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## Classroom Management Practices and Simplified Reading Instruction: Exploring Early Literacy Experiences in Elementary Education

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### Abstract

*Classroom management and simplified reading instruction play a significant role in strengthening early literacy development among elementary learners. This study explored the classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction experiences in elementary education. Anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory and Emergent Literacy Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine learners' literacy experiences, instructional interactions, classroom participation, and teacher practices related to reading instruction and classroom management. Participants included elementary teachers, learners, and selected parents from public elementary schools. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach was utilized in analyzing the gathered data. Findings revealed that organized classroom routines, positive teacher-learner relationships, structured learning environments, and learner-centered reading activities significantly contribute to literacy engagement and classroom participation. Teachers utilized simplified reading instruction strategies such as guided reading, phonics instruction, repetitive reading, storytelling, visual aids, peer-assisted learning, and contextualized literacy activities to improve reading comprehension and learner confidence. The study further revealed that supportive classroom environments and effective classroom management practices reduce reading anxiety and encourage active participation during literacy instruction. However, challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited reading materials, short attention spans, and insufficient home literacy support affected reading participation and classroom behavior. The study concludes that effective classroom management and simplified literacy instruction are essential in promoting positive literacy experiences and strengthening early reading development among elementary learners. Strengthening literacy-rich classroom environments, learner-centered instructional strategies, and home-school literacy collaboration is recommended to improve early literacy engagement in elementary education.*

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## Introduction

Early literacy development serves as one of the most important foundations of learning in elementary education. Reading literacy enables learners to acquire comprehension skills, vocabulary knowledge, communication competence, and academic readiness necessary for lifelong learning and educational success. During the primary years of schooling, learners begin developing foundational literacy competencies such as phonemic awareness, word recognition, oral fluency, comprehension, and independent reading engagement. Consequently, effective classroom management and simplified reading instruction become critical components in supporting learners' literacy development and classroom participation.

Classroom management refers to the strategies, practices, and routines teachers utilize to establish organized, supportive, and productive learning environments that encourage learner participation and positive classroom behavior. Effective classroom management promotes attentiveness, discipline, engagement, cooperation, and emotional security within the classroom. In literacy instruction, classroom management significantly influences learners' participation in reading activities, oral communication, collaborative learning, and literacy engagement. Simplified reading instruction refers to learner-centered instructional approaches that make reading lessons understandable, engaging, and developmentally appropriate for early-grade learners. Simplified literacy instruction often includes guided reading, phonics instruction, repetitive reading, storytelling, visual aids, contextualized examples, collaborative reading activities, and scaffolded literacy support designed to improve comprehension and reading confidence.

Within the Philippine educational context, improving foundational literacy remains a continuing concern due to persistent challenges in reading comprehension and literacy participation among elementary learners. The Department of Education continuously implements literacy intervention programs and reading initiatives aimed at strengthening foundational reading competencies among early-grade learners. However, many learners still encounter difficulties related to vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral reading participation, and comprehension, particularly in rural school settings where instructional resources and literacy exposure may be limited.

Elementary teachers continuously implement classroom management practices and reading strategies to improve literacy engagement and sustain positive learning environments. Teachers manage learners with varying literacy abilities, attention spans, behavioral patterns, and learning needs while simultaneously facilitating reading instruction and literacy participation. Understanding teachers' classroom management experiences and instructional approaches is important in identifying practices that strengthen literacy engagement and improve early reading instruction.

Several studies emphasized that supportive classroom environments and learner-centered literacy instruction significantly influence reading development and literacy participation among young learners. Marzano (2020) explained that effective classroom management contributes to positive learner behavior, classroom engagement, and academic participation. Similarly, Rasinski (2019) emphasized that guided reading, repetitive reading, and interactive literacy activities strengthen reading fluency, comprehension, and learner confidence.

Although literacy instruction has been widely studied, there remains limited qualitative research exploring the relationship between classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction in early elementary education within rural Philippine school contexts. Thus, this study aimed to explore classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction experiences in elementary education.

## Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Emergent Literacy Theory by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998).

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction, collaboration, guided participation, and meaningful learning experiences. Learning becomes more effective when teachers create supportive classroom environments that encourage participation, interaction, and scaffolded instruction.

Emergent Literacy Theory explains that literacy development begins during early childhood through learners' interactions with language, print materials, storytelling, oral communication, and literacy-rich environments. Early literacy development is strengthened through meaningful reading experiences, guided support, and positive instructional interactions within classroom and home environments.

These theories provided the framework for understanding how classroom management practices, literacy instruction, instructional interactions, and classroom environments influence early literacy experiences among elementary learners.

## Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction experiences in elementary education. Specifically, it sought to examine learners' and teachers' experiences in literacy instruction and classroom reading activities and identify classroom management practices that contribute to literacy engagement and learner participation. The study further aimed to explore simplified reading instruction strategies that strengthen reading comprehension, literacy confidence, and classroom engagement among elementary learners. Additionally, it intended to identify the challenges encountered by teachers and learners during literacy instruction and classroom management processes. Finally, the study aimed to derive insights from the participants' experiences that may serve as basis for strengthening literacy instruction and classroom management practices in elementary education.

## Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction experiences in elementary education. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich and contextualized descriptions regarding literacy participation, instructional interactions, classroom management experiences, and reading engagement among elementary learners. Through qualitative inquiry, the study captured the lived experiences of teachers and learners and examined how classroom environments and literacy instruction influence early reading development.

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in Isabela, Philippines. The schools operate under the supervision of the Department of Education and serve learners from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The locale provided a meaningful context for examining literacy engagement and classroom management practices in rural elementary school settings.

The participants of the study included selected elementary teachers, learners, and parents. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experiences and involvement in literacy instruction and classroom management practices. The selected learners represented varying literacy abilities, participation levels, and classroom engagement experiences.

The study utilized semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides, classroom observation notes, and document analysis checklists as qualitative research instruments. Interview questions focused on classroom routines, literacy participation, reading strategies, classroom behavior, learner engagement, instructional practices, and challenges encountered during literacy instruction.

Prior to data gathering, permission was secured from school administrators and ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. Significant statements and recurring patterns were identified, coded, categorized, and organized into themes representing classroom management practices and literacy instruction experiences. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and thick description to ensure credibility and dependability of the findings.

## Results and Discussion

### Theme 1: Structured Classroom Management Enhances Literacy Participation

The findings revealed that organized classroom management practices significantly contribute to learners' participation and engagement during reading instruction. Participants explained that classroom routines, clear behavioral expectations, structured learning activities, and organized seating arrangements help learners focus more effectively during literacy activities.

One teacher participant stated:

"Kapag maayos ang classroom routines, mas nagiging attentive at participative ang mga bata sa reading."

Another teacher shared:

"Importante ang clear rules at classroom structure para maging manageable ang literacy activities."

Similarly, one learner participant explained:

"Mas madali po kaming makapagbasa kapag tahimik at maayos ang classroom."

These responses indicate that structured classroom environments positively influence learners' behavioral engagement and attentiveness during reading instruction. Organized classroom routines reduce distractions and create learning spaces that encourage participation, cooperation, and active involvement in literacy activities. Teachers further emphasized that consistent classroom management practices help learners develop discipline, confidence, and readiness for reading instruction.

One teacher participant shared:

"Kapag may consistent routines, mas alam ng learners ang gagawin during reading activities."

Another participant explained:

"Mas nagiging cooperative sila kapag organized ang classroom environment."

The findings suggest that effective classroom management creates emotionally safe and supportive literacy environments where learners feel comfortable participating in oral reading and collaborative literacy activities. The findings support Marzano (2020), who emphasized that effective classroom management contributes significantly to learner participation, positive behavior, and classroom engagement. Similarly, Emmer and Sabornie (2019) argued that organized classroom environments strengthen instructional effectiveness and learner attentiveness during classroom instruction.

The findings further align with Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that supportive and organized learning environments promote active participation and meaningful learning experiences among learners.

Classroom observations further revealed that learners demonstrated greater attentiveness, cooperation, and literacy participation when teachers implemented structured classroom routines and clear expectations during reading instruction.

One teacher participant stated:

"Kapag organized ang environment, mas nagiging smooth at effective ang reading instruction."

This finding highlights the importance of classroom management practices in strengthening literacy participation and creating productive literacy learning environments among elementary learners.

## **Theme 2: Simplified Reading Instruction Improves Literacy Engagement and Comprehension**

The study further revealed that simplified reading instruction significantly improves learners' literacy engagement, comprehension, and reading confidence. Participants explained that learners understand reading materials more effectively when teachers utilize simple explanations, phonics instruction, visual aids, storytelling, repetitive reading, and contextualized examples during literacy instruction.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas naiintindihan ko po ang story kapag simple lang ang explanation ni teacher."

Another learner shared:

"Kapag may pictures at examples, mas madaling maintindihan ang binabasa."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Mas gusto ko pong magbasa kapag may storytelling at activities."

The findings indicate that simplified and learner-centered literacy instruction strengthens learners' cognitive engagement and reading comprehension. Simplified instruction helps learners gradually process unfamiliar words, sentence structures, and reading concepts while reducing confusion and anxiety during reading activities. Teachers also highlighted the importance of guided reading and repetitive literacy practice in improving learners' fluency and participation.

One teacher participant stated:

"Malaking tulong ang repetitive reading para masanay sila sa pronunciation at comprehension."

Another participant shared:

"Kapag guided ang reading activities, mas naiintindihan nila ang lesson."

These responses imply that scaffolded instruction and repetitive literacy exposure contribute significantly to learners' reading fluency, vocabulary development, and literacy confidence. Guided literacy instruction helps struggling readers participate more actively during classroom reading activities.

The findings support Rasinski (2019), who emphasized that guided reading and repetitive reading significantly

improve fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition among early-grade learners. Similarly, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) explained that literacy competence develops gradually through repeated interaction with print materials and guided literacy experiences.

The findings further align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct understanding more effectively through scaffolded instruction and meaningful learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Teachers further explained that contextualized literacy instruction strengthens learners' interest and engagement during reading activities.

One teacher participant shared:

"Mas nagiging interesado sila kapag relatable at simple ang stories."

This finding highlights the importance of simplified and contextualized literacy instruction in improving reading engagement and comprehension among elementary learners.

### **Theme 3: Positive Teacher-Learner Relationships Strengthen Reading Confidence**

The findings revealed that supportive teacher-learner relationships significantly influence learners' reading confidence, participation, and literacy engagement. Participants consistently described effective reading teachers as patient, approachable, encouraging, and willing to provide individualized guidance during literacy activities.

One learner participant stated:

"Mas ginaganahan po akong magbasa kapag tinutulungan ako ni teacher."

Another learner explained:

"Kapag hindi ko po mabasa ang word, tinuturo po ni teacher hanggang matutunan ko."

Similarly, another participant shared:

"Hindi po ako natatakot magbasa kapag mabait si teacher."

These responses indicate that emotionally supportive classroom environments strengthen learners' emotional engagement and confidence during reading instruction. Learners become more willing to participate in oral reading and literacy activities when they feel respected, encouraged, and supported by teachers.

Teachers also highlighted the importance of positive reinforcement in improving learners' reading participation.

One teacher participant explained:

"Kailangan talagang i-encourage ang mga bata para magkaroon sila ng confidence."

Another participant stated:

"Kapag pinapakita mong supportive ka, mas nagiging active sila sa reading."

The findings suggest that positive teacher interactions help reduce reading anxiety and improve learners' willingness to participate in literacy activities and classroom discussions.

The findings align with Fredricks et al. (2019), who argued that emotional engagement increases when learners feel respected, valued, and encouraged within classroom settings. Similarly, Pianta et al. (2021) emphasized that supportive teacher-learner relationships significantly influence learner participation, confidence, and academic engagement.

The findings further revealed that learners become more motivated when teachers recognize their progress and achievements during reading activities.

One learner participant shared:

"Mas gusto ko pong magbasa kapag pinupuri ako ni teacher."

This finding highlights the importance of supportive literacy environments and positive teacher-learner relationships in strengthening reading confidence and literacy engagement among elementary learners.

### **Theme 4: Reading Difficulties and Classroom Challenges Affect Literacy Participation**

Despite positive literacy experiences, the findings revealed that learners and teachers encounter several challenges affecting reading instruction and classroom participation. Participants identified limited vocabulary, short attention spans, reading anxiety, varied learner abilities, pronunciation difficulties, and insufficient instructional resources as major barriers to literacy engagement.

One learner participant stated:

"Nahihirapan po akong magbasa kapag mahahaba ang words."

Another learner explained:

“Minsan po nahihiya akong magbasa sa harap ng klase.”

Similarly, another participant shared:

“May mga words po na hindi ko maintindihan kaya nahihirapan akong sumabay.”

These responses indicate that emotional and cognitive barriers negatively influence learners’ literacy participation and reading confidence. Learners who struggle with vocabulary and pronunciation often become hesitant to participate during oral reading and classroom discussions.

Teachers also emphasized that classroom management challenges affect reading instruction and literacy engagement.

One teacher participant stated:

“Minsan mahirap i-manage ang classroom kapag iba-iba ang reading abilities ng learners.”

Another participant explained:

“May mga learners na madaling mawalan ng focus habang nagbabasa.”

The findings suggest that learner diversity and behavioral concerns influence the effectiveness of literacy instruction and classroom participation. Teachers often need to balance classroom management responsibilities while simultaneously supporting struggling readers and maintaining learner engagement.

The findings support OECD (2019), which highlighted that literacy difficulties and learner diversity significantly influence classroom participation and reading performance. Similarly, Emmer and Sabornie (2019) emphasized that classroom management challenges affect instructional effectiveness and learner engagement in elementary classrooms.

Participants further revealed that insufficient reading materials and limited home literacy support affect literacy development.

One teacher participant stated:

“Hindi lahat ng learners ay may sapat na reading materials sa bahay.”

Another participant explained:

“May mga bata na kulang talaga ang reading practice outside the classroom.”

These findings imply that literacy development is influenced not only by classroom instruction but also by external literacy exposure and home support systems.

Despite these challenges, participants emphasized that supportive classroom environments, simplified instruction, and collaborative literacy activities help improve learners’ participation and reading confidence.

One learner participant shared:

“Mas gusto ko pong magbasa kapag tinutulungan ako ni teacher at classmates ko.”

This finding highlights the importance of supportive and collaborative literacy environments in strengthening reading participation and literacy engagement among elementary learners.

## Conclusion

The study revealed that effective classroom management practices and simplified reading instruction significantly influence literacy participation, reading confidence, and early literacy development among elementary learners. Structured classroom routines, organized learning environments, clear expectations, and supportive classroom management practices contribute positively to learners’ attentiveness, cooperation, and literacy engagement during reading instruction.

The findings further revealed that simplified literacy instruction strategies such as guided reading, phonics instruction, repetitive reading, storytelling, visual aids, and contextualized reading activities improve learners’ comprehension, fluency, vocabulary development, and literacy confidence. Learners become more engaged and motivated when reading instruction is learner-centered, interactive, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. The study also found that positive teacher-learner relationships significantly strengthen learners’ emotional engagement and willingness to participate in oral reading and literacy activities. Supportive teachers who provide encouragement, patience, and individualized guidance help reduce reading anxiety and improve literacy participation among learners.

However, the findings revealed that challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited vocabulary, pronunciation

difficulties, short attention spans, insufficient reading materials, and limited home literacy support continue to affect literacy instruction and reading engagement among elementary learners.

The study concludes that effective classroom management and simplified reading instruction are essential in promoting positive literacy experiences, improving reading participation, and strengthening early literacy development among elementary learners.

### **Implications of the Study**

The findings of the study provide important implications for literacy instruction, classroom management, early childhood education, parental involvement, educational leadership, and educational policy. The study emphasizes the importance of supportive and learner-centered literacy environments in improving reading engagement and literacy development among elementary learners.

### **Educational Implications**

The findings imply that literacy instruction in elementary education should become more interactive, simplified, contextualized, and learner-centered to strengthen literacy participation and reading comprehension among learners. Teachers may integrate guided reading, storytelling, phonics instruction, repetitive reading, collaborative activities, and visual learning materials to improve literacy engagement.

The study further implies that classroom management practices significantly influence literacy instruction and classroom participation. Organized classroom routines, structured learning environments, and positive classroom behavior management contribute to more effective literacy instruction and learner engagement.

Additionally, the findings suggest that literacy instruction should focus not only on decoding and pronunciation but also on confidence-building, comprehension, vocabulary development, and meaningful literacy experiences.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings imply that teachers play an essential role in shaping learners' literacy confidence, participation, and classroom behavior. Teachers should demonstrate patience, encouragement, empathy, and instructional flexibility in supporting learners with varying literacy abilities and learning needs.

The study also highlights the importance of differentiated literacy instruction and scaffolded learning support. Teachers may utilize contextualized stories, repetitive reading activities, visual aids, and collaborative literacy tasks to improve learners' comprehension and participation.

Furthermore, the findings imply that positive reinforcement and emotionally supportive literacy environments help reduce reading anxiety and strengthen learner confidence during oral reading activities.

### **Implications for Parents and Home Literacy Support**

The findings suggest that parental involvement and home literacy environments significantly influence learners' reading development and literacy engagement. Parents may strengthen literacy development by providing reading opportunities at home, encouraging reading practice, and guiding learners during literacy activities.

The study further implies the importance of strengthening home-school literacy partnerships to support learners' reading progress and classroom participation.

### **Institutional and Policy Implications**

The findings provide important implications for educational leaders and policymakers within the Department of Education regarding the strengthening of early literacy intervention programs and classroom literacy support systems. Schools may strengthen literacy instruction by providing adequate reading materials, literacy-rich classroom environments, contextualized learning resources, and teacher training programs focusing on literacy instruction and classroom management.

Educational institutions may also strengthen reading intervention programs and learner support initiatives focusing on struggling readers, vocabulary development, fluency enhancement, and literacy participation among early-grade learners.

## Implications for Future Research

The findings highlight the need for future studies exploring classroom management and literacy engagement across different educational contexts and learner populations. Future researchers may conduct comparative studies involving urban and rural schools to examine variations in literacy instruction and classroom management practices.

Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies may also be conducted to explore the relationship between classroom management, literacy engagement, instructional interventions, and reading performance over time.

The study emphasizes that strengthening early literacy development requires collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, school leaders, and educational institutions. Effective classroom management, simplified literacy instruction, supportive learning environments, and strong home-school partnerships are essential in promoting meaningful literacy experiences and improving reading development among elementary learners.

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