

Challenges and Triumphs in the Aral Program: A Phenomenological Inquiry Among Public School Teachers

Louie Corona Baluyot*

E. J. Dulay National High School, Laoang, Philippines

Abstract—This study explored the lived experiences of public-school teachers implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in the Division of Northern Samar using a phenomenological inquiry design. The ARAL Program, institutionalized under Republic Act No. 12028, was established as a national learning recovery intervention to address widespread learning loss and literacy gaps intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite strong policy intent and substantial government funding, its implementation at the school level reveals persistent structural and operational challenges, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged contexts. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten ARAL teacher-participants and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method. Findings revealed six major themes: (1) the ARAL Program as an intervention for learning loss, (2) teachers as frontliners in program implementation, (3) complex and contrasting lived experiences characterized by both fulfillment and systemic strain, (4) challenges in implementation including learner readiness mismatches, resource limitations, workload intensification, and participation barriers, (5) teacher resilience and coping mechanisms through learner-centered, gamified, and scaffolded instructional strategies, often supported by personal resources, and (6) triumphs and positive outcomes reflected in improved learner literacy and enhanced teacher professional growth. The findings indicate that while the ARAL Program contributes to addressing foundational learning gaps, its implementation is constrained by significant systemic gaps that place considerable burden on teachers, including workload pressure, insufficient instructional resources, and instances of burnout and personal financial sacrifice. Teachers nonetheless demonstrated strong adaptability and instructional innovation in sustaining learner engagement and progress. The study concludes that the effectiveness and sustainability of the ARAL Program depend on addressing structural implementation gaps rather than relying primarily on teacher resilience. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Education implement proficiency-based learner grouping, strengthen funding and resource allocation, institutionalize external tutor support, and establish mechanisms to reduce teacher workload and prevent burnout, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable learning recovery system.

Index Terms—ARAL Program, phenomenological inquiry, teacher lived experiences, learning recovery, literacy intervention, burnout, instructional innovation, educational policy implementation.

1. Introduction

The global education landscape is currently navigating a severe learning crisis prompted by the prolonged disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. International assessments consistently indicate that a staggering number of learners have dropped significantly below the minimum proficiency levels in core subject areas, namely English, Mathematics, and Science (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2022; UNICEF, UNESCO, & World Bank, 2022). In the Philippine context, this reality is exceptionally stark. The 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) placed the Philippines in the bottom ten among 81 participating nations. The data revealed that a typical 15-year-old Filipino learner scores dramatically below the global average, reflecting a learning deficit equivalent to roughly five to six years of schooling behind international peers (OECD, 2023).

Locally, domestic diagnostic bodies validate these alarming trends. Data from the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2023) highlighted a structural breakdown in basic education: only 14.47% of early-grade learners can read at their expected grade level, 88% of students entering Grade 7 struggle with basic reading, and proficiency rates plummet to a critical 1% by Senior High School. These severe learning gaps and metrics of "learning poverty" served as the primary catalyst for radical legislative intervention.

To systematically mitigate this crisis, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act (RA 12028, 2024). The ARAL Program is a structured, nationwide, free remedial initiative designed to help struggling learners master essential competencies. It specifically targets students who fall under the "frustration level" of reading and comprehension based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessments, as well as foundational numeracy gaps.

Recognizing the gravity of its rollout, the national government allocated a massive ₱8.93 billion under the 2026 national budget to fully scale up and expand the ARAL

*Corresponding author: louie.baluyot@deped.gov.ph

initiative (Gatchalian, as cited in EDCOM II, 2025). This historic funding is intended to cover instructional materials, comprehensive tutor training, and monetary allowances to mobilize roughly 440,000 educators—including hired para-teachers, pre-service teachers, licensed professionals, and community college graduates (Philippine News Agency, 2026). Crucially, during congressional budget deliberations, the Department of Education (DepEd) committed to utilizing these external tutors specifically to prevent an increase in the existing administrative and instructional workloads of public-school teachers.

Despite robust fiscal backing and centralized policy guidelines, the localized implementation of the ARAL Program faces severe operational friction. In geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) like Northern Samar, contextual barriers heavily impede the program's efficacy. The region struggles not only with geographical fragmentation but also with socio-economic hurdles, where skeptical community members sometimes prioritize child labor over remedial schooling (Obradović, 2021). Compounding this issue, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2024) indicates that Northern Samar holds a basic literacy rate of just 74.9%—the lowest in the entire Eastern Visayas region.

While the overarching objective of the ARAL Program is to transition struggling students from the "frustration" tier to "instructional" and "independent" competencies, the operational reality falls squarely upon the shoulders of the frontline educators. In the Division level, public-school teachers navigate the duality of managing policy expectations against real-world logistical deficiencies. Consequently, exploring and understanding the lived experiences of these public-school teachers is imperative. Their narratives, struggles, coping mechanisms, and pedagogical innovations provide the authentic, field-level insights necessary to determine whether the ARAL Program is truly winning the battle against illiteracy, or if it is inadvertently exacerbating teacher burnout on the ground.

A. Objectives

This study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of public-school teachers in implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. Specifically;

1. Explore the lived experiences of the teachers in the implementation of the ARAL program.
2. Uncover the challenges and hindrances felt by the teachers in the ARAL program implementation.
3. Understand the coping mechanisms in adapting to the demand of ARAL implementation.
4. Reveal the triumphs and accesses experienced by the teachers through the ARAL program participation.

B. The ARAL Program

The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program is a structured, nationwide tutorial and remediation initiative designed to support learners who experience difficulties in reading, comprehension, and other foundational

competencies. Institutionalized through Republic Act No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act, the program aims to address learning losses that emerged during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through targeted interventions, ARAL seeks to assist learners in attaining grade-level competencies and improving their academic performance.

The program provides free tutoring and remedial instruction to learners identified as being at the frustration level based on the results of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and other learning assessment tools. By focusing on literacy and numeracy development, ARAL serves as a critical component of the government's broader learning recovery agenda, ensuring that struggling learners receive the academic support necessary to bridge learning gaps and improve educational outcomes.

ARAL represents a transformative educational initiative of the Philippine government aimed at reducing learning deficits among vulnerable learners. To strengthen and expand program implementation, the national government allocated approximately ₱8.93 billion under the 2026 national budget. This funding supports the recruitment of ARAL tutors, including licensed teachers, para-teachers, pre-service teachers, other licensed professionals, and qualified college graduates. The budget also covers the development and distribution of instructional materials, training programs for tutors, and the provision of monetary allowances for program implementers. During congressional budget deliberations, the Department of Education (DepEd) emphasized that the program would be implemented primarily through hired tutors to prevent additional workload burdens on regular classroom teachers.

Despite these efforts, implementing learning recovery programs remains challenging, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas such as Northern Samar. Contextual factors, including socioeconomic conditions, accessibility issues, and varying levels of parental support, continue to influence learner participation and program effectiveness. Obradović (2021) noted that some families prioritize economic activities over educational participation, which may affect learners' attendance and engagement in intervention programs. Furthermore, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2024) reported that Northern Samar recorded a basic literacy rate of 74.9 percent, one of the lowest rates in Eastern Visayas, highlighting the urgency of implementing effective literacy interventions in the province.

C. Role of Teachers in Implementing Learning Recovery Interventions

The success of the ARAL Program largely depends on the competence, commitment, and instructional expertise of teachers and tutors who directly facilitate learning interventions. Teachers serve as the primary implementers of remediation activities, providing individualized support, monitoring learner progress, and employing appropriate pedagogical strategies to address diverse learning needs.

Gul and Anjum (2023) emphasized that teachers' pedagogical competence is a critical factor influencing the

success or failure of educational programs and curriculum reforms. Their ability to adapt instructional approaches, assess learner needs, and provide targeted interventions significantly affects program outcomes. Similarly, Villaver *et al.* (2024) described teachers as interpreters and facilitators of curriculum content, highlighting their essential role in translating policy directives into meaningful classroom practices.

In the context of the ARAL Program, teachers function not only as instructors but also as mentors, motivators, and advocates for learner success. Their dedication and responsiveness to learners' needs contribute substantially to the achievement of the program's objectives. Consequently, understanding teachers' experiences in implementing ARAL is essential for identifying both the challenges they encounter and the triumphs they achieve while carrying out learning recovery interventions.

D. Challenges in Program Implementation

The ARAL Program is a remediation initiative of the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented pursuant to Republic Act No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act. During the regular school year, ARAL sessions are generally conducted for two hours per week, while the summer implementation requires two hours of instruction per day from Monday to Friday. Although participation among teachers is officially voluntary, as stipulated in Department Order No. 005, s. 2024, several studies suggest that the realities of implementation often differ from policy intentions. De Los Santos *et al.* (2025), in a study published in the *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, found that many teachers participated in the program not solely out of volunteerism but because of professional expectations and institutional compliance requirements. Similarly, Estrellado *et al.* (2025) reported that public school teachers frequently perceived limited practical alternatives but to assume responsibilities associated with the program, resulting in increased instructional workload and time demands.

Another significant challenge in program implementation is learner participation and engagement. While the ARAL Program is carefully planned and structured, learner attendance remains voluntary, creating difficulties in ensuring consistent participation among target beneficiaries. Consequently, teachers often assume the additional responsibility of encouraging learners and their families to actively engage in remediation activities. Findings from the Valencia City District Assessment (2025) revealed that learner participation was highest during peer-supported learning activities and guided scaffolding sessions. The collaborative nature of these instructional approaches reduced learners' anxiety and facilitated their progression from the "Beginning" to the "Developing" proficiency level. However, these positive findings contrast with the observations of Tomelden (2019), who identified several barriers to participation, including domestic responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings and assisting parents with livelihood activities such as farming and fishing. These competing obligations frequently hinder

regular attendance in remediation programs. Such challenges are particularly relevant in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, including remote communities in Northern Samar, where distance, transportation difficulties, and socioeconomic conditions may further limit learner participation.

The availability of instructional materials also remains a critical concern in ARAL implementation. DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025, which outlines the implementing guidelines of Republic Act No. 12028, establishes clear provisions for the development, distribution, and utilization of instructional resources to support learning recovery initiatives. Through the program's allocated budget, the Department aims to provide adequate materials and learning resources for both learners and tutors nationwide. Nevertheless, implementation studies reveal persistent gaps in resource availability. De Los Santos *et al.* (2025) documented localized shortages of learning materials, noting that the absence of readily available state-provided resources constrained tutors' ability to deliver standardized and effective remediation. Likewise, Prosia & Paglinawan (2025) reported that many tutors relied primarily on digital resource links rather than printed instructional modules. As a result, tutors were often required to download, reproduce, and distribute learning materials themselves, creating additional financial and logistical burdens during program implementation.

Finally, administrative support and stakeholder engagement are essential determinants of successful ARAL implementation. The effectiveness of the program depends largely on the collaborative efforts of school leaders, teachers, parents, local government units (LGUs), and other community stakeholders. Strong leadership from school heads can foster a supportive environment that encourages parental involvement, promotes learner attendance, and facilitates the efficient delivery of intervention services. According to De Los Santos *et al.*, (2025), successful implementation is strongly associated with decentralized decision-making and shared accountability among key stakeholders. Their findings suggest that active collaboration and collective commitment can mitigate operational challenges and enhance program outcomes. Furthermore, Alinsunurin and Sombilon (2026) found that organizational support from school leadership—including the provision of adequate learning spaces, streamlined monitoring systems, and emotional support for tutors—significantly reduces burnout and improves program compliance. These findings underscore the crucial role of school administrators in creating conditions that enable teachers and tutors to effectively fulfill the objectives of the ARAL Program.

E. Triumphs and Positive Outcomes

Educational interventions are designed not only to address learning deficiencies but also to generate meaningful improvements in learner achievement and teacher development. In the context of the ARAL Program, the Department of Education remains committed to providing targeted remediation for learners identified at the frustration level through assessments such as the Philippine Informal Reading

Inventory (Phil-IRI). As a learning recovery initiative, the program seeks to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills while supporting learners in attaining grade-level competencies.

Research has demonstrated the positive impact of the ARAL Program on learner achievement. Silagan & Sariana (2024) reported that learners enrolled in the program achieved significantly higher mean scores across various reading performance indicators compared to their counterparts who participated only in regular classroom instruction. These findings suggest that structured remediation and individualized learning support can substantially improve learners' academic outcomes. The study further emphasizes the importance of providing appropriate interventions tailored to learners' specific needs, thereby enabling them to overcome learning gaps and demonstrate improved academic performance.

Beyond learner achievement, the ARAL Program also contributes to teachers' sense of satisfaction and professional fulfillment. Despite challenges such as limited resources and increased workload demands, many teachers reported experiencing a strong sense of accomplishment as they observed learners' progress. According to Zhang & Zhu (2025), witnessing tangible improvements in learners' reading proficiency, classroom participation, and self-confidence enhanced teachers' professional satisfaction and reinforced their commitment to the teaching profession. Similarly, Villaber *et al.*, (2024) found that observing learners achieve significant milestones and demonstrate increased engagement validated the extensive instructional efforts invested by teachers during remediation sessions. These findings suggest that teachers derive motivation and fulfillment from seeing the positive impact of their interventions on learners' growth and development.

The implementation of the ARAL Program has likewise fostered professional growth and instructional innovation among teachers. In response to the learning losses exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, educators have been encouraged to adopt more responsive and learner-centered teaching approaches. Matyakhan & Santos (2024) found that teachers involved in the ARAL Program increasingly utilized gamified reading activities, digital learning applications, and small-group instructional strategies to enhance learner engagement and comprehension. The authors concluded that participation in the program encouraged teachers to become more adaptive and innovative, thereby strengthening their pedagogical competencies. Likewise, Dela Cruz and Macapagal (2026) emphasized that continuous curriculum adaptation and institutional support for innovative instructional practices created opportunities for meaningful professional development. Through these experiences, teachers expanded their instructional repertoire, refined their intervention strategies, and developed greater confidence in addressing diverse learner needs.

Overall, the literature suggests that the ARAL Program generates benefits that extend beyond learner remediation. While the program primarily aims to improve learners' academic performance, it also contributes to teachers'

professional satisfaction, instructional effectiveness, and ongoing development. These positive outcomes highlight the transformative potential of educational intervention programs in fostering both learner success and teacher growth.

F. Teacher Resilience and Coping Mechanisms

The implementation of the ARAL Program has highlighted the resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness of teachers serving as tutors in learning recovery interventions. Faced with diverse learner needs, limited instructional time, and varying contextual challenges, teachers have continuously developed and refined strategies to ensure effective program delivery. Their ability to adjust instructional approaches and create engaging learning environments demonstrates their commitment to supporting learners who require additional academic assistance.

One notable coping mechanism employed by teachers is the use of innovative and learner-centered instructional strategies. The ARAL Teacher's Guide provides a variety of activities and interventions that encourage active participation and engagement among learners. Drawing from these resources, teachers incorporate interactive and gamified learning activities to make remediation sessions more meaningful, enjoyable, and responsive to learners' needs. Such approaches not only sustain learner interest but also foster a positive learning atmosphere that encourages participation and confidence.

Reputana, J. G. D. (2026) reported that teachers addressed diverse reading difficulties and limited instructional time through the use of highly structured scaffolding techniques. Among the strategies frequently utilized was the "I Do, We Do, You Do" gradual release of responsibility model, which enables learners to progress systematically from guided instruction to independent practice. This structured approach allowed teachers to maximize limited remediation periods while reducing learner anxiety and promoting gradual skill acquisition. By carefully pacing instruction and providing appropriate support, teachers were able to address individual learning gaps more effectively.

Similarly, Chen *et al.* (2025) found that tutors successfully enhanced learner engagement through gamified reading activities and the integration of digital and interactive learning resources. These strategies helped counter learner fatigue, sustain motivation, and create a more dynamic remediation experience. The incorporation of technology-assisted and game-based learning approaches also enabled teachers to respond more effectively to the diverse learning preferences and interests of learners.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that teachers employ a variety of coping mechanisms to overcome implementation challenges and ensure the effectiveness of the ARAL Program. Through adaptability, creativity, and instructional innovation, they are able to navigate constraints while maintaining their commitment to learner success. These strategies reflect not only teachers' professional competence but also their resilience in addressing the demands of learning recovery interventions.

G. Lived Experiences of Teachers in Educational Programs

Teachers' lived experiences in educational intervention programs extend beyond the delivery of instruction. These experiences encompass the personal meanings they attach to their work, the emotional journeys they undergo, the relationships they build with learners, and the challenges they encounter in facilitating meaningful learning. Within remediation and learning recovery programs, teachers often navigate a complex interplay of professional responsibilities, personal sacrifices, and emotional investments as they strive to support learners with significant academic needs.

In her study of reading remediation teachers in the Schools Division of Sipalay City, Geroso (2024) found that teachers demonstrated remarkable resilience and personal commitment in addressing learners' reading difficulties. The transition of learners from non-readers to independent readers served as a powerful source of emotional fulfillment and professional validation. Such achievements reinforced teachers' sense of purpose and motivated them to persist despite the demands and challenges associated with remediation work. The findings suggest that teachers frequently extend efforts beyond their prescribed duties to ensure that learners acquire the foundational competencies necessary for academic success.

Similarly, Villaceran *et al.* (2024) reported that teachers experience a continuous cycle of hope and concern throughout the remediation process. Feelings of optimism emerge when learners demonstrate academic progress, while frustration and anxiety may arise when learners experience setbacks, particularly those influenced by unfavorable home environments. These findings highlight the deep emotional connection teachers develop with their learners, as students' successes and struggles often become intertwined with teachers' own perceptions of accomplishment and effectiveness.

Despite these rewarding experiences, teachers also face considerable challenges in balancing remediation responsibilities with their regular teaching duties. Alviore & Corpuz (2026) revealed that teachers frequently reported feelings of exhaustion resulting from the demands of diagnostic assessments, documentation requirements, individualized lesson preparation, and progress monitoring, all of which must be completed alongside their regular classroom responsibilities. The study underscores how the accumulation of instructional and administrative tasks can contribute to workload pressures and emotional strain among teachers involved in intervention programs. Such experiences highlight the need for adequate institutional support to sustain teacher well-being and program effectiveness.

Another recurring theme in teachers' narratives involves the challenges associated with learner absenteeism and inconsistent participation. According to Divinagracia and Escandallo (2025), teachers often find themselves reteaching previously covered lessons because of irregular learner attendance during remediation sessions. This challenge becomes more pronounced when learners exhibit substantial gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy skills, requiring teachers to revisit basic concepts such as letter recognition, phonemic

awareness, and elementary number concepts. Consequently, teachers must continuously adapt their instructional strategies to accommodate varying learner needs and levels of readiness, often extending additional effort to ensure that no learner is left behind.

Collectively, these studies illustrate that teachers' experiences in remediation and learning recovery programs are characterized by both fulfillment and adversity. While witnessing learner progress provides a profound sense of achievement and purpose, teachers must also contend with emotional, instructional, and organizational challenges that accompany intervention work. These experiences reveal the multifaceted nature of teachers' roles and the significant personal and professional investments they make in supporting learner success.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a phenomenological inquiry research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of public-school teachers involved in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in the Division of Northern Samar. Phenomenology is an appropriate qualitative research approach for examining how individuals perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their experiences regarding a particular phenomenon. According to Colaizzi (1978), phenomenological inquiry seeks to uncover the essence of participants' experiences by describing the meanings they attach to those experiences. Through this approach, the researcher gained an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on ARAL Program implementation and the realities they encountered in carrying out their responsibilities as teacher-tutors.

The use of phenomenology enabled the researcher to capture participants' narratives concerning the implementation of the ARAL Program, particularly the challenges and barriers they encountered, the coping mechanisms they employed, and the triumphs and positive outcomes they experienced. Understanding these lived experiences is essential for identifying areas for program enhancement and generating recommendations that may contribute to the effective implementation of learning recovery initiatives. Furthermore, exploring teachers' adaptive strategies provided valuable insights that may guide future ARAL tutors and educational stakeholders in addressing similar implementation concerns. The study also sought to illuminate both the strengths and limitations of the program as experienced by its primary implementers, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of ARAL implementation in the public-school context.

Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with selected teacher-participants involved in the ARAL Program. The semi-structured interview format provided flexibility for participants to freely share their experiences while allowing the researcher to probe and clarify responses relevant to the study objectives. Specifically, the interviews focused on teachers' lived experiences in implementing the ARAL Program, the challenges they

encountered, the coping strategies they developed, and the triumphs and positive outcomes they achieved throughout their participation in the program. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and authenticity of the data.

The analysis of interview data followed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method, which included: (1) familiarization with the participants' descriptions, (2) extraction of significant statements, (3) formulation of meanings, (4) clustering of themes, (5) development of an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, (6) identification of the fundamental structure of the experience, and (7) validation of findings through participant verification or member checking. This systematic and rigorous analytical process enabled the researcher to remain faithful to the participants' narratives while generating a rich and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

To ensure the trustworthiness and ethical integrity of the study, established qualitative research procedures and ethical standards were strictly observed. Participants were fully informed about the purpose and nature of the research prior to their involvement, and informed consent was obtained before data collection commenced. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the secure handling of all research data. These ethical safeguards protected the rights and welfare of participants while enhancing the credibility, dependability, and integrity of the research findings.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the teachers who participated in the study. The participants were composed of both teacher tutors and volunteer tutors involved in the implementation of the ARAL program.

In terms of civil status, seven (7) participants were married, while three (3) were singles. This shows that the majority of the

participants were married individuals with varied personal and educational endeavors.

As to the educational attainment, seven (7) participants had earned units in a Master of Arts program, one (1) participant had earned units a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program, and two (2) participants held a bachelor's degree. This posits strong educational expertise and background as all of the teacher participants had a continuing education program reflecting their utmost commitment to professional growth and expertise.

With emphasis to role selection, eight (8) participants served as teacher tutors meaning that they are DepEd teachers opted to be an ARAL tutor, while two (2) served as volunteer tutors. the predominance of teacher tutors provided in depth insights from experienced educators who are involved in the ARAL program.

As to years of service, participants had teaching experience ranging from 0 to 32 years. The majority of the participants had extensive teaching experience, with eight (8) participants having served between 8 and 32 years. On the other hand, the two (2) volunteer tutors had no prior years of teaching experience. In all, this diversity in teaching experience allowed the study to capture perspective from both seasoned educators and neophyte volunteer tutors.

Overall, the participants emerged from diverse group of educators in terms of civil status, educational background, roles in ARAL program, and years of service. Such diversity strengthened the data gathered and provided a comprehensive understanding on the participants' lived experiences in implementing the ARAL program.

Table 2 presents the major themes that emerged from the phenomenological analysis. The data reveals that while the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program which institutionalized through Republic Act No. 12028 that serves as the primary national mechanism to mitigate student learning loss, its field implementation exposes critical systemic friction.

Teachers function as the primary catalysts of knowledge essential to achieving these recovery objectives; however, the findings indicate they frequently experience the program as an operational burden. This operational strain highlights a direct

Table 1
The demographic profile of the teachers

Code	Civil Status	Highest Educational Attainment	Role	Years in Service
T1	Married	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	14
T2	Single	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	11
T3	Married	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	32
T4	Married	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	13
T5	Single	Bachelor's Degree	Volunteer Tutor	0
T6	Married	Bachelor's Degree	Volunteer Tutor	0
T7	Married	With PhD Units	Teacher Tutor	15
T8	Married	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	16
T9	Single	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	11
T10	Married	With MA Units	Teacher Tutor	8

Table 2
Emergent themes on the lived experiences of ARAL tutors

Theme	Core Meaning
Theme 1: The ARAL Program	Intervention to address the learning loss of the students
Theme 2: Role of teachers in implementing the ARAL recovery programs	To serve as frontliners as educational catalyst
Theme 3: Lived experiences of teachers as ARAL tutors	The over-arching complexities of phenomenological accounts
Theme 4: Challenges in program implementation	The hindrances faced by the ARAL tutors
Theme 5: Teacher resilience and coping mechanisms	The capacity of teachers to maintain professionalism amidst difficulties
Theme 6: Triumphs and positive outcomes	The best outcomes of the program

disconnect with the foundational policy framework. Specifically, DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025 (Implementing Guidelines of the ARAL Program) explicitly stipulates that external tutor should be recruited to manage these sessions, rather than relying solely on the existing school teaching complement.

Consequently, the lived experiences of the participants reveal deeply nuanced, contrasting phenomenological accounts. For some teachers, the intervention is intrinsically rewarding; for others, the structural demands render the experience challenging and uninspiring.

This duality is heavily pronounced in the specific challenges and triumphs articulated by the informants:

- *Systemic Challenges and Teacher Burnout:* Participants reported severe instructional fatigue and professional burnout. This exhaustion stems from a severe gap in student readiness, with teachers noting instances where high school learners were still struggling with basic alphabet recognition.
- *Pedagogical Triumphs:* Conversely, the participants highlighted profound professional validation as their primary success. They noted that their greatest triumphs occurred when previously non-reading tutees successfully decoded full sentences, with some transitioning into functional reading comprehension.

The themes are inclined with Maslach's Burnout Theory, which explains the burden experienced by the participants leaving massive gaps on teachers as they feel entirely drained. Also, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory & Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which connects students' literacy gaps to eventual triumphs of teachers as the teacher successfully hurdled through targeted scaffolding which connects the gaps moving tutees from frustration to instructional level. Lastly, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which focuses on the varied experiences of the participants from uninspiring to rewarding.

Theme 1: The ARAL Program – Intervention to address the learning loss of the students

The first theme reveals that participants viewed this program as vital to address the learning loss and gaps experienced by the students. The teachers acknowledged that there were students who were not capable of coping up to the expected learning competencies thus remedial instruction is a must. The ARAL program was perceived as an opportunity to provide reinforcement to enhance the foundational skills of the learners in connection to their academic performance. The findings suggested that the program was a strategic response of the Department of Education to combat illiteracy to ensure that all students are given equal opportunities and no one left behind.

Theme 2: Role of Teachers in Implementing the ARAL Recovery Program – To serve as Frontliners as Educational Catalyst

The second theme clearly described the participants as crucial variable in the realization of the objective of the ARAL Program which is to eradicate the illiteracy. As catalyst of education, teachers were expected to fulfill their responsibilities even beyond their calling as this program should not be given to them instead for outside tutors to lessen their workloads, but

the reality sucked that the findings spoke differently as they were pushed through as a mandatory teaching load rather than voluntary.

One participant expressed: "My role in the implementation of the ARAL Program is to act as a tutor, mentor and assessor." Also, "My role is to implement the ARAL Program in our school – bridge the gap in learning," a participant added.

According to Tinio (2026), the localized rollouts of the ARAL framework heavily backtracked on the promise of hiring external tutors, forcing permanent public-school teachers into expanding, unfunded expectations and unpaid labor." Despite this, the teachers viewed their role rewarding because of their commitment to ensure the successful implementation of the program.

Theme 3: Lived experiences of Teachers as ARAL tutors- The Overarching Complexities of Phenomenological Accounts

The duality of response of the participants made the study more interesting that the program was seen differently from diverse perspective which can be a ground for an in-depth analysis. The experiences shared by the participants revealed complex realities of serving ARAL tutors. Participants recounted both rewarding and demanding experiences while implementing the program. The fulfillment that they had as their tutees advanced from frustration to instructional was really evident:

One participant expressed: "Implementing the ARAL Program was a meaningful and rewarding experience. It gives me an opportunity to help learners improve their academic performance, especially reading." This experience by the participants indicates that there are teachers who are into working beyond their calling. On the other hand, other participants uttered significantly way different from the mentioned one.

Another participant expressed: "It is not enjoyable, it's actually sad. The government should hire more teachers and tutors so that students can receive more attention and guidance." This voice echoed from the reality in the school setting where there were no enough volunteer tutors from the outside premise of the school and teachers were only limited coming from the department as again it is not mandatory.

In summary, the lived experiences of the participants reveal a profound systemic tension between pedagogical fulfillment and operational strain. While ARAL program viewed as a tool to bridge the gaps of learning, it simultaneously exposes critical gaps in institutional support. The dual perspective uttered by the participants highlight that there is an urgent need to align the ideals of Republic Act No. 12028 with realistic data from the ground from its tutors, resources and provide a clear rule on the participation of students who are under the minimum yet not attending the session.

Theme 4: Challenges in Program Implementation – The hindrances faced by the ARAL tutors

The fourth theme identified that participants seen several obstacles that affected the implementation of the ARAL program. Common challenges included were: the focus of the program was more on reading comprehension yet some students were only beginning to recognize letters, lack of

budget from the program implementors, lack of teachers to handle the tutees, behavior of the students in participating classroom tasks, teachers' burnout and heavy workloads.

One participant expressed: "Challenges I encountered was addressing the different learning abilities and needs of the learners. Some learners' needs required more time guidance, making it challenging to ensure that all learners could keep up with the lesson." Additionally, "The program focuses more on reading comprehension, yet some students are only beginning to recognize letters even though they are already in high school. There is a lack of budget and teachers, which the government in the Philippines should properly fund," the participant uttered.

These challenges often required teachers to extend more efforts to ensure that learning objectives are met. The finding suggest that ARAL program is beneficial, yet effective implementation by ensuring that everything is well implemented is a must to for the continuity of the program in addressing learning gaps.

Theme 5: Teacher resilience and coping mechanisms – The Capacity of Teachers to maintain Professionalism amidst difficulties

The fifth theme indicates that even there are challenges, participants were able to demonstrate resilience and adaptability throughout the implementation process. Participants employed several coping mechanisms techniques such as localizing the giving examples which is essential to make the learners familiarize the lessons, learner-centered approach, tactical adjustment of the resources, extrinsic motivation by giving rewards, and organizing time effectively.

One participant expressed: "One of the most effective strategies was the use of learner-centered and interactive activities such as games, group and storytelling. These activities helped keep learners motivated in participating the sessions." This was also added by another participant who said: "The reward or reinforcement theory though not in money, buying candies, chocolates, biscuits, treating them for a snack, etc."

The findings suggest that teachers were really into creating the whole tutorial experience a blast of knowledge, but restraint from the resources caused them to adjust. Others even used their own money to make the tutees encouraged and hyped as they go on with their session by providing rewards by cash and in goods. This shows resiliency and resourcefulness in the part of the participants as they professed their noble calling.

Theme 6: The Triumphs and Positive Outcomes – The Best Outcomes of the Program

The sixth theme reported that there were numerous positive outcomes resulting on the implementation of the ARAL program. To include, improvement in learners' academic performance especially in reading - many learners who initially struggled, gradually improved, students who were left behind in regular classes were given attention to address their needs – these learners were given priority, ARAL tutees gained self-confidence and a little improvement in their academic skills – evidently improved learning ability, learners who struggled academically were given tutors freely – an act of selfless devotion to help the learners. These were the triumphs experienced by the tutees who brought their selves to a custody

of learning process.

One participant expressed: "Seeing my struggling learners able to read little by little." Also added by another participant who answered: "Students who were left behind in regular classes were given attention to address their needs." On the other hand, tutors also benefited from the program as it helped them to contribution to their professional growth, "The program has a great contribution when it comes to my professional growth by this, I was able to understand the different needs of the learners when it comes to teaching-learning process," a participant added.

With these findings, the ARAL Program was not just about a remediation for learners but also a great contributor to the growth of the participants to cope up to the different situations when learning at stakes. They were also able to come up with different teaching strategies to hold the quorum of the classroom which is vital to make the teaching and learning process become more enjoyable.

4. Discussion

The primary goal of the ARAL Program is to address the learning gaps brought about by different circumstances such as the COVID 19 pandemic. This program is institutionalized by Republic Act 12028 otherwise known as The Recovery Program Act and further intensified by Department Order No. 18, s. 2025. The findings of this study highlight how the lived experiences of the public-school teachers were revealed through their role in the program implementation as they uttered that they have been tutor, men tor and assessor which significantly contributed to the realization of the objectives of this program. It embedded to them the real essence of being a teacher that despite their shortcomings and even putting their family aside just to teach these nimble learners from regular class schedule up to this summer program. This asserted as Bautista and Santos (2021) cited in their research that the teachers' attitude toward literacy intervention viewed as vital resulted them to actively and consistently perform. This was even strengthened by Gecana and Caparas (2025) who said that English teachers working with struggling readers, noting that teachers were motivated by student progress despite facing hurdles like large class sizes and inadequate resources. So, the role of teachers in this endeavor mirrored how selfless they are just to hone the future.

As for the lived experiences of teachers as ARAL tutors as an emerging theme, it went far behind what was expected of them as basically, they were tutors who imparts knowledge for the struggling learners, but the findings suggest that the teachers were forced to be in the program and their rights to object has been curtailed. Implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program has an allocated budget of PHP8.96 billion under the national budget to benefit millions of public-school learners. It is funded primarily through the national General Appropriations Act (GAA) allocated directly to the Department of Education (DepEd), with additional local support permitted through Special Education Funds. With all these funds from national to local, still the voices from the field were never be silenced to expose the truth that even a part of

the participants felt a sense of fulfillment yet others directly burst out their grudges that the program was challenging and uninspiring due to lack of resources. Teachers were the ones to print the materials contradicted the plan that they will be provided with all the materials. Others experienced shortage of bond papers and other paraphernalia to sustain the program with others spent their own money to make the sessions productive. This finding has given emphasis by Bandura's self-efficacy theory that the teacher's personal confidence directly dictates their willingness to see an intervention program through success. How much more if they are given everything?

Also, the findings show that the ARAL program faces many hard problems that stop it from working well. Teachers deal with a big mix-up in lessons, a lack of school money, and heavy fatigue. The biggest problem is that the lessons do not match what students actually know. The program forces teachers to focus on hard reading comprehension, but many students even in high school they do not even know their alphabet yet. This forces teachers to rush and change lessons constantly, which makes it hard for other students to keep up. On top of that, schools do not have local funding or enough teachers. Because there are too few tutors, classes are too big, student behavior gets worse, and teachers burn out from too much extra work. One participant explained, "Challenges I encountered was addressing the different learning abilities and needs of the learners. Some learners' needs required more time guidance, making it challenging to ensure that all learners could keep up with the lesson." Another added, "The program focuses more on reading comprehension, yet some students are only beginning to recognize letters even though they are already in high school. There is a lack of budget and teachers, which the government in the Philippines should properly fund."

These problems match local Philippine research about learning loss after the pandemic. According to the EDCOM II reports, experts criticize the government for grouping students by age or grade level instead of what they actually know. This matches the teachers' complaints about trying to teach hard reading when basic letter skills are missing. Local studies also show that these new programs create extra work and stress for teachers because they lack local school supplies. Furthermore, while Republic Act No. 12028 made the ARAL program an official law, the actual work and money depend heavily on local school heads. When local government or Special Education Funds are delayed, teachers are left to handle the heavy workloads and large classes alone. In the end, these findings show that teachers cannot fix this program by themselves. For ARAL to succeed and continue, the Department of Education must stop just giving orders and start fixing the system by sending money directly to schools, providing simpler booklets for beginners, and hiring more tutors.

In addition, the findings show that despite many problems, teachers adapted well during the ARAL program. The resiliency to solve daily issues, they changed lessons to fit students' learning capacity. Instead of long lectures, they used fun games, group work, and storytelling to keep students interested and stop bad behavior. Teachers also used rewards to keep students motivated. One participant shared, "One of the

most effective strategies was the use of learner-centered and interactive activities such as games, group and storytelling. These activities helped keep learners motivated in participating the sessions." Another participant added, "The reward or reinforcement theory though not in money, buying candies, chocolates, biscuits, treating them for a snack, etc."

Teachers wanted to make classes fun, but a lack of school money and materials forced them to pay out of pocket. Many spent their own money on food, snacks, and small toys to keep children excited. In local Philippine research, this is called the "noble calling," where teachers use their own cash to fill school gaps and make their own learning tools. However, experts warn that a national program like ARAL cannot rely on teachers' financial sacrifices. While teacher resilience helps during a crisis, long-term success requires the government to step in. The Department of Education must provide official funds for student rewards and local supplies so that learning recovery does not cause financial hardship for teachers.

Lastly, the triumphs and positive outcomes show that despite many challenges, the ARAL program brought great results for both students and teachers. For students, the biggest improvement was in their reading. Children who used to struggle a lot slowly learned to read letters and then full words. The program did a good job of helping the most vulnerable students who were left behind in regular classes, giving them the close attention, they needed. This special focus helped students learn better and made them feel much more confident in school.

At the same time, the teachers also benefited. Handling a classroom full of students with different needs helped teachers grow professionally. They learned how to use new teaching methods and understand their students better. This win-win situation is clear in what the teachers said. One participant shared how happy they felt "seeing my struggling learners able to read little by little." Another participant noted that "students who were left behind in regular classes were given attention to address their needs." A third teacher explained that the program helped them grow by helping them "understand the different needs of the learners."

These findings show that when a reading program focuses on the right students, it helps close learning gaps and trains teachers at the same time. This matches local Philippine laws, like the ARAL Program Act (Republic Act No. 12028), which aims to save students from severe learning poverty. Local research also shows that when classes are smaller and students spend dedicated time on basic reading skills, they quickly get better at sounding out words. Furthermore, local studies confirm that actual classroom practice teaches educators much more than listening to boring training seminars. Instead of just following strict rules, teachers learned how to make their classrooms fun and adaptive. In the end, the ARAL program does not just help at-risk youth; it also makes schools stronger by turning tough classroom challenges into valuable experience for teachers.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and the experiences shared by the

teachers, four key recommendations can help improve the ARAL program.

First, the program must change how it groups and teaches students. Right now, teachers struggle because they are expected to teach hard reading comprehension skills to high school students who still do not know their basic alphabet. To fix this, schools should test students first and group them by their actual reading level, not their age. The program should use two separate lesson plans: one simple track for beginners learning their letters, and one advanced track for students ready to practice comprehension.

Second, schools must give teachers an official budget for classroom rewards. Teachers explained that buying small treats like candies and biscuits was the best way to keep students behaving and excited to learn. However, teachers had to spend their own money to buy these items. Schools should use local education funds to set up an official classroom allowance for the ARAL program. This will protect teachers from paying out of their own pockets just to keep their students motivated.

Third, schools must hire more tutors to solve the problem of teacher shortage and heavy workloads. Having too many students in one remedial class causes behavior issues and exhausts the teachers. By partnering with local colleges, schools can bring in education students and assistants to act as extra tutors. This will lower the number of students per teacher, give left-behind children the close attention they need, and save regular teachers from burning out.

Lastly, the government should reward teachers for the professional growth and hard work they put into this program. Even though the teachers were tired, they felt proud to watch their students learn to read little by little, and they became better educators by creating new teaching games. School leaders should give teachers proper credits and promotion points for teaching in the ARAL program. Schools should also set up meetings where teachers can share their best storytelling and game ideas with each other, making the program stronger for everyone.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program operates as a vital but structurally strained intervention in the Philippine public education system. On one hand, the program achieves its core mission by rescuing the most vulnerable, left-behind students from learning poverty, yielding measurable improvements in basic literacy and fostering renewed self-confidence among struggling learners (Theme 6). This intensive teaching environment also acts as a powerful, practical laboratory that accelerates the professional growth and adaptive skills of the educators involved (Theme 6). On the other hand, these positive outcomes are heavily bottlenecked by severe implementation gaps. Teachers are routinely forced to navigate a profound pedagogical mismatch, attempting to teach advanced reading comprehension to high school students who still lack basic alphabet recognition, all while battling acute shortages in localized funding and personnel (Theme 4).

Ultimately, the study highlights that the continuity and

success of the ARAL program currently rest on the individual resilience, personal pocketbooks, and emotional endurance of frontline teachers rather than a stable institutional framework (Theme 5). While the teachers' resourcefulness in buying incentives and improvising localized games successfully keeps students motivated, this reliance on personal financial sacrifice is structurally unsustainable. For the ARAL program to transition from a crisis-response mechanism to a sustainable pillar of academic recovery, the Department of Education must shift from merely mandating policy to actively stabilizing its infrastructure. Ensuring true learning recovery requires a systematic alignment of resources: students must be grouped by actual reading proficiency rather than grade level, direct allowances must be provided for classroom motivators, and external tutor partnerships must be institutionalized to shield regular teachers from systemic burnout.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expresses sincere gratitude to the teacher-tutors from the Northern Samar Division for sharing their time, experiences, and insights, which made this study possible. Appreciation is also extended to mentors and colleagues for their valuable guidance and feedback during the preparation of this manuscript. This study did not receive any external funding; the design, data collection, analysis, and writing were conducted entirely by the researcher. Finally, heartfelt thanks are offered to the researcher's family, friends, and course professor for their steady support and encouragement throughout the research process.

References

- [1] A. Acuña and T. Diquito, Jr., "A systematic literature review of learning recovery initiatives in the post-pandemic period: Outcomes and limitations," *Journal of Social Development and Law*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2026.
- [2] J. R. Alinsunurin and M. T. Sombilon, "Public policy, school education, and teacher experiences in learning recovery tracks," *Asian International Journal of Functional Research*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 114–128, 2025.
- [3] J. R. Alvir and M. T. Corpuz, "Teacher's workload in relation to burnout and work performance," *Philippine E-Journals*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 45–58, 2026.
- [4] R. Bautista and M. Santos, "Filipino teachers' attitudes toward literacy interventions and remedial programs," *Journal of Philippine Education and Teaching*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 112–125, 2021.
- [5] C.-M. Chen, M.-C. Li, and Y.-C. Kao, "A gamified collaborative reading annotation system to facilitate reading comprehension, annotation behaviours, immersion experience and reading motivation," *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, vol. 34, no. 5, pp. 639–658, 2025.
- [6] P. F. Colaizzi, "Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it," in *Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*, R. Valle and M. King, Eds. New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 48–71.
- [7] A. De Los Santos, J. Reyes, and P. Mendoza, "Challenges and realities in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program," *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 2025.
- [8] J. De Los Reyes, N. R. Delos Reyes, A. F. Cabigon, and L. Pimili, "Cultivating inclusive teaching: A study of Philippine secondary school educators' preparedness," *Journal of Learning and Development Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 88–103, 2025.
- [9] Department of Education, Department Order No. 005, s. 2024: Implementing Guidelines for the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. Pasig City, Philippines: Department of Education, 2024.

- [10] Department of Education, Department Order No. 018, s. 2025: Implementing Guidelines of Republic Act No. 12028 (Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act). Pasig City, Philippines: Department of Education, 2025.
- [11] K. L. C. Divinagracia and J. C. Escandallo, "Elementary teachers' experiences on the implementation of Catch-up Fridays in Kapalong: Reading in Focus," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research and Innovation*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 244–258, 2025.
- [12] EDCOM II, *Miseducation: The Failed System of Philippine Education*. Manila, Philippines: Second Congressional Commission on Education, 2023.
- [13] C. J. P. Estrellado and M. P. O. Altarejos, "The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program on the discourse of dialectical hegemony," *Pantao: International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 557–572, 2025.
- [14] S. Gatchalian, "EDCOM 2: Gatchalian: 2026 education budget 'highest in history,' focuses on struggling learners, poor students," *Senate of the Philippines*, Nov. 13, 2025.
- [15] R. P. Gecana and S. M. L. Caparas, "Empowered or not: English teachers' lived experiences in teaching struggling high school readers," *International Journal of Integrative Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 12–28, 2025.
- [16] M. S. Geroso, "Lived experiences of reading remediation teachers in the Schools Division of Sipalay City," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 45–59, 2024.
- [17] M. Gul and G. Anjum, "Determinants of achievement motivation in university students," *Global Educational Studies Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 144–156, 2023.
- [18] J. Guzman, "DepEd launches ARAL program to strengthen students' foundational skills," *Philippine Information Agency*, Sep. 16, 2025.
- [19] M. Hernando-Malipot, "DepEd to roll out ARAL-Reading Program to boost literacy among learners," *Manila Bulletin*, Aug. 4, 2025.
- [20] M. E. C. D. Liwag, A. S. De la Cruz, and M. E. J. Macapagal, "How we raise our daughters and sons: Child-rearing and gender socialization in Filipino families," *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, vol. 31, pp. 1–35, 1998.
- [21] T. Matyakhan, T. Chaowanakritsanakul, and J. A. L. Santos, "Implementing gamification to enhance reading engagement and reading comprehension of Thai EFL university students," *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2024.
- [22] J. Obradović, M. J. Sulik, and A. Shaffer, "Learning to let go: Parental over-engagement predicts poorer self-regulation in kindergartners," *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2021.
- [23] R. Ocillos-Walet, C. J. Gialen, and A. R. Aranded, "An input for localized policy development: Teachers' techniques and strategies in implementing ARAL program," *International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management*, vol. 9, no. 10, pp. 211–225, 2025.
- [24] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2023.
- [25] *Philippine News Agency*, "DepEd to expand ARAL to 6.7M learners, taps over 440K tutors," Jan. 7, 2026.
- [26] Philippine Statistics Authority, *Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) 2024*. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024.
- [27] C. S. Prosia and J. L. Paglinawan, "Emotional burnout, digital dependency, and their impact on pedagogical practices among basic education teachers," *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering, Management & Applied Science*, vol. 14, no. 10, pp. 403–412, 2025.
- [28] Republic of the Philippines, Republic Act No. 12028: An Act Institutionalizing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes. Manila, Philippines: Official Gazette, 2024.
- [29] J. G. D. Reputana, "Reading comprehension strategies of teachers: Amplifying reading literacy," *Nexus International Journal of Science and Education*, 2024.
- [30] R. Silagan and J. Sariana, "Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Reading Program on learners' numeracy and problem-solving skills," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 1412–1425, 2026.
- [31] A. Timio, "DepEd ARAL guidelines backtrack on 'tutors, not teachers' promise; use full P8.96B and guarantee proper pay, support," Press Release, ACT Teachers Party-list, May 4, 2026.
- [32] E. A. Tomelden, "Effectiveness of remedial reading to non-readers in the intermediate level at Lomboy Elementary School," M.S. thesis, Pangasinan State Univ., Pangasinan, Philippines, 2019.
- [33] UNESCO, *From Learning Recovery to Education Transformation*. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2022.
- [34] UNICEF, UNESCO, and World Bank, *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2022.
- [35] Valencia City District, *District Assessment Report on Learner Participation and Proficiency Development in the ARAL Program*. Department of Education, 2025.
- [36] E. T. Villaceran, K. Y. A. Bisaya, and N. B. Mediodia, "Elementary teachers' lived experiences in handling learners with reading difficulties," *International Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 7, 2024.
- [37] A. A. Villaver, M. J. Dela Peña, and R. S. Flores, "Instructional coping mechanisms of public school teachers on remedial reading interventions," *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 89–102, 2024.
- [38] C. Zhang and J. Zhu, "Teacher enthusiasm and students' reading achievement: Teachers' stimulation of reading engagement and students' reading enjoyment as mediators," *Language Teaching Research*, 2025.