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Bridging Learning Gaps: Developing an Action Plan for Vulnerable Learners

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Abstract

This study examined literacy and numeracy gaps, associated risk factors, and educational barriers among vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6 at Felicidad Magday Elementary School to develop a responsive action plan. A quantitative descriptive-survey design was employed involving 45 learners, 45 parents or guardians, and 11 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were obtained from researcher-developed questionnaires and relevant school assessment records and analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Mathematics was identified as the most challenging learning area by 44.44% of learners, while 42.22% reported reading comprehension difficulties. Understanding mathematical instructions and solving problems challenged 55.56% of learners. Personal barriers included fear of mistakes and low motivation (37.78%), difficulty concentrating (33.33%), and low confidence (28.89%). At home, limited parental availability (35.56%) and the absence of a quiet study area (31.11%) were frequently reported. Teachers also identified financial difficulties and limited parental time as external concerns. The findings indicated that academic difficulties occurred alongside personal and household barriers, underscoring the need for coordinated rather than isolated support. The proposed BRIDGE+ Program therefore integrates targeted reading and mathematics instruction, individualized learning goals, motivation-building activities, accessible learning materials, family engagement, and regular progress monitoring. School administrators and teachers should consider piloting and evaluating these strategies using learners' identified needs and assessment results. The single-school setting, purposive sample, and descriptive design limit generalizability, and the proposed program has not been evaluated for effectiveness. Supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4, this study contributes a context-specific framework for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable school-based learning support. Its practical components can guide resource allocation and home-school collaboration efforts.

Keywords: Action Plan, Educational Barriers, Inclusive Education, Learning Gaps, Literacy, Numeracy, Vulnerable Learners

1. Introduction

Learning gaps refer to differences between curriculum-prescribed competencies and learners' demonstrated knowledge and skills. These disparities are particularly concerning among vulnerable learners whose academic development may be affected by poverty, irregular attendance, limited educational resources, inadequate parental support, and personal learning difficulties. During Grades 4 to 6, learners transition from acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy skills to applying comprehension, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities across subjects. Unaddressed difficulties during this period may contribute to declining confidence, disengagement, and persistent academic underachievement.

International evidence indicates that learning disruptions disproportionately affect disadvantaged learners. Betthäuser et al. (2023) identified substantial learning deficits following the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among learners from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, Garon-Carrier et al. (2024) emphasized that socioeconomic disadvantages, limited early learning experiences, and unfavorable family circumstances increase educational vulnerability. Lim et al. (2024) associated learning loss with interrupted schooling, inadequate instructional materials, poor attendance, and limited parental engagement. These findings underscore the importance of identifying learning gaps early and implementing differentiated, evidence-based interventions responsive to learners' academic and environmental needs.

Related literature identifies literacy and numeracy difficulties as interconnected challenges influenced by individual, instructional, familial, and socioeconomic conditions. Raoof et al. (2024) classified educational risk factors into internal factors, including low motivation, anxiety, emotional difficulties, and weak self-regulation, and external factors, including family circumstances, socioeconomic status, and school environments. Drane et al. (2021) emphasized the need for academic, social, and emotional support to prevent cumulative learning disadvantages. Minea-Pic (2023) further highlighted differentiated instruction, efficient instructional time, and evidence-based learning recovery as essential responses to individual learning needs. Literacy difficulties require structured interventions emphasizing word recognition, comprehension, and continuous assessment. Dietrichson et al. (2021) identified targeted reading instruction and frequent progress monitoring as important components of effective academic support. Garcia et al. (2025) emphasized explicit literacy instruction, scaffolded learning, and formative assessment, while Campo et al. (2025) identified difficulties in word recognition, sentence interpretation, and higher-order comprehension among learners with special educational needs. Numeracy difficulties also require targeted interventions. Nelson et al. (2022) reviewed research on mathematics learning disabilities and difficulties, identifying evidence concerning instructional interventions and approaches to supporting learners experiencing mathematical challenges. Oclarit et al. (2024) highlighted the influence of attendance, family background, motivation, and confidence on numeracy development, while Mandagdag et al. (2024) emphasized remedial mathematics instruction, teacher involvement, and continuous progress tracking. These studies support the integration of individualized literacy and numeracy interventions within school-based learning support programs.

Globally, learning recovery initiatives emphasize educational equity, differentiated instruction, accessible learning resources, and coordinated school interventions. Silvarajan et al. (2025) identified choice, instructional variety, and technology as important components of Universal Design for Learning, while Pachauri (2026) highlighted differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching, formative assessment, and stakeholder collaboration. In the Philippines, foundational learning difficulties remain a significant educational concern. Igarashi and Suryadarma (2023) reported that many Filipino learners in higher grade levels had not mastered foundational reading and mathematics competencies expected in earlier grades. Abrigo and Francisco (2024) demonstrated the importance of early educational experiences in developing functional literacy. Department of Education et al. (2021) reported below-average Filipino learner performance in reading, mathematics, and writing compared with other participating Southeast Asian countries. The World Bank (2024) further estimated that approximately 91 percent of Filipino children at late primary age lacked minimum reading proficiency after accounting for out-of-school children. National studies also highlight the importance of inclusive instructional practices and contextualized support. UNICEF Philippines (2024) identified accessible resources, teacher support, and adaptable instruction as important considerations in learning recovery following educational disruptions. Manzul (2025) highlighted challenges involving teacher preparation, facilities, learning environments, and support services in Philippine inclusive education. At the local level, Felicidad Magday Elementary School provides the context for examining learning gaps among vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6. The study focuses on reading and mathematics difficulties, internal and external risk factors, and barriers involving home circumstances, school attendance, educational resources, and learning support. Understanding these conditions provides a foundation for developing interventions appropriate to the school's identified needs.

The study adopts the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model as its conceptual framework for examining vulnerable learners' educational needs and developing a responsive action plan. The input comprises learners' demographic characteristics, literacy and numeracy performance, internal and external risk factors, educational resources, and existing support systems. These components provide information about learners' academic difficulties and the circumstances influencing their educational experiences. The process involves gathering and analyzing information from learners, teachers, and parents or guardians through questionnaires and school assessment records. The analysis identifies prevalent learning gaps, contributing factors, and priority intervention needs. The output is the proposed BRIDGE+ Program, an action plan incorporating targeted literacy and numeracy instruction, individualized learning goals, motivation-building activities, accessible learning resources, family engagement, and continuous progress monitoring. The framework is consistent with literature emphasizing responsive instructional practices and coordinated educational management. The Education Endowment Foundation (2025) emphasized the importance of metacognition and self-regulated learning in helping learners

plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Sandoval et al. (2021) emphasized structured school planning, professional development, inclusive leadership, stakeholder participation, and continuous evaluation.

Existing studies establish the importance of targeted academic interventions, differentiated instruction, and collaborative educational support. However, the reviewed literature also identifies persistent challenges involving fragmented intervention practices, inadequate instructional resources, limited teacher preparation, and insufficient coordination among schools and families. Although remediation programs address specific academic deficiencies, sustained learning support requires the integration of learner assessment, intervention planning, resource management, and continuous monitoring. Parental involvement represents another important consideration. The present study addresses the need for a school-specific assessment integrating learners' demographic characteristics, literacy and numeracy difficulties, internal and external risk factors, and barriers identified by learners, teachers, and parents or guardians. It seeks to determine the characteristics and learning difficulties of vulnerable learners, identify barriers affecting their educational experiences, and develop a corresponding action plan. The proposed BRIDGE+ Program provides an organized framework for responding to these identified needs. The study is limited to Felicidad Magday Elementary School and focuses on action-plan development rather than experimental evaluation of intervention effectiveness.

The study primarily aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly its emphasis on inclusive and equitable education and meaningful learning opportunities. By identifying literacy and numeracy difficulties among vulnerable learners and developing targeted interventions, the study contributes to school-level efforts to improve foundational competencies, instructional responsiveness, and access to appropriate educational support. Its proposed BRIDGE+ Program emphasizes individualized instruction, accessible learning materials, family participation, and continuous monitoring as mechanisms for addressing educational disadvantages. The study also supports Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through its focus on learners experiencing socioeconomic, familial, and educational barriers. Identifying differences in learning needs and providing a basis for differentiated support can contribute to more equitable educational opportunities. The study's emphasis on educational vulnerability, stakeholder collaboration, and inclusive school practices reinforces the importance of addressing disadvantages that may prevent learners from achieving expected academic competencies.

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by providing a basis for identifying persistent learning difficulties and developing organized literacy and numeracy interventions. Its proposed BRIDGE+ Program emphasizes individualized learning goals, differentiated instructional support, accessible resources, and continuous assessment. These components are intended to strengthen schools' capacity to respond consistently to vulnerable learners' needs and support their academic progression. From a socioeconomic and community sustainability perspective, the study recognizes that financial constraints, family responsibilities, limited parental availability, and inadequate home learning resources may influence educational participation and achievement. Strengthening communication and collaboration among teachers, parents, and guardians can support more accessible learning opportunities and shared responsibility for learners' development. The study also contributes to institutional and educational management sustainability by emphasizing evidence-based planning, instructional leadership, resource allocation, stakeholder coordination, and progress monitoring. The proposed action plan provides school administrators and teachers with a framework for organizing interventions according to identified learner needs. Its findings may also inform district-level educational planning and future investigations concerning inclusive education and learning recovery. However, the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the BRIDGE+ Program remain subject to future implementation and evaluation.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-survey research design to identify and describe learning gaps among vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6. This approach enabled the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data concerning learners' demographic characteristics, literacy and numeracy difficulties, internal and external risk factors, and challenges encountered by teachers and parents or guardians. Quantitative research emphasizes the objective measurement and statistical analysis of numerical information to describe patterns and population characteristics (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Structured questionnaires and relevant school records provided the data, which were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings served as the empirical basis for developing a contextualized school-based action plan.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Felicidad Magday Elementary School, a public elementary school under the Department of Education (DepEd). The school serves learners from kindergarten to Grade 6 with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and implements literacy and numeracy enhancement programs, remedial instruction, and other academic interventions. The research focused on Grades 4 to 6 because these intermediate levels require

learners to apply foundational competencies to increasingly complex academic tasks. The school was selected because of its identified vulnerable learners, existing intervention initiatives, and accessibility to relevant stakeholders. Its educational context provided the basis for developing a school-specific learning support action plan.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The study involved 45 vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6, 45 parents or guardians, and 11 teachers at Felicidad Magday Elementary School. Learners were identified through school records, classroom assessments, teacher observations, and existing academic support programs indicating difficulties in literacy, numeracy, or other learning areas. Participating teachers provided information about instructional challenges, remediation practices, and learner support needs, while parents or guardians described home learning conditions, educational resources, and family-related barriers. The study also identified the school head as a participant because of responsibilities involving instructional supervision, school management, and intervention planning. Information from the respondents supported the identification of priority learning needs and the development of the proposed action plan.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who met predefined inclusion criteria relevant to the study objectives. Eligible learners were officially enrolled in Grades 4 to 6 and identified by the school or their class advisers as experiencing academic difficulties requiring additional support, as indicated by assessment results or relevant school records. Teachers were selected based on their direct involvement in teaching and supporting vulnerable learners, while parents or guardians were included because of their responsibilities in providing home-based educational assistance. The sample was determined according to participant eligibility, availability, and the approved sampling procedure. Parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained for participating minors.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering instrument. It collected information on learners' demographic profiles, literacy and numeracy difficulties, internal and external risk factors, and barriers affecting their educational experiences. The questionnaire items were aligned with the research objectives and statement of the problem. Before administration, the instrument underwent expert validation by three validators with relevant expertise in educational management, research, and related fields. The validation assessed item clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives, and recommendations were considered in refining the instrument. Supplementary information was obtained from authorized school records, including literacy and numeracy assessment results, attendance records, intervention reports, and learner progress monitoring documents.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher secured approval from the research adviser, Graduate School, and school administration. A formal request was submitted to the school head of Felicidad Magday Elementary School, explaining the study's purpose and procedures. Following approval, qualified respondents were identified through purposive sampling. The validated questionnaires were administered to gather information about learners' academic difficulties, learning barriers, and available support mechanisms. Relevant school assessment records and intervention documents were reviewed with appropriate authorization. Participation was voluntary, and parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained where applicable. Respondent information was coded to maintain confidentiality. Completed responses were organized, coded, and tabulated for statistical analysis, and the findings informed the development of the proposed BRIDGE+ Program.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, particularly frequency counts and percentages. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), quantitative research involves systematically collecting and analyzing numerical data to address research questions. Questionnaire responses were organized and summarized to describe learners' demographic characteristics, literacy and numeracy difficulties, internal and external risk factors, and educational barriers. Available reading and mathematics assessment records were also reviewed to identify academic support needs. The statistical findings provided the empirical basis for identifying priority intervention areas and developing an evidence-based action plan appropriate to the needs of vulnerable learners at Felicidad Magday Elementary School.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, with particular attention to protecting vulnerable learners who were minors. Necessary institutional and school approvals were secured before data collection. Written informed consent was obtained from participating teachers and parents or guardians, while learners' willingness to participate was respected. Respondents were informed of the study's

purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and intended use of the information. Confidentiality was maintained through participant coding, secure handling of questionnaires and school records, and exclusion of identifying information from the research report. Findings were presented in summarized form to prevent identification, stigmatization, or discrimination. Participants received no monetary compensation and incurred no participation expenses. The collected information was used exclusively for academic purposes and the development of the proposed school-based action plan.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Characteristics of Vulnerable Learners

3.1.1 Age

Among the 45 vulnerable learners, 15 (33.33%) were 10 years old and another 15 (33.33%) were 11 years old. Eight (17.78%) were 9 years old, while seven (15.56%) were 12 years old. Learners aged 10 and 11 represented 66.67% of the respondents. The findings indicate that most respondents belonged to the typical age range of intermediate elementary learners. The variation in ages highlights the importance of considering developmental differences when designing appropriate instructional interventions.

3.1.2 Gender

Of the 45 respondents, 24 (53.33%) were female and 21 (46.67%) were male, indicating a slightly higher representation of female learners. The relatively balanced gender distribution indicates that both male and female learners were represented in the study. This supports the development of inclusive learning interventions responsive to individual academic needs.

3.1.3 Grade Level

The respondents were equally distributed across Grades 4, 5, and 6, with 15 learners (33.33%) representing each grade level. The equal distribution provides balanced representation across the three intermediate grade levels. This offers a basis for developing differentiated interventions appropriate to the academic needs of learners at each grade level.

3.1.4 Living Arrangement

The findings showed that 24 learners (53.33%) lived with both parents, nine (20.00%) with their mothers, six (13.33%) with their grandparents, three (6.7%) with their fathers, and three (6.7%) with guardians. Although most learners lived with both parents, others experienced different household arrangements. These variations emphasize the importance of considering family circumstances when planning home-based learning support.

3.2 Academic Performance of Vulnerable Learners

3.2.1 Most Challenging Learning Area

Mathematics was identified as the most challenging learning area by 20 learners (44.44%), followed by Filipino with 14 (31.11%) and English with 11 (24.44%). The findings indicate that Mathematics presented the greatest reported academic difficulty. However, difficulties in Filipino and English also demonstrate the need for coordinated literacy and numeracy interventions.

3.2.2 Reading Difficulties

Difficulty understanding written material was reported by 19 learners (42.22%), followed by word recognition difficulties among 10 (22.22%), slow reading or pronunciation difficulties among eight (17.78%), and fear of reading aloud among five (11.11%). Only three learners (6.67%) reported no reading difficulties. The results identify reading comprehension as the most frequently reported difficulty. Challenges in word recognition, pronunciation, and reading confidence further indicate the need for targeted reading instruction addressing comprehension and foundational literacy skills.

3.2.3 Mathematics Difficulties

Among the respondents, 25 learners (55.56%) experienced difficulties understanding directions and solving mathematical problems. Twelve (26.67%) struggled with multiplication and division, while eight (17.78%) reported difficulties with addition and subtraction. The findings indicate that interpreting mathematical instructions and solving problems were the most prominent challenges. Difficulties with fundamental arithmetic operations further emphasize the importance of strengthening computational skills alongside mathematical comprehension and problem-solving.

3.3 Internal and External Risk Factors

3.3.1 Internal Risk Factors

Among the 11 teachers, four (36.4%) identified difficulties in mathematical problem-solving, while three (27.3%) reported reading difficulties. Other concerns included absenteeism associated with low motivation, health problems, low self-confidence, poor study habits, and difficulty concentrating. These findings indicate that

academic difficulties coexist with motivational, behavioral, and personal challenges. Addressing these interconnected concerns requires instructional support that strengthens foundational competencies while encouraging confidence, concentration, and classroom participation.

3.3.2 External Risk Factors

Financial difficulties were the most frequently identified external risk factor, reported by six teachers (54.54%). These included inadequate study spaces, limited learning materials, and lack of internet connectivity. Limited parental time was identified by three teachers (27.27%), while peer influence was reported by two (18.18%). The findings indicate that socioeconomic circumstances and insufficient home support may affect learners' academic progress. Limited financial resources can restrict access to educational materials and suitable learning environments, emphasizing the importance of accessible instructional resources and school-family collaboration.

3.4 Barriers Affecting Learners' Educational Experiences

3.4.1 Personal Learning Barriers

Fear of making mistakes associated with low motivation was reported by 17 learners (37.78%). Difficulty concentrating was identified by 15 (33.33%), while 13 (28.89%) experienced low confidence or shyness. The findings indicate that motivational and emotional concerns accompany academic learning difficulties. These challenges emphasize the importance of supportive classroom activities that strengthen learner confidence, concentration, and participation.

3.4.2 Challenges Experienced at Home

Sixteen learners (35.56%) reported that their parents were too busy working to assist with studying. Fourteen (31.11%) lacked a quiet study area, eight (17.78%) experienced difficulties due to household responsibilities, six (13.33%) reported financial constraints, and one (2.22%) identified family problems. The findings suggest that limited parental availability and unsuitable study environments were the most common household challenges. These conditions highlight the need for manageable home-based learning activities and accessible educational resources.

3.4.3 Problems Experienced in Attending School

Eighteen learners (40.00%) reported no difficulties attending school. However, eight (17.78%) experienced transportation or distance-related problems, another eight (17.78%) reported frequent absences, six (13.33%) identified health concerns, and five (11.11%) experienced family-related difficulties. Although the largest group reported no attendance difficulties, other learners experienced circumstances that disrupted school participation. These findings emphasize the importance of attendance monitoring and appropriate academic support for learners experiencing interruptions in schooling.

3.4.4 Academic Support Received

Numeracy intervention was the most frequently received support, reported by 14 learners (31.11%). Reading intervention followed with 12 (26.67%), individualized teacher mentoring with 10 (22.22%), remedial classes with seven (15.56%), and peer tutoring with two (4.44%). The findings indicate that existing interventions primarily addressed foundational Mathematics and reading difficulties. Teacher mentoring and remedial instruction provided additional support, while the limited use of peer tutoring suggests an opportunity to strengthen collaborative learning strategies.

3.4.5 Learning Barriers Reported by Teachers

Among the 11 teachers, poor numeracy skills were identified by three (27.27%). Frequent absenteeism associated with motivation and behavioral concerns and limited parental support were each reported by two (18.18%). Poor reading skills, insufficient intervention time, reported learning disabilities, and financial difficulties were each identified by one teacher (9.09%). The findings indicate that teachers encountered interconnected academic, behavioral, and household-related barriers. These challenges highlight the need for structured remediation, consistent attendance monitoring, sufficient instructional support, and stronger family involvement.

3.4.6 Learning Barriers Reported by Parents or Guardians

Among the 45 parents or guardians, 15 (33.33%) identified insufficient time due to family responsibilities as their primary challenge. Financial constraints were reported by 13 (28.89%), children's lack of motivation by eight (17.78%), limited parental educational background by five (11.11%), and health concerns by four (8.89%). The findings indicate that limited time and financial resources were the most common barriers to parental academic support. These circumstances emphasize the importance of practical home-learning activities, accessible materials, and structured guidance that enables families to support their children's learning.

3.5 Proposed Action Plan for Vulnerable Learners

3.5.1 Development of Program BRIDGE

The findings identified persistent difficulties in reading comprehension, mathematical problem-solving, learner confidence, concentration, attendance, parental involvement, and access to learning resources. Based on these concerns, the researcher developed Program BRIDGE (Building Resilience, Individualized Development, and Guided Empowerment for Vulnerable Learners), comprising seven proposed interventions addressing the academic, personal, family, and environmental needs of vulnerable learners. The proposed program provides a structured approach to strengthening foundational competencies, encouraging learner participation, and improving collaboration among teachers, parents, and school stakeholders. Its interventions incorporate designated activities, responsible persons, implementation timelines, success indicators, and progress monitoring to guide school-based learning support.

3.5.2 Literacy and Numeracy Interventions

The proposed Read-to-Understand Pathway addresses difficulties in reading comprehension, word recognition, and fluency, while Math-in-My-World focuses on mathematical understanding through practical problem-solving activities. These interventions respond to the reported difficulties in reading comprehension (42.22%) and mathematical problem-solving (55.56%). These components prioritize the foundational skills most frequently identified as challenging among respondents. Their inclusion provides a focused approach to addressing literacy and numeracy gaps through targeted and practical instructional activities.

3.5.3 Motivation and Academic Recovery

Small Wins Sessions was proposed to improve learners' confidence, concentration, and classroom participation, while Catch-Up Learning Map aims to help learners recover essential competencies missed because of absences. These interventions address the reported fear of making mistakes (37.78%), concentration difficulties (33.33%), and frequent absenteeism (17.78%). The proposed activities recognize the importance of motivation and instructional continuity in supporting vulnerable learners. Confidence-building strategies and structured academic recovery activities provide opportunities to address personal learning barriers and missed competencies.

3.5.4 Family Engagement and Learning Resources

The proposed 10-Minute Home Connection encourages manageable family participation in learning, while No-Cost Learning Kits provides accessible instructional materials for learners with limited resources. These components respond to insufficient parental time (33.33%) and financial constraints (28.89%) reported by parents or guardians. These interventions emphasize practical family involvement and equitable access to educational resources. Short home-based activities and no-cost materials are intended to reduce barriers associated with limited parental availability, household responsibilities, and financial difficulties.

3.5.5 Individualized Learning Support and Monitoring

The Individual Learner Support Profile was proposed to document learners' strengths, academic difficulties, learning barriers, and progress. This component complements the six other interventions by providing an organized mechanism for identifying individual needs and monitoring academic development. The proposed profile supports differentiated instructional planning and continuous progress monitoring. By consolidating information on learners' academic performance and challenges, it provides teachers and school administrators with a structured basis for adjusting interventions according to identified learning needs.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study established that vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6 at Felicidad Magday Elementary School experienced overlapping academic, personal, and environmental challenges affecting their learning experiences. Mathematics and reading comprehension emerged as major areas of difficulty, particularly in understanding instructions, interpreting written information, and solving mathematical problems. Internal barriers included low motivation, limited confidence, fear of making mistakes, and difficulty concentrating, while external challenges involved financial constraints, insufficient learning resources, limited parental availability, and irregular attendance. Responses from learners, teachers, and parents or guardians demonstrated that learning difficulties extended beyond classroom instruction and required coordinated academic and family support. Although existing reading and numeracy interventions provided assistance, the findings indicated a need for more individualized and sustained learning support. Consequently, the study developed Program BRIDGE, a proposed school-based action plan integrating targeted instruction, learner motivation, family engagement, accessible resources, and continuous progress monitoring to address identified learning gaps.

The school administration should consider implementing Program BRIDGE through structured literacy and numeracy interventions, differentiated instruction, and individualized learner support. Teachers should prioritize reading comprehension, mathematical problem-solving, and foundational arithmetic skills using guided practice, appropriate learning materials, and regular progress assessments. Learners experiencing absenteeism should receive targeted catch-up activities, while those demonstrating low confidence and motivation should be supported through encouraging classroom practices and peer-assisted learning. Parents and guardians should be encouraged

to establish manageable home-learning routines and maintain regular communication with teachers despite time and financial limitations. School administrators, the Schools Division Office, and community stakeholders should strengthen resource provision, teacher development, and collaborative assistance for learners experiencing educational disadvantages. Existing assessment tools, including the Phil-IRI and Rapid Mathematics Assessment, should guide intervention planning and monitoring. Future researchers may validate and pilot-test Program BRIDGE to determine its feasibility, effectiveness, and potential improvements before wider implementation.

The study was limited to 45 vulnerable learners in Grades 4 to 6, 11 teachers, and 45 parents or guardians at Felicidad Magday Elementary School, restricting the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings. Its quantitative descriptive-survey design, purposive sampling, and reliance on questionnaires and school assessment records provided primarily descriptive evidence of learning difficulties and barriers. Frequency counts and percentages identified patterns but did not establish causal relationships among the examined factors. Furthermore, Program BRIDGE was developed as a proposed action plan and was not experimentally evaluated. Future studies may involve broader samples, additional schools, and longitudinal or intervention-based assessments to evaluate its effectiveness.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study adhered to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Necessary approvals were obtained from the Graduate School and the administration of Felicidad Magday Elementary School before data collection. Participation was voluntary, with written informed consent obtained from teachers and parents or guardians and assent secured from minor learners. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to decline participation or leave questions unanswered. Confidentiality and anonymity in reporting were maintained through participant coding, secure data handling, and the exclusion of identifying information. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes and the development of the proposed action plan, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare.

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