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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PREDICTORS OF NON-PROMOTION: NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF TEACHERS OF AT-RISK KINDERGARTEN LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study examined the predictors of non-promotion for at-risk kindergarten children based on the narrative accounts of teachers from Palungkada Elementary School. In particular, the study aimed to analyze teachers' narratives regarding the factors contributing to learners' non-progression to Grade 1, identify the major themes derived from these narratives, and propose intervention measures to support at-risk learners. Using a qualitative narrative research design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with kindergarten teachers and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that non-promotion among at-risk learners was influenced by interconnected learner, family, school, and teacher-related factors. Major themes identified included cognitive development difficulties, socio-emotional and behavioral challenges, physical and motor development delays, language and communication difficulties, limited parental involvement and home support, school and instructional constraints, teacher challenges, and emotional effects of non-promotion. The study concluded that non-promotion is a multidimensional issue requiring holistic and collaborative interventions. The findings are significant in strengthening school-based support systems and developing context-sensitive intervention programs that promote kindergarten learners' readiness for Grade 1 progression.

Keywords: at-risk learners, developmental delays, non-promotion, narrative research, thematic analysis

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INTRODUCTION

The problem and its background

Kindergarten education plays a significant role in shaping children's academic performance, socio-emotional development, and readiness for formal schooling. Around the world, educational systems increasingly recognize that school readiness involves more than academic ability alone. It also includes communication skills, emotional regulation, social interaction, behavior management, and early literacy and numeracy competencies (Erkan et al., 2021). Research consistently shows that children who begin school without adequate preparation are more likely to experience learning difficulties, behavioral concerns, and challenges in meeting grade-level expectations even when classroom support is available (Wilson, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified global concerns about developmental delays among young learners because school closures and limited learning opportunities disrupted children's early educational experiences. In response, many countries strengthened readiness assessments, intervention programs, and home-school partnerships to support kindergarten learners during their transition to formal schooling (Doctor et al., 2024). These developments highlight that school readiness is a shared responsibility among families, schools, educators, and communities.

In the Philippines, kindergarten is recognized as the first stage of compulsory basic education under the Enhanced Basic Education Act and the Department of Education's Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education. The policy emphasizes the development of foundational competencies in literacy, numeracy, language, socio-emotional growth, motor skills, and positive learning attitudes needed for Grade 1 readiness (Department of Education, 2016). Despite these policies, many Filipino learners continue to enter school with uneven developmental readiness caused by socio-economic difficulties, irregular attendance, inadequate parental involvement, and limited learning stimulation at home (Domingo, 2025). Teachers also observe that some kindergarten pupils struggle with following instructions, sustaining attention, communicating effectively, and participating in structured classroom activities despite the presence of interventions (Abriol et al., 2022).

These concerns are evident in Palungkada Elementary School, where teachers have observed that several kindergarten learners encounter difficulties in meeting developmental expectations required for promotion to Grade 1. Classroom observations and school records reveal challenges in attention span, communication, socio-emotional behavior, and fine and gross motor skills. Such conditions encouraged the researchers to examine the experiences of at-risk kindergarten pupils within the school setting. The researchers chose this problem because the increasing number of learners experiencing readiness difficulties directly affects their academic progression and adjustment to formal schooling. Understanding these realities may help improve intervention programs and strengthen support systems that are more responsive to the needs of learners and the community.

Although several studies have examined kindergarten readiness, most previous research focused on general readiness levels, intervention effectiveness, or teachers' perceptions of learner performance. Existing literature confirms that learner, family, and school factors influence readiness outcomes, particularly in literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional behavior, language development, and motor skills (Peterson, 2023). However, only a limited number of studies provide detailed and localized examinations of learners who are at risk of non-promotion and the contextual factors affecting their development.

This study differs from previous research because it focuses specifically on the lived experiences and developmental challenges of at-risk kindergarten learners in Palungkada Elementary School. Rather than concentrating only on readiness trends or intervention outcomes, the study seeks to explore how family conditions, school experiences, and learner behaviors interact in real-life cases of possible non-promotion. By providing a localized and case-based analysis, the study contributes a deeper understanding of why some learners continue to struggle despite existing policies and support mechanisms. The findings are expected to help schools, teachers, and parents design more responsive interventions that can better support kindergarten learners in achieving readiness for Grade 1.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to analyze the narratives of teachers of at-risk kindergarten learners who were not promoted to Grade 1, focusing on the factors that contributed to their non-promotion.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the narratives of teachers on the factors leading to the non-promotion of At-risk Kinder Learners?
2. What are the major themes that can be derived from the narratives of teachers?
3. What intervention measures may be proposed to support at-risk Kindergarten learners?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Lev Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory and Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to explain learners’ non-promotion to Grade 1. Vygotsky emphasizes that children learn through social interaction, guided support, and cultural tools within the Zone of Proximal Development (Goos et al., 2021; McLeod, 2025). Limited interaction, guidance, and learning exposure may affect development in language, cognition, motor, and socio-emotional skills, leading to poor school readiness.

Maslow’s theory further explains that learning depends on meeting basic physical, emotional, and social needs (Aanstoos, 2024; Maslow, 1987). When learners experience insecurity, stress, or lack of support, they may show low motivation, weak participation, and behavioral difficulties, which affect their readiness for Grade 1.

Together, these theories explain that kindergarten readiness is not purely an academic concern but is also shaped by children’s social environment, emotional well-being, and developmental support systems. The study therefore emphasizes the need for holistic interventions that address the cognitive, emotional, social, and environmental needs of at-risk kindergarten learners.

Conceptual Framework

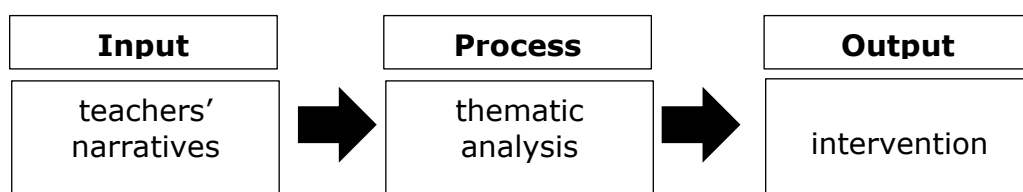


Figure 1. Input – Process – Output (IPO) Research Paradigm of the Study

The study follows the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model. The input consists of teachers’ experiences, observations, and challenges regarding kindergarten learners who are at risk of non-promotion. These narratives serve as the main source of qualitative data and provide insights into the factors affecting learners’ readiness and development.

The process involves analyzing, coding, and organizing the collected narratives through thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns. This helps the study examine learner, family, school, and environmental factors that may contribute to developmental delays and readiness difficulties.

The output of the study is the development of appropriate and context-based interventions. The findings will serve as a guide in creating support strategies that can improve learner readiness and help kindergarten pupils successfully progress to Grade 1.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter outlines the research methods and procedures utilized in this paper. It describes the research design, locale of the study, participants and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection methods and analyses as well as ethical consideration. The methodology was constructed to map to the study’s Statement of the Problem and conceptual framework where teachers’ narratives serve as the input, thematic analysis as the process and proposed intervention measures act as the output. Methodological processes were rigorously designed and structured to promote credibility, trustworthiness, and rigor in producing findings about the antecedents of non-promotion among at-risk kindergarten learners.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative narrative research design to explore the experiences of teachers handling at-risk kindergarten learners who were not promoted to Grade 1. Through teachers’ stories, observations, and experiences, the study aimed to understand the factors and effects related to non-promotion. Narrative inquiry was appropriate because it focused on the lived experiences and perspectives of participants (Creswell & Poth,

2018).

The study used thematic analysis to examine the collected narratives and identify common themes related to learner, family, and school factors affecting kindergarten readiness and development. This design allowed the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by at-risk learners and to develop practical, experience-based interventions that may help improve learner readiness and successful progression to Grade 1.

Locale of the Study

The study took place at Palungkada Elementary School. The school provides a complete elementary grade from kindergarten to grade 6. Thus, providing a suitable environment to study issues on learners' preparedness and promotion to Grade 1.

The study site was chosen for its relevance to the research aims. In school, a classroom experience where teachers encountered kindergarten learners who experienced delays with learning and development. Classroom environment as well as parental involvement, learner behavior, pattern of attendance, and availability of instructional guidance were believed to be important predictors for non-promotion. Palungkada Elementary School was purposively identified since it had cases on both the development and the context of the children needed for the study. In this context, conducting the research allowed the researcher to obtain genuine stories and experiences from the teachers dealing with kindergarteners who would experience non-promotion.

Results should inform research on the formation of context-based interventions, which the school community can use across schools and comparable sites, and that research in this field can aid in developing such interventions.

Respondents and Sampling

This study focused on at-risk kindergarten learners identified as not ready for promotion to Grade 1. Two kindergarten pupils from Palungkada Elementary School were purposively selected based on indicators such as low literacy and numeracy skills, limited classroom participation, irregular attendance, and delayed socio-emotional development. The study recognized that learners become at-risk due to combined learner, family, and school factors, including difficulty in basic skills, limited parental support, low socio-economic status, lack of early learning exposure, large class sizes, limited resources, and varied learning pace. Six kindergarten teachers served as key informants, providing classroom experiences that validated and enriched learner data to better understand non-promotion and develop context-based interventions.

Research Instrument.

The research questionnaire was adopted from established qualitative study of Yin,, Braun, Hattie, and Duncan et al. which was designed to gather in-depth and triangulated data on the factors contributing to the non-promotion of at-risk kindergarten learners to Grade 1 (Braun, V., & Clarke, V. ,2006, Yin, R. K.,2018, Hattie, J.,2009, Duncan, G. J., Dowsett, C. J., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A. C., Klebanov, P., et al., 2007). The research instrument consisted of four major components:

Part 1: Semi-Structured Interview Guide (Learner Case – Teacher as Informant)

Part 2: Document Analysis

Part 3: Classroom Observation Protocol

This semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument, and this guide was developed to draw out rich stories from kindergarten teachers who are involved in working with at-risk learners in kindergarten. The interview guide included open-ended questions consistent with the Statement of the Problem of the study. Questions addressed teachers' impressions of the issues that have influenced non-promotion by learners, including cognitive, behavioral, social-emotional, family-related, and school-related issues; what teachers' observations and experiences. Follow-up questions added depth to the narratives and resulted in more in-depth responses. These sections ensured methodological triangulation, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed a systematic and ethical process to ensure accurate and reliable qualitative data. Permission was secured from the Schools Division Office and the School Head of Palungkada Elementary School. Teacher-participants were then informed about the study and given written consent forms. Participation was voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the process.

Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews, where teachers shared their experiences and insights on the non-promotion of at-risk kindergarten learners. All interviews were audio-

recorded with permission for accurate transcription and analysis, along with field notes to capture observations and non-verbal responses.

Data Analysis

Data from the interview were analyzed thematically in a six-step analysis based on Braun and Clarke (Braun, V., & Clarke, V., 2006). The initial step was to read through recurring interview transcripts in order to gain familiarity with the data. Stage two was to create preliminary codes from substantial statements and responses of the participants. In the third phase, codes that are related, were grouped together into preliminary themes. For phase four, the researcher reviewed and curated the themes from which they were derived to ensure their correspondence with the research questions and objectives. The fifth phase consisted of defining and naming the final themes, and at the 6th level was to write and present findings in a thematic way.

The analysis allowed the researcher to discover the most significant predictors for non-promotion in at-risk kindergarten learners based on the teachers' narratives. The themes identified were also used to recommend interventions to enhance learners' readiness for and help them make the transition to Grade 1.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research with a qualitative focus was carried out according to strict ethical requirements. All participants' anonymity was achieved through the use of pseudonyms and the coding procedures. All data collected from the interviews was confidential and was employed only for academic purposes. The consent of participants was obtained by explaining the purpose, procedure, potential gain, and risks involved in the study prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of the possibility to terminate participation at any time without repercussions. The researcher also guaranteed that the conduct of the study would not do any significant physical, emotional or professional harm on the participants as well as the institution. To honor ethical norms of qualitative inquiry, respect, transparency, and integrity were maintained during the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussions based on the narratives of teachers regarding at-risk kindergarten learners who were not promoted to Grade 1. The presentation of results follows the Statement of the Problem of the study. Teacher narratives were coded using labels such as TN1 (Teacher Narrative 1) to ensure confidentiality and organization of responses. Filipino verbatim responses were translated into English to provide clarity and consistency in the presentation of findings. The results were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the factors contributing to non-promotion among at-risk kindergarten learners.

Narratives of teachers on the factors leading to the non-promotion of at-risk kindergarten learners
Cognitive Development Difficulties

Teachers narrated that the learners demonstrated difficulty in recognizing letters, phonological awareness, number identification, and comprehension skills. which affected their readiness for Grade 1.

TN 1 stated:

"When I handled him in class, I noticed that he struggled with basic literacy skills, including recognizing letters, identifying sounds, and reading syllables. He could not blend sounds to read simple CVC words and often avoided participating because of shyness. I also observed limited reading support at home, which affected the effectiveness of school interventions. To help him, I provided one-on-one sessions, visual aids, and repetition drills, but his progress remained slow. Despite the challenges, I believed he needed patience, close guidance, and learning opportunities suited to his abilities to prevent his literacy difficulties from affecting other learning areas."

Another narrative highlighted the difficulty in numeracy

TN 2

"I have a learner who still cannot count sequentially even though we are already in the middle of the school year. Whenever I ask him to count, he skips numbers or repeats some of them. I can see that he has difficulties with cognitive processing, particularly in sequencing and memory. Because of this, I provide him with more drills and individualized attention."

The findings showed that learners had difficulties in early cognitive skills, particularly in literacy and

numeracy, including letter naming, phonological awareness, reading CVC words, number recognition, sequencing, and comprehension, all essential for early learning success. In literacy, weak phonological processing affected reading development, with Ehri (2005) stressing the importance of letter-sound knowledge for fluency and Stanovich (1986) noting that early reading difficulties widen achievement gaps; low confidence also reduced engagement, as Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explained. In numeracy, weak number sense such as counting and one-to-one correspondence was evident, which Siegler and Booth (2004) and Jordan et al. (2009) linked to later math difficulties. Cognitive processing issues in memory, attention, and sequencing also emerged, which Diamond (2013) identified as key executive functions. Limited home literacy support further affected learning, consistent with Snow (2007).

Overall, these challenges require structured teaching strategies, early intervention, and strong support to prevent long-term learning delays.

Socio-Emotional and Behavioral Development

Teachers also described socio-emotional concerns among at-risk learners particularly social withdrawal, low classroom participation and attention difficulties.

TN 1 shared:

"When I started handling my class, I immediately noticed that one learner behaved differently from his classmates. He preferred to be alone most of the time. While the other children played and interacted with one another, he would stay quietly in one corner. During group activities, he had difficulty socializing and would often choose not to participate.

I also observed that he was unable to finish his tasks in class. He usually did not complete activities because of a lack of concentration. Even with simple instructions, I often had to repeat them several times before he could begin the activity. Once he started, he would easily lose focus by looking around or stopping what he was doing.

As a teacher, I am challenged in finding ways to help him not only academically but also in his socio-emotional development. I try to approach him gently, talk to him, and provide simple and structured tasks. I also seat him near me so I can closely monitor his progress. At times, I can see that he wants to participate, but he seems hesitant or lacks confidence. That is why he truly needs closer attention and a supportive classroom environment."

The findings showed that learners experienced social-emotional and behavioral difficulties such as social withdrawal, preference for isolation, poor attention, and weak participation, which affected classroom engagement and task completion. Limited peer interaction also reflected weak social skills and reduced collaboration. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that social interaction supports cognitive development, while Bandura (1977) explained that learning occurs through observation and interaction, meaning limited social engagement can hinder learning. Attention problems also indicate weak executive functioning, particularly in focus and working memory, which are needed for task completion (Diamond, 2013). Low participation may be linked to low self-efficacy, leading to withdrawal from tasks (Bandura, 1977), while Kagan (1997) described similar behavior as behavioral inhibition. Achenbach, Dumenci, and Rescorla (2001) noted that these behaviors are early signs of behavioral difficulties affecting academic performance. Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) stressed the need for supportive teacher-student relationships and structured classroom environments.

Overall, socio-emotional and behavioral issues significantly affect learners' academic engagement, requiring structured support and reinforcement.

Physical and Motor Development Delays

Teacher narratives also revealed learners' delays in fine and gross motor development affect their ability to perform academic and physical tasks effectively.

TN 2

"When I started handling my class, I immediately noticed that there was one child who had difficulty with tasks that required fine motor skills. He did not know how to hold a pencil properly. Whenever he wrote, his grip was incorrect, and he struggled to control the movement of the pencil. As a result, his handwriting was not neat, and he became tired very quickly."

Another observation includes:

TN 3

"His difficulties are not only evident in writing. Even in simple activities, such as holding onto the rails while going up or down the stairs, he struggles. There are also times during Physical Education activities when
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he cannot properly throw and catch a ball. Sometimes, he is unable to judge the movement or strength needed to throw, which makes it difficult for him to catch the ball properly.

As a teacher, I can see that these are indications of delays in his physical and motor development. Because of this, I provide him with activities that can improve his hand coordination, such as tracing, using clay, and holding larger writing tools. It truly requires patience and continuous practice because improvement is not immediately visible."

The findings revealed that learners experienced delays in fine and gross motor development, shown through poor pencil grip, handwriting difficulties, and problems with activities such as catching balls, throwing, and using rails. These challenges suggest limited coordination and motor control needed for both academic and daily tasks.

Gesell (1945) explained that motor development happens in stages, and delays may affect later academic skills like writing. Berk (2013) also emphasized that fine motor skills are important for early learning and school performance. Difficulties in balance, coordination, and movement reflect weak gross motor skills, which are essential for physical and social activities (Gallahue, Ozmun, & Goodway, 2012).

The study also showed that learners' low confidence and reluctance to join physical activities may be connected to low self-efficacy, which affects motivation and participation (Bandura, 1977). Piaget (1952) highlighted that children learn through active interaction and practice, while Diamond (2013) explained that motor skills are closely linked to attention, planning, and executive functioning. These findings suggest that motor delays may also affect broader developmental skills.

In summary, the research indicates that problems with physical and motor development have profound effects on learners' academic and physical performance. These need to be addressed through timely interventions, such as fine motor exercises, teacher support and physical activities to improve learners' development.

Language and Communication Difficulties

Teachers further narrated that some learners experienced limited receptive and expressive language skills affecting classroom communication and participation.

TN 1 narrated

"When I started handling my class, I immediately noticed that there was one learner who had difficulties with language and communication skills. She could not answer simple questions. Even basic questions such as, 'What is your name?' or 'How many pencils do you have?' were difficult for her to answer. Sometimes, she would just look at me or at her classmates and could not immediately respond.

I also noticed that her vocabulary was limited, and she struggled to form even simple sentences. Whenever I talked to her, she usually gave only one-word answers, or at times, she did not respond at all. She also seemed shy and lacked confidence in communicating with others.

As a teacher, I am challenged in finding ways to help her improve her communication skills. I try to use simple and clear questions, visual aids, and repeated practice in conversation. I also give her opportunities to speak in small groups so that she will not feel too pressured. I can see that she needs more exposure to language activities in order to gradually develop her communication abilities."

The findings showed that learners had difficulties answering simple questions, following instructions, and expressing ideas verbally, reflecting weaknesses in receptive and expressive language skills essential for communication and learning. Snow (2007) emphasized that early language skills support understanding, speaking, and academic engagement, while limited vocabulary and comprehension reduce classroom participation. Chomsky (1965) explained that language development involves understanding and producing meaningful communication, and Vygotsky (1978) highlighted language as vital for thinking and cognitive development. Low confidence also affects participation, as noted by Bandura (1977). Bruner (1960) stressed scaffolding strategies, while Nation (2001) emphasized repeated language exposure for vocabulary and communication development.

In summary, the findings indicate that communicative and language proficiency greatly affect learners' participation and understanding of classroom content. This highlights the need for interventions such as explicit language instruction, scaffolding, and communication strategies to improve language skills and academic performance.

Limited Parental Support and Home Involvement

Teacher narratives also highlighted the limited parental involvement and home support

TN 4 stated:

"When I started coordinating with the parents of my learners, I noticed that one child was clearly lacking support from home. Most parent-teacher meetings were not attended by his parents, which made it difficult for me to follow up on his progress. Whenever I had concerns about his performance, there were no parents available for me to talk to who could help with the intervention.

I also noticed that most of his assignments were unanswered. Whenever I asked him why he had not completed them, he usually could not give a clear explanation. Sometimes, he would say that he forgot or that no one helped him at home. It was evident that he lacked guidance outside the classroom.

In my conversations with the parents, they also mentioned that "He keeps making excuses" and that it was "very hard for him to finish activities." This showed that the problem was not only evident in school but also at home. As a teacher, I am challenged because no matter what interventions are implemented inside the classroom, their effects remain limited without reinforcement at home. That is why I try to provide simpler tasks and clearer instructions, but I know these would be more effective if there were also support from the family."

Another narrative shared:

TN 3

"In my class, there is a learner who is clearly affected by his home environment. Most parent-teacher meetings are not attended, so we do not have consistent communication with his parents. This communication is important so that we can discuss his condition and how to help him, but the family's participation is really lacking.

Another thing I have noticed is that most of his assignments are unanswered. Whenever I check his notebook, his work is often blank or unfinished. When I talk to him, it seems that he does not have enough support at home to guide him.

According to his parents, "He keeps making excuses" and has difficulty finishing activities. It is evident that he has problems with motivation and task persistence, which may be influenced by his home environment. Because of this, I adjust my strategies by providing guided tasks inside the classroom and allocating time to help him complete his work. However, I believe that the intervention would be more effective if there were active participation from his family."

The findings revealed that family and home environment, especially limited parental involvement and support, greatly affect learners' academic engagement and task completion. Poor attendance in meetings, weak home-school communication, and incomplete homework indicate insufficient academic support at home. Epstein (2001) emphasized that parental involvement improves academic performance, while Baumrind (1991) explained that parenting styles influence children's self-control and responsibility. These findings support Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which highlights the interaction between home and school in child development. Similarly, Lareau (2003), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), and Cooper (1989) stressed that parental support improves motivation, self-regulation, and homework completion.

In summary, learners' academic challenges are not only school-related but also related to home and family factors. Improving partnerships between parents and teachers and promoting parental involvement is crucial to overcoming learners' academic and behavioral difficulties.

School and Instructional Factors

Teachers also described limitations in instructional time and resources.

TN 3 narrated

"When I was assigned to my class, I tried to implement school programs such as ARAL and REAP to support struggling learners. These programs could have been a great help, especially for remediation. However, I found it difficult to maximize their effectiveness because of insufficient time for individualized attention. There are many learners inside the classroom, so I cannot closely attend to each one, especially those who require more focused guidance."

Another statement revealed:

TN 5

"In addition to this, the instructional materials available to me are also limited. Sometimes, I even have to create my own visual aids or use improvised materials just to explain the lesson properly. Because of this, teaching becomes even more challenging, especially for children with learning difficulties.

As a teacher, I do everything I can to provide for the needs of my students, but I can feel that there

are limitations within the system that affect their learning. If there were more time and sufficient materials, these intervention programs would become more effective.”

The findings showed that intervention programs like ARAL and REAP help struggling learners, but their effectiveness is limited by lack of instructional time and resources. Large class sizes and curriculum demand make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized instruction and timely feedback needed by at-risk learners (Hattie, J., 2009). Limited materials also restrict the use of engaging and varied teaching strategies that support different learning styles (Marzano, R. J., 2001).

The study supports Fullan’s view that successful school interventions require adequate time, resources, and teacher readiness (Fullan, M., 2007). Likewise, differentiated instruction, which is essential in meeting learners’ individual needs, becomes difficult when resources and time are insufficient (Tomlinson, C. A., 2001). Teachers used strategies such as peer tutoring and improvised materials, reflecting Vygotsky’s concept of scaffolding and social learning (Vygotsky, L. S., 1978). However, adequate resources and manageable class sizes remain necessary for effective instruction and intervention (Darling-Hammond, L., 2010).

In summary, this study suggests that while intervention programs such as ARAL and REAP may help to enhance learner outcomes, their effectiveness is highly reliant on adequate instructional time and resources. Overcoming these constraints is critical to improve school-based instruction.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Teachers’ Narratives on the Predictors of Non-Promotion Among At-Risk Kindergarten Learners

| Core Ideas from the Responses | Sub-Themes | Major Themes |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulty recognizing letters and sounds; inability to read syllables; poor counting skills; sequencing difficulties | Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties | Cognitive Development Difficulties |
| Inability to focus; unfinished tasks; social withdrawal; reluctance to participate | Attention and Participation Problems | Socio-Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties |
| Improper pencil grip; difficulty writing; poor coordination in physical activities | Fine and Gross Motor Delays | Physical and Motor Development Delays |
| Difficulty answering simple questions; limited vocabulary; inability to follow instructions | Weak Receptive and Expressive Language Skills | Language and Communication Difficulties |
| Lack of parental support; absence during meetings; unanswered assignments | Poor Home Support and Parental Involvement | Home and Family Factors |
| Insufficient instructional time; limited materials; difficulty implementing interventions | Resource and Instructional Limitations | School and Instructional Factors |
| Teacher workload; emotional stress; difficulty managing diverse learner needs | Professional and Instructional Challenges | Teacher Challenges |
| Learners becoming withdrawn after non-promotion; low self-confidence; parental frustration | Emotional Effects of Non-Promotion | Effects of Non-Promotion |

The findings showed that non-promotion among at-risk kindergarten learners is influenced by interconnected factors involving the learner, family, school, and instruction (Goos, M., Pipa, J., & Peixoto, F., 2021; Maslow, A. H., 1987; Kagan, J., 1997). Learners’ cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, and communication difficulties were further affected by limited parental support, inadequate school resources, and teacher-related challenges.

The results support previous studies emphasizing the importance of literacy, numeracy, executive functioning, emotional support, social interaction, motor development, and communication skills in academic readiness and success (Ehri, L. C., 2005; Jordan, N. C. et al., 2009; Diamond, A., 2013; Vygotsky, L. S., 1978; Bandura, A., 1977; Gesell, A., 1945; Snow, C. E., 2007). Findings also highlighted the strong influence of family involvement, instructional support, and adequate resources on learner engagement and achievement (Epstein,

J. L., 2001; Bronfenbrenner, U., 1979; Hattie, J., 2009; Tomlinson, C. A., 2001).

The emotional effects of non-promotion, such as frustration, withdrawal, and low self-confidence, further stress the need to address both academic and socio-emotional needs in early childhood education (Maslow, A. H., 1987; Bandura, A., 1977). Overall, the study highlights the important role of teachers, parents, school administrators, and educational stakeholders in supporting kindergarten learners’ readiness for Grade 1.

Proposed Intervention Program

Program Title

PROJECT R.E.A.C.H.

(Remediation, Engagement, Assistance, Collaboration, and Holistic Development)

Rationale

The study found that non-promotion among at-risk kindergarten learners is influenced by cognitive, behavioral, socio-emotional, parental, and instructional factors. PROJECT R.E.A.C.H. aims to provide a holistic, learner-centered intervention to improve school readiness and support successful transition to Grade 1.

General Objective

To improve the school readiness and learning skills of at-risk kindergarten learners to prevent non-promotion to Grade 1.

Specific Objectives

- Strengthen literacy and numeracy skills
- Improve attention, behavior, and motivation
- Develop communication and language skills
- Enhance fine and gross motor skills
- Increase parent involvement in learning
- Support teachers with strategies and materials

Target Beneficiaries

- At-risk kindergarten learners
- Parents/guardians
- Kindergarten teachers

Key Intervention Components

1. Remediation Program – Daily small-group or one-on-one lessons in literacy, phonics, counting, and multisensory activities.
2. Behavioral and Socio-Emotional Support – Positive reinforcement, structured routines, peer support, and activities that build participation and confidence.
3. Language Enrichment – Storytelling, Q&A activities, visuals, and guided speaking opportunities.
4. Motor Skills Development – Fine motor activities (tracing, drawing, cutting) and gross motor exercises through play-based learning.
5. Parent Support Program – Parent-teacher conferences, home learning activities, and guidance on supporting children at home.
6. Teacher Support – Training on differentiated instruction, use of improvised materials, peer tutoring, and learner progress monitoring.

Implementation Plan

| Phase | Activities | Timeline | Persons Involved |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Phase 1 | Identification of at-risk learners | Week 1 | Teacher, School Head |
| Phase 2 | Baseline assessment | Week 2 | Teacher |
| Phase 3 | Intervention implementation | Weeks 3–12 | Teacher, Parents |
| Phase 4 | Monitoring and evaluation | Ongoing | Teacher |
| Phase 5 | Post-assessment | End of program | Teacher |

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Pre- and post-tests in literacy and numeracy

- Checklists for behavior, engagement, and motor skills
- Parent feedback and learner progress tracking

Expected Outcomes

- Improved literacy and numeracy skills
- Better focus, communication, and motor coordination
- Increased parental involvement
- Reduced number of non-promoted learners

Sustainability Plan

- Integrate interventions into daily classroom activities
- Provide continuous teacher training and support
- Strengthen school-home partnerships
- Use simple and recycled learning materials

Conclusion

Project R.E.A.C.H. offers a comprehensive and flexible intervention program that targets various factors responsible for non-promotion of kindergarten children. Through focusing on cognitive, behavioral, social, and environmental factors, the project provides equal opportunities for learners to learn and prepare for Grade 1.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study examined teachers' experiences regarding the non-promotion of at-risk kindergarten learners to Grade 1. Findings revealed that learners struggled with cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral, physical, motor, and communication skills, which affected their classroom participation, task completion, and school readiness. Limited parental involvement, poor home support, inadequate instructional resources, large class sizes, and teachers' workload also contributed to learners' difficulties.

The study showed that non-promotion is influenced by the combined effects of learner, family, school, and instructional factors rather than a single cause. Teachers also experienced challenges in providing individualized support and effective interventions due to limited resources and time.

Based on these findings, the study emphasized the importance of early intervention, differentiated instruction, strong home-school collaboration, and support from teachers, parents, school administrators, and stakeholders. It also proposed PROJECT R.E.A.C.H., a holistic intervention program designed to improve the readiness and overall development of at-risk kindergarten learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that learners' non-promotion is highly correlated with cognitive, socio-emotional, physical and language developmental delays.

1. Thus, learners struggle with cognitive development, socio-emotional and behavioral adjustment, physical and motor skills, language and communication abilities, which ultimately hinder their participation in the classroom, ability to complete a task and academic readiness.

2. Major themes from the teachers' narratives: difficulties in cognitive development, socio-emotional and behavioral challenges, delays in physical and motor development, language and communication difficulties, limited parental involvement and home support, school and instructional constraints, teacher-related challenges, and the emotional impacts of non-promotion. The themes highlight that non-promotion among vulnerable kindergarteners has an interactive effect with learner, family, school, and instructional factors as opposed to single cause reasons, as non-promotion among at-risk kindergarteners.

3. In general, the findings support a wide range of holistic and collaborative intervention such as Project R.E.A.C.H that includes teacher, parent, school administrators, and other educational stakeholders' participation for further support in preparing learners for success in Grade 1.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Teachers should introduce early screening, differentiated instruction, and targeted intervention in literacy, numeracy, language, socio-emotional, and motor skills to be able to better support the needs of at-risk students.
- Parents should promote good home support with participation in school (e.g., through participation in school activities), monitoring learner progress, consistent instructional practices, and reinforcing learning at home.
- School Administrators should supply adequate teaching resources (including appropriate teaching materials), remediation time, and teachers' professional development to assist in the provision of appropriate materials for students that are experiencing challenges.
- School and stakeholders should collaborate to strengthen the support to the ongoing academic and socio-emotional well-being of at-risk kindergarten students.
- Department of Education and other educational stakeholders should strengthen intervention programs to help foster learner readiness and growth towards Grade 1.

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