ABSTRACT:
The purpose of this phenomenological study was to dig into the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers. This study was participated by the four reading coordinators from the secondary schools of New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte. These participants were selected through purposive sampling and approved selection criteria. Then, these participants undertook in-depth interviews to gather the needed data. From the results, it showed that reading coordinators have different lived experiences, coping mechanisms and inferences in handling grade 7 struggling readers. The results revealed six major themes in the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers; these were: Encountering Disinterested Students and Sense of Despondency, Experiencing Time Constraint, Encountering Students with Low Self-esteem, Concerns on Linguistic Comprehension, Language Barrier Issues and Phonetical Challenges. There were also four major themes emerged for reading coordinators coping mechanisms; namely: Adopting Experiential Learning Methods, Employing Rewards System, Cultivating Resiliency and Allocating Time Judiciously. Lastly, eleven (11) major themes revealed for the inferences of these experiences by teachers to the teaching of Reading in the Philippine Context; these were: Committing Fully to One’s Duty, Nurturing Motivation and Dedication, Evolving Strategies through Research and Training, Tailoring Pedagogies for Learning Needs, Feeling Sense of Fulfillment and Happiness, Applying Adaptive Strategies for Diverse Learning, Nurturing Positivity Despite the Challenges, Providing Support and Encouragement, Needing for Parental Guidance and Supervision, Encouraging Parental Involvement and Enhancing Reading Skills through Practice. In essence, the implications for teaching practice underscore the need for an inclusive, innovative, and emotionally supportive approach that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by both reading coordinators and struggling readers.

Keywords: reading coordinators, grade 7 struggling readers, qualitative, phenomenology, New Corella District, Davao del Norte

INTRODUCTION
Reading is a fundamental skill that is essential to all element of life. It is a fundamental component of all learning that is linked to academic success, job success, and the ability to fully engage in many aspects of life (Evans & Hares, 2021). However, there are still many struggling readers in our country today. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2020) reported that the near-global lockdown caused by Coronavirus Disease 2019 has disrupted education, affecting more than 91% of students particularly in developing skills in reading. English teachers during the face to face classes noticed a number of struggling readers on their class who have difficulty in understanding the concepts, and they will fail to attain the learning competencies expected to them due to the lack of skill in reading (Harb & Jamal, 2021).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the World Bank (2021) reported that learning poverty in the country had worsened and is now at 90% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning poverty is defined as being unable to read and understand a simple story by age 10. This latest estimate on learning poverty in the country reflects new data from the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM).
The conduct of this study was urgent since the reading coordinators of the New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte, handled a number of grade 7 struggling readers based from the result reported from the Phil-IRI assessment tool. They had found out that students who were poor readers tend to participate less in the teaching-learning process. They were behind their peers in reading and struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this phenomenological study was to deeply explore and thoroughly understand the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers in New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte.

Research Questions
1. How do the reading coordinators describe their experiences in handling grade 7 struggling readers?
2. How do reading coordinators describe their coping mechanisms with the challenges they encountered in handling grade 7 struggling readers?
3. What are the inferences of these experiences by reading coordinators to the teaching of reading in the Philippine context?

Theoretical Lens
This study was gleaned through Lev Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory (1978), which emphasized the significance of scaffolding reading lessons by the most knowledgeable teachers who influence the zone of proximal growth of reading learners.

METHODOLOGY
This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach in exploring the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers. I utilized the qualitative research design to seek, discover, and understand the lived experiences of four reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers in New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte through in-depth interviews.

Research Material
In conducting this study, lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers were the main focus of the phenomenon being explored. I used a sample size of four reading coordinators in the secondary schools of New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte who experienced handling grade 7 struggling readers employing only in-depth interview.

Data Analysis
After the collection of the data which be transcribed texts from the interviews of the four participants, I look closely, analyze and group according to themes. Tables created for a better facilitation of the discussion. Further, it was also my purpose to unravel the lived experiences of the reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers. So, with this, I decisively discussed the issues that came out from the answers or replies of the participants.

RESULTS
Lived Experiences of Reading Coordinators in Handling Grade 7 Struggling Readers
Reading coordinators have faced a range of difficulties and adversities in handling the grade 7 struggling readers. Their own personal experiences helped them to understand and acknowledge the realities of teaching reading to these struggling readers which other reading coordinators had also encountered. Through the perspective of these reading coordinators, we gain a deeper understanding of the delicate balance required to inspire, motivate, and guide Grade 7 struggling readers toward literacy proficiency. After analyzing the responses of the four reading coordinators about their lived experiences in handling grade 7 struggling readers, six major themes emerged: 1) Encountering Disinterested Students and Sense of Despondency; 2) Experiencing Time Constraint; 3) Encountering Students with Low Self-esteem; 4) Concerns in Linguistic Comprehension; 5) Language Barrier Issues; and 6) Phonetical Challenges.
Coping Mechanisms of Reading Coordinators in Handling Grade 7 Struggling Readers

Teachers are naturally adaptable. They frequently adjust to new or unpredictable demands and conditions since teaching is a profession that is characterized by change. Reading coordinators have coping mechanisms and tactics that help them stay positive despite all the difficulties they faced in handling grade 7 struggling readers. They had continued to apply those coping mechanisms to keep on fulfilling their tasks and carry out their teaching duties.

There were four themes emerged from the data collected. Based on the participants’ responses the themes are 1) Adopting Experiential Learning Methods; 2) Employing Rewards System; 3) Cultivating Resilience; and 4) Allocating Time Judiciously.

Inferences of these Experiences by Reading Coordinators to the Teaching of Reading in the Philippine Context

As reading coordinators grapple with the diverse challenges inherent in guiding Grade 7 struggling readers, they accumulate practical knowledge that extends beyond problem-solving. Having experienced the challenges and adversities and being able to devise coping mechanisms, reading coordinators have attained some inferences about the teaching of reading in the Philippine context. These inferences were generated after the reading coordinators experienced the phenomenon in handling grade 7 struggling readers. By examining the inferences made by these professionals, we gain valuable perspectives that contribute to a more effective and culturally responsive teaching of reading, aligning with the dynamic needs and aspirations of Filipino students in the ever-evolving educational journey.

The reading coordinators shared their inferences about their experiences to the teaching of reading in the Philippine context. From the transcriptions made, the following eleven (11) themes were collected: 1) Committing Fully to One’s Duty; 2) Nurturing Motivation and Dedication; 3) Evolving Strategies through Research and Training; 4) Tailoring Pedagogies for Learning Needs; 5) Feeling Sense of Fulfilment and Happiness; 6) Applying Adaptive Strategies for Diverse Learning; 7) Nurturing Positivity Despite the Challenges; 8) Providing Support and Encouragement; 9) Needing for Parental Guidance and Supervision; 10) Encouraging Parental Involvement; and 11) Enhancing Reading Skills through Practice.

DISCUSSIONS

Encountering Disinterested Students and Sense of Despondency

Reading coordinators are confronted with challenges when tasked with addressing disinterested students, a situation that significantly obstructs the implementation of reading programs. The lack of enthusiasm from students during remediation sessions poses a substantial barrier to the effective impartation of essential reading skills.

Experiencing Time Constraint

In the lived experiences of reading coordinators, the thread of time management emerges as a critical and formidable aspect. These dedicated professionals showcase unwavering commitment to balance tasks, often extending their efforts into spare moments and lunch breaks. The theme illuminates the challenges of time constraints experienced by reading teachers in conducting reading remediation.

Encountering Students with Low Self-esteem

Reading teachers observed that students with reading difficulty have low self-esteem in school that may put them at risk of negative socio-emotional adjustment associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The theme encapsulates the fear of potential bullying, coupled with low self-esteem, shyness and emotional hurdles faced by this vulnerable group.

Concerns on Linguistic Comprehension

The theme of concerns on linguistic comprehension reveals the challenges faced by grade 7 learners transitioning from elementary to high school, as observed from the experiences of reading teachers. Reading teachers find themselves challenged in managing the varying readiness levels of students in adapting to the fast-paced curriculum delivery characteristic of high school settings.

Language Barrier Issues

The theme of language barrier issues unveils the challenges that language-related hurdles pose to reading comprehension for grade 7 learners, drawing insights from the experiences of reading teachers. Despite
a discernible interest in reading, students encounter formidable difficulties stemming from language barriers that impede their full engagement with academic materials.

**Phonetical Challenges**

The theme of phonetical challenges showed the struggles related to pronunciation and phonetics faced by grade 7 learners, echoing the experiences and insights shared by reading teachers. Pronunciation problems emerge as a significant hurdle, necessitating targeted interventions to elevate students' oral communication skills.

**Adopting Experiential Learning Methods**

In the realm of addressing the needs of struggling readers in grade 7, the theme of adopting experiential learning methods takes center stage among reading coordinators. This strategic approach involves a proactive search for diverse instructional strategies that go beyond conventional methods.

**Employing Rewards System**

Reading coordinators employed rewards system in handling the grade 7 struggling readers. This theme underscores the deliberate and thoughtful use of positive reinforcement to not only encourage but also inspire students in their journey toward improved reading skills.

**Cultivating Resiliency**

Reading coordinators employ a variety of strategies to cultivate resilience in handling grade 7 struggling readers. They create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes. By fostering a growth mindset, they encourage students to view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.

**Allocating Time Judiciously**

Reading coordinators play an essential role in supporting struggling readers in grade 7. Their ability to allocate time judiciously is essential in ensuring these students receive the necessary attention and resources to improve the reading skills of the struggling readers.

**Committing Fully to One's Duty**

In delving into the theme of committing fully to one's duty, it becomes evident that English teachers play a crucial role in shaping the reading skills of their students, especially when external support, such as parental involvement, may be constrained.

**Nurturing Motivation and Dedication**

In exploring the theme of nurturing motivation and dedication, English teachers highlight the intrinsic factors that drive their commitment to teaching struggling readers. The unwavering dedication to the task of teaching, coupled with the ability to stay motivated despite challenges, emerges as a cornerstone of effective pedagogy.

**Evolving Strategies through Research and Training**

Expanding upon the theme of evolving strategies through research and training, English teachers underscore the dynamic nature of their profession, illustrating a commitment to continual improvement. Teachers actively immerse themselves in research initiatives to deepen their understanding of struggling readers, aiming to dispel biases and cultivate a more nuanced and informed teaching approach.

**Tailoring Pedagogies for Learning Needs**

In the theme of tailoring pedagogies for learning needs, English teachers emphasize the necessity of adaptability in their instructional approaches, particularly when faced with the diverse learning profiles of struggling readers. Teachers explicitly acknowledge the individual differences among students, recognizing the importance of deploying diverse and flexible teaching strategies.

**Feeling Sense of Fulfillment and Happiness**

Within the exploration of feeling a sense of fulfillment and happiness, English teachers navigate the emotional rewards entwined with their endeavors in teaching struggling readers. Reflecting on past experiences, even in the face of challenges, becomes a source of inspiration and fulfillment for teachers.

**Applying Adaptive Strategies for Diverse Learning**

Within the theme of adjusting strategies for diverse learning, English educators highlight the importance of employing a range of teaching approaches to suit the distinct learning styles of struggling readers. Teachers actively acknowledge and modify their methods to align with individual learning profiles, emphasizing personalized strategies.
Nurturing Positivity Despite the Challenges

Within the theme of fostering optimism amidst challenges, English educators shed light on their resilient mindset when confronted with obstacles in teaching struggling readers. Actively choosing to maintain a positive outlook becomes a deliberate and strategic approach, emphasizing the crucial role of optimism and resilience in the demanding field of education.

Providing Support and Encouragement

Within the theme of providing support and encouragement, reading coordinators illuminate the crucial role they play in fostering a positive and nurturing learning environment for struggling readers. Consistent and unwavering support becomes an essential aspect of their approach, ensuring struggling readers feel valued and empowered in their educational journey.

Needing for Parental Guidance and Supervision

The theme of needing parental guidance and supervision amplifies the indispensable role that parents play in cultivating basic reading skills among struggling Grade 7 readers. It accentuates the symbiotic relationship required between parents and educators to provide effective support for students encountering challenges in reading.

Encouraging Parental Involvement

The commitment of reading coordinators is unwavering, as they invest significant time and effort in assessing students' reading abilities, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and developing individualized reading plans.

Enhancing Reading Skills through Practice

Within the thematic realm of cultivating reading proficiency through consistent practice, reading coordinators accentuate the iterative process crucial for the development of struggling readers' skills. A pivotal strategy emerges: the ongoing and purposeful engagement in various reading exercises, particularly focused on comprehension. Teachers underscore the significance of posing questions spanning different cognitive levels, providing a comprehensive approach to promote continuous improvement.

Implications for Teaching Practice

The insights gleaned from the major themes within the lived experiences of reading coordinators offer profound implications for teaching practices, particularly in the context of handling Grade 7 struggling readers. The challenge of encountering disinterested students calls for a paradigm shift in instructional methods. Innovative teaching approaches that captivate the attention and interest of struggling readers are essential. The findings put emphasis on the role of student engagement and advocating for the incorporation of multimedia elements, interactive activities, and varied instructional strategies to rekindle interest among disinterested students. This aligns with the call within the themes to adopt experiential learning methods, integrating engaging materials and strategies like videoke and spelling bee competitions to make reading more interesting and relevant to students.

Further, low self-esteem experienced by struggling readers accentuates the need for a holistic and supportive learning environment. Reading coordinators must have a good balance between academic progress and emotional well-being, fostering a positive atmosphere where struggling readers feel safe, accepted, and motivated. This necessitates strategies for building confidence, positive peer interactions, and a culture that mitigates social stigma. Teachers need to recognize and address emotional distress as an integral part of their pedagogical approach, prioritizing the emotional well-being of students alongside their academic development.

More so, efficient time management, as highlighted in the themes, becomes a critical aspect of teaching practice. The findings emphasize the need for a strategic allocation of time and resources, encouraging a thoughtful examination of how time is distributed within the educational framework. This underscores the importance of implementing efficient time management strategies, ensuring that educators can fulfill their responsibilities without compromising the quality of instruction.

Additionally, collaborative efforts involving parents, as underscored in the theme on parental guidance. They are said to be the second teachers, this can give them the whole picture of their big responsibility as a parent of the grade 7 struggling readers in secondary public school and their role in helping their learners to read, comprehend, and instill the love of reading. It emphasizes the positive impact of parental engagement on students' literacy outcomes, advocating for partnerships with parents and providing resources for home-based support. Teaching practices should extend beyond the classroom, recognizing the pivotal role parents play in the development of basic reading skills among struggling Grade 7 readers.
Meanwhile, Reading coordinators gained inferences from their lived experiences the need to attend training and seminars in order to effectively handle grade 7 struggling readers. This is essential for their professional development and to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to support these students. Attending training and seminars allows them to stay updated on the latest research and best practices in reading instruction. They can learn new strategies and techniques that have been proven to be effective in helping struggling readers improve their reading skills. It also provides reading coordinators with the opportunity to collaborate and network with other reading coordinators in the field, exchange ideas, and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. This collaboration can greatly enhance their ability to support grade 7 struggling readers. By attending training and seminars they can also gain access to valuable resources and materials that can be used to support struggling readers. They can learn about new technologies, instructional materials, and interventions that can be implemented in the classroom to meet the specific needs of these students.

Moreover, English teachers gained knowledge and understanding about the situations of reading coordinators handling the grade 7 struggling readers. They may provide valuable support to school reading coordinators through collaboration, assessment, creating supportive environment, and active participation. They may collaborate with coordinators to develop and implement effective reading programs. This involves sharing their expertise in teaching reading strategies, selecting appropriate reading materials, and designing engaging activities to enhance students’ reading skills. Their expertise and dedication contribute significantly to the success of reading programs and the overall literacy development of students.

Furthermore, the school administrators serve as the backbone of any educational institution may provide the necessary support and resources for reading coordinators to thrive. Administrators may allocate sufficient time and funding for professional development opportunities, ensuring that reading coordinators are equipped with the latest research-based strategies. By fostering a positive school climate, administrators empower reading coordinators to implement effective reading programs and initiatives.

In addition, the Department of Education could gain knowledge about the needs of reading coordinators through this study. They play a crucial role in supporting reading coordinators to effectively address the needs in handling struggling readers in grade 7. Reading Coordinators work closely with students who face challenges in reading comprehension and literacy skills. With this, the DepEd officials may provide them with access to a wide range of instructional materials and resources. This can include books, digital resources, and educational software that are specifically designed to address the needs of struggling readers. By providing coordinators with these resources, DepEd can empower them to implement effective reading interventions and strategies in the classroom. More so, they may also give support and guidance to these coordinators by organizing trainings, seminars, or webinars to enhance their knowledge and skills to efficiently handle the grade 7 struggling readers. This will enable them to effectively address the needs of struggling readers and implement evidence-based strategies in their teaching practice. Through investing in the professional growth of reading coordinators the DepEd ensures that they are equipped with the expertise needed to effectively support grade 7 struggling readers. Additionally, DepEd officials may recognize and appreciate the efforts and sacrifices of reading coordinators in handling grade 7 struggling readers. By acknowledging their hardwork and dedication, officials can motivate coordinators to continue their efforts in improving the reading skills of these students. This can be done through public recognition, awards, or professional development opportunities.

Hence, this study gives future researchers more ideas on what they should focus on in their studies, and it also serves as a basis for future studies.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The study of the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling Grade 7 struggling readers has unveiled critical themes that warrant further investigation to deepen our understanding and inform future educational practices. One avenue for future research lies in the realm of innovative teaching strategies tailored to disinterested students. While the themes emphasized the need for engaging materials and experiential learning, specific interventions, such as the integration of emerging technologies or gamification, could be explored. This research could delve into the impact of these innovative methods on student engagement and achievement, providing practical insights for educators facing challenges with disinterested readers.

Another area for future inquiry pertains to the emotional well-being of struggling readers. The themes highlighted the emotional distress faced by this vulnerable group, necessitating a more nuanced understanding.
of the factors contributing to their emotional struggles. Research could investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at building self-esteem, addressing shyness, and mitigating the fear of potential bullying. Additionally, exploring the role of positive peer interactions and mentorship programs in fostering emotional resilience among struggling readers could provide valuable insights into creating a supportive learning environment.

Further research could also be directed towards refining time management strategies for reading coordinators. Understanding the specific challenges and stressors related to time constraints and workload distribution could lead to the development of targeted interventions and systemic changes within the education system. Investigating the impact of improved time management on the quality of remediation efforts and student outcomes could provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers.

Lastly, future research could explore the dynamics of parental involvement in supporting struggling Grade 7 readers. Understanding the barriers to parental participation and identifying effective strategies to enhance collaboration between educators and parents could contribute to the development of comprehensive support systems for struggling readers. Additionally, examining the long-term impact of parental engagement on students' literacy outcomes and academic success could offer valuable insights into the sustainability and effectiveness of collaborative efforts between home and school environments.

In conclusion, these recommendations for further research aim to address specific gaps in our current understanding of the challenges faced by reading coordinators and struggling readers. By exploring these avenues, researchers can contribute to the ongoing enhancement of educational practices, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment for Grade 7 struggling readers.

**Concluding Remarks**

In concluding this study into the lived experiences of reading coordinators in handling Grade 7 struggling readers, it becomes evident that the challenges they face extend beyond the academic realm. The multifaceted nature of these challenges encompasses disinterested students, low self-esteem, time management issues, the need for parental guidance, and linguistic proficiency struggles among learners. As we reflect on these themes, it is imperative to acknowledge the dedication and resilience exhibited by reading coordinators in overcoming these complexities.

Based on the lived experiences of reading coordinators in addressing the needs of struggling readers in grade 7, it is evident that their role is crucial in supporting these students. The coordinators play a vital role in identifying struggling readers, implementing effective interventions, and monitoring their progress.

The overarching implication of this study is the necessity for a holistic and innovative approach to reading remediation. It is not merely about imparting academic skills but about creating an inclusive, emotionally supportive, and engaging learning environment. The call for innovative teaching strategies, the recognition of emotional well-being, and the emphasis on collaborative efforts with parents underscore the interconnectedness of various facets in the educational journey of struggling readers.

Moving forward, the recommendations for further research point towards refining and expanding our understanding of these challenges. Innovative teaching methods, interventions for emotional well-being, enhanced time management strategies, and effective parental engagement are key areas that warrant continued exploration. By delving deeper into these aspects, educators, researchers, and policymakers can collaboratively work towards more informed and targeted interventions, ensuring that the unique needs of Grade 7 struggling readers are met comprehensively.

In essence, the narratives shared by reading coordinators provide a valuable lens through which we can perceive the relationship between academic instruction and emotional support. The experiences of reading coordinators highlight the importance of their role in addressing the needs of struggling readers in grade 7. Their insights, strategies, and interventions have proven effective in supporting these students and fostering a positive reading culture. By continuing to learn from their experiences and collaborating with other educators, reading coordinators can make a lasting impact on the literacy skills and overall academic success of struggling readers. As we conclude this study, it is a call to action for educators, researchers, and policymakers to collaborate in shaping the educational system that not only imparts knowledge but nurtures the holistic development of every student, fostering a love for reading and a foundation for lifelong learning.
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