**Learners’ Perception in The Implementation of Catch-up Friday Program and Its Effect to The Reading Performance**

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ABSTRACT

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| The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has initiated the “Catch-Up Friday Program” to address the Philippines underperformance in the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Catch-Up Friday provides structured weekly sessions to enhance students’ reading skills through focused activities and support. This study aimed to understand the learners’ perception on the implementation of Catch-Up Friday Program and its effect on the reading performance of junior high school learners’ of Cupis National High School. Descriptive survey method is primarily used to understand phenomenon, it involves data collection through surveys and observation among the respondents. A thematic analysis was conducted that obtained from the survey in order to pinpoint the problems encountered of the learners and documentary analysis to reveal the reading performance before the implementation of the program. The findings suggest that learners hold a generally positive perception of the Catch-Up Friday Program. They recognize its effectiveness in enhancing their reading skills and express appreciation for the program’s content, structure, and the support it provides. In conclusion, the initiated educational intervention Catch-Up Friday Program effectively improves reading performance of the junior high school learners of Cupis National High School. |

*Keywords: Catch-up Friday, perception, reading performance, reading skills, educational intervention*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading performance is crucial for learners in acquiring knowledge. As the most essential skill in the educational context, serves as an assessment for learners’ general language ability (Brown, 2004) Understanding and analyzing written text is essential not only during learners’ educational journey but also in their future endeavors. Research findings suggest that many learners struggle with reading appropriate for their levels due to a lack of motivation and effective reading strategies (De Coster et. al, 2011). A study highlights that inadequate reading material, improper teaching methodology, and insufficient language development were causes of reading difficulties (Mule, 2014). That’s why many nations now implemented reading intervention program to ensure that students reach the desired levels of reading proficiency. One of this is the Catch-up literacy projects of England that made an extra £10 million for a grant round dedicated to literacy catch-up projects for learners.

 The interventions intended for learners struggling to reach what are officially deemed the age-appropriate levels in reading. It was intended to benefit learner who enter the secondary school with below Level 4 in literacy. Reading Recovery (RR) is an intensive one-to-one intervention for the lowest performing 20% of first graders and has been used world-wide in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. (Gorard et. al, 2015) Also World Vision implement [Catch-Up Programme (CUP)](https://www.wvi.org/Education/catch-up-programme-) to focus on acquisition of early grade reading ability and numeracy skills in community-based and designed to provide safe, play-based, inclusive and carefully sequenced instruction at the right level that also addresses social emotional learning of children. World Visions strengths in mobilizing communities to support learners reading proficiency, working with and supporting the well-being of community facilitators, and forging partnerships with schools and teachers to provide holistic support using UNESCO global proficiency frame work designed and rapidly piloted a Catch-Up Programme in 3 countries including Cambodia, Ghana, Zimbabwe (Okada, 2025). In today’s society, ability to read is paramount. Reading is not merely a pastime but a fundamental prerequisite to fully embracing life and actively participating in nation-building endeavors (Requiso & Bascos 2022). To combat these problems an interactive and holistic approach should be used. Various interactive techniques and interdisciplinary collaborations could help foster learners reading performance skills. Due to the multi-roles played by the teachers in the field, it is indeed necessary to have a roster assigned to meet the challenges of low reading performance (Rominimbang et. al, 2024).

             Reading intervention program designed for each grade level, more than 2,000 students in pre-K through 12th grade are empowered to develop a lifelong appreciation for reading. This serves them throughout their academic years and careers (Hershey, 2018). The issue of reading performance is global not merely national. The state is dedicated to making efforts to eradicate illiteracy a top priority and carrying them out. If reading performance is adequately addressed, this situation may be resolved (Tomas, 2021). The struggles of reading have always existed in the Philippine context. A needs assessment on the national scale should be conducted to craft a suitable intervention plan for this problem. According to a report learner who get off to a poor start in reading hardly catch up; poor first-grade readers are likely to continue to be poor readers (Janet, 1997). Students experience difficulties in reading comprehension because their focus and attention are destructed by cellphones and social media. They spend more time using cell phones rather than reading. Moreover, some parents do not have extra time to teach their children even the basics of reading.

 The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines implemented a reading intervention program called "Catch-Up Fridays" to address this issue. Every Friday, this intervention devotes to reading and writing exercises. By offering opportunities for reading intervention and enhancement through developmentally appropriate reading materials, the initiative seeks to close the reading gap among students (Sevillano, 2024) Throughout the school year, students participate in reading, values, peace, and health education-focused activities every Friday. This program operationalizes the National Reading Program (NRP) during the first half of the day's schedule and is not graded. Its goal is to strengthen the foundational, social, and other pertinent skills needed to actualize the basic education curriculum's intent (Requillo et. al, 2024)

However, with this many readings’ intervention program implemented in our country, poor reading performance remains a serious problem among Filipino learners. In the PISA results of 2022 (Program for International Student Assessment), the Philippines ranked among the lowest in the concluded assessment, with science scoring 24.00%, English (Reading) scoring 23.00%, and Mathematics scoring 16.00%, indicating that students have only achieved basic proficiency in these major subjects. Notably, reading scored only 23.00%, indicating a need for prompt attention to address learning gaps and strengthen the reading proficiency of every learner (OECD, 2022). The Philippines’ underperformance in the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) highlighted the issue of “Learning poverty” drawing significant attention from policymakers, educators, and public figures. In response, DepEd has implemented various intervention aimed to enhance reading performance among learners. One of these reading interventions implemented before is Brigada Pagbasa (BP). The Brigada Pagbasa is a movement that seeks to enhance the skills of Filipino children who can read and improve their comprehension (Calica, 2019). Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) focuses on developing reading skills at primary level (DepEd, 2020).

As a department-mandated academic institution, Cupis National High School adheres to the motto "every child should be a reader no child will be left behind," focusing on providing its Filipino students with an accessible, equitable, and high-quality basic education. And because it has observed that some of our learners have low reading proficiency levels based on the last PISA exam. The institution takes lead roles in implementing Catch-Up Friday and introduced weekly program dedicated to intensive reading activities. By offering structured reading sessions and learning environment to fill the gap in reading proficiency and to ensure that all learners possess adequate literacy skills for future educational and life opportunities.

Implementing Catch-up Friday is of utmost importance due to its potential to provide crucial academic support to students facing learning gaps. This program offers a structured platform for learners, allowing them to received tailored guidance and supplemental resources to enhance reading performance and overall academic progress and success. The use of reading intervention program elevates reading performance is quite effective. Reading intervention program does play a role in learners’ reading performance. This finding according to Tolentin, 2023. “When a reading intervention program is implemented extensively learners’ are more like to experience improvement in their reading skills and performance”. He revealed that the use of reading intervention program enriches learners’ reading proficiency. It is manifest that reading intervention program does affect reading performance.

 Thus, the purpose of the study is to understand the learner’s perception on the implementation of Catch-Up Friday program and its effect on the reading performance of Junior High School learners’ of Cupis National High School. Understanding student perceptions allows to tailor their instruction and create a more engaging and supportive learning environment. The results will contribute to existing knowledge on improving reading performance of learners’ and offer practical suggestions for educators and policymakers interested in similar intervention. Although "Catch-Up Fridays" initiative has encountered various obstacles in its implementation, despite its admirable goals (Department of Education, 2024). So therefore, relevant and timely data can be drawn on implementation of Catch-up Friday this study highlights areas that need improvement and some intervening aspects of the program. Moreover, this study provides an opportunity to collect data on students’ perspectives, gather invaluable feedback form the interview regarding the implementation of the program, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in meeting Catch-up Friday objectives. The formulation of a sustainable program like Catch-Up Friday in reading intervention can be achieved by using the recommendation derived from the observed evidence presented in this research.

 This study is important in order to find out how the Cupis National High School Junior learners perceive on the implementation of Catch-up Friday program and its effect on the reading performance which is necessary so that teachers are able to understand whether or not it works in closing any gaps with regards to reading performance. As a Grade 7 advisory and Araling Panlipunan teacher, the researcher is committed to improve the reading performance among junior high school learners’ of Cupis National High School.

2. **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to understand learners’ perspective in the implementation of catch-up Friday and its effect to reading performance of junior high school students of Cupis National High School.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the reading performance of learners before the implementation of Catch-up Friday Program?

2. What is the reading performance of the learners after the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program?

3. Is there a significant difference of the reading performance of the learners before and after implementation of Catch-up Friday Program?

4. What is the learners’ perception on the implementation of Catch-up Friday Program?

5. What are the problems encountered by the learners in the implementation of Catch-up Friday Program?

**2.1 Hypothesis**

 There is no significant difference in the reading performance of the learners before and after the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

 This study used a descriptive survey method.

3.2. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Cupis National High School (CuNHS), located at Sitio Umbog, Caglayan, Conner, and Apayao. The school site is 2.2 km away from Conner municipality hall.

3.3. Participants Of the Study

The participants of the study were the 108 learners of grade 7, 8, 9 and 10 junior high school students of Cupis National High School. They were selected through random sampling using the Slovin’s formula.

 **Table 1. Sample size using Slovin’s formula**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participants | Number of learners’ | Sample size |
| Grade 7 | 49 | 36 |
| Grade 8 | 28 | 21 |
| Grade 9 | 36 | 26 |
| Grade 10 | 34 | 25 |
| Total | **148** | **108** |

3.4. Research Instrument

 The main instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire divided into 2 parts. Part 1 presented the students’ perspective on the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program adopted to the study of Jean Rose A. Abejo. Part 2 determine the problems encountered by the learners during the implementation of catch-up Friday program. The PHIL IRI result pre- and post-test is also used to determine the reading performance of the learners.

3.5. Data Gathering Procedure

 The researcher asked permission to the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) of Northern Conner District and Teacher-In-Charge of Cupis National High School to conduct the study. The researcher asked the result of pre- and post- test Phil IRI S.Y. 2024-2025 of the selected respondents from Junior high school of Cupis National High School. After which, the questionnaires administered. The data tabulated, consolidated and analyzed. A thematic analysis was conducted that obtained from the survey in order to pinpoint the problems encountered of the learners had with Catch-up Friday and documentary analysis to reveal the reading performance before the implementation of the program.

3.6. Statistical Analysis

 T-test has been employed to get the significant difference of the pre- and post- Phil IRI and weighted means used to determine the learners’ perspective after the implementation of catch-up Friday. Frequency and rank are also used to identify from most to least problems encountered by learner during the implementation of Catch-up Friday program.

**Table 2 interpret the mean of learners’ perception on the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program, the following scale is used.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mean and Range** | **Descriptive Interpretation** |
| 4.21 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 1.81- 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1.00 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

4. results and discussion

**Table 3 Learners’ Reading Performance Before the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade Level** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** |
| **Total Assessed** | 49 | 28 | 36 | 34 |
| **At Grade Level****(GST)****(Score between 28-40)** | 0 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| **2- Level Down****(Score Between 16- 27)** | Independent | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Instructional | 8 | 3 | 12 | 2 |
| Frustration | 3 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| **Total** | **14** | **12** | **14** | **6** |
| **3- Level Down****(Score Between 0 to 15)** | Independent | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Instructional | 23 | 4 | 9 | 17 |
| Frustration | 12 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| **Total** | **35** | **10** | **17** | **23** |

Table 3 revealed that before the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program, most learners across all grade levels were performing below the expected reading level. In Grade 7, none of the 49 learners were reading at grade level, with 14 students assessed as two levels down and 35 as three levels down. Similarly, in Grade 8, only 6 out of 28 students were at grade level, while the rest showed varying degrees of reading difficulties. Grades 9 and 10 followed the same pattern, with only a small fraction of learners meeting grade-level expectations—5 out of 36 in Grade 9 and 5 out of 34 in Grade 10—while a significant number remained in instructional and frustration levels across two or three grade levels down. These findings imply a substantial gap in reading proficiency prior to the intervention, underscoring the urgent need for a targeted reading support program like Catch-up Friday. The high percentage of learners in instructional and frustration points to systemic challenges in reading comprehension and fluency, which, if not addressed, could impede academic progress across subject areas. This baseline data strongly supports the rationale for implementing a structured reading intervention to enhance learners' reading outcomes. The results aligned in the study of Requillo 2024, emphasized the alarming number of learners performing below expected reading levels and highlighted the necessity of structured reading interventions like Catch-Up Friday. They found that with consistent implementation of targeted strategies, students previously in frustration and instructional levels showed measurable improvements in reading fluency and comprehension. The parallel between the current findings and their study further validates the need for programs that prioritize reading recovery and support struggling readers through dedicated interventions.

**Table 4 Learners’ Reading Performance After the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade Level** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** |
| **Total Assessed** | 49 | 28 | 36 | 34 |
| **At Grade Level****(GST)****(Score between 28-40)** | 0 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| **2- Level Down****(Score Between 16- 27)** | Independent | 9 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| Instructional | 5 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Frustration | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **14** | **12** | **14** | **6** |
| **3- Level Down****(Score Between 0 to 15)** | Independent | 16 | 7 | 13 | 12 |
| Instructional | 17 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| Frustration | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| **Total** | **35** | **10** | **17** | **23** |

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program shows varying effects on the reading performance of learners across different grade levels. Among the 147 students assessed from Grades 7 to 10, only 16 learners were reading at their grade level, with Grade 8 showing the highest number at six learners, while Grade 7 had none. A significant portion of students still fall into the two-level-down and three-level-down categories. Notably, Grade 7 had the highest number of learners three levels below, with 35 students, indicating that this level remains the most challenged despite the intervention. Instructional and independent levels were evident in both the two- and three-level-down groups, but frustration levels remained relatively low across all grades. These findings imply that while the Catch-up Friday Program may have contributed to moving some students from frustration to instructional and independent levels, especially in higher grades, a large number of students are still far from meeting grade-level reading expectations. Therefore, while the program shows potential, it may need to be strengthened with more targeted strategies, differentiated instruction, and consistent monitoring to effectively bridge the learning gaps, particularly in Grade 7 where reading difficulties are most pronounced. The results aligned in the study (Rominimbang et. al, 2024), who explored teachers’ effective strategies in Catch-Up Fridays in addressing reading gaps. Their findings highlighted that while the Catch-Up Friday initiative helped shift some learners from frustration to instructional and independent reading levels, many students still required more targeted and sustained interventions to achieve grade-level proficiency. This supports the current study’s observation that although progress is evident, particularly in higher grades, substantial reading challenges remain—especially in Grade 7—thus indicating the need for reinforced and differentiated reading strategies.

**Table 5 Significant Difference in Learners’ Reading Performance Before and After the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Paired Variables** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Mean Difference** | **t-value** | **p-value** | **Decision at 0.05** |
| Pre-test Reading Performance | 19.15 | 8.25 | 6.58 | -5.53 | <0.001 | Reject Ho |
| Post-test Reading Performance | 25.73 | 5.74 |

 Table 5 reveals a statistically significant improvement in learners’ reading performance following the implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program. The mean score increased from 19.15 in the pre-test to 25.73 in the post-test, yielding a mean difference of 6.58. This improvement is supported by a t-value of -5.53 and a p-value of less than 0.001, which is far below the significance level of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This result indicates that the Catch-up Friday Program had a meaningful and positive impact on learners’ reading abilities. The implication is that structured and focused interventions like Catch-up Friday can effectively address reading gaps among learners, reinforcing the value of dedicated remedial sessions within the academic week. Educators and school administrators may consider institutionalizing such programs as part of regular instructional support to enhance literacy outcomes. These results aligned in the study of (Gorard et. al, 2015), (Okada, 2025) and (Rominimbang et. al, 2024). The findings of this study corroborate the results of (Gorard et. al, 2015), who evaluated the ‘Switch-on Reading’ literacy catch-up programme and found statistically significant improvements in learners' reading outcomes after participating in targeted intervention. Similarly, (Okada, 2025) emphasized in the Catch-Up Education Research Evaluation Framework that well-structured catch-up programs are instrumental in closing learning gaps, particularly in foundational skills like reading. Furthermore, (Rominimbang et. al, 2024) explored the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays and highlighted the effectiveness of dedicated reading strategies during these sessions in improving reading fluency and comprehension among learners. These studies reinforce the present research’s conclusion that the Catch-up Friday Program contributes positively to elevating learners’ reading performance and supports the institutionalization of similar programs to promote literacy development.

***Table 6 Learners’ Perspectives on the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Learners’ Perspectives** | **Weighted Mean** | **Descriptive Interpretation** |
| I enjoy the variety of reading activities offered during Catch-Up Friday sessions | 3.92 | Agree |
| Participating in Catch-Up Friday sessions have increased my confidence in my reading | 3.91 | Agree |
| I feel supported by teachers during Catch-Up Friday sessions | 4.0 | Agree |
| Catch-Up Friday sessions address my individual reading needs and learning preferences | 4.1 | Agree |
| I am actively engaged during Catch-Up Friday sessions. | 3.74 | Agree |
| The reading materials used during Catch-Up Friday sessions are relevant to my learning needs | 3.87 | Agree |
| I feel that the frequency and duration of Catch-Up Friday sessions are appropriate. | 3.68 | Agree |
| Catch-Up Friday sessions positively impacted my overall academic performance | 3.82 | Agree |
| I am satisfied with the structure and organization of Catch-Up Friday sessions. | 3.87 | Agree |
| Catch-Up Friday sessions effectively improved my reading skills. | 4.31 | Strongly Agree |
| **Category Mean** | **3.92** | **Agree** |

Table 6 indicates that learners generally have a positive perception of the Catch-Up Friday Program, with a category mean of 3.92 interpreted as “Agree.” Notably, the highest rated item was that the sessions effectively improved reading skills, receiving a weighted mean of 4.31, while the lowest was the appropriateness of the frequency and duration, with a 3.68. This suggests that while students appreciate the content, structure, and support provided, there may be a need to reassess the scheduling and time allotment of the program. These findings imply that Catch-Up Friday is beneficial to students’ reading development and engagement, but refining logistical aspects could further enhance its effectiveness. The results aligned with the study of (Rominimbang et. al, 2024), who explored teachers’ effective strategies in Catch-Up Fridays in addressing reading gaps. Their findings revealed that structured, engaging, and learner-centered reading interventions—like those implemented during Catch-Up Friday sessions—significantly contributed to improved reading skills and learner motivation. This supports the learners’ positive perceptions in the current study, particularly regarding the program’s effectiveness in enhancing reading performance and addressing individual learning needs.

**Table 7 Problems Encountered by Learners in the Implementation of the Catch-up Friday Program**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Problems Encountered** | **Frequency** | **Ranking** |
| Not enough reading materials for each student | 66 | 3 |
| The words used in the reading materials are deep to understand | 85 | 1 |
| The reading material is long and boring | 39 | 9 |
| The reading material is not aligned in the lesson objectives | 40 | 8 |
| Unfocused because it’s a whole day reading activity | 39 | 10 |
| Uninterested because it’s not promoting engaging activities | 41 | 7 |
| The reading activity stressed students which heavily affect the physical and mental health | 42 | 6 |
| Time- consuming because we need to read one by one | 65 | 4 |
| No recognition and encouragement from the teachers for attending Catch-Up Friday | 48 | 5 |
| Lack of awareness about Catch-Up Friday program | 72 | 2 |

Problems encountered by learners in the implementation of the Catch-Up Friday Program. The main concerns encountered by the participants during the Catch-up Fridays are as follows: First is the words used in the reading materials are deep to understand. Followed by lack of awareness about Catch-up Friday program. Next is not enough reading materials for each learner. Fourth, time consuming because we need to read one by one. And the last is No recognition and encouragement from the teachers for attending Catch-up Friday. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of the program is hindered by problems encountered by the learners. These results imply that for Catch-Up Friday to positively impact reading performance, improvements must be made in selecting appropriate reading resources, integrating more interactive approaches, and enhancing program awareness among learners. The results align with the study of (Tomas et. al, 2021), which emphasized the perceived challenges learners face in reading, such as difficulty understanding vocabulary, lack of motivation, and the misalignment of reading materials with instructional goals. Their findings support the current data showing learners’ negative perceptions of the Catch-Up Friday Program due to insufficient engaging content, overwhelming length of reading tasks, and lack of proper encouragement and alignment with learning objectives. These shared concerns suggest the need for responsive and learner-centered program adjustments to enhance reading engagement and outcomes.

5. Conclusion

 It can be concluded that Catch-Up Friday Program has an effect on the improvement of reading performance in junior high school learners at Cupis National High School.

Consent (where ever applicable)

I affirm that the participants voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentially in accordance with ethical guidelines

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

I acknowledge that I have used Copilot for only refining some of the sections in the document.

Ethical approval (where ever applicable)

The study was conducted with the approval and in accordance with the standard of the school. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the participants’ privacy and confidentially.

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