

Leadership approaches on the implementation of the reading programs for struggling readers

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Abstract

This comprehensive research study determined the extent of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership approaches influencing the implementation of reading programs for struggling readers in Vinzons District based on empirical data for the school year 2024–2025. Employing a descriptive-correlational quantitative design grounded in Transformational Leadership, Social Cognitive, and Self-Determination theories, data were gathered from 119 respondents, comprising 100 language teachers and 19 school heads, using a validated questionnaire through total enumeration sampling. Results revealed that school leaders demonstrated a very great extent of leadership practices across transformational (4.32), instructional (4.27), and distributed (4.26) models. Reading programs were highly implemented, with monitoring and assessment registering the highest mean (4.66). Significant positive correlations existed between leadership approaches and program implementation, showing the strongest links under distributed leadership for capacity building (0.586) and stakeholder involvement (0.561). However, critical challenges persisted, particularly teachers balancing reading instruction with other curriculum demands (3.32), limited home support for reading practice (3.83), and inadequate family engagement initiatives (3.67). The study concluded that while strong leadership significantly enhances program execution through collaboration and shared accountability, persistent systemic and home-based barriers necessitate targeted interventions. Consequently, the researcher developed and strongly recommended the adoption of Project READ-UP. This school-based intervention integrates a Protected Reading Block, READ-HOME Kits, and a School Literacy Team to strengthen instructional time, home-school partnerships, and shared accountability within the district. Future researchers may validate this scalable literacy intervention using longitudinal and qualitative methods to ensure sustainable educational improvements for struggling learners across the entire Schools Division of Camarines Norte.

Keywords: Leadership approaches, reading program implementation, transformational leadership, struggling readers, Project READ-UP

1. Introduction

Reading proficiency is a foundational academic skill requiring holistic, multi-faceted literacy programs that incorporate strategic planning, continuous monitoring, and teacher empowerment (Slavin et al., 2009). Fostering meaningful literacy experiences relies heavily on instructional quality and teacher engagement (Gambrell and Morrow, 2015), while sustaining effective instruction demands continuous professional development (International Literacy Association, 2019) and the equitable allocation of resources (Leu et al., 2011). Despite these established global standards, the Philippines struggles with significant reading

comprehension gaps, ranking among the lowest in international large-scale assessments such as PISA (OECD, 2019) and SEA-PLM (Department of Education et al., 2021).

To address these literacy deficiencies, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) and issued DepEd Order No. 18, s. 2017 to institutionalize the Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP), alongside DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2015, which guides literacy and numeracy development. However, despite these legislative efforts, national assessments like the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) reveal persistent challenges among struggling readers. Traditional interventions focusing solely on cognitive strategies often neglect motivational and psychosocial factors, underscoring the critical need for transformative educational leadership to foster collaboration, innovation, and accountability within learning environments (Northouse, 2025; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006).

Educational leadership significantly enhances reading proficiency through three complementary frameworks: transformational leadership, which inspires a shared vision and intrinsic motivation (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006); instructional leadership, which emphasizes curriculum supervision and capacity building (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985); and distributed leadership, which promotes shared responsibility among stakeholders (Spillane, 2005; Bush and Glover, 2014). These models align with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020) and are operationalized through DepEd Order No. 18, s. 2017 (ECARP), DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018 (CRLA), and DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022, which collectively evaluate program planning, instructional delivery, progress monitoring, capacity building, and resource utilization.

While community-based initiatives like Brigada Pagbasa successfully mobilize stakeholders to promote reading habits, they often lack the structured empirical frameworks necessary for long-term sustainability (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2008; DepEd Memorandum No. 062, s. 2022). This structural gap is highly evident in the Vinzons District of the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Camarines Norte, where recent CRLA data expose a significant number of learners performing below grade-level expectations in reading comprehension and fluency. Furthermore, local teachers note that conventional remedial programs fail to address the underlying motivational and behavioral barriers hindering reading development, emphasizing the urgent need to systematically integrate formal leadership models into school-based reading interventions.

Addressing these persistent literacy gaps is critical for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership approaches influence the reading proficiency of struggling learners and the overall implementation of reading programs. Furthermore, it seeks to identify the challenges teachers encounter and explore the relationship between these leadership practices and contextual barriers. By generating empirical evidence to inform policy and practice, this research aims to empower struggling readers, nurture their self-efficacy, and promote sustainable, lifelong literacy habits across Philippine schools.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study determined the extent to which leadership approaches influenced the reading proficiency of struggling readers based on EOSY CRLA data for SY 2024–2025. Specifically, it assessed the extent of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership models, alongside the level of reading program implementation across program planning and design, instructional delivery, progress monitoring, stakeholder involvement, capacity building, and resource utilization. Furthermore, the research investigated the significant relationship between these leadership approaches and the level of program implementation, identified the specific challenges encountered by teachers, and utilized these findings to propose a targeted intervention to enhance the overall execution of reading programs for struggling learners.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to evaluate the extent of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership approaches on the implementation of reading programs for struggling readers during the 2025–2026 school year. The descriptive component measured these leadership practices alongside the teacher-, learner-, and institutional-related challenges encountered in literacy instruction. Furthermore, the correlational component investigated the significant relationship between the extent of these leadership approaches and the identified challenges. Ultimately, this systematic examination of the link between leadership practices and contextual barriers provided the data-driven insights necessary to propose a targeted intervention for enhancing students' reading proficiency (Creswell and Creswell, 2022).

2.1. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

This study employed total enumeration to survey 119 respondents from public elementary schools in the Vinzons District, comprising 100 Grades 1 to 3 language teachers and all 19 school heads. The teachers were selected for their direct role in delivering foundational literacy instruction and identifying contextual classroom challenges, while the school heads provided essential insights into the execution of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership practices. Including the entire population of relevant stakeholders ensured a comprehensive, authentic assessment of day-to-day literacy practices and leadership dynamics without sampling bias. As Creswell and Creswell (2022) asserted, total enumeration is particularly suitable in well-defined and manageable research settings, allowing for a thorough and valid analysis of key variables. Ultimately, this exhaustive sampling approach successfully captured the full scope of school-based reading interventions, supporting the study's goal of generating grounded, context-specific recommendations to enhance early-grade reading programs for struggling learners (Etikan and Bala, 2017).

2.2. Data Gathering Procedures

Following formal approval from division and district authorities, data were collected face-to-face using a researcher-made structured questionnaire grounded in relevant literature and DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018. The instrument utilized five-point Likert scales across three sections: Part I measured the extent of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership; Part II evaluated the implementation level of reading programs across six operational domains; and Part III identified teacher-, learner-, and institutional-related challenges. Validated by a panel of educational experts and pilot-tested on 20 non-participating individuals, the tool demonstrated high internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from .726 to .993 across all constructs. Strict ethical protocols, including informed consent, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and data anonymization, were rigorously upheld throughout the entire administration process within the Vinzons District.

2.3. Statistical Treatment of Data

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics, specifically the weighted mean, were computed to determine the extent of the three leadership approaches, the level of reading program implementation across its six operational domains, and the frequency of teacher-, learner-, and institution-related challenges based on a five-point Likert scale. Because the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated a non-normal data distribution ($p < 0.05$), the non-parametric Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was employed at a 0.05 significance level to examine the monotonic relationship between the extent of leadership approaches and program implementation. This relationship was calculated using the formula

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}.$$

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Extent of Leadership Approaches on the Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers

Table 1 reveals that transformational leadership in reading program implementation achieved an overall weighted mean of 4.32 (Very Great Extent), indicating that Vinzons District leaders exceptionally inspire teachers and promote a strong literacy culture (Leithwood et al., 2020; Grissom et al., 2021). The highest-rated indicators (4.39) demonstrated that leaders strongly encourage innovation and collective commitment through localized initiatives like Brigada Pagbasa and the institutionalized Marungko and Fuller reading approaches (Leithwood et al., 2020; Groenewald, 2024). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator (4.25) suggested that while management is strong, administrators’ modeling visible enthusiasm for literacy requires slight enhancement, a challenge often attributed to competing administrative priorities limiting direct motivational engagement (Antonopoulou et al., 2021; Calub, 2023).

Table 1. Extent of Leadership Approaches on the Implementation of the Reading Program for Struggling Readers along Transformational Leadership Approaches

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	School leaders articulate a compelling vision for reading improvement that inspires teachers and students.	4.37	Very Great Extent
2.	School administrators model enthusiasm for literacy that motivates struggling readers.	4.25	Very Great Extent
3.	Leaders encourage innovative approaches to address reading difficulties.	4.39	Very Great Extent
4.	School heads provide individualized support to teachers working with struggling readers.	4.29	Very Great Extent
5.	Leadership creates a culture of high expectations for reading achievement.	4.33	Very Great Extent
6.	School leaders intellectually stimulate teachers to find creative solutions for reading challenges.	4.34	Very Great Extent
7.	Administrators communicate optimism about students' potential to overcome reading difficulties.	4.27	Very Great Extent
8.	School leaders inspire collective commitment to improving reading outcomes.	4.39	Very Great Extent
9.	Leadership encourages risk-taking and experimentation with new reading strategies.	4.29	Very Great Extent
10.	School administrators recognize and celebrate reading improvement milestones.	4.26	Very Great Extent
Overall Weighted Mean		4.32	Very Great Extent
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Very Great Extent	
3.40 – 4.19		Great Extent	
2.60 – 3.39		Moderate Extent	
1.80 – 2.59		Slight Extent	
1.00 – 1.79		No Extent	

Table 2 reveals that instructional leadership in the Vinzons District is practiced to a Very Great Extent (overall weighted mean of 4.27), indicating strong strategic planning and data-driven monitoring to support early-grade reading interventions (Liu et al., 2021; Leithwood, 2021). The highest-rated indicator, defining and communicating clear reading goals (4.40), demonstrates that administrators effectively utilize School Learning Action Cells to dissect CRLA results and integrate measurable targets into teachers’ Weekly Learning Plans and IPCRFs (Leithwood et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator, modeling effective reading instructional techniques (4.13), highlights a practical gap; while leaders actively conduct evaluations, heavy administrative constraints frequently limit their direct engagement in demonstrating

specific remedial strategies, such as the Marungko or Fuller approaches, inside the classroom (Grissom et al., 2021; Calub, 2023).

Table 2. Extent of Leadership Approaches on the Implementation of the Reading Program for Struggling Readers along Instructional Leadership Approaches

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. School leaders define and communicate clear reading goals and objectives.	4.40	Very Great Extent
2. Administrators allocate resources specifically for reading intervention programs.	4.23	Very Great Extent
3. School heads regularly observe and provide feedback on reading instruction.	4.15	Great Extent
4. Leadership coordinates curriculum to ensure systematic reading skill development.	4.24	Very Great Extent
5. School leaders use assessment data to guide decisions about reading instruction.	4.29	Very Great Extent
6. Administrators provide teachers with relevant professional development in literacy instruction.	4.30	Very Great Extent
7. School heads protect instructional time dedicated to reading.	4.34	Very Great Extent
8. Leadership ensures alignment between reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	4.33	Very Great Extent
9. School administrators model effective reading instructional techniques.	4.13	Great Extent
10. School leaders monitor student reading progress and adjust interventions accordingly.	4.24	Very Great Extent
Overall Weighted Mean	4.27	Very Great Extent
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00	Very Great Extent	
3.40 – 4.19	Great Extent	
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Extent	
1.80 – 2.59	Slight Extent	
1.00 – 1.79	No Extent	

Table 3 indicates that distributed leadership in the Vinzons District is practiced to a Very Great Extent (overall weighted mean of 4.26), reflecting a decentralized school culture that strongly prioritizes teacher empowerment, inclusivity, and shared accountability in managing reading interventions (Eden et al., 2024; Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022; Tiongzon et al., 2024). The highest-rated indicator, encouraging teacher collaboration in designing reading interventions (4.38), demonstrates how administrators actively utilize School Learning Action Cells (SLAC) for joint CRLA data analysis and synchronized remedial planning, thereby fostering shared ownership and innovative instructional quality (Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022; Leithwood et al., 2020; Okken et al., 2022). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator, facilitating community partnerships to enhance literacy resources (4.16), reveals that despite thorough internal teamwork, school leaders encounter logistical constraints in mobilizing external stakeholders, such as the local government or alumni, highlighting a critical need for stronger institutional mechanisms to sustain cross-sectoral resource generation for struggling readers (Abdulrahim and Orosco, 2020; Azcoitia et al., 2020).

Table 3. Extent of Leadership Approaches on the Implementation of the Reading Program for Struggling Readers along Distributed Leadership Approaches

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. School leaders delegate responsibility for reading programs across multiple stakeholders.	4.20	Very Great Extent
2. Leadership establishes literacy teams with shared decision-making authority.	4.17	Great Extent
3. School heads empower reading specialists to lead intervention initiatives.	4.22	Very Great Extent
4. Administrators encourage teacher collaboration in designing reading interventions.	4.38	Very Great Extent
5. School leaders involve parents as partners in supporting reading development.	4.33	Very Great Extent
6. Leadership facilitates community partnerships to enhance literacy resources.	4.16	Great Extent
7. School heads foster peer coaching among teachers of struggling readers.	4.35	Very Great Extent
8. Administrators create structures for sharing literacy expertise throughout the school.	4.18	Great Extent
9. School leaders distribute leadership responsibilities among grade-level reading coordinators.	4.34	Very Great Extent

10. Leadership supports teacher-led literacy improvement initiatives.	4.31	Very Great Extent
Overall Weighted Mean	4.26	Very Great Extent
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00	Very Great Extent	
3.40 – 4.19	Great Extent	
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Extent	
1.80 – 2.59	Slight Extent	
1.00 – 1.79	No Extent	

3.2. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers

Table 4 demonstrates that program planning and design for reading interventions in the Vinzons District are Fully Implemented (overall weighted mean of 4.47), reflecting a cohesive culture where School Literacy Teams establish structured timelines and clear learner outcomes prior to intervention (Leithwood et al., 2020; Grissom et al., 2021). The highest-rated indicator (4.55) highlights a strong alignment with Beginning-of-School-Year CRLA results, as educators actively map color-coded reading profiles for struggling learners and meticulously encode these diagnostic targets into the funded Annual Implementation Plan (Leithwood et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator (4.40) reveals that regular, formal updates to reading plans are less consistently practiced; burdened by heavy administrative workloads, teachers often make mid-stream instructional adjustments mentally rather than documenting formal revisions to the rigid initial plans, underscoring systemic barriers to continuous program reflection (Imants and Van der Wal, 2020; Calub, 2023).

Table 4. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Program Planning and Design

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Reading programs are aligned with CRLA results and tailored to address learning gaps.		4.55	Fully Implemented
2. Reading intervention plans are developed collaboratively among teachers and school heads.		4.46	Fully Implemented
3. School reading programs are clearly documented with timelines and expected outcomes.		4.44	Fully Implemented
4. Program planning considers learner profiles, reading history, and diagnostic data.		4.51	Fully Implemented
5. Reading plans are regularly updated based on ongoing assessments and feedback.		4.40	Fully Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		4.47	Fully Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Fully Implemented		
3.40 – 4.19	Extensively Implemented		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Implemented		
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Implemented		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Implemented		

Table 5 reveals that instructional delivery and teacher engagement are Fully Implemented in the Vinzons District (overall weighted mean of 4.48), reflecting a strong culture of professional adaptability and learner-centered commitment (Leithwood, 2021; Grissom et al., 2021). The highest-rated indicators (4.54) demonstrate that teachers effectively integrate phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension by employing differentiated strategies, such as grouping learners to utilize the Marungko or Fuller methods tailored to specific CRLA diagnostic profiles (Liu et al., 2021; Groenewald, 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator regarding the maximization of instructional time (4.36) exposes significant structural constraints; due to the rigid pacing demands of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), teachers are frequently forced to squeeze remediation into fatiguing lunch breaks or after-school hours, limiting their capacity for extended, individualized reading instruction despite their strong dedication (Leithwood et al., 2020; Calub, 2023).

Table 5. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Instructional Delivery and Teacher Engagement

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Teachers use differentiated strategies to support struggling readers.	4.54	Fully Implemented
2.	Reading instruction integrates phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension activities.	4.54	Fully Implemented
3.	Teachers show enthusiasm and commitment in delivering reading interventions.	4.49	Fully Implemented
4.	Instructional time is maximized to support struggling readers' needs.	4.36	Fully Implemented
5.	Teachers adjust instructional approaches based on learner responses and progress.	4.46	Fully Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		4.48	Fully Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Fully Implemented	
3.40 – 4.19		Extensively Implemented	
2.60 – 3.39		Moderately Implemented	
1.80 – 2.59		Slightly Implemented	
1.00 – 1.79		Not Implemented	

Table 6 demonstrates that the monitoring and assessment of learner progress are Fully Implemented in the Vinzons District (overall weighted mean of 4.52), functioning not merely for compliance but as a strategic, evidence-based backbone actively utilized during quarterly SMEA conferences to adjust school improvement plans (Leithwood, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Imants and Van der Wal, 2020). The highest-rated indicator (4.66) confirms that teachers meticulously track reading progress using CRLA and classroom assessments, maintaining explicit Class Reading Profiles and employing Running Records to document specific data-driven shifts in learners' decoding abilities from the Beginning to the End of the School Year (Leithwood et al., 2020; Grissom et al., 2021; Groenewald, 2024). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator (4.38) reveals a communication gap in systematically sharing these progress reports with stakeholders; feedback is frequently limited to quarterly Card Giving Days or passive Messenger group chats, which proves ineffective for parents lacking connectivity or working overseas, highlighting a critical need to strengthen active home-school communication frameworks (Calub, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022).

Table 6. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Monitoring and Assessment of Learner Progress

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Student reading progress is tracked using CRLA and classroom-based assessments.	4.66	Fully Implemented
2.	Data from assessments are used to modify and improve reading instruction.	4.56	Fully Implemented
3.	Reading progress reports are shared with stakeholders (e.g., parents, school heads).	4.38	Fully Implemented
4.	Teachers maintain accurate records of individual learner reading development.	4.54	Fully Implemented
5.	Regular reading assessments are administered to evaluate intervention impact.	4.44	Fully Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		4.52	Fully Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Fully Implemented	
3.40 – 4.19		Extensively Implemented	
2.60 – 3.39		Moderately Implemented	
1.80 – 2.59		Slightly Implemented	
1.00 – 1.79		Not Implemented	

Table 7 indicates that stakeholder involvement and support in the Vinzons District are Extensively Implemented (overall weighted mean of 3.82), reflecting a strong Bayanihan culture where the community is socially and emotionally invested in literacy outcomes despite financial constraints (Leithwood, 2021; Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022; Tiongzon et al., 2024). The highest-rated indicator, conducting stakeholder meetings (4.03), demonstrates active participatory governance; school heads transparently present CRLA data during School Governing Council and PTA assemblies to secure commitments for initiatives like the Summer Reading Camp and Brigada Pagbasa (Abdulrahim and Orosco, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020; Groenewald,

2024). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator regarding community resource contributions (3.64) highlights a critical disparity between abundant volunteer manpower and scarce material assets. While stakeholders readily provide labor and snacks, securing funds for expensive instructional consumables, such as printer ink, paper, or smart TVs, remains difficult in this rural context, often leaving teachers to shoulder these financial burdens personally (Calub, 2023; Azcoitia et al., 2020).

Table 7. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Stakeholder Involvement and Support

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Parents are actively engaged in home reading practices and follow-ups.	3.67	Extensively Implemented
2.	Community stakeholders contribute resources or support for reading programs.	3.64	Extensively Implemented
3.	There is a strong collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting reading development.	3.85	Extensively Implemented
4.	School leaders advocate for community and local government support in reading efforts.	3.90	Extensively Implemented
5.	Stakeholder meetings are conducted to monitor and support reading programs.	4.03	Extensively Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		3.82	Extensively Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Fully Implemented	
3.40 – 4.19		Extensively Implemented	
2.60 – 3.39		Moderately Implemented	
1.80 – 2.59		Slightly Implemented	
1.00 – 1.79		Not Implemented	

Table 8 reveals that capacity building and professional development in the Vinzons District are Fully Implemented (overall weighted mean of 4.36), reflecting strong institutionalized teacher learning systems aligned with DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, to support the continuous rollout of the MATATAG Curriculum (Liu et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Groenewald, 2024). The highest-rated indicator (4.54) demonstrates thorough provision of literacy training opportunities, evidenced by teachers' active participation in mandated programs like the ELLN Digital Enhancement, the regional USAID 'ABC+ Project,' and school-based Mid-Year INSETs focusing on HOTS-PLP (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Leithwood, 2021; Imants and Van der Wal, 2020). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator regarding the invitation of external reading coaches or experts (4.15) exposes specific financial limitations; constrained by limited MOOE funds, schools rely heavily on an internal cascading model led by Division-trained Master Teachers, an approach that sustains immediate mentoring needs but restricts teachers' exposure to fresh perspectives and specialized external clinical supervision (Calub, 2023; Grissom et al., 2021).

Table 8. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Capacity Building and Professional Development

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Teachers are trained in evidence-based reading intervention strategies.	4.38	Fully Implemented
2.	Professional development sessions focus on phonics, comprehension, and motivation.	4.44	Fully Implemented
3.	Teachers are given opportunities to attend literacy training or workshops.	4.54	Fully Implemented
4.	Reading coaches or experts are invited to mentor and support teachers.	4.15	Extensively Implemented
5.	Teachers engage in peer-learning or learning action cells focused on reading.	4.30	Fully Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		4.36	Fully Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	

4.20 – 5.00	Fully Implemented
3.40 – 4.19	Extensively Implemented
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Implemented
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Implemented
1.00 – 1.79	Not Implemented

Table 9 indicates that the availability and utilization of resources in the Vinzons District are Extensively Implemented (overall weighted mean of 4.11), relying heavily on educators' resilience to compensate for systemic material gaps (Leithwood et al., 2020; Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022; Azcoitia et al., 2020). The highest-rated indicator (4.30) demonstrates that teachers effectively maximize instructional materials through creative contextualization, actively modifying DepEd LRMS resources and utilizing recycled materials to craft interactive, localized big books for struggling readers (Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022; Abdulrahim and Orosco, 2019; Eden et al., 2024). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator (3.88) reveals that the consistent utilization of functional school libraries or reading corners remains constrained by severe structural realities; libraries are frequently repurposed into regular classrooms or offices, and classroom reading corners often house outdated textbooks rather than engaging storybooks, a physical limitation that strongly contrasts with better-funded environments where digital platforms actively replace traditional reading spaces (Cabahug et al., 2024; Sheikh et al., 2024).

Table 9. Level of Implementation of Reading Programs for Struggling Readers along Availability and Utilization of Resources

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	There is sufficient supply of leveled readers and literacy materials for learners.	4.11	Extensively Implemented
2.	Digital resources (e.g., apps, videos) are available to supplement reading instruction.	4.08	Extensively Implemented
3.	Teachers have access to assessment tools for identifying reading difficulties.	4.18	Extensively Implemented
4.	School libraries or reading corners are functional and regularly used by students.	3.88	Extensively Implemented
5.	Instructional materials are used effectively to enhance reading outcomes.	4.30	Fully Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean		4.11	Extensively Implemented
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Fully Implemented	
3.40 – 4.19		Extensively Implemented	
2.60 – 3.39		Moderately Implemented	
1.80 – 2.59		Slightly Implemented	
1.00 – 1.79		Not Implemented	

3.3. Relationship Between the Extent of Leadership Approaches and the Level of Implementation of the Reading Programs for Struggling Readers

Table 10 reveals that transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership approaches all share significant moderate-to-strong positive correlations with five of the six dimensions of reading program implementation, specifically: instructional delivery, progress monitoring, stakeholder involvement, capacity building, and resource utilization ($p = 0.000$ for all). Distributed leadership demonstrated the most consistently strong relationships, particularly concerning capacity building ($p = 0.586$) and stakeholder involvement ($p = 0.561$), indicating that when leadership responsibilities are shared among teachers, parents, and community members, such as during Brigada Pagbasa and Reading Camps, program execution becomes highly effective through collective accountability and mutual trust (Okken et al., 2022; Eden et al., 2024; Chua Reyes et al., 2022). Similarly, transformational leaders who inspire a shared vision ($p = 0.546$ for monitoring) and

instructional leaders who ensure pedagogical alignment ($\rho = 0.529$ for capacity building) significantly enhance teacher morale and instructional quality (Leithwood et al., 2020; Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022).

Table 10. Test for Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Leadership Approaches and the Level of Implementation of the Reading Programs for Struggling Readers

Implementation of Reading Programs	Transformational		Leadership Approach Instructional		Distributed	
	ρ	p -value	ρ	p -value	ρ	p -value
Program Planning and Design	.053	.630	-.016	.885	.013	.905
Instructional Delivery and Teacher Engagement	.504**	.000	.376**	.000	.480**	.000
Monitoring and Assessment of Learners Progress	.546**	.000	.449**	.000	.499**	.000
Stakeholder Involvement and Support	.385**	.000	.525**	.000	.561**	.000
Capacity Building and Professional Development	.540**	.000	.529**	.000	.586**	.000
Availability and Utilization of Resources	.402**	.000	.382**	.000	.396**	.000

*Correlation is significant @ 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant @ 0.01 level

Conversely, none of the three leadership approaches showed a significant correlation with the "Program Planning and Design" dimension ($p > 0.05$). This consistent lack of correlation implies that in the local context of the Vinzons District, the initial planning of reading programs is highly structured, prescriptive, and committee-based, often adhering strictly to standardized Department of Education frameworks that leave limited flexibility for individual principals to exert direct transformational or instructional influence during the design phase (Fernandes et al., 2023; Miramon et al., 2024). Overall, the findings strongly advocate for a multi-dimensional leadership approach in the Division of Camarines Norte, highlighting that sustained literacy improvements for struggling readers require a harmonious blend of visionary guidance, pedagogical supervision, and decentralized, shared responsibility (Leithwood et al., 2020; Abella et al., 2024; Tiongzon et al., 2024).

3.4. Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Reading Programs

Table 11 reveals that teacher-related challenges in implementing reading programs are experienced "Sometimes" (overall weighted mean of 3.17), highlighting a heavy reliance on teacher resilience to sustain literacy interventions despite persistent systemic barriers (Fisher, 2021; Eden et al., 2024; OECD, 2019, mentioned in Fernandes et al., 2023). The most prominent challenge, difficulty balancing reading instruction with other curriculum demands (3.32), exposes the severe constraints Key Stage 1 educators face while navigating the MATATAG Curriculum alongside ancillary administrative tasks, which frequently cannibalize the time required for individualized remediation (Abdulrahim and Orosco, 2019; Lindner et al., 2023; Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022). Conversely, the lowest-rated challenge regarding limited peer collaboration (3.02) indicates that while informal support exists, a persistent "silo" culture prevents the systematic sharing of localized best practices through structured mentoring (Okken et al., 2022; Azcoitia et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). Ultimately, these findings underscore the urgent need to institutionalize a "Protected Reading Block" and provide specialized diagnostic tools to alleviate the cognitive load on educators who routinely sacrifice their pre-class and after-school hours to assist struggling learners.

Table 11. Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Reading Programs along Teacher-Related Factors

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Lack of specialized training in reading intervention strategies	3.11	Sometimes
2.	Insufficient time for individualized reading instruction	3.18	Sometimes
3.	Limited access to appropriate reading materials and resources	3.20	Sometimes
4.	Difficulty in differentiating instruction for various reading levels	3.14	Sometimes

5. Challenges in diagnosing specific reading difficulties	3.24	Sometimes
6. Inadequate support from school leadership for reading initiatives	3.14	Sometimes
7. Limited collaboration with colleagues on reading interventions	3.02	Sometimes
8. Difficulty balancing reading instruction with other curriculum demands	3.32	Sometimes
9. Insufficient professional development focused on reading instruction	3.17	Sometimes
Overall Weighted Mean	3.17	Sometimes
Weighted Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation	
4.20 – 5.00	Always	
3.40 – 4.19	Often	
2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes	
1.80 – 2.59	Rarely	
1.00 – 1.79	Never	

Table 12 reveals that learner-related challenges persistently hinder reading programs in the Vinzons District (overall weighted mean of 3.62, "Often"), primarily driven by a "Consistency Gap" between school instruction and home environments (Fisher, 2021; Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022; OECD, 2019, cited in Fernandes et al., 2023). The most pressing barrier is limited home support for reading practice (3.83), as parents' demanding agricultural livelihoods often leave struggling learners without adult reinforcement, resulting in significant "weekend regression" (Tiongzon et al., 2024; Abella et al., 2024; Cabahug et al., 2024). This lack of continuity is further exacerbated by poor attendance (3.71) linked to seasonal harvests and difficult travel conditions. Conversely, the lowest-rated challenges, students' reading anxiety (3.46) and behavioral issues (3.46), highlight the profound psychological toll of the "Full Refresher" stigma; learners frequently internalize failure through "learned helplessness" and employ disruptive avoidance tactics during assessments, necessitating targeted psychosocial interventions like peer-tutoring to rebuild reading self-efficacy (Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022; Shahjahan et al., 2022; Eden et al., 2024).

Table 12. Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Reading Programs along Learner-Related Factors

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Students' lack of motivation to improve reading skills	3.66	Often
2. Poor attendance affecting continuity in reading intervention	3.71	Often
3. Limited home support for reading practice	3.83	Often
4. Students' reading anxiety or negative self-perception	3.46	Often
5. Diverse learning needs within the same classroom	3.76	Often
6. Limited background knowledge affecting reading comprehension	3.59	Often
7. Students' inability to transfer reading skills across subjects	3.52	Often
8. Behavioral issues interfering with reading instruction	3.46	Often
Overall Weighted Mean	3.62	Often
Weighted Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation	
4.20 – 5.00	Always	
3.40 – 4.19	Often	
2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes	
1.80 – 2.59	Rarely	
1.00 – 1.79	Never	

Table 13 reveals that institutional and system-related challenges are encountered "Sometimes" (overall weighted mean of 3.33), highlighting a critical funding gap where limited Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) are frequently diverted to physical infrastructure over essential literacy materials, creating systemic constraints that hinder full-scale program effectiveness (Sheikh et al., 2024; Azcoitia et al., 2020; OECD, 2019, cited in Fernandes et al., 2023). The most pervasive barrier is the lack of family engagement initiatives (3.67), reflecting a systemic failure to transition parental involvement from purely administrative tasks, like Brigada Eskwela, to structured instructional partnerships, such as "Nanay-Teacher" workshops that train parents to reinforce reading at home (Abdulrahim and Orosco, 2019; Tiongzon et al., 2024; Cabahug et al., 2024). Conversely, the lowest-rated challenge regarding the lack of a consistent school-wide approach (3.18)

exposes the fragmentation often caused by leadership transitions; incoming school heads frequently discard existing interventions in favor of new projects, severely disrupting the long-term vertical alignment of literacy strategies across grade levels (Leithwood et al., 2020; Xuan Mai and Thanh Thao, 2022; Eden et al., 2024).

Table 13. Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Reading Programs along Institutional/System-Related Factors

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.	Insufficient allocated time for reading intervention programs	3.29	Sometimes
2.	Lack of consistent school-wide approach to reading instruction	3.18	Sometimes
3.	Inadequate funding for reading resources and materials	3.36	Sometimes
4.	Limited assessment tools to track reading progress	3.28	Sometimes
5.	Policies that limit flexibility in addressing reading needs	3.22	Sometimes
6.	Pressure to cover curriculum at the expense of reading fundamentals	3.44	Often
7.	Insufficient coordination between regular and intervention reading programs	3.20	Sometimes
8.	Lack of family engagement initiatives to support reading	3.67	Often
Overall Weighted Mean		3.33	Sometimes
<i>Weighted Mean Range</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	
4.20 – 5.00		Always	
3.40 – 4.19		Often	
2.60 – 3.39		Sometimes	
1.80 – 2.59		Rarely	
1.00 – 1.79		Never	

3.5. Proposed Intervention Program

Addressing the study’s lowest-rated implementation indicators, specifically weak stakeholder resource contributions, and critical barriers like limited home support, inadequate family engagement, and competing curriculum demands, the researcher proposed Project READ-UP (Reading Engagement and Development through Unified Partnership). This holistic, school-based intervention operationalizes transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership to forge a sustainable literacy support system in the Vinzons District. Its first core component establishes a Protected Reading Block (30–45 minutes, 3–4 times weekly) to strictly safeguard pedagogical time against administrative interruptions (Leithwood et al., 2020). Directly combating limited home support, the second component forges a Unified Home-School Partnership utilizing READ-HOME Kits and Parent Mini-Workshops to empower parents as active co-educators (DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018; Eden et al., 2024). Finally, the project establishes a multi-stakeholder School Literacy Team (SLT) tasked with resource management, peer coaching, and rigorous data-driven monitoring through bi-weekly fluency checks and real-time CRLA tracking to ensure continuous, collective accountability for struggling readers' proficiency.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that school leaders in the Vinzons District exhibited a very great extent of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership, which significantly enhanced the highly effective, well-aligned implementation of reading programs for struggling readers. These three leadership approaches were significantly and positively correlated with program success, fostering thorough teacher engagement and stakeholder collaboration. However, recurring barriers, particularly instructional time constraints, limited home literacy support, and insufficient family engagement, highlight the urgent need for stronger institutional mechanisms and community partnerships. Consequently, the proposed Project READ-UP serves as a comprehensive, targeted intervention designed to directly overcome these systemic challenges by institutionalizing structured reading time, strengthening home-school partnerships, and embedding shared leadership to cultivate a sustainable culture of collective literacy responsibility.

To sustain effective reading interventions, school heads and supervisors may strengthen

transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership through continuous professional development in literacy management and community partnership-building. Concurrently, the Schools Division of Camarines Norte may institutionalize standardized frameworks for program planning and assessment while improving logistical support for reading resources and library functionality. Administrators can further enhance teacher performance by promoting a unified leadership approach that prioritizes shared decision-making and data-driven supervision. To systematically overcome persistent instructional and systemic barriers, stakeholders may collaborate to form School Literacy Teams (SLTs), conduct regular parent workshops, and safeguard instructional time. Specifically, school leaders in the Vinzons District are strongly urged to adopt and pilot-test Project READ-UP, leveraging its core components, the Protected Reading Block, READ-HOME Kits, and SLTs, to resolve teacher workload and limited family engagement. Finally, future researchers may employ qualitative, mixed-method, or longitudinal designs to further validate Project READ-UP as a scalable and inclusive literacy intervention model.

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