

Innovation of Teachers and Initiatives of School Heads in the Implementation of Reading Program

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how innovative instructional practices and leadership initiatives contribute to improving learners' reading comprehension. It focused on the experiences and perspectives of Junior High School English teachers in a school within the Division of Bukidnon, particularly in implementing reading strategies and programs aligned with institutional goals. The research employed a qualitative design using a hermeneutical approach, which emphasizes interpreting the deeper meanings behind participants' experiences and interactions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select key informants, specifically Junior High School English teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights. Findings revealed three major themes: Strategic Prioritization of Reading, Systematic Instructional Governance, and Enabling and Supportive Leadership Culture. These themes highlight the importance of structured planning, coordinated instructional support, and a positive leadership environment in promoting effective reading instruction. Despite challenges such as limited resources, time constraints, and diverse learner needs, the study found that the collaborative efforts of teachers and school leaders significantly enhance reading comprehension outcomes. The use of innovative teaching strategies, contextualized learning materials, and collaborative practices was shown to improve learner engagement and deepen understanding. In conclusion, fostering reading success requires a strong partnership between teacher innovation and supportive school leadership. The study recommends strengthening instructional supervision, promoting continuous professional development, and ensuring adequate resource provision to sustain effective reading programs and improve overall literacy outcomes among learners.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Teacher Innovation, Instructional Leadership, Qualitative Research, Thematic Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Improving reading comprehension among junior high school students remains a critical concern in education, particularly in diverse and resource-constrained learning environments. Addressing this issue requires not only effective instructional practices but also responsive and supportive school leadership. Teachers are expected to implement innovative, learner-centered strategies that address varying reading abilities, while school heads play a vital role in initiating, guiding, and sustaining school-wide reading programs. The interaction between instructional practices and leadership initiatives significantly influences how reading comprehension is developed and supported within the school context.

Innovative strategies in teaching reading have become essential interventions in many public high schools in Bukidnon, particularly in addressing learners' low reading comprehension levels. In response to the literacy gaps identified through assessments such as Phil-IRI, schools have implemented several learner-centered and context-based reading programs aligned with DepEd policies and literacy initiatives.

One of the most widely implemented literacy programs in Bukidnon public schools is the BRAINS Literacy Program or Bukidnon Reading Assessment and Intervention for Numeracy and Literacy Skills, institutionalized

through DM No. 322 s. 2023. This program integrates scheduled reading interventions into the class program and emphasizes differentiated instruction, remediation, and continuous monitoring of learners' reading levels. Teachers employ strategies such as peer reading, guided oral reading, timed reading sessions, and comprehension-based activities to improve learners' fluency and understanding.

Public high schools in Bukidnon also implement reading innovations such as Read-a-Thon, Reading Camp, Project DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), and Remedial Reading Programs. These initiatives encourage sustained reading habits, improve vocabulary development, and strengthen comprehension through engaging and interactive activities. Teachers utilize contextualized reading materials, storytelling, collaborative learning, vocabulary unlocking, and scaffolding strategies to make reading more meaningful and learner-responsive.

In addition, some teachers integrate technology-based approaches such as PowerPoint-assisted reading, educational videos, online flashcards, and game-based learning activities to increase student engagement and motivation. Studies on reading interventions in public schools further show that strategies such as modified board games, flashcard-based instruction, and reading tutorial videos effectively improve learners' reading performance and comprehension.

These innovative reading strategies are supported by DepEd policies such as DepEd Order No. 14 s. 2018, which emphasizes the use of assessment data in designing appropriate reading interventions, and DepEd Order No. 24 s. 2020, which encourages school leaders to support instructional innovation, professional collaboration, and literacy development programs. Together, these programs and strategies demonstrate how public high schools in Bukidnon continuously adapt innovative and context-sensitive approaches to enhance learner's reading comprehension.

Innovative initiative implemented in public schools which is introduced in for the school year 2026-2027 is the ARAL Program, which focuses on providing targeted support to struggling readers through intervention classes, leveled reading materials, and individualized instruction. The program prioritizes learners identified through Phil-IRI assessments and promotes responsive and contextualized teaching practices. This aligns with DepEd's thrust under the MATATAG Agenda to strengthen foundational literacy skills among learners.

Teacher innovativeness is widely recognized as a key factor in enhancing reading comprehension. Studies have shown that the use of varied strategies such as skimming, scanning, vocabulary development, and interactive approaches can improve learners' engagement and understanding. These strategies become more effective when they are adapted to students' needs and contextual realities. Moreover, teachers' ability to implement diverse techniques and continuously refine their practices highlights the importance of professional development and instructional flexibility in addressing reading difficulties.

At the same time, school leadership plays a crucial role in fostering an environment that supports instructional innovation. National initiatives such as the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) provide structured mechanisms for assessing learners' reading performance; however, their effectiveness largely depends on teacher competence, resource availability, and administrative support. In many school contexts, challenges such as limited instructional materials, insufficient training, and disparities in resource access continue to affect the implementation of reading programs.

In addition, teachers encounter persistent challenges related to learner engagement, varying reading levels, and contextual factors such as socioeconomic conditions and limited parental support. These challenges often require teachers to design individualized and creative approaches, including differentiated instruction and targeted interventions. However, the sustainability of these practices is frequently constrained by time limitations, heavy workloads, and limited institutional support.

Given these conditions, the interplay between teachers' innovativeness and school leaders' initiatives becomes essential in addressing reading comprehension challenges. Research suggests that innovative teaching practices are more effective when supported by strong and collaborative leadership that promotes professional growth, resource provision, and instructional coherence. This highlights the need to examine how these elements work together in actual school settings.

Despite these efforts, several gaps and challenges continue to affect the implementation and sustainability of reading interventions in public high schools. Teachers commonly encounter difficulties related to limited instructional materials, inadequate access to technology, insufficient time for remediation, and the wide range of learners' reading abilities within a single classroom. Many teachers also experience heavy workloads due to administrative tasks and multiple teaching preparations, limiting their ability to consistently implement innovative reading strategies. Furthermore, learners' low motivation, weak vocabulary foundation, poor decoding skills, and short attention spans continue to hinder reading development. Socioeconomic factors, including limited parental involvement and irregular attendance, further affect learners' engagement in reading activities both at school and at home.

School leaders also face significant challenges in sustaining literacy initiatives. These include limited school funding, insufficient instructional resources, inconsistent implementation of reading programs across grade levels, and varying levels of teacher readiness and innovativeness. Monitoring and evaluating reading programs become difficult due to the large number of teachers and learners that need supervision. In some cases, school heads struggle to balance instructional leadership responsibilities with administrative and community-related duties. Additionally, while teachers are encouraged to innovate, the lack of continuous training opportunities and sustainable support systems may discourage long-term implementation of creative reading practices.

These gaps highlight the need for stronger collaboration between teachers and school leaders, more context-responsive interventions, and sustained institutional support. They further emphasize the importance of instructional supervision, continuous professional development, adequate resource allocation, and consistent monitoring systems to ensure that innovative reading strategies effectively address the literacy needs of learners in public high schools in Bukidnon.

Innovative strategies in teaching reading have become essential interventions in many public high schools in Bukidnon, particularly in addressing learners' low reading comprehension levels and literacy gaps. This concern has become more urgent following the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where the Philippines remained among the lowest-performing countries in reading literacy. The OECD reported that only 24% of Filipino learners attained at least Level 2 proficiency in reading, compared to the OECD average of 74%. Moreover, the Philippines obtained an average reading score of 347 points, significantly lower than the OECD average of 476 points. These findings indicate that many Filipino learners continue to struggle with identifying main ideas, interpreting texts, and applying reading skills in real-life contexts.

Despite these interventions, significant gaps and challenges remain. Teachers continue to encounter difficulties related to limited instructional materials, inadequate technology access, insufficient time for remediation, and the wide range of learners' reading abilities within one classroom. Many teachers also experience heavy workloads due to administrative responsibilities and multiple teaching preparations, limiting the consistent implementation of innovative reading practices. Learners' low motivation, poor vocabulary foundation, weak decoding skills, and short attention spans further complicate reading instruction. Additionally, socioeconomic factors such as irregular attendance and minimal parental involvement negatively affect learners' participation in reading activities.

Thus, this study explores how teachers' innovative strategies and school leaders' initiatives interact in enhancing reading comprehension among junior high school students. Specifically, it seeks to understand the strategies employed by teachers, the initiatives implemented by school leaders, the challenges encountered, and the ways these challenges are addressed. By focusing on participants' experiences and perspectives, the study adopts a qualitative approach to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of instructional innovation and leadership in reading comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological research design, guided by the work of Max van Manen. This approach focuses on exploring and interpreting the lived experiences of participants to understand the meaning they assign to a particular phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon centers on teachers'

innovativeness and school leaders' initiatives in enhancing reading comprehension. This study employed a one-on-one survey questionnaire.

Hermeneutic phenomenology goes beyond mere description by emphasizing interpretation of participants' experiences within their specific contexts. It allows the researcher to uncover deeper meanings embedded in participants' narratives, particularly how teachers and school leaders experience, implement, and respond to reading comprehension practices in their school setting.

Through this approach, the study captures the richness of participants' perspectives, highlighting how instructional strategies, leadership support, challenges, and responses are experienced in real-life educational contexts. This design is appropriate as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between teacher practices and leadership initiatives, grounded in actual lived experiences.

Research Locale

This study will be conducted at a public high school located in the District of San Fernando I, under the Division of Bukidnon in the Department of Education (DepEd) Philippines. As a public secondary institution catering to Junior High School learners from Grades 7 to 10, the school presents a diverse student population with varying literacy needs and learning contexts. It serves as a strategic research locale due to its ongoing efforts to implement reading programs and its emphasis on instructional leadership and teacher development. The school's initiatives reflect DepEd's broader mission to address reading comprehension challenges through innovative teaching and collaborative leadership. Studying this particular setting provides valuable insights into how grassroots educational practices align with national literacy goals and how local educators navigate these through innovation and initiative.

Research Participants

The participants of this study will consist of eight (8) English teachers and the school head assigned to a public high school in Bukidnon, which offers instruction to Junior High School students from Grades 7 to 10. Each grade level typically has two to three English teachers who are directly involved in delivering reading comprehension instruction. These teachers are selected based on their active engagement in classroom innovation and their experience in implementing reading strategies. The school head and key instructional leaders will also participate, as they play a critical role in initiating and sustaining programs that support literacy development. By involving both teaching and leadership personnel, the study aims to capture a holistic view of how collaborative efforts influence students' reading comprehension outcomes.

These participants bring valuable insights into the realities of implementing reading programs within a public-school setting, particularly in a rural Philippine context. Their varied years of teaching experience, exposure to professional development programs, and involvement in school-wide reading initiatives provide a rich foundation for examining the interplay between innovation in instruction and administrative leadership. By selecting participants from multiple grade levels, the study ensures a diverse representation of teaching practices and challenges across the Junior High School curriculum. The inclusion of school heads also highlights the importance of leadership in motivating and supporting teachers to adopt innovative approaches. This combination of perspectives will offer meaningful data on how institutional dynamics affect the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies.

Research Tool

To explore the lived experiences of teachers regarding innovativeness and school leaders' initiatives in enhancing reading comprehension among junior high school students, this study utilized a semi-structured, one-on-one interview guide as the primary data collection instrument. This tool was designed to generate rich, in-depth descriptions of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices within their instructional context.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with English teachers to allow participants to freely express their insights while maintaining focus on the central areas of the study. The interview questions

were open-ended and organized around key themes, including: (1) innovative instructional strategies in reading, (2) school leaders' initiatives and support, (3) challenges encountered in enhancing reading comprehension, and (4) coping strategies and responses. Probing questions were used when necessary to clarify meanings and deepen the understanding of participants' experiences.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study will follow a systematic and ethical process in gathering data to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research. Prior to data collection, formal approval will be secured from the appropriate authorities, including the Dean, Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, Thesis Committee, and the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

After obtaining the necessary permissions, the researcher will coordinate with the selected participants and conduct an orientation to explain the purpose of the study, the data collection process, and the ethical considerations involved. Participants will be provided with informed consent forms detailing the nature of the study, their rights, confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, and the option to withdraw at any time. Consent will be obtained before proceeding with any data collection activities.

Following this, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with the selected English teachers. The interviews were guided by an interview protocol designed to explore participants' experiences related to instructional innovation, leadership support, challenges encountered, and coping strategies in enhancing reading comprehension. Each interview session was conducted in a quiet and private setting to ensure confidentiality and encourage open and honest responses. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

To further enrich the data, follow-up discussions were conducted with selected participants to clarify responses and deepen the understanding of emerging themes. This process allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide additional insights relevant to the study.

After data collection, all interview transcripts were carefully reviewed and organized for analysis. The data then underwent coding and thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and significant themes aligned with the objectives of the study. Member checking was employed by returning selected interpretations to participants to verify accuracy and ensure that their perspectives were faithfully represented.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the conduct of this study to ensure the protection of participants' rights, dignity, and well-being. Prior to data collection, formal approval was secured from the appropriate educational authorities and the institutional ethics review body. Participants were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and expectations through an informed consent form. This document outlined their rights, including voluntary participation, the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty, and assurance that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality. Participants were given sufficient time to review the consent form and raise any questions before agreeing to participate.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The identity of the research locale and participants was protected by omitting specific names and using pseudonyms or coded identifiers in all transcripts, analyses, and reports. All audio recordings and transcribed data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. The data were used solely for academic purposes and will be properly disposed of after the completion of the study in accordance with data privacy regulations.

To ensure that no harm was inflicted on participants, the researcher maintained a respectful and non-intrusive approach during data collection. Interview questions were designed to focus on professional experiences and avoided sensitive or personal issues. Participants were encouraged to share only what they were comfortable

discussing and were informed that they could decline to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time. This approach ensured that the research process remained safe, respectful, and ethically sound.

In establishing the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with participants and the use of member checking, where selected participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of their transcribed responses and interpretations. Transferability was supported by providing detailed and context-rich descriptions of the research setting, participants, and processes, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts.

Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear and systematic documentation of the research process, including interview procedures, coding decisions, and theme development. This audit trail allows for transparency and consistency in how the study was conducted. Confirmability was established through the use of reflexive journaling and careful documentation of analytical decisions, ensuring that the findings were grounded in participants' narratives rather than researcher bias.

Through these ethical safeguards and trustworthiness strategies, the study upholds the integrity of qualitative research and ensures that the findings accurately reflect the lived experiences of the participants.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected because it allows for the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns of meaning across qualitative data. Thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for this study as it enables the researcher to examine and interpret the lived experiences of participants, which is consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenological design. Through this approach, deeper meanings embedded in participants' narratives about instructional innovation, leadership support, challenges, and coping strategies were explored and interpreted within their context.

After data collection, all audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and preserve participants' original expressions. The researcher then engaged in repeated reading of the transcripts to achieve immersion and gain a holistic understanding of the data. This process allowed for the identification of significant statements and meaningful units relevant to the study.

Initial coding was conducted by identifying recurring ideas, phrases, and concepts related to teachers' innovativeness, school leaders' initiatives, challenges encountered, and coping strategies. These codes were then organized into broader categories and subsequently developed into potential themes that captured shared patterns across participants' experiences.

Following the initial coding, the themes were reviewed, refined, and defined to ensure coherence and alignment with the research questions. The analysis focused on interpreting how participants described their instructional practices, the support they received from school leadership, and the ways they addressed challenges in enhancing reading comprehension. Attention was given not only to common patterns but also to variations in experiences, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

Consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, the analysis emphasized interpretation rather than mere categorization. The researcher sought to uncover the meanings participants assigned to their experiences and how these meanings shaped their practices in the classroom.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, several strategies were employed. Member checking was conducted by sharing selected interpretations with participants to confirm accuracy. Peer debriefing was used to review the coding process and thematic development for clarity and consistency. Additionally, reflexive journaling was maintained throughout the analysis to document the researcher's insights, decisions, and potential biases. These procedures ensured that the findings were credible, transparent, and grounded in participants' lived experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that teachers employ a range of innovative and adaptive instructional strategies to enhance students' reading comprehension. These strategies are not limited to the use of specific techniques but reflect a responsive approach to learners' needs, reading levels, and classroom contexts. Teachers consistently demonstrate flexibility in modifying their instruction to ensure that students are actively engaged in the reading process.

One of the prominent practices observed is the use of contextualized and differentiated instruction. Teachers design reading materials and activities that are relevant to students' experiences, allowing learners to connect prior knowledge with new information. In actual classroom implementation, this is evident in the use of localized texts, simplified reading passages, and leveled materials that match students' comprehension abilities. Teachers also group students based on reading proficiency and provide targeted support through guided reading sessions and individualized instruction.

Another key strategy is the integration of interactive and collaborative learning approaches. Teachers facilitate activities such as peer reading, group discussions, and questioning techniques that encourage students to actively construct meaning from texts. These practices promote engagement and allow students to develop critical thinking and comprehension skills through interaction with peers.

The following matrices show the different themes that emerged and the data quotes are highlighted with their corresponding formulated meaning as show below:

Matrix 1. Innovative Strategies of Teachers

Data Quotes	Formulated Meaning	Themes	Key Findings
“Our principal emphasized reading in every faculty meeting and reminded us it is our top priority this year.”(Participant 1) “Reading comprehension is highlighted in our School Improvement Plan; we need to focus on struggling readers.” (Participant 2)“We have monthly reading campaigns, and all teachers participate in monitoring student progress.” (Participant 3) “The principal clearly stated that improving reading scores is our main goal this semester.” (Participant 4) “During our quarterly review, reading performance is always discussed and analyzed.” (Participant 5)	- Shows continuous communication and prioritization of reading. - Evidence of formal planning with reading focus. - Demonstrates school-wide initiative and collective action. - Explicit leadership messaging. - Reflects ongoing monitoring and discussion. - Alignment with external DepEd/Division standards. - Shows clear messaging and	- Theme 1.1: Contextualized and Differentiated Instruction - Theme 1.2: Interactive and Collaborative Learning Approaches - Theme 1.3: Integration of Technology and Creative Approaches	1. Innovative Strategies of Teachers

“Division targets for reading are shared in meetings, and teachers are asked to plan lessons accordingly.” (Participant 6) “Our school year started with a reading campaign slogan: ‘Reading is our focus this year’.” (Participant 7) “All new instructional programs are designed to support reading comprehension improvement.” (Participant 8) “The school prioritizes reading by including it in the AIP and allocating resources for it.” (Participant 9)	motivation for staff and students. • Integration of reading into teaching programs. • Demonstrates institutional commitment and resource support.		
“The principal shared that we aim to reduce the number of students struggling with reading by 10% this semester.” (Participant 1) “Teachers were given clear benchmarks for grade-level reading skills to guide instruction.” (Participant 2) “Our reading program includes specific goals like improving comprehension scores by at least 15% by year-end.” (Participant 3) “The school communicated that students should meet standardized reading levels, aligned with DepEd standards.” (Participant 4) “Frustrated readers are identified, and teachers are expected to provide interventions to help them improve.” (Participant 5)	• Shows specific target for struggling readers. • Focus on grade-level expectations. • Quantitative improvement goal. • Aligns with national reading standards. • Emphasis on monitoring and support for struggling students. • Combination of benchmarks and progressive goals. • Explicitly communicates reduction of low-	Communicating Clear Reading Goals	

“At the start of the year, we were given the reading targets per grade level and monthly milestones.” (Participant 6) “The principal clearly outlined that the goal is to increase the number of proficient readers and reduce the number of below-level readers.” (Participant 7) “All teachers were informed about standardized reading expectations and how they are measured.” (Participant 8) “Each grade level has percentage goals for reading improvement, and teachers must track student progress monthly.” (Participant 9)	performing readers. • Clarity on assessment and expectations. • Concrete, measurable targets with accountability.		
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MATRIX 2. School Leader's Initiatives

Data Quotes	Formulated Meaning	Themes	Key Findings
“Class advisers submit the reading levels quarterly...results are shared during meetings.” (Participant 1)	• Reading progress is regularly monitored and communicated for instructional planning.	• Theme 2.1: Instructional Monitoring and Data-Driven Practices	2. School Leader's Initiatives
“The principal evaluates reading comprehension by asking data of every grade level's progress.” (Participant 2)	• School leaders rely on data to track learner's reading development.	• Theme 2.2: Professional Development and Instructional Support	
“Looking at student progress data...reading scores, engagement, feedback.” (Participant 3)	• Multiple indicators are used to monitor reading performance	• Theme 2.3: Supportive and Enabling Leadership Culture	
“Data such as test results and reading levels are used as indicators.” (Participant 4)	• Assessment results guide monitoring of reading outcomes.		
“Phil-IRI results are reports are shared during meetings.” (Participant 9)	• Standardized assessments are used to monitor reading progress.		

“Programs like ARAL require scheduled reading activities based on students’ levels.” (Participant 1)	• Reading programs are implemented systematically based on learner needs.		
“Pre-screening determines students’ reading levels before interventions.” (Participant 2)	• Programs are evaluated using diagnostic assessments.		
“Results are shared...to highlight successes and areas to improve.” (Participant 3)	• Evaluation involves reflection and continuous improvement.		
“Monitoring through reading coordinator and reports ensures effectiveness.” (Participant 4)	• Implementation is reviews through structured reporting systems.		
“Misalignment occurs when strategies do not match program goals.” (Participant 5)	• Ineffective implementation results from lack of alignment with objectives.		
“Consistency of reading instruction depends on teacher commitment.” (Participant 2)	• Program effectiveness is influenced by teacher consistency		
“Master Teachers coach and mentor us during classroom observations.” (Participant 1)	• Instructional supervision is provided through coaching and mentoring		
“School leaders provide one-on-one coaching and strategies.” (Participant 1)	• Leaders actively guide teachers to improve instruction.		
“Leaders do one-on-ones and provide targeted support.” (Participant 3)	• Supervision is personalized based on teacher needs.		
“Classroom observations with feedback help improve strategies” Participant 6)	• Supervision includes observation and constructive feedback.		
“Leaders provide coaching, mentoring, and instructional materials.” (Participant 5)	• Instructional supervision includes both guidance and resource support.		
“Monitoring and feedback improve teachers’ strategies and student outcomes.” (Participant 4)	• Supervision contributes to improved teaching effectiveness.		

MATRIX 3. Challenges Encountered

Data Quotes	Formulated Meaning	Themes	Key Findings
“Students have different reading levels and needs.” (Participant 5) “Many students enter high school with limited reading skills.” (Participant 1)	Student’s reading needs vary from their levels of comprehension. Most students even graduate from primary school and having little to no comprehension when entering high school.	- Theme 3.1: Diverse Learner Needs and Low Reading Levels - Theme 3.2: Limited Resources and Time Constraints - Theme 3.3: Inconsistency and Teacher Readiness	3. Challenges Encountered
“Computers and internet are not easily accessible.” (Participant 1) “Limited time... only 50 minutes per period.” (Participant 4)	Appropriate amount of time and accessibility in learning materials should be observed.		
“Not all teachers are ready to use new strategies.” (Participant 5)	This inconsistency impacts the overall effectiveness of reading programs..		
“Teachers are encouraged to experiment...with a supportive environment.” (Participant 8)	A collaborative culture enables experimentation.		
“School appreciates success and treats failure as learning opportunities.” (Participant 9)	Constructive feedback culture strengthens innovation.		
“Successful strategies are shared during LAC sessions.” (P1)	Best practices are recognized and disseminated.		
“Successfully implemented strategies could be adopted by everyone.” (P2)	Effective innovations are acknowledged and replicated.		
“We get recognized in meetings and sometimes share with other schools.” (P3)	Recognition motivates teachers to innovate.		

“Successful strategies are recognized while others are learning experiences.” (P4)	• Recognition is balanced with constructive feedback.		
“Encouragement and approval of activities boost confidence.” (P5)	• Administrative support validates teacher efforts.		
“Recognition like certificates motivates teachers.” (P6)	• Formal recognition enhances teacher morale.		
“Recognition and support boost morale and effort.” (P7)	• Acknowledgment strengthens commitment to innovation.		
“Schools give compliments and comments.” (P8)	• Feedback mechanisms reinforce innovation.		
“Constructive feedback during observations boosts confidence.” (P9)	• Feedback is a form of recognition and improvement.		
“School leaders offer emotional support and encouragement.” (P1)	• Emotional support strengthens teacher motivation.		
“Principal supports by encouragement and follow-up.” (P2)	• Continuous guidance sustains teacher performance.		
“Leaders provide coaching, resources, and recognition.” (P3)	• Support includes instructional, emotional, and material aspects.		

MATRIX 4. Coping Strategies and Responses to Challenges

Data Quotes	Formulated Meaning	Themes	Key Findings
“Teachers are always encouraged and given the freedom to try new strategies.” Participant 1)	• Teachers are empowered to explore innovative teaching practices.	• Theme 4.1: Adaptive and Differentiated Instruction	4. Coping Strategies and Responses to Challenges
“Teachers are all encouraged to experiment new strategies... failures are considered for improvement.” (P2)	• A safe environment allows trial-and-error in teaching.	• Theme 4.2: Collaboration and Shared Practices	
“We’re free to try new strategies, even if they flop sometimes.” (P3)	• Leadership promotes risk-taking without fear of failure.	• Theme 4.3: Leadership Support and	

“We are allowed to experiment... unsuccessful ones are treated as learning experiences.” (P4)	• Innovation is supported through reflective practice.	Capacity Building	
“School leaders encourage us to think of strategies without fear of mistakes.” (Participant 5)	• Leaders foster confidence in trying new methods.		
“School head is very open to trying innovation that helps learners.” (Participant 6)	• Leadership openness promotes innovation in teaching		
“Leadership encourage experimentation through seminars and workshops.” (Participant 7)	• Professional development supports innovation		
“Teachers are encouraged to experiment...with a supportive environment.” (Participant 8)	• A collaborative culture enables experimentation.		
“School appreciates success and treats failure as learning opportunities.” (Participant 9)	• Constructive feedback culture strengthens innovation.		
“Successful strategies are shared during LAC sessions.” (P1)	• Best practices are recognized and disseminated.		
“Successfully implemented strategies could be adopted by everyone.” (P2)	• Effective innovations are acknowledged and replicated.		
“We get recognized in meetings and sometimes share with other schools.” (P3)	• Recognition motivates teachers to innovate.		
“Successful strategies are recognized while others are learning experiences.” (P4)	• Recognition is balanced with constructive feedback.		
“Encouragement and approval of activities boost confidence.” (P5)	• Administrative support validates teacher efforts.		
“Recognition like certificates motivates teachers.” (P6)	• Formal recognition enhances teacher morale.		
“Recognition and support boost morale and effort.” (P7)	• Acknowledgment strengthens commitment to innovation.		
“Schools give compliments and comments.” (P8)	• Feedback mechanisms reinforce innovation.		

“Constructive feedback during observations boosts confidence.” (P9)	Feedback is a form of recognition and improvement.		
“School leaders offer emotional support and encouragement.” (P1)	Emotional support strengthens teacher motivation.		
“Principal supports by encouragement and follow-up.” (P2)	Continuous guidance sustains teacher performance.		
“Leaders provide coaching, resources, and recognition.” (P3)	Support includes instructional, emotional, and material aspects.		
“They provide coaching, mentoring, and materials.” (P4)	Holistic support improves instructional delivery.		
“Leaders provide instructional materials and mentoring.” (P5)	Resource provision aids effective teaching.		
“School head provides internet access and materials.” (P6)	Material resources enhance program implementation.		
“Support includes seminars, materials, and encouragement.” (P7)	Combined support strengthens teacher capability.		
“Funds, training, and resources are provided.” (P8)	Financial and professional support enable innovation.		
“Coaching, mentoring, and limited materials are provided.” (P9)	Support systems help sustain instructional practices.		

The findings are presented in alignment with the Statement of the Problem. First, in terms of teachers’ innovative strategies, the results revealed that teachers employ adaptive and learner-centered approaches grounded in continuous assessment and responsiveness to learners’ needs. These include monitoring reading levels, using contextualized materials, and implementing varied instructional strategies to support comprehension. Innovation is not limited to new methods but is reflected in how teachers adjust their practices based on learners’ abilities and classroom realities.

Second, regarding school leaders’ initiatives, the findings showed that leadership plays a significant role in guiding and sustaining reading programs. School leaders provide instructional supervision, facilitate professional development, and promote a culture of collaboration and accountability. Their initiatives ensure that reading programs are systematically implemented and aligned with instructional goals.

Third, in relation to challenges encountered, participants identified several constraints, including limited resources, time constraints, diverse learner needs, and inconsistencies in program implementation. These challenges highlight the complexity of improving reading comprehension in real school settings.

Fourth, in terms of coping strategies, the study found that teachers and school leaders address these challenges through collaboration, continuous monitoring, mentoring, and adaptive instructional practices. Leadership support and teacher innovativeness work together to mitigate constraints and sustain reading interventions.

The findings of the study revealed that enhancing reading comprehension among junior high school students is a dynamic and collaborative process shaped by the interplay between teachers' innovativeness and school leaders' initiatives. The study showed that teachers employ adaptive, contextualized, and learner-centered instructional strategies in response to the diverse comprehension levels, reading abilities, and learning needs of students. Through differentiated instruction, collaborative learning activities, technology integration, and creative reading approaches, teachers continuously modify their practices to make reading instruction more meaningful, engaging, and accessible. Participants emphasized that learners comprehend texts more effectively when instructional materials are connected to their lived experiences, culture, and level of understanding. This indicates that teacher innovativeness is not simply reflected in the use of new strategies, but in the ability of teachers to remain flexible, reflective, and responsive to learners' realities and literacy needs.

The findings further revealed that school leadership plays a vital role in sustaining reading comprehension programs and supporting instructional improvement. School leaders contribute significantly through instructional monitoring, data-driven practices, mentoring, coaching, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, and the provision of professional support systems that strengthen teachers' instructional capacities. The participants' experiences demonstrated that school leaders who create supportive and enabling environments encourage teachers to become more confident in experimenting with innovative reading strategies. Leadership initiatives such as regular monitoring of Phil-IRI results, collaborative discussions, and recognition of teachers' efforts contribute to the consistency and sustainability of reading interventions. Thus, the study concludes that effective literacy leadership extends beyond administrative functions and becomes an active instructional force that empowers teachers and improves literacy outcomes.

Moreover, the study revealed that improving reading comprehension remains a complex challenge influenced by diverse learner needs, low reading levels, limited instructional resources, time constraints, and inconsistencies in teachers' readiness to implement innovations. Participants described how many learners enter junior high school with weak foundational reading skills, making reading instruction more demanding and requiring continuous adaptation of teaching practices. In addition, insufficient access to instructional materials, technology, and intervention time limits the effectiveness of reading programs and individualized instruction. These findings suggest that reading comprehension challenges are not solely classroom concerns but are deeply connected to broader institutional and contextual realities within the educational setting.

Despite these challenges, the findings showed that teachers and school leaders address reading difficulties through adaptive instructional practices, collaboration, mentoring, and sustained professional support. Teachers continuously adjust strategies according to learners' needs, while school leaders provide guidance, encouragement, and monitoring mechanisms that sustain innovation and instructional improvement.

The collaborative relationship between teachers and school leaders emerged as a central factor in the success of reading interventions. The study therefore concludes that effective reading comprehension programs are achieved not through isolated efforts, but through collective engagement, shared responsibility, and supportive leadership structures that enable teachers to innovate and learners to succeed.

The findings of the study indicate that enhancing reading comprehension requires a coordinated and sustained effort between teachers and school leaders. Effective instructional practices are not solely dependent on the use of specific strategies but on the teacher's ability to adapt, contextualize, and continuously refine these strategies based on learners' needs. Teachers' innovativeness, therefore, plays a critical role in making reading instruction meaningful, engaging, and responsive to diverse learners.

At the same time, the study reveals that school leadership is a vital factor in sustaining instructional improvement. School leaders who provide consistent monitoring, professional support, and opportunities for collaboration create an environment where teachers can effectively implement innovative practices. Leadership is not merely administrative but instructional, as it directly influences the quality and consistency of reading programs.

The study further concludes that challenges in improving reading comprehension are inevitable and multifaceted. These challenges stem from both instructional and contextual factors, including limited resources, varying learner abilities, and implementation gaps. However, such challenges can be addressed through adaptive strategies, collaborative efforts, and sustained leadership support.

Moreover, the interaction between teachers and school leaders emerges as a key determinant of successful reading outcomes. When both work collaboratively through shared decision-making, continuous feedback, and professional engagement the effectiveness of reading programs is significantly enhanced. This synergy highlights that improving reading comprehension is not an individual effort but a collective and systemic process.

Thus, the study concludes that the enhancement of reading comprehension is a holistic and systemic process that requires continuous collaboration among teachers, school leaders, schools, and stakeholders. Successful literacy instruction is grounded in adaptability, responsiveness, instructional support, and shared commitment toward improving students' literacy development and academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed. School leaders are encouraged to strengthen instructional leadership by ensuring consistent monitoring of reading programs, providing continuous professional development, and fostering a supportive environment that encourages innovation among teachers. Emphasis should be placed on mentoring, collaboration, and resource provision to sustain effective reading interventions. They are also encouraged to further strengthen instructional leadership by institutionalizing systematic monitoring and evaluation of reading programs through regular assessment, feedback mechanisms, and data-driven decision-making practices.

Continuous professional development activities such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, mentoring programs, coaching, and literacy-focused trainings should be sustained to enhance teachers' instructional competence and innovativeness in reading instruction. School leaders should also continue fostering a supportive and enabling school culture where teachers feel encouraged to explore creative and learner-centered strategies without fear of failure.

In addition, schools may communicate and utilize the findings of this study through school-based literacy action planning, faculty development activities, and collaborative literacy initiatives aligned with the Department of Education's reading programs and literacy goals.

Teachers are encouraged to continue developing and implementing innovative, learner-centered strategies that respond to the diverse needs of students. Active participation in professional development activities and collaborative learning communities is essential in enhancing instructional practices and improving reading outcomes. Also, to continuously develop adaptive, contextualized, and differentiated instructional practices that address the diverse reading levels, interests, and comprehension needs of learners.

Teachers may strengthen collaborative engagement with colleagues through the sharing of best practices, professional reflection, and participation in school-based and division-level professional learning communities. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to integrate technology-assisted and interactive approaches in reading instruction whenever resources are available to sustain learner engagement and motivation. The findings of this study may also serve as a reflective guide for teachers in evaluating and improving their classroom reading practices and intervention strategies.

Schools and stakeholders should work collaboratively to support reading programs by ensuring the availability of instructional resources, strengthening program implementation, and promoting community involvement. Sustained support systems are necessary to address existing challenges and ensure the continuity of literacy initiatives. Also, to strengthen support systems for literacy development by improving access to instructional materials, technological resources, and intervention programs that address learners' reading difficulties. Greater collaboration among schools, parents, local stakeholders, and the community should be promoted to establish

a literacy-supportive environment that extends beyond the classroom. Schools may also disseminate the findings of this study through research presentations, school improvement planning, literacy advocacy activities, and professional development seminars to encourage the utilization of innovative and collaborative reading practices within the educational community. The Department of Education and educational planners may utilize the findings of this study in designing responsive literacy policies, contextualized intervention programs, and teacher capacity-building initiatives that address the realities and challenges encountered in public secondary schools. The findings may also contribute to the enhancement of literacy frameworks and instructional supervision practices that support both teacher innovation and school leadership in improving reading

Future researchers may explore similar studies in different contexts or expand the scope by examining additional factors that influence reading comprehension. Further investigation into long-term program effectiveness and the role of emerging instructional approaches may provide deeper insights into improving literacy outcomes. Also, they may conduct similar studies in different educational settings and contexts to further explore the relationship between teacher innovativeness, school leadership, and literacy development.

Researchers may also investigate additional variables such as parental involvement, learners' socio-emotional factors, digital literacy integration, and long-term intervention effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension. Further qualitative and mixed-method studies may provide deeper insights into sustainable literacy practices and emerging approaches that can strengthen reading instruction and improve student learning outcomes.

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