interactions. Also, motivation and encouragement were identified as crucial factors in fostering resilience and success. Peers play a significant role in motivating learners to strive for improvement, instilling confidence and perseverance. Positive support from peers can boost learners' confidence and motivation, while negative attitudes can lead to decreased motivation and confidence.

As to teacher support, they play a crucial role in boosting the self-confidence of learners with reading difficulties. They also highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between families and schools in addressing reading difficulties. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance, teachers create a supportive environment where students feel empowered to improve their reading skills. Furthermore, teachers recognize the importance of providing tailored resources and materials to support learners with reading difficulties. By offering a variety of tools and activities catered to diverse learning styles, teachers engage students and facilitate their academic growth. Personalized instruction and targeted interventions help address individual needs and enhance reading comprehension. Improving pronunciation and communication skills is also essential for effective language proficiency. Teachers focus on phonetic exercises and practice with native speakers to enhance articulation and clarity.

And lastly, when it comes to school support, access to resources such as leveled reading materials, assistive technology, and specialized instructional tools is essential for supporting learners with reading difficulties. Ten out of fifteen learner-participants and three teacher-participants emphasized the importance of adequate resources during interviews. Providing a reading program play a vital role in addressing the needs of learners with reading difficulties by through a systematic approach to instruction. By incorporating evidence-based strategies and interventions, structured support programs help students develop essential reading skills in a scaffolded and incremental manner. Both learner-participants and teacher-participants highlighted the significance of such programs during interviews. Additionally, fostering a reading culture in schools is crucial for supporting students with reading difficulties. Schools that prioritize reading culture interventions witness significant improvements in reading comprehension and fluency among struggling readers. Learner-participants mentioned the presence of reading corners in their classrooms, but expressed a desire for more activities and resources to promote reading culture.

#### 4.8. Reading Intervention Program

This program caters to a holistic approach to reading intervention, where learners are supported emotionally, intellectually, and socially, empowering them to overcome reading difficulties and achieve success. It emphasizes the creation of a supportive environment to foster motivation and resilience. Through personalized assistance and adaptive interventions, learners receive tailored support to address their challenges. Structured guidance and practice opportunities enable gradual skill development and confidence building. Additionally, peer collaboration enhances learning outcomes by achieve collective knowledge and support within the community.

Project SAGIP is a Reading Intervention Program that envisions a holistic development of learners having difficulties in reading. Reading difficulties often engender feelings of frustration and discouragement among learners. By cultivating a supportive environment within the program, learners are encouraged to confront challenges with resilience and determination. A supportive atmosphere fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, empowering learners to engage in reading activities and pursue improvement with confidence. Each learner possesses unique strengths and areas for improvement. The program recognizes this diversity and offers personalized assistance tailored to individual needs. Continuous adaptation of interventions based on learners' progress ensures that support remains relevant and effective, maximizing the likelihood of success for every participant. This program is validated by English language experts, all are Doctorate Degree holders in English as well as validated by the Reading Coordinators of the three schools in Sto. Domingo District.

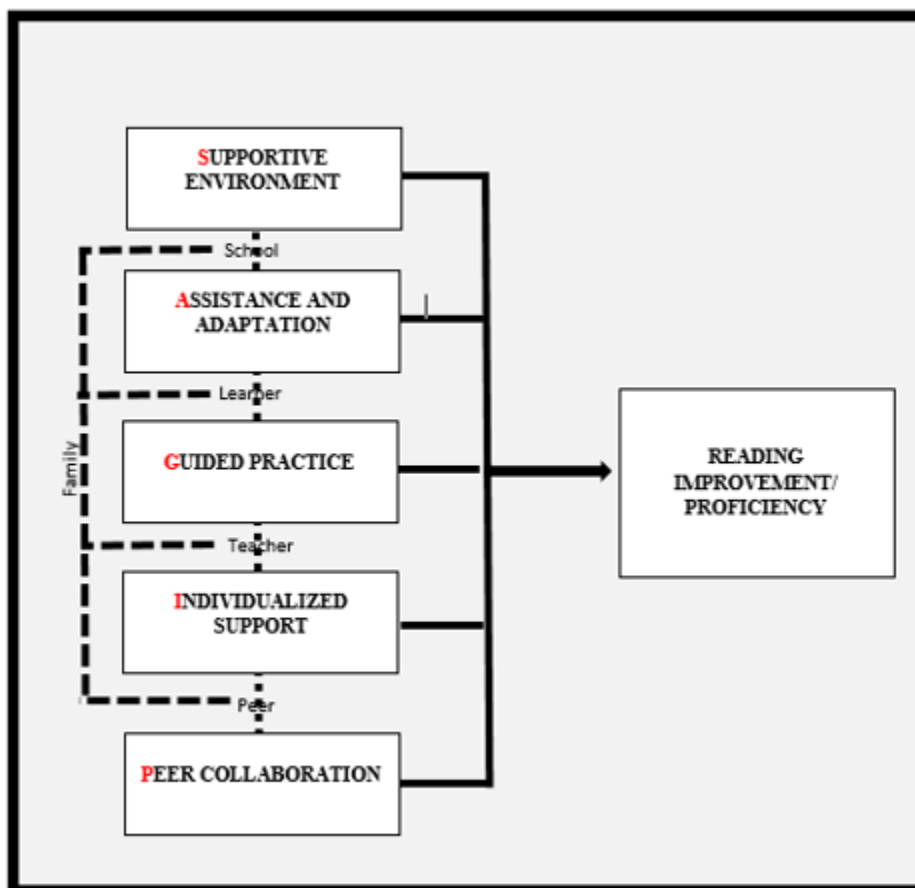
Moreover, structured guidance and practice are essential for nurturing reading skills effectively. Through the provision of clear direction and purposeful practice opportunities, learners develop both competence and confidence in their reading abilities. Also, guided practice sessions enable learners to engage with reading materials in a supportive environment, reinforcing essential skills and strategies under the guidance of experienced facilitators.

**Table 3.**

Work plan for reading intervention plan.

<b>Implementing structures</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies/Activities</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>MOV's</b>
Reading Assessment among Senior High School	To determine the level of readings of students	Language teachers will facilitate reading assessment through Phil-IRI (A standardized Reading Assessment)	January 2025 First Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phil-IRI reading Assessment tool</li> </ul>
Orientation of Learner-Beneficiaries of the Reading Intervention Program	To explain the objective of the reading program and provide an overview of the reading activities	Learners' Orientation	January 2025 second Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Letters to Advisers</li> <li>List of Participants</li> </ul>
Orientation of Parents of Learner-Beneficiaries of the Reading Intervention Program	To explain the objective of the reading program, provide an overview of the reading activities, and orient them on their role as a guide of their child at home	Parents Orientation	January 2025 second Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Letters to Parents</li> <li>List of learner-beneficiaries of the Reading Intervention Program</li> </ul>
LAC Session of	To discuss about			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memo of the</li> </ul>

Language Teachers	the reading intervention program activities and for further clarifications and recommendations	Learning Action Cell Session of Language Teachers (Meeting/Seminar)	January 2025 third Week	LAC session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of the Project SAGIP documents</li> <li>• Agreement Form</li> </ul>
Start of the Implementation of the Project SAGIP (Reading Intervention Program)	To facilitate the Reading intervention Program activities among the Learners who were categorized as having reading difficulties	Conduct of Reading Interevntion Program	Every Friday of the Week starting February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Intervention Program activities</li> </ul>
Re-Assessment/Follow-up Assessment among Learners	To determine the improvement of the reading level of learners after the reading sessions.	Language-teachers will facilitate Raeding Assessment through Phil-IRI (A standardized Reading Assessment)	March, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phil-IRI reading Assessment tool</li> </ul>
Reading Achievement Ceremony (Reading Completion)	To recognize the improvement of learners in terms of reading and to give sets of awards to each learner depending on their improvement	Class-room based Recognition Program	April, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress report</li> <li>• Recognition/Completion Program</li> </ul>



**Figure 2.**  
Framework of the reading intervention plan.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Indicators of Reading Difficulties and Associated Mean Scores

A researcher-made questionnaire with ten (10) items was used to determine the learners' perspective regarding the study. This survey is crucial in the study of reading difficulties as it provides insights into the multifaceted impact of such challenges on individuals. By assessing various indicators such as emotional well-being, social interactions, cultural influences, academic performance, coping strategies, and support systems, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding reading difficulties. The mean scores offer quantitative data, indicating the extent to which these factors are perceived by individuals experiencing reading difficulties, thereby informing the development of targeted interventions and support programs tailored to address their specific needs.

Result shows the perspective of the learner-participants when it comes to their experiences of having difficulties in learning. It shows that learners can relate to statements about the lived-experiences of learners with reading difficulties, as evidenced by the average mean of 3.16. In this case, most of the respondents strongly agreed that the factor that is affected by the learners' reading difficulty is the academic performance, averaging 3.40. Also, they have agreed that they are having coping mechanisms to aid their difficulties with a mean of 3.20. Meanwhile, most of the respondents agreed that they have received support from the family with a mean of 2.53. And lastly, they strongly agreed that a reading intervention program is deemed necessary to help them with their reading difficulties.

Thus, this claim aligns with the findings of Smith et al. (2021), who emphasized the complex connection between academic success and reading proficiency in learners who struggle with reading.

More so, this result is consistent with the research conducted by Johnson and Williams (2020), which highlighted the importance of increased family participation and customized support techniques to effectively manage the complex problems that individuals with reading difficulties encounter.

With these results, the researchers then started gathering data through an interview among the participants.

### *5.2. Profile Criteria of the Participants*

The study involved in-depth interviews with fifteen (15) Senior High School students selected from three (3) schools within the Sto. Domingo District. Specifically, seven (7) learners were from Sto. Domingo National Trade School, six (6) from Julia Ortiz Luiz National High School, and two (2) from Sto. Rosario National High School. These learners were identified as in the frustration level of reading based on their Phi-IRI assessment scores conducted by their respective schools, making them the focal participants of the study. Additionally, the research included a thorough examination of the participants' profiles to gain insights into their demographics and experiences. This contextual information was deemed crucial for developing a targeted reading intervention program tailored to their needs.

Furthermore, the study encompassed the involvement of ten (10) language teachers, all of whom represented the entire population of language teachers within the district. Specifically, five (5) teachers were from Sto. Domingo National Trade School, four (4) from Julia Ortiz Luiz National High School, and one (1) from Sto. Rosario National High School. The inclusion of these teachers was significant as they played a pivotal role in facilitating the reading intervention program. Their perspectives and insights provided valuable input into the design and implementation of effective strategies to improve reading proficiency among the identified students.

#### *5.2.1. Learner-Participants*

From the statements of the teacher-participants, it is evident that they believe that enhancing reading skills among learners is essential to leverage technology and online applications, as they are already immersed in digital tools.

The teacher-participants, all experienced educators in English language instruction at the Senior High School level, unanimously emphasized the critical importance of enhancing reading skills among learner. They advocate for leveraging technology and online applications to support reading interventions, recognizing the prevalence of digital tools in learners' lives. Additionally, they highlighted the necessity of appropriate training for educators to effectively teach reading and employ suitable strategies. Some suggested the creation of dedicated reading spaces or the integration of cellphones and various technological tools into reading instruction. Moreover, they stress the importance of collaborative efforts, inclusive educational settings, and the provision of diverse reading materials to cater to learners' needs and interests.

Indeed, using both learners and teachers as participants in the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by learners with reading difficulties and allowed for insights into effective intervention strategies from both perspectives. This approach ensured that the reading intervention program is informed by the lived experiences and needs of both learners and educators, enhancing its relevance and efficacy.

### *5.3. Reading Difficulty Experiences of Learners and Its impact to Emotional, Social, Cultural and Academic Aspects*

To determine the lived- experiences of learner-participants who faced reading difficulties, the researchers gathered qualitative data by conducting interviews. The interviewees were asked about their lived experiences as having difficulty in reading which affects the emotional, social, cultural, and academic aspects. Supported by Moll et al., (2020), who emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the emotional, social, cultural and academic aspects of reading difficulties.



### 5.3.1. Emotional Aspect

Based on the result, the impact of reading difficulties on emotions was divided into (6) themes namely: Social Discomfort, Vulnerability, Emotional Distress, Isolation and Loneliness, Pressure and Overwhelm, and Self-Evaluation and Doubt. Negative emotions, including frustration, anxiety, embarrassment, and low self-esteem, are commonly experienced by learners with reading difficulties, significantly affecting their academic progress and overall well-being (Hospelhorn, 2018). These emotions often arise from challenges in understanding text or mastering reading skills, leading to feelings of helplessness and social isolation. In the following paragraphs, participants shared what they felt having difficulties in reading.

### 5.3.2. Social Discomfort

This discomfort may manifest in avoidance of social situations where reading is required or in feelings of struggling to read aloud (Swanson et al., 2013). When it comes to reading tasks, learners felt embarrassed. They are conscious of what other may say about the way they read.

### 5.3.3. Vulnerability

In this theme, participants indicated that they felt nervous and embarrassed. Anxiety and humiliation, particularly when they occur together, frequently highlight a deep sense of vulnerability, stemming from a fear of being evaluated poorly or from a sense of not having control over a certain situation (Brown & Marshall, 2017).

### 5.3.4. Emotional Distress

In this theme, participants stated that they felt sad, anxious, and discouraged. These emotions can intensify existing challenges in mastering reading skills and understanding text, leading to further academic struggles and decreased motivation (Jones & Brown, 2019). It is essential to address emotional distress in struggling readers through individualized education and supportive interventions to build resilience and enhance the general well-being of struggling readers.

### 5.3.5. Isolation and Loneliness

Some emotions, such as sadness and shyness, can lead to feelings of isolation or loneliness. These can intensify for individuals experiencing reading difficulties, leading to heightened emotional distress and decreased well-being (Johnson & Smith, 2019).

### 5.3.6. Pressure and Overwhelm

This includes emotions like feeling pressured and overthinking. The constant demand to meet expectations and perform at high levels can lead to heightened stress levels and feelings of being overwhelmed (Brown & Jones, 2019).

### 5.3.7. Self-Evaluation and Doubt

These emotions often arise from feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. Doubt can emerge when readers question their interpretations or struggle to grasp complex concepts, leading to a cycle of self-reflection and adjustment in their reading strategies. Self-evaluation and doubt often arise in individuals experiencing slow reading difficulties, leading to feelings of inadequacy (Smith, 2018). Through self-reflection and expressing uncertainty, readers can develop a more profound comprehension of texts and improve their general literacy skills (McClure, 2023).

Overall, emotional distress covers various negative feelings like sadness, anxiety, and discouragement, showing deep inner turmoil and discomfort. While, social discomfort, like embarrassment, shyness, and bullying, reveals struggles in social situations, often due to perceived judgment or negative experiences. Pressure and overwhelm, seen in feeling pressured and overthinking, demonstrate the challenges individual face from external expectations or internal worries, emphasizing the importance of understanding and coping strategies for emotional resilience. These themes suggest a

complex interplay of internal and external factors that contribute to negative emotional experiences. Understanding these themes can help individuals identify the underlying causes of their emotions and develop strategies for coping and resilience.

#### *5.4. Strategies or Techniques to Cope with their Reading Difficulties*

The coping mechanism of learner-participants with reading difficulties was divided into two (2) themes, the Utilization of Available resources and Seeking Support and Assistance.

The following paragraphs present the themes extracted in the interview for coping mechanisms of learners facing difficulties in reading. Learners facing reading difficulties often employ various coping mechanisms to navigate challenges. Some may utilize visualization techniques, mentally creating images related to the text to enhance comprehension (Mouratidis et al., 2019). Additionally, taking regular pauses during reading sessions helps them focus and control their frustration, which enhances their overall reading ability. Additionally, getting individualized strategies and assistance from teachers or peers can greatly reduce the stress associated with reading and promote a more positive learning environment. In the following paragraphs, respondents shared their coping mechanisms.

##### *5.4.1. Seeking Support and Assistance*

Seeking support and assistance is a crucial strategy for learners grappling with reading difficulties. Learners can obtain resources and interventions that are specifically designed to meet their needs by contacting teachers, fellow learners, or specialists in the field (Gambrell et al., 2017).

##### *5.4.2. Utilization of Available Resources*

Research by Smith (2020) suggests that incorporating tangible resources reinforces learning and improves comprehension. Utilization of resources such as books, library facilities, and materials is essential for effective learning and research (Smith, 2019). Likewise, educators may establish a more effective and inclusive learning environment that supports the development of literacy skills in all learners by utilizing these tools in conjunction with organized interventions.

##### *5.4.3. Support received by the Learners with Reading Difficulties*

In the realm of education, supporting learners with reading difficulties remains a crucial endeavor. Adequate support must be given to create inclusive learning settings where each learner can succeed in reading (Smith, 2018). Addressing the diverse needs of students with reading difficulties requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses various strategies and interventions (Jones & Lee, 2020).

##### *5.4.4. Family Support*

Family support plays a crucial role in addressing reading difficulties among children, providing them with essential encouragement and resources. According to Smith (2019), involving parents in reading activities at home can significantly improve a child's literacy skills and confidence. Thus, creating a supportive family environment can play a major role in helping individuals overcome their reading difficulties and advancing their academic performance.

Based on the result, family support plays a crucial role in helping learners with reading difficulties. There were two (2) themes derived from the responses of the learner-participants and teacher-participants namely: Parental/Family Involvement and Support and Reliance on Extended Family.

In the following paragraphs, learner-participants shared the support they have from family while teacher-participants clarified what role family can play in helping the learners.

##### *5.4.5. Parental/Family Involvement and Support*

Parental and familial support plays a crucial role in mitigating reading difficulties among individuals (Smith & Jones, 2019). When parents actively engage in reading activities with their children, offering encouragement and assistance, it fosters a positive and conducive learning environment (Brown, 2018). Scholarly investigations persistently demonstrate the association between enhanced literacy abilities

and familial participation, emphasizing the need of familial assistance in tackling reading difficulties (Johnson et al., 2020).

#### *5.4.6. Reliance on Extended Family*

Studies by Smith and Johnson (2018) show that children who have extended family members actively involved in their literacy development tend to exhibit fewer reading difficulties. This emphasizes how crucial it is to build family support systems to learners develop their literacy abilities.

#### *5.4.7. Peer support*

Peer support can significantly enhance reading interventions for students with difficulties (Lundberg & Herrlin, 2003). Peer collaboration on reading activities fosters a positive atmosphere where struggling readers can get individualized support and inspiration (Karchmer & Hart, 2005). Research consistently shows that peer support fosters positive attitudes toward reading and improves overall reading outcomes (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005).

Accordingly, peer support plays a crucial role in helping learners with reading difficulties. There were two (2) themes derived from the responses of the learner-participants namely: Mutual assistance and Collaboration, and Motivation and Encouragement. In the following paragraphs, they shared the support they have from peers. It also includes the observations of the teacher-participants.

#### *5.4.8. Mutual Assistance and Collaboration*

Mutual assistance and collaboration among peers significantly benefit individuals with reading difficulties by fostering personalized support, active engagement, and a supportive learning environment (Topping, 2017). Peer interactions improve understanding and critical thinking abilities by enabling individualized education and a variety of learning opportunities. This cooperative method fosters empathy and understanding in addition to improving reading outcomes and giving the learning group a feeling of community (McMaster et al., 2016).

#### *5.4.9. Motivation and Encouragement*

These are essential components in fostering resilience and success, particularly in overcoming challenges. Despite challenges, motivation propels individuals toward their objectives by giving them a sense of direction and self-belief (Dweck, 2006). Additionally, encouragement from peers, instills confidence and perseverance, ultimately leading to greater achievements (Pajares, 2002). Together, motivation and encouragement create a supportive environment that empowers individuals to surpass limitations and realize their full potential.

#### *5.4.10. Mutual Assistance and Collaboration/Motivation and Encouragement*

Two (2) of the teacher-participants have stated these. Integrating mutual assistance, collaboration, motivation, and encouragement into educational practices can create an inclusive and empowering learning environment for learners with reading difficulties. Peers can assist learners in developing the abilities and self-assurance required to overcome reading difficulties by creating a feeling of community, boosting motivation, and offering constant support.

#### *5.4.11. Teachers' Support*

Teachers play a significant role in supporting learners with reading difficulties (Smith, 2018). By employing personalized teaching strategies and providing targeted interventions, educators can effectively address individual learning needs (Jones & Brown, 2020). This proactive strategy creates a nurturing atmosphere where struggling readers can succeed academically (Johnson et al., 2019).

Result shows the teacher's support to the learners having difficulty in reading. From the responses of the learner-participants and teacher-participants, there were three (3) themes being derived as Boosting Confidence and Encouragement, Providing Resources and Materials, and Improving Pronunciation and Communication. The following paragraphs show the support given by the language teachers.

#### 5.4.12. *Boosting Confidence and Encouragement*

Boosting self-confidence among learners with reading difficulties is crucial for their academic progress (Smith, 2017). Teachers can promote self-esteem by celebrating small achievements and providing positive feedback (Jones & Brown, 2019).

#### 5.4.13. *Providing Resources and Materials*

Providing resources and materials tailored to the needs of learners with reading difficulties is essential for their academic growth (Smith & Thompson, 2018). Teachers can offer a variety of tools to engage diverse learning styles (Jones & White, 2020).

#### 5.4.14. *Improving Pronunciation and Communication*

Integrating pronunciation practice with communicative activities fosters a holistic approach to language learning (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Raising learners' awareness of pronunciation features specific to their native language can help them overcome pronunciation difficulties (Major, 2016). Learners can more effectively comprehend and generate sounds that might not exist in their first language by recognizing and addressing these disparities.

#### 5.4.15. *Boosting confidence and Encouragement /Improving Pronunciation*

There is one (1) teacher-participant who stated both of these. Combining encouragement with targeted efforts to improve pronunciation creates a supportive and motivating environment for language learners. When learners feel confident and supported, they are more likely to persist in their efforts to improve their pronunciation skills, ultimately enhancing their overall language proficiency.

#### 5.4.16. *School's Support*

In order for learners with reading issues to succeed academically, schools must provide them with support (Smith & Williams, 2019). Schools can implement interventions such as specialized reading programs, one-on-one tutoring, and small group instruction to target individual needs (Jones et al., 2020). From the statements of the participants, there were three (3) themes derived such as Resource Provision, Promotion of Reading Culture and Structured Support Programs.

#### 5.4.17. *Resource Provision*

Resource provision is essential for supporting learners with reading difficulties in schools (Smith & Brown, 2018). Access to resources like specialized instructional tools, assistive technology, and leveled reading materials can be guaranteed by schools (Jones & Wilson, 2020).

#### 5.4.18. *Reading Support Programs*

Support programs are vital for addressing the needs of learners with reading difficulties in schools (Smith & Johnson, 2019). A methodical approach to instruction that incorporates interventions and methods based on evidence should be a part of these programs. (Jones & White, 2021). Structured support programs assist learners acquire critical reading abilities in a scaffolded and gradual way by offering a defined framework for instruction and learning, ultimately fostering academic success. (Brown et al., 2023).

#### 5.4.19. *Promotion of Reading Culture*

Promoting a reading culture in schools is crucial for supporting students with reading difficulties as it fosters an environment where reading is celebrated and encouraged. According to a study by Smith et al. (2023), schools that prioritize reading culture interventions witness significant improvements in reading comprehension and fluency among struggling readers.

#### 5.4.20. *Reading Intervention Program from Learners' Perspective*

A learners' perspective on a reading intervention program can be multifaceted, influenced by factors such as their reading abilities and engagement levels. According to a recent study by Johnson et al., (2023), they may perceive such programs positively if they feel supported and empowered to improve their reading skills through interactive and tailored approaches. There were four (4) themes derived from the responses of the participants during the interview. The following paragraph explains the activities that the participants want to have.

#### 5.4.21. *Diverse Reading Approaches*

Diverse reading approaches, coupled with engaging and interactive reading activities, are essential components of effective reading intervention programs. Research by Martinez and Chen (2022) emphasizes how important it is to use a variety of strategies, including peer discussions, multimedia resources, and gamified activities, to accommodate different learning styles and keep learners engaged. By offering interactive opportunities for exploration and discovery, these programs not only foster a deeper understanding of texts but also promote a positive attitude towards reading among learners (Martinez & Chen, 2022).

#### 5.4.22. *Individualized Support and Resources*

Individualized support and resources play an essential role in addressing the diverse needs of learners within reading intervention programs. Recent research by Garcia and Lee (2023) demonstrates how important it is to customize interventions to meet the unique needs and strengths of each learner in order to maximize learning outcomes. Through the implementation of differentiated instruction, adaptive technology, and one-on-one tutoring, teachers can successfully cater to the specific requirements of each learner and accelerate their progress toward reading mastery.

#### 5.4.23. *Consistent and Ongoing Support*

Consistent and ongoing support is vital in ensuring the effectiveness of reading intervention programs. Research conducted by Williams and Jackson (2023) emphasizes the importance of providing continuous guidance and support to learners throughout their journey to improve reading skills. Teachers and other stakeholders can assist learners develop resilience and confidence by creating a supportive environment and providing frequent feedback. This will ultimately increase the success of reading intervention activities (Williams & Jackson, 2023).

#### 5.4.24. *Focus on Pronunciation*

A targeted focus on pronunciation within reading intervention programs has been highlighted as a critical aspect by recent research (Smith & Patel, 2024). Teachers can help learners overcome language hurdles and improve reading fluency in general by focusing on pronunciation, which will boost understanding. Including targeted tasks like guided pronunciation practice and phonetic exercises helps them become more confident in their spoken language abilities, which in turn promotes a more thorough and successful reading intervention strategy.

#### 5.4.25. *Consistent and Ongoing Support and Diverse Reading Approaches*

There are two (2) learner-participants who have suggested two intervention activities. They believed that these can be an effective intervention to be given to them to help them with their reading difficulties.

#### 5.4.26. *Focus on Pronunciation*

Pronunciation has been increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in aiding learners with reading difficulties. According to Smith and Cuellar (2020), focusing on pronunciation can significantly benefit

individuals struggling with reading comprehension. Improved pronunciation helps learners understand phonetics better, which improves their ability to decipher and understand written materials. Moreover, research by Johnson et al., (2021) highlights the relationship that exists between precise pronunciation and enhanced reading fluency in struggling students. Therefore, interventions targeting pronunciation offer promising avenues for addressing reading difficulties in learners.

#### *5.4.27. Diverse Reading Approaches/Focus on Correct Pronunciation*

One (1) learner-participants have suggested two intervention activities. Diverse reading approaches encompass various methods and strategies for language learning, all of which contribute to the development of correct pronunciation. Accurate and efficient word pronunciation is eventually improved by exposing learners to a variety of reading strategies, whether through explicit phonics instruction, whole language methods, sight word identification, or fluency-building exercises.

#### *5.5. Reading Intervention Program*

Recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate for addressing diverse reading difficulties, the program offers individualized support tailored to each learner's specific challenges and learning preferences.

By catering to the unique needs of each learner, the program maximizes the effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that learners receive targeted assistance aligned with their goals and aspirations.

Additionally, collaboration among peers enhances learning outcomes by fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for academic growth. By encouraging peer collaboration, the program harnesses the collective knowledge and support of learners to enrich the learning experience. Peer collaboration also promotes the exchange of ideas, the sharing of strategies, and the provision of mutual encouragement, creating a dynamic learning environment conducive to sustained progress and achievement. Furthermore, family involvement can also be of great help. When families are involved, they can reinforce the strategies and skills learned in the intervention program at home. This consistency helps the child to retain and apply what they've learned more effectively.

This project aims to:

1. To foster a supportive learning environment that considers not only individual reading skills but also environmental factors, peer interactions, and family support, thereby promoting holistic reading improvement;
2. To implement evidence-based strategies and interventions proven to enhance reading skills;
3. To facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders, including teachers, families, peers, and community members, to create a supportive network that reinforces learners' reading development and promotes a culture of shared responsibility;
4. To provide personalized support tailored to the individual strengths, challenges, and learning styles of each learner, empowering them to progress at their own pace and achieve reading success;
5. To emphasize continuous assessment, feedback, and adaptation to ensure ongoing improvement in reading outcomes, monitoring progress and adjusting interventions as needed to maintain relevance and effectiveness over time; and
6. To rebuild learners' confidence and motivation by providing a supportive environment, personalized support, and engaging activities that foster a love for reading, empowering learners to overcome obstacles and thrive academically and personally.

## **6. Conclusion**

In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Addressing the multifaceted challenges in reading comprehension requires a comprehensive approach that targets the underlying issues of phonological and phonemic awareness, vocabulary depth,

fluency, decoding, and metacognitive awareness. Learners struggling in these areas face significant barriers to successful reading, impacting their confidence and academic performance. By implementing targeted interventions and instructional strategies such as explicit instruction in phonological awareness, vocabulary-building activities, structured phonics instruction, repeated reading practice, and metacognitive strategy instruction, educators can provide the support needed for these learners to improve their reading skills. Additionally, creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment where learners feel safe to take risks and make mistakes can help alleviate feelings of embarrassment or nervousness associated with reading challenges. With dedicated efforts and tailored support, learners can develop the necessary skills and strategies to become confident and proficient readers.

2. Learners grappling with reading difficulties face a myriad of negative emotions, ranging from social discomfort to overwhelming self-doubt. These emotional challenges, including frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem, significantly impede both academic progress and overall well-being. Social interactions are also affected, with reading difficulties often leading to social anxiety, avoidance, and feelings of isolation. Cultural factors further shape how these challenges are perceived and addressed, with alienation, language barriers, and socioeconomic status influencing students' experiences and academic performance. The impact of reading difficulties on academic performance is evident through low quiz scores and struggles with comprehension and retention of academic material.

3. The coping strategies employed by learners with reading difficulties offer valuable insights into effective approaches for improving reading skills. Notably, these learners actively seek support from multiple sources, including teachers, peers, and family members, underscoring the significance of social support networks in educational settings. Peer collaboration and cooperative learning emerged as effective methods, alongside seeking extra help from those perceived as skilled readers. Overall, these findings underscore the value of collaborative learning environments and the importance of utilizing diverse resources to foster reading skills development.

4. Learners highlighted the pivotal role of parental guidance and encouragement in overcoming reading challenges, emphasizing the active involvement of family members in reading activities. This collaboration fosters a positive learning environment and correlates with improved literacy skills. Teachers echoed the importance of family-school partnerships in addressing reading difficulties, recognizing the contributions of extended family members when parental support may be limited. Peer support also emerged as a valuable resource, with mutual assistance and collaboration.

Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in boosting the self-confidence of learners with reading difficulties through inclusive environments and tailored resources. Personalized instruction and targeted interventions address individual needs and enhance reading comprehension. Pronunciation and communication skills are addressed through phonetic exercises and practice, while access to resources such as leveled reading materials and assistive technology is essential for school support. Structured reading programs and a fostering of reading culture in schools are vital for supporting learners with reading difficulties, providing evidence-based strategies and interventions to develop essential skills in a scaffolded manner.

Overall, collaborative efforts between families, peers, teachers, and schools are essential for effectively addressing reading challenges and fostering literacy development

5. The emphasis on cultivating consistent reading habits, providing individualized support, and reinforcing reading skills both inside and outside the classroom underscores the multifaceted approach needed to promote effective reading comprehension. Incorporating technology and materials tailored to learners' interests enhances engagement, while targeted interventions address specific needs and difficulties. Improving pronunciation and oral language skills is recognized as crucial for comprehension. Additionally, peer mentoring and collaborative efforts among teachers and stakeholders further enrich the learning experience. A comprehensive approach that combines various strategies and resources is essential for fostering proficient reading skills among learners.

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