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Implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the extent of implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it examined the implementation of the program in terms of goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. It also identified the problems encountered by teachers and determined whether significant differences existed in their perceptions when grouped according to their demographic and professional profiles. The study employed the descriptive research method, utilizing a descriptive survey research design. A total of 292 teachers, representing 50% of the population, were selected through quota sampling. Data were gathered using a questionnaire-checklist and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Findings revealed that most respondents were female, married, 41–50 years old, bachelor's degree holders, Teacher I, had 20–24 years of teaching experience, and had attended national-level in-service training. The ARAL Program was perceived to be often implemented across all five dimensions. Results further indicated no significant differences in teachers' perceptions when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and in-service trainings attended. However, significant differences were observed in terms of length of service concerning learning resources and materials and position title concerning program goals and objectives and curriculum alignment and development. Moreover, teachers seldom encountered implementation problems, particularly those involving student attendance, inadequate infrastructure, and low learner engagement and motivation. The study concluded that certain professional characteristics influence teachers' perceptions of selected dimensions of program implementation. Consequently, it recommended strengthening professional development, peer mentoring, contextualized learning resources, diagnostic assessment, parental engagement, and collaborative instructional planning. A proposed action plan to enhance the implementation of the ARAL Program was also recommended for adoption and implementation in public elementary schools.

Keywords: *Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, Program Implementation, Teacher Perceptions, Learning Resources, Curriculum Alignment, Public Elementary Schools*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

Education is recognized as a fundamental instrument for individual development, social progress, and national advancement. However, access to education does not necessarily guarantee that learners acquire the knowledge and competencies expected at their respective grade levels. The continuing challenges in literacy, numeracy, and academic achievement emphasize the need for educational interventions that address learning deficiencies and promote equitable learning opportunities. UNESCO (2024) emphasized the importance of inclusive and quality education, while the World Bank (2022a) identified learning poverty as a major concern affecting children's ability to acquire foundational reading skills. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing learning inequalities and disrupted the continuity of education, particularly among disadvantaged learners (UNESCO et al., 2022; World Bank, 2022b).

In the Philippines, the learning crisis remains a significant concern in basic education. Results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 indicated that only 24% of Filipino learners attained at least minimum proficiency in reading, 16% in mathematics, and 23% in science (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). Likewise, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 National Report revealed challenges in the reading, writing, and mathematical literacy of Filipino Grade 5 learners (UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2021). Its supplementary report further examined contextual factors associated with learners' academic performance (Department of Education [DepEd] & UNICEF, 2021). These findings demonstrate the necessity of strengthening foundational competencies through targeted instructional interventions, appropriate learning resources, and continuous academic support.

Research has established that structured remedial instruction and tutoring can improve learners' academic performance, particularly among those experiencing difficulties in foundational subjects. Banerjee et al. (2007) demonstrated that remedial education interventions improved the achievement of learners who were academically behind. Similarly, Nickow et al. (2024) found that tutoring programs produced substantial positive effects on student learning outcomes. Evans and Popova (2016) emphasized that effective educational interventions must be supported by appropriate instructional strategies, while Ganimian and Murnane (2016) highlighted the importance of improving the actual teaching and learning experiences of students. The World Bank (2023a) likewise recommended prioritizing foundational competencies, conducting regular assessments, and improving instructional efficiency as essential components of learning recovery.

In response to these concerns, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act, on October 16, 2024. The legislation established a national learning intervention program intended to provide free academic assistance to struggling learners in basic education (Republic Act No. 12028, 2024). Its Implementing Rules and Regulations provided the operational framework for delivering the program (DepEd, 2024), while DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025 established the implementing guidelines for its actual delivery in schools. DepEd Memorandum No. 058, s. 2025 subsequently disseminated the implementing rules and regulations to concerned education offices and schools. The program emphasizes the provision of targeted interventions in reading, mathematics, and science, supported by qualified tutors, appropriate instructional materials, learner assessment, and monitoring mechanisms.

The successful implementation of the ARAL Program requires attention to several important dimensions. These include program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasized that effective professional development strengthens teachers' instructional practices and contributes to improved student learning. Desimone (2009) likewise identified essential characteristics of meaningful teacher development. Moreover, appropriate instructional materials and structured pedagogy contribute to more effective classroom instruction (World Bank, 2022c). Black and Wiliam (1998) highlighted the value of formative assessment in improving teaching and learning, while Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasized the importance of meaningful feedback in enhancing student achievement. These principles are consistent with the ARAL Program's emphasis on continuous assessment, instructional support, and academic progress monitoring.

Nevertheless, implementing an educational intervention involves challenges related to institutional capacity, teacher preparedness, learner participation, resource availability, and administrative support. The World Bank (2023b) stressed that learning recovery requires coordinated efforts and evidence-based educational strategies. UNICEF (2023), through its SEA-PLM policy briefs, also emphasized the importance of parental engagement, teacher support, and early learning experiences in addressing academic disparities. UNESCO (2023) recognized the need to ensure that educational resources and technological interventions respond appropriately to learners' actual needs. Furthermore, effective school leadership is necessary to establish clear directions, mobilize personnel, and monitor institutional improvement (UNESCO, 2024b).

In selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, examining the implementation of the ARAL Program is necessary to determine how its intended components are translated into actual educational practices. Teachers play a significant role in delivering academic interventions, identifying learning deficiencies, utilizing instructional materials, and monitoring pupil progress. Their personal and professional characteristics may also provide insights into differences in their perceptions of program implementation. Equally important is identifying the problems they encounter, particularly those involving learner attendance, infrastructure, and student engagement and motivation.

In view of these considerations, the researcher conducted the study entitled "Implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program" during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it determined the extent of implementation in terms of program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. It also examined the problems encountered by teachers and determined significant differences in their assessments when grouped according to their personal and professional profiles. Ultimately, the study sought to develop an action plan that would strengthen program implementation and improve the delivery of accessible, responsive, and effective academic recovery interventions in public elementary schools.

1.2. Research Problem

This study aimed to determine the extent of implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to describe the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, position title, and in-service trainings attended. It also aimed to determine the extent of implementation of the ARAL Program as perceived by the respondents with respect to program

goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the study sought to establish whether significant differences existed in the respondents' assessments of the extent of program implementation across the identified aspects when they were grouped according to their personal and professional profiles. Moreover, it aimed to determine the extent of problems encountered by the respondents in implementing the ARAL Program. Finally, the study sought to propose an action plan to enhance the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in public elementary schools.

1.3. Research Gap

Although the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program has been established as a national intervention to address learning deficiencies among Filipino learners, there remains a need to examine how its implementation is carried out at the school level. Existing educational discussions and policy directives have primarily emphasized the program's objectives, implementation guidelines, and expected learning outcomes, while limited attention has been given to teachers' actual assessments of its implementation across program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the differences in teachers' perceptions according to their personal and professional characteristics and the operational problems they encounter require further investigation, particularly in the local context of public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal. Addressing this gap is necessary to generate localized empirical evidence regarding the strengths and areas requiring improvement in program implementation. Thus, this study sought to contribute to the existing body of educational research by examining the implementation of the ARAL Program from the perspectives of 292 teachers and utilizing the findings as a basis for developing an action plan responsive to the actual needs and challenges of participating schools.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the extent of implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it aimed to describe the respondents' demographic and professional profiles in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, position title, and in-service trainings attended. It also sought to assess program implementation with respect to program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, it intended to determine whether significant differences existed in the respondents' assessments when grouped according to their profiles, identify the extent of problems encountered in implementing the program, and develop a proposed action plan to enhance its implementation. Through these objectives, the study intended to provide an evidence-based assessment that could guide school administrators, teachers, and education stakeholders in strengthening academic recovery interventions and improving the delivery of learning support to pupils.

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

This study is significant because it provides empirical information on the implementation of the ARAL Program and identifies areas that require further institutional and instructional support. The findings may benefit school administrators by providing a basis for improving program management, allocating resources, strengthening monitoring mechanisms, and organizing relevant professional development activities. Teachers and ARAL tutors may use the results to improve instructional strategies, contextualize learning materials, address learners' academic deficiencies, and strengthen assessment practices. Pupils may benefit from more responsive

and organized academic interventions that address their individual learning needs, particularly in foundational competencies. Parents and guardians may gain greater awareness of their role in supporting children's participation and academic progress through strengthened home-school collaboration. Likewise, the Department of Education and district education supervisors may utilize the findings as localized evidence in developing policies, providing technical assistance, and improving the delivery of the program. Future researchers may also use the study as a reference for further investigations involving learning recovery, educational intervention programs, and instructional management. Most importantly, the proposed action plan may serve as a practical guide for addressing identified implementation challenges and sustaining improvements in the delivery of the ARAL Program.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

This study is primarily aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. By examining the implementation of the ARAL Program, the study supports efforts to improve foundational literacy, numeracy, and other essential competencies through accessible academic interventions, qualified instructional personnel, appropriate learning resources, and systematic monitoring of learner progress. It is particularly relevant to Target 4.1, which emphasizes quality primary and secondary education, and Target 4.5, which promotes equal access to education for vulnerable learners. The study also supports SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by emphasizing the importance of providing additional learning opportunities to pupils experiencing academic difficulties, regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances or learning backgrounds. Furthermore, it contributes to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by recognizing the importance of collaboration among school administrators, teachers, parents, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in strengthening program implementation. Through the proposed action plan, the study seeks to promote more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable educational practices that contribute to improved learning opportunities and better academic outcomes among elementary school pupils.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study employed the descriptive research method, utilizing a descriptive survey research design to determine the extent of implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically describe the existing conditions, practices, and experiences of teachers concerning the implementation of the program without manipulating any of the variables involved. Through a structured questionnaire-checklist, data were gathered regarding the respondents' demographic and professional profiles, their assessments of program implementation in terms of program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as the problems encountered during implementation. The descriptive survey design also facilitated the comparison of respondents' assessments when grouped according to their profiles to determine whether significant differences existed. The information obtained provided an empirical basis for interpreting the current implementation of the ARAL Program, identifying areas requiring improvement, and developing a proposed action plan to enhance its implementation in public elementary schools.

2.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. Taytay is a municipality in the Province of Rizal, situated in the CALABARZON Region. The district was selected as the research locale because its public elementary schools serve as important implementing institutions of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, which aims to address the learning deficiencies of pupils through structured academic interventions. The schools provided an appropriate setting for examining the implementation of the program in terms of program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the participation of teachers from the selected schools enabled the researcher to gather relevant information regarding actual implementation practices, professional experiences, and challenges encountered in delivering the program.

2.3. Sampling Technique

The study employed quota sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, in selecting the respondents. A total of 292 teachers, representing 50% of the total population of teachers in the selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, served as respondents. This sampling technique was utilized to establish a predetermined number of participants who could provide relevant information regarding the implementation of the ARAL Program. The respondents were selected based on their involvement and familiarity with the implementation of the program in their respective schools. Their participation provided the researcher with sufficient data to assess the extent of implementation, determine differences in perceptions according to their personal and professional profiles, and identify the problems encountered in carrying out the program.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher initially secured permission from the appropriate authorities of the Department of Education, Division of Rizal, and the concerned school administrators to conduct the study in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the school heads regarding the administration and distribution of the research instrument to the identified respondents. The purpose of the study, its objectives, and the instructions for answering the questionnaire-checklist were explained to ensure that the respondents understood the information being requested. The questionnaires were distributed to the 292 teacher-respondents, who were given sufficient time to accomplish them. After retrieval, the completed instruments were examined for completeness and consistency of responses. The gathered data were subsequently organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis and interpretation. The results served as the basis for determining the extent of implementation of the ARAL Program, identifying the problems encountered, and developing the proposed action plan.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency counts and percentages were utilized to describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of service, position title, and in-service trainings attended. Weighted mean was employed to determine the extent of implementation of the ARAL Program in terms of program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, teacher capacity building, learning resources and materials, and monitoring and evaluation. It was also used to establish the extent of problems encountered by the respondents in implementing the program. To determine whether significant differences existed in the respondents' assessments when grouped according to their personal and professional profiles, appropriate tests of significant difference, particularly the independent-samples t-test and one-

way analysis of variance (ANOVA), were utilized depending on the number of categories being compared. The results were interpreted based on the established level of significance and served as the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed ethical standards throughout the conduct of the study to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents. Permission was secured from the appropriate educational authorities and school administrators before the distribution of the research instruments. The respondents were informed of the purpose, objectives, and nature of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained, and they were assured that they could decline participation or withdraw without experiencing any disadvantage. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that personal information and individual responses were not disclosed or used for purposes beyond the study. The collected data were handled responsibly, stored securely, and reported objectively without manipulation or misrepresentation. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the findings were presented accurately and that all materials and references utilized in the study were properly acknowledged to uphold academic integrity and responsible research practices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of the Selected Variables

The findings revealed that the 292 respondents were predominantly 41–50 years old, accounting for 33.6%, female at 77.4%, and married at 64.7%. In terms of educational attainment, the largest group held a bachelor's degree at 30.8%, while 42.8% occupied the Teacher I position. Regarding length of service, the highest proportion had 20–24 years of teaching experience at 23.6%. Moreover, most respondents had attended national-level in-service trainings at 30.5%, followed by division-level trainings at 28.4%. These findings indicate that the respondents were generally experienced educators with varied educational qualifications, professional positions, and training experiences. Their diverse professional backgrounds provided relevant perspectives in assessing the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal.

3.2. Extent of the Implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program as Perceived by Teacher-respondents With Respect to the Different Aspects

The findings revealed that the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program obtained a composite weighted mean of 4.48, verbally interpreted as Often or Much Implemented. Among the five aspects, program goals and objectives ranked first with a weighted mean of 4.59, verbally interpreted as Always or Very Much Implemented. This was followed by curriculum alignment and development and monitoring and evaluation, both obtaining a weighted mean of 4.53 and ranking second. Teacher capacity building obtained a weighted mean of 4.46, verbally interpreted as Often or Much Implemented, while learning resources and materials ranked last with a weighted mean of 4.31 under the same interpretation. These results indicate that the ARAL Program is substantially implemented, particularly in establishing program directions, aligning instructional activities with learning competencies, and monitoring learner progress. However, the relatively lower assessments of teacher capacity building and learning resources and materials suggest the need to strengthen professional development, provide adequate instructional materials, and improve resource accessibility. The findings imply that while schools have established the necessary administrative and instructional foundations for program implementation, sustained improvement requires greater institutional support to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared and equipped to deliver effective academic interventions. Thus, school administrators may prioritize targeted capability-

building activities, the provision of contextualized learning materials, and stronger resource mobilization to improve the consistency and sustainability of the ARAL Program.

3.3. Significant Difference on the Extent of the Implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning(ARAL) Program as Perceived by the Respondents with Respect to the Different Aspects in Terms of Their Profile

The findings revealed that there were no significant differences in the respondents' assessments of the extent of implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and in-service trainings attended, as all computed p-values were greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted for these variables across all five aspects of program implementation. However, significant differences were noted in terms of length of service concerning learning resources and materials, which obtained a p-value of 0.013, and position title concerning program goals and objectives and curriculum alignment and development, which obtained p-values of 0.045 and 0.024, respectively. Since these values were lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected for the identified aspects. These results indicate that teachers generally shared similar perceptions of program implementation regardless of their age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and training experiences. However, differences in professional experience and position title may influence how teachers assess the availability and utilization of learning resources, program directions, and curriculum implementation. The findings suggest the importance of providing differentiated institutional support, strengthening mentoring opportunities between experienced and less experienced teachers, and establishing collaborative mechanisms among teachers holding different positions. Such initiatives may help address varying professional perspectives and promote more consistent implementation of the ARAL Program across public elementary schools.

3.4. Extent of Problems Encountered by the Respondents in the Implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program

The findings revealed that the extent of problems encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.46, verbally interpreted as Seldom Encountered. Among the identified problems, student attendance issues ranked first with a weighted mean of 2.73, followed by lack of infrastructure at 2.67 and low student engagement and motivation at 2.62, all interpreted as Sometimes Encountered. Low parental support also emerged as a concern, with a weighted mean of 2.51. Meanwhile, curriculum mismatch ranked last at 2.25, indicating that it was seldom encountered. These findings suggest that although the implementation of the ARAL Program generally experienced manageable challenges, student attendance, availability of appropriate learning spaces, and learner motivation remained areas requiring attention. The results further imply that sustaining academic recovery efforts requires not only appropriate instructional strategies but also consistent learner participation, stronger parental involvement, and adequate school facilities. Thus, school administrators and teachers may strengthen attendance monitoring, establish mechanisms to encourage learner participation, engage parents in supporting remediation activities, and provide conducive spaces for intervention sessions. Overall, the findings indicate that while major implementation difficulties were seldom encountered, addressing the most frequently reported concerns is essential to sustaining the effectiveness and continuity of the ARAL Program..

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program was generally implemented to a considerable extent in selected public elementary schools in Taytay District, Division of Rizal, as reflected in the overall weighted mean of 4.48. The findings showed that program goals and objectives, curriculum alignment and development, and monitoring and evaluation were among the strongest aspects of implementation, while teacher capacity building and learning resources and materials required further strengthening. Differences in teachers' assessments were observed according to length of service in terms of learning resources and materials and position title in terms of program goals and objectives and curriculum alignment and development. Meanwhile, the other profile variables did not yield significant differences. Problems encountered in implementation were generally seldom experienced, with student attendance issues, lack of infrastructure, and low student engagement and motivation emerging as the most prominent concerns. These results indicate that although the program has established a generally favorable implementation foundation, sustained efforts are necessary to address the practical challenges affecting the delivery of learning interventions.

In view of these conclusions, it is recommended that school administrators strengthen teacher capacity building through relevant training, mentoring, and professional development activities, while ensuring the availability and accessibility of appropriate instructional materials and learning resources. Schools may also establish more responsive attendance-monitoring mechanisms, strengthen parent-teacher partnerships, and develop strategies that encourage learner participation and motivation. School heads should explore the provision of conducive spaces for remediation sessions and consider the varying needs of teachers based on their professional experience and position. Furthermore, continuous monitoring and evaluation should be maintained to identify implementation gaps and guide timely interventions. The proposed action plan may serve as a practical guide for addressing these priority areas and improving program delivery. Future researchers may also conduct similar studies involving other school districts, additional stakeholder groups, or alternative research approaches to provide a broader understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of the ARAL Program.

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