Implementation Of Catch-Up Fridays: A Case Study on Teachers' Experiences at the Davao Del Norte Division

ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the implementation of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program in the Davao del Norte Division, Philippines, aimed at addressing learning gaps among students exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiated by the Department of Education (DepEd), this program dedicates every Friday to reading and writing activities, values, peace, and health education to enhance students' academic and holistic development. Despite its noble intentions, the program faces challenges in execution, notably in the provision of adequate resources and teacher training. This research explores teachers' experiences with the program, highlighting the additional burdens placed on them, such as the personal cost of photocopying materials due to inadequate resources. It also discusses the program's lack of structure, training, and differentiation, as assessed by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2). The study revealed themes in terms of teacher perspectives prior to the Catch-Up Friday program implementation, namely: educational impact, training and support, awareness and understanding. Moreover, three themes emerged for the challenges such as communication and coordination, teacher workload, and student engagement. Meanwhile, in terms of drawn insights, two themes appeared, namely: the importance of support and idealism and limitations. Furthermore, Theoretical frameworks such as Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Organizational Theory, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), and Complexity Theory provide insights into the complexities of implementing educational interventions. By examining these challenges, the study aims to propose solutions to improve the "Catch-Up Fridays" program's effectiveness and support its goal of leaving no student behind.

Keywords: Catch-Up Fridays, Case Study, Department of Education, Davao del Norte.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Education is a fundamental right and a crucial factor in developing children, communities, and countries. However, the quality of education is not uniform across regions, and many students struggle with learning gaps. In the Philippines, around 90% of children aged ten cannot read simple text, which has increased from 70% before the pandemic. This high level of learning poverty is alarming and calls for immediate intervention (World Bank, 2023).

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines launched a weekly reading intervention program called "Catch-Up Fridays" to address this issue. This program allocates half every Friday to reading and writing activities and the other half to values, peace, and health education. The program aims to close the reading gap among Filipino students by providing opportunities for reading intervention and enhancement through developmentally appropriate reading materials (Sevillano, 2023).

The Department of Education has consistently delivered quality, relevant, inclusive, and responsive education. Strengthening more in education is its MATATAG Education Agenda stipulated in DepEd Order (DO) No. 013, s. 2023, titled Adoption of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), and in compliance with Republic Act (RA) No. 11476, Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC), and Values Education Act. With this, it has introduced Catch-Up Fridays to proactively address the learning gaps among elementary and secondary school students and learners in the community learning centers (CLCs) nationwide. It provides a valuable opportunity for students who lag in academics. Additionally, it aims to effectively reinforce learning and strengthen the relevant skills necessary to realize the basic education curriculum's objectives fully. One way of attaining that is the implementation of catch-up Fridays of 2023.

"Catch-Up Fridays" is a program initiated by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines. It was launched on January 12, 2024, in Davao del Norte. This comprehensive program addresses learning gaps among grade and high school students. Every Friday throughout the school year, students participate in activities focused on reading, values, peace, and health education. It operationalizes the National Reading Program (NRP) during the first half of the day's schedule. This learning mechanism is not graded; it intends to strengthen foundational, social, and other relevant skills necessary to actualize the intent of the basic education curriculum.

Implementing Catch-Up Fridays is of utmost importance due to its potential to provide crucial academic support to students facing learning gaps. This program offers a structured platform for lag students, allowing them to receive tailored guidance and supplemental resources to enhance their overall academic progress and success. It aims at reinforcing learning.

Furthermore, it bridges learning gaps. The disruption of classes during the pandemic brought a big stir to the Philippine educational system. Catch-Up Fridays may provide targeted support to these students. Students can catch up and build a stronger foundation by revisiting essential concepts.

Also, it is a holistic development. These Fridays emphasize values, peace, education, and health. Hence, this holistic approach contributes to well-rounded students. Third, attention is given individually and in small groups. Smaller class sizes permit teachers to be involved more personally with students. This individual attention positively influences motivation and understanding.

Moreover, there is stakeholder involvement. Parents are called to participate, fostering a collaborative learning environment while forging better stakeholder relationships. Increased parental engagement correlates with better student outcomes; at the same time, it ensures firm support and sustainability of Catch-Up Fridays implemented in the school. Catch-Up Fridays play a crucial role in supporting students' overall growth and ensuring that no student is left behind.

Despite the noble intentions of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program, its implementation has been met with several challenges. Teachers have reported additional burdens related to preparing and executing Catch-Up Fridays. A significant issue highlighted is the inadequate supply of reading materials, forcing teachers to bear the cost of photocopying resources.

Moreover, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) has expressed concerns about the effectiveness and impact of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program. Based on its initial assessment, EDCOM 2 has found that the program lacks structure, training, and differentiation to optimize learning recovery. Teachers have not been given in-depth training on how to conduct effective reading intervention, which involves diagnosing the students' reading difficulties, providing them with appropriate strategies and feedback, and monitoring their progress.

This research aims to delve deeper into these issues by exploring teachers' experiences in the Davao del Norte Division with the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays. By doing so, it hopes to shed light on the challenges teachers face and propose solutions to improve the program's implementation.

1.2. Theoretical Lens

In order to comprehend the implementation challenges of the Department of Education's (DepEd) "Catch-Up Fridays" program, which aims to improve students' academic and values formation, the study drew upon various theories. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) holds that IQ tests are not the only

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appropriate means of measuring human intelligence because there are other factors to consider, such as the diversity of intellectual strengths and weaknesses, which is a significant theoretical perspective. According to Gardner's theory, every person has a distinct intelligence profile, ranging from linguistic to logical-mathematical to interpersonal and intrapersonal. This means educational interventions should be diverse and accommodate different learning styles (Gardner, 1983). This supports the program's goal of meeting the needs of a wide range of students, but it also emphasizes how difficult it is to execute such a comprehensive strategy and how much funding is required.

Moreover, a critical examination of teachers' difficulties in putting the "Catch-Up Fridays" program into practice using the frameworks of Organizational Theory and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) reveals a contradiction between policy goals and the realities of practice. According to Engeström (2001), CHAT highlights structural inconsistencies and the inadequateness of mediating tools. It also highlights the mismatch between the program's objectives and available resources, which compels teachers to compensate for these shortcomings (Engeström, 2001). This viewpoint proposes a top-down strategy that ignores instructors' real-world difficulties in various classroom environments. However, organizational theory—discussed by Bolman and Deal (2017)—suggests that the problems are caused by internal structural inefficiencies, like role ambiguity and inefficient resource allocation, which put educators under more stress and workload. This theory suggests that educational institutions' internal structures are not set up to facilitate the successful implementation of their programs (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) and Complexity Theory by Fullan (2016) add even more complexity by illuminating the conflict between the requirement for adaptive change and external dependencies. RDT draws attention to the educational system's intrinsic power disparity and critical reliance on limited outside resources, which force teachers to bear the financial burden of managing resource shortages (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). According to Fullan (2016), Complexity Theory highlights the necessity of dynamic and adaptive strategies to manage these complexities effectively. It also suggests responsiveness to changing conditions and flexibility are necessary for successful educational change. These opposing theoretical stances show that although the program's goals are praiseworthy, its execution is hampered by a lack of sufficient funding, systemic support, and efficient organizational techniques. It is necessary to harmonize these divergent viewpoints to tackle these obstacles by strengthening systemic support, optimizing resource allocation, and implementing flexible tactics.

Therefore, through educators' participation in actual pedagogical activities set in local contexts, the effectiveness of Catch-Up Fridays is examined in this case study. The analysis sought to highlight how the current program supported or hindered the implementation of the DepEd's detailed plan, including how it should be carried out, how to measure its effectiveness, and how to equip teachers to support students' effective learning during class—broader effects on how systemic supports are structured to keep the program going.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

Effective professional development improves teacher efficacy and instructional practices, according to Guskey (2002). Professional development programs in Davao del Norte give teachers the abilities and information they need to carry out Catch-Up Fridays efficiently. The main objectives of these programs are to improve teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and collaborative learning.

Teachers can better address the diverse needs of their students and explain complex concepts by developing their content knowledge. With better pedagogical skills, teachers can use various instructional strategies that meet the needs of students with varying learning styles, increasing the effectiveness and engagement of their instruction. Teachers who engage in collaborative learning can share best practices and work together to solve problems, which fosters a positive professional community. These components work together to create a thorough framework for professional development that seeks to empower educators and improve learning in general during Catch-Up Fridays.

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1.4. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the opinions, difficulties, and realizations of public elementary school teachers regarding the introduction of Catch-Up Fridays in the Davao del Norte Division. This study specifically aimed to respond to the following queries:

1. What were the perspectives of the teachers prior to the implementation of Catch-up Fridays?

2. What challenges were encountered by elementary school teachers implementing catch-up Fridays?

3. What insights can be drawn from the implementers that can help improve performance in implementing catch-up Fridays?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study used a case study methodology in conjunction with a qualitative approach. This case study aimed to provide a thorough description of the elementary teachers' Catch-Up Friday implementation strategies in the Davao del Norte Division. In order to fully explore the complex dynamics, contextual elements, and experiences surrounding the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays, a comprehensive case study approach utilizing a qualitative research design was employed (Cresswell, 2021).

2.2. Sampling Techniques

Convenient-purposive sampling was used in this study to choose the informants for the interview. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique in which investigators intentionally choose participants according to standards pertinent to the study's goals or questions (Obilor, 2023). It deliberately incorporated subjects with the traits, backgrounds, or expertise necessary for the research (Obilor, 2023).

These served as the inclusion criteria that were used to select study participants. Regardless of school size, eight (8) different elementary schools from the DepEd Davao del Norte Division employed eight (8) elementary teachers with at least three years of experience to implement Catch-Up Fridays during the 2023–2024 school year. This straightforward addition guaranteed the study's viability.

2.3. Research Instrument

The implementation practices of the Catch-Up Fridays by elementary teachers of the Department of Education, Division of Davao del Norte, Philippines, were described using an interview guide created by the researchers. Three (3) professors with expertise in research, teaching language, and equal competence in their respective fields validated and improved the interview guide.

2.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study was gathered in this methodical manner. The school division's superintendent had to be formally asked for permission to carry out the study. Second, research participants' school leaders were given permission letters and informed consent forms for the key informants following the approval. Third, the data was gathered through in-depth interviews with the primary informants. Fourth, the researchers employed thematic analysis to examine the key informants' responses in the case study. Finally, a tabulation of the emerging themes was presented along with in-depth discussions (Creswell, 2021).

2.5. Data Analysis

The researchers transcribed the audio recordings. Colaizzi's data analysis strategy was employed to ensure accuracy in capturing the subtleties of the participants' responses through a meticulous process of transcribing spoken words and visual content into written form. The method used was the structured approach, which is frequently used in case study research to extract valuable insights from qualitative data (Upendra, 2021). Researchers first familiarized themselves with the data in the case study context through multiple readings and open coding. Key statements were found, and thematic clusters were created to draw

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attention to patterns in the data. These themes were categorized, which helped to create a thorough account of the case being looked into. The research aimed to keep the analysis rigorous and coherent throughout. The accuracy and fidelity of the findings to the particulars of the case study were ensured by validating the results against the original data (Creswell, 2021).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study's results are shown in this section, along with a thorough analysis of the difficulties instructors encountered when implementing the Department of Education's (DepEd) "Catch-Up Fridays" program, which aims to improve students' academic performance and development of moral principles. This study investigates teachers' perspectives prior to the initiative's implementation, the difficulties they encountered when it was being implemented, and the lessons they learned from their mistakes to enhance performance going forward.

In particular, the first question examined teachers' viewpoints before Catch-up Fridays were implemented. The second question examined the difficulties that arose in putting them into practice, and the final one focused on the lessons learned from those who put them into practice that can be applied to enhance the effectiveness of catch-up Fridays.

3.1. Teacher Perspectives Prior to Implementation

Teachers' opinions on the possible educational impact of "Catch-Up Fridays" varied widely before implementing the program. The replies show a mix of hope and concern regarding the program's capacity to close learning gaps and improve student performance.

Table 1. *Emerging Themes and Core Ideas under Q1. "Teacher Perspectives Prior to Implementation" for the "Catch-Up Fridays" program.*

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Educational Impact	• Expectations of Positive Outcomes - IDI3, IDI8 • Skepticism -IDI2, IDI4 • Balanced Viewpoints - IDI4, IDI7
Training and Support	• Inadequate Initial Training - IDI1, IDI2, IDI5 • Lack of Support Materials - IDI4, IDI7 • Support Mechanisms -IDI1, IDI8
Awareness and Understanding	• Lack of Clarity -IDI1, IDI3 • Diverse Interpretations -IDI6, IDI7,

3.1.1. Educational Impact

Before "Catch-Up Fridays" were implemented, teachers had differing opinions about how they might affect education. For example, IDI3 was upbeat, seeing the time set aside for reading exercises as a promising chance to improve literacy, particularly for struggling readers.

> *"I was hoping that 'Catch-Up Fridays' would have a significant impact, particularly for our readers who are struggling."* -IDI3
>
> *"Through the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays, the learners can rebuild their confidence to actively engage in significantly addressing the learning gaps of the readers."* -IDI8

This positive perspective by IDI8 demonstrated confidence in the program's ability to close learning gaps successfully.

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> *"We have a lot of curriculum to cover, and I worry that individualizing activities in a single day will cost us a lot of money."* -IDI2

On the other hand, IDI-2 expressed reservations regarding the viability of customizing tasks within the program's structure. The sentiment expressed concerns regarding the practicality of incorporating a variety of learning needs into a single day's activities, indicating a realistic perspective molded by the demands of the curriculum. Even though the program had positive and negative aspects, some participants offered a more balanced perspective.

> *"I felt conflicted. The emphasis on reading and values, which are so important for our students, excited me on the one hand."* -IDI4

IDI4 offered a balanced viewpoint that acknowledged both anticipation and prudence. Although it was acknowledged that emphasizing values and reading is necessary for the development of students, there was also concern about the new program's smooth integration into the existing curriculum structures.

> *"I was cautious as I knew that integrating this new program would be difficult."* -IDI4

> *"Implementing Catch-Up Fridays in the elementary level may need time to adapt and smoothen their integration in providing learning opportunities to students that foster their development in improving literacy."* - IDI7

This fair assessment highlighted by IDI7 the difficulties educators would face in guaranteeing that all students benefited from the program.

The results above are supported by a recent study by LaBad (2024), which explored the reception of "Catch-Up Fridays" in the Philippines, an initiative implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) to bolster foundational, social, and other essential skills within the basic education curriculum. The study focused on the assessed perceptions and experiences related to reading enhancement during these designated Fridays. By tailoring interventions and learning resources to meet individual needs, "Catch-Up Fridays" significantly impacted students' reading proficiency levels, suggesting a positive correlation between customized educational programs and improved literacy.

Additionally, complementing these findings, a separate study by Saro et al. (2024) examined the effects of an intensive reading intervention on ninth-grade English learners with learning disabilities. Although not directly related to "Catch-Up Fridays," the research underscores the critical role of personalized and targeted interventions in enhancing reading proficiency. Contextualized reading materials and focused support significantly improved students' comprehension and engagement with texts. Despite their reservations, the balanced perspective acknowledges the value of emphasizing reading and values essential for student development while recognizing the complexities involved in seamlessly incorporating these initiatives into the existing curriculum. Together, these studies highlight customized educational strategies' broader implications and potential benefits in fostering literacy and student achievement.

3.1.2. Training and Support

Participants are unsure about their level of readiness as well, particularly about the specifics of the implementation. IDI1 and IDI2 reported that the training was hurried and insufficient, with only a few presentations and written guidelines.

> *"The abrupt implementation of Catch-Up Fridays caught teachers and learners off guard, especially us (teachers), who need to be trained more to implement the program effectively."* -IDI1

> *"That's all we got—a couple of presentations and some written guidelines."* -IDI2

> *"With the limited amount of time in the training regarding the Catch-Up Fridays teachers are not certain about the implementation of the program."* -IDI5

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Because of this apparent lack of thorough planning, educators felt unprepared to carry out the program's tasks effectively. Furthermore, concerns regarding the implementation process's reactive nature were brought up by IDI4, which also suggested that more financial planning and resource allocation were needed.

> *"It was reactive and urgent! It appears that not even financial planning was done.* -IDI4
>
> *"Lack of materials in program implementation may limit the opportunity for teachers to develop their literacy skills and provide significant learning experience to learners."* -IDI7

IDI 7 felt that teachers were unprepared because there were insufficient training and support systems, which could have made it more difficult for them to provide memorable learning experiences. With the same sentiments, IDI1 and IDI8 further hoped for continued assistance through frequent workshops and follow-up conferences.

> *"Catch-Up Fridays implementation can be more effective if the teachers were assisted by the expert of the field with the use of hands-on workshops and post conferences after the implementation of the said program."* -IDI1
>
> *"Prior to implementation, initial workshops or follow-up meetings might have been helpful."* - IDI8

These viewpoints emphasized their concerns and the necessity of ongoing professional development to maintain momentum during the program's execution.

The results above are supported by Vaughn et al. (2020), highlighting the critical role of training and professional development in successful program implementation, emphasizing the necessity of equipping educators with the skills and strategies needed for effective interventions. Their study on an intensive reading intervention for ninth-grade English learners with learning disabilities underscores the importance of comprehensive preparation and support for teachers. This aligns with the broader educational discourse, suggesting that even well-designed programs may fall short of their goals without adequate training. Effective implementation hinges on educators feeling prepared and confident in their ability to deliver the program's content, maximizing its impact on student learning outcomes.

Similarly, Francia (2022) explores the development of ICT-based enhancement materials for Grade 7 students, underscoring the ongoing need for continuous professional development. Establishing professional learning communities (PLCs) can be instrumental in addressing challenges faced during program implementation. PLCs provide a platform for educators to collaborate, share best practices, and receive ongoing support, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This approach enhances educators' readiness and confidence and promotes sustained effectiveness in implementing educational initiatives. By integrating such collaborative frameworks, educational systems can better ensure the successful adoption and execution of programs like "Catch-Up Fridays," ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

3.1.3. Awareness and Understanding

Concerns about awareness and comprehension were prevalent in teachers' reflections before "Catch-Up Fridays" after the memo outlining the implementation dates was made public. IDI1 and IDI3 observed a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the goals and regulations of the program. The initiative's goals and the best way to incorporate it into regular teaching practices were unclear to educators due to unclear communication.

> *"There was a lack of clarity in the objectives and guidelines."* - IDI1
>
> *"The goal and objectives of the Catch-Up Friday were unclear on how to incorporate the program to the regular teaching practices."* -IDI3

In a similar view, IDI6 emphasized how different schools interpret information differently, leading to different methods of implementing programs.

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"There was a great deal of confusion because each school had to interpret the information in their own way." -IDI6

"Due to the abrupt implementation, different interpretations of the policies and procedures led to uncertainty, which brings up the urge to have a uniform policy on what to expect from implementing the Catch-Up Friday program." -IDI7

This variation highlighted the response of IDI7, which urges uniform policies and more transparent communication channels to guarantee uniformity in the interpretation and implementation of "Catch-Up Fridays."

Research by Stys (2019) and Baumann and Krskova (2016) underscores the critical role of clear communication and uniform policies in successful program implementation. Stys (2019) highlights that transparent guidelines and objectives are essential, as a lack of clarity can lead to confusion and hinder effective implementation, particularly in the context of intensive reading interventions for ninth-grade English learners with learning disabilities. Similarly, Baumann and Krskova (2016) reveal that when schools interpret information differently, it can result in varied approaches that compromise program effectiveness. Their findings suggest that educational institutions should prioritize transparent communication, align interpretations, and provide educators with a shared understanding of program objectives. This approach minimizes confusion and ensures that all educators work cohesively towards the same goals. By establishing uniform policies and clear communication channels, programs like "Catch-Up Fridays" can be implemented more effectively, leading to more consistent and successful outcomes across different schools.

3.2. Encountered Challenges

Through special sessions centered on reading, values education, and holistic development, the Department of Education implemented "Catch-Up Fridays" to close educational gaps and improve student engagement. Unfortunately, several obstacles prevented this initiative from being implemented effectively in all schools.

Table 2. ***Emerging Themes and Core Ideas under Q2. "Challenges encountered" during S.Y. 2023-2024 "Catch-Up Fridays" implementation.***

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Communication and Coordination	• Lack of Clarity -IDI1, IDI5, IDI8 • Inconsistent Implementation -IDI2, IDI3 • Blur Coordination Between Higher Ranks - IDI7, IDI8
Teacher Workload	• Preparation Burden -IDI4, IDI6 • Balancing Multiple Roles -IDI1, IDI2, • Heavy Contextualization Due to Resource Limit -IDI6, IDI7, IDI8
Student Engagement	• Interest and Motivation IDI1, IDI2 • Inclusivity IDI3, IDI5 • Fly day IDI6, IDI8

3.2.1. Communication and Coordination

IDI1 states that the guidelines were unclear. Educators were inundated with memoranda and documents, thus making it difficult to understand how to implement the program effectively. Moreover, IDI5 and IDI8 express that the implementation of the Catch-Up Friday program can be affected by the lack of decision-making, leading to ununited workplace and coordination issues.

"The guidelines lacked clarity. Many memos and documents that we received were vague at best." -IDI1

"Delays of decision making due to lack of communication" -IDI5

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> *“Lack of collaboration due to lack of clarity of the guidelines of the program has a big impact on the efficiency of the program.”* – IDI8

Differences in the way schools incorporated "Catch-Up Fridays" into their curricula were brought to light by IDI2. While some schools successfully implemented the program, others found it difficult to reconcile the new endeavor with the pre-existing academic priorities specified by IDI3.

> *“In our school, it is challenging for us teachers to implement Catch-Up Fridays because we need to incorporate it into the curricula that we are currently using.”* -IDI2

> *"While some schools found it difficult, others successfully incorporated it into their curriculum."* -IDI3

IDI7 conveyed their dissatisfaction with the absence of unambiguous updates and channels of communication concerning program advancement and effectiveness. IDI8 was unsure if their efforts were up to par or if they needed to make any changes.

> *"There was no clear communication channel or update regarding our progress."* -IDI7

> *“The ambiguous coordination between the administrators in the higher position on enacting the Catch-Up Friday makes us (teachers) uncertain in implementing the program in our classrooms.”* -IDI8

This opaque communication made it difficult for teachers to assess their performance and make necessary adjustments, pointing to a critical area where program oversight and feedback mechanisms must be strengthened.

Effective communication is crucial for maintaining healthy relationships among stakeholders within educational systems. Gustafson (2022) emphasizes that schools are complex, dynamic environments with diverse needs, necessitating a clear understanding of communication dynamics to implement programs like "Catch-Up Fridays" effectively. Three critical components—trust, transparency, and active listening—build the relationships necessary for engaging in challenging conversations. Clear verbal and non-verbal communication channels are essential for meeting the high expectations of students, teachers, administrators, and families. When guidelines lack clarity, as observed, educators struggle to interpret expectations, leading to confusion and inefficiency. Therefore, establishing transparent communication practices and promoting active listening is vital for effective program execution, ensuring all stakeholders are aligned and informed.

Furthermore, In educational organizations, communication is pivotal in driving effective functioning. Kemi (2023) highlights the need for uniform policies and consistent communication, noting that varied interpretations of information can lead to disparate approaches in program implementation. Effective communication fosters motivation, builds staff culture, and supports change. Rodela and Bertrand (2021) emphasize that stakeholders—staff, administrators, and parents—must feel heard and valued. Without established relationships and transparent communication, voices can be lost during program implementation, diminishing the program's effectiveness. To enhance program outcomes, educational institutions should prioritize clear communication, active listening, and ongoing feedback mechanisms, ensuring that all participants are engaged, informed, and capable of contributing to the program's success.

3.2.2. Teacher Workload

Many participants reported that the program significantly impacted teachers' workload.

> *"Developing new lesson plans and engaging activities was a significant addition to our workload during the preparation for Catch-Up Fridays”* -IDI4

> *“New program means more time preparing for the lesson which makes seasoned teachers like me feel burdened about this new change.”* -IDI6

IDI4 observed that teachers experienced significant workload pressure when they prepared for "Catch-Up Fridays." They had to make fresh lesson plans and fun activities, especially for the designated day. Stressed

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by IDI6 that this extra work required more time and energy, which led to teachers working longer hours and experiencing higher levels of stress.

> *"It was challenging to effectively manage our overall responsibilities due to the increased workload, which frequently resulted in longer working hours and increased stress"*-IDI1

> *"Making use of creativity skills and utilizing resources can heighten the demand for more time to work on creating materials and increase the risk of burnout."* -IDI2

IDI1 concurred, highlighting the difficulties in overseeing general responsibilities due to the increased workload. Thus, IDI2 emphasized that teachers' creativity and resources are frequently stretched when creating materials and activities from scratch, increasing job demands and the risk of burnout.

> *"We frequently use our resources to create our materials. We had to create tasks that didn't seem to be redundant to our everyday routines."* -IDI6

> *"Challenges in relating the new program to the curriculum needs to be contextualized to improve the teaching and learning process."* -IDI7

> *"Due to resource limits, it is necessary to have a diverse network to easily access the materials needed by the teachers and provide a long-term implementation of the program."* -IDI8

IDI6 and IDI7 shed light on the creativity needed by educators, who frequently used their initiative to create instructional materials. Furthermore, IDI8 emphasized that this self-sufficiency demonstrated the necessity of all-encompassing support networks and easily accessible materials to lessen the load on educators and improve the long-term viability of program execution.

The study by Mohammad (2022), which focused on student perceptions of "Catch-Up Fridays" in the Philippines, indirectly sheds light on teachers' significant workload challenges. As noted in discussions, implementing new lesson plans and engaging activities increased teachers' responsibilities and workload. This additional demand often translates into longer working hours and heightened stress levels among educators. To mitigate these challenges, educational institutions should prioritize providing adequate support, resources, and professional development opportunities aimed at helping teachers manage the demands of implementing innovative educational programs.

Teacher creativity is critical in program implementation, as educators often rely on their resources to develop materials that align with program goals. However, this self-reliance can strain creativity and energy over time. Research by Alamri et al. (2020) underscores the importance of accessible and well-structured learning resources. When teachers are burdened with creating materials from scratch, it can lead to redundancy and burnout, ultimately detracting from the program's effectiveness. Therefore, fostering collaborative networks, providing ready-made resources, and offering ongoing professional development can alleviate workload burdens and enhance the sustainability of initiatives like "Catch-Up Fridays." By supporting teachers with the necessary tools and opportunities, educational institutions can ensure educators are well-equipped to deliver engaging and effective learning experiences without compromising their well-being.

3.2.3. Student Engagement

During "Catch-Up Fridays," teachers encountered various difficulties concerning student engagement.

> *"...many found it difficult to remain focused, particularly throughout the day."* -IDI1

> *"Learners nowadays become uninterested in their learning which can impact the program's effectiveness."* -IDI2

IDI1 noticed that students found staying actively engaged during the whole day of classes difficult. The program's effectiveness was affected by learners' inability to maintain interest and participation due to the prolonged focus on particular educational activities that IDI2 indicated.

> *“Encouraging learners in seeing the relevance of what they are learning depending on their learning preference.”* -IDI3

> *"...We had to accommodate varying learning styles and skill levels."* -IDI5

In order to ensure inclusivity and maximize engagement, activities modified to accommodate different learning preferences and capabilities must be carefully planned and differentiated using differentiation strategies, as highlighted by IDI3 and IDI5.

> *"...due to challenges in sustaining enthralling activities, occasionally resulted in diminished interest and involvement, even absenteeism on Fridays."* -IDI6

IDI6 outlined specific examples of how challenges maintaining high-energy activities on "Catch-Up Fridays" led to declining student engagement and interest. In certain instances, these difficulties have caused student absenteeism, highlighting the significance of dynamic and captivating teaching strategies to promote ongoing student participation.

> *"In terms of students being involved in missing attendance, the program must be organized to empower the school community’s support in eradicating illiteracy."* -IDI8

IDI8 proposed that effectively addressing these issues is crucial for improving educational outcomes, streamlining program delivery, and promoting the well-being of educators and students in school communities.

The results above are supported by Yang et al. (2021), who conducted a study investigating student engagement in active learning classrooms with varying seating arrangements, revealing insights applicable to initiatives like "Catch-Up Fridays." Their findings underscored that while student perceptions of engagement were consistent across different learning spaces, instructors and researchers observed higher levels of engagement in classrooms with mobile tables compared to those with stationary desks. This highlights the importance of dynamic and adaptable learning environments that support student-centered activities, fostering meaningful participation and reflection. Active learning methodologies, which prioritize interaction and hands-on experiences over traditional lecture-based approaches, have consistently enhanced academic performance, engagement, satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation among students in higher education settings.

Moreover, Schnitzler et al. (2020) explored patterns of student engagement across diverse classroom activities, identifying three key forms: listening/processing, discussing, and problem-solving. These engagement behaviors significantly influence learning outcomes, emphasizing the need for educators to employ varied teaching strategies that cater to different learning styles and skill levels. This resonates with the challenges noted during "Catch-Up Fridays," where sustained student engagement proved difficult. To address this, educational programs should incorporate differentiated instruction strategies that accommodate diverse learning preferences and capabilities. By promoting interactive and stimulating learning experiences, educators can mitigate disengagement issues and foster consistent student participation, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of initiatives to improve educational outcomes like "Catch-Up Fridays."

3.3. Insights Drawn

These insights were drawn by diving into the "Catch-Up Fridays" program's implementation highlights and important tactics for boosting the efficacy and sustainability of education.

Table 3. ***Emerging Themes and Core Ideas under Q3. "Insights drawn" after S.Y. 2023-2024 "Catch-Up Fridays" implementation.***

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Importance of Support	• Shared Resource Pool - IDI5, IDI6 • Provision of Ready-to-Use Materials -IDI3, IDI8

Idealism and Limitations	• Mixed Feelings – IDI2, IDI4, IDI7 • Burn-out -IDI3, IDI5

3.3.1. Importance of Support

IDI5 reports that using digital resources and educational kits from other schools was a great way to enhance the curriculum without going over budget.

> *"...for instance, borrowing educational kits or digital resources from other schools allowed us to enrich our activities without straining our budget."* -IDI5
>
> *"Collaboration among educational institutions enhances quality education by giving access to diverse learning opportunities."* -IDI6

This practice underscores the significance of collaborative resource-sharing among educational institutions. By leveraging shared resources, schools can enhance the quality of educational experiences and ensure equitable access to diverse learning tools and materials, which was emphasized by the response of IDI6.

> *"Pre-made learning materials lessen preparation time and help teachers focus on student learning."* -IDI3
>
> *"Having access to pre-made resources meant we could focus more on instructional delivery and student engagement."* -IDI8

Furthermore, IDI3 and IDI8 highlighted the advantages of having pre-made resources available, which reduced preparation time and freed up teachers to focus more on student engagement and instruction.

Lesson plans and activity templates are readily available materials that make planning and executing instructional interventions more efficient and effective.

Lesson plans and activity templates are crucial tools that streamline instructional interventions, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in educational settings. Kalman (2020) conducted a qualitative focus group study involving stakeholders to explore successful collaboration in school improvement initiatives, emphasizing the pivotal role of collaboration in achieving educational goals. Collaborative resource-sharing practices exemplify these collaborative principles, such as borrowing educational kits or digital resources from other schools. By pooling resources, educational institutions can enrich their curriculum offerings without exceeding budgetary constraints, promoting equitable access to diverse learning tools and materials across schools.

Moreover, research by Liebech-Lien and Sjølie (2021) underscores the benefits of resource sharing among collaborating schools. Their study highlighted that such practices create a conducive learning environment, improve educational delivery, and foster shared experiences among educators and administrators. By sharing pre-made resources, educational institutions reduce preparation time, as noted in discussions about pre-made resources, enhance overall school management, and promote effective teaching practices. This collaborative approach strengthens mutual understanding and cooperation among schools, benefiting student engagement and educational outcomes. Leveraging collaborative practices and shared resources is crucial for modern educational settings, as it facilitates innovation, efficiency, and equitable access to educational opportunities for all learners.

3.3.2. Idealism and Limitations

The 'Catch-Up Fridays' program experienced by teachers demonstrated a harmonious blend of utopian goals and real-world obstacles that arose during execution.

> *"Many of us were excited about the chance to be creative and meaningfully involve students."* -IDI4
>
> *"Excited but worried regarding the additional workload*."-IDI7

IDI4 initially showed excitement for the program and saw it as a chance to implement fresh teaching methods and reaffirm fundamental knowledge of reading, morality, and holistic education. Meanwhile, IDI7 feels thrilled but concerned about the additional teaching workload and its impact on the teaching and learning process.

> *"...but as the program went on, burnout and exhaustion started to become serious issues."* -IDI2
>
> *"Extra duties put teachers to plan and make activities beyond working hours due to the abrupt implementation of the program."* -IDI5
>
> *"Extra workload stressed teachers in providing effective and high-quality teaching materials which heavily affect the physical and mental health of the teachers."* -IDI7

The initial enthusiasm surrounding IDI2 was dampened by worries about the workload. Furthermore, IDI5 said that the extra duties involved in planning and carrying out the 'Catch-Up Fridays' activities led to a rise in teacher exhaustion and stress. IDI7 stated that the increased workload jeopardizes teachers' health and ability to provide high-quality instruction.

Educators' passion for creativity and student involvement is essential to the progress of education. However, realistic concerns about sustainable development and workload management must temper idealistic aspirations. Careful planning, sufficient support systems, and continuous professional development are necessary for sustainable educational interventions to empower teachers and promote program success over the long run.

Research by Ortan et al. (2021) explores the critical intersection of teacher well-being and sustainable educational initiatives, underscoring that educators' enthusiasm and creativity are foundational to program success. However, the study emphasizes the practical necessity of managing workload effectively. Sustainable interventions emphasize continuous support, professional development opportunities, and transparent communication channels. Addressing workload challenges is paramount for empowering teachers to sustain their passion and commitment while ensuring the successful execution of educational programs like 'Catch-Up Fridays.' This approach safeguards teacher well-being and enhances overall program efficacy by fostering an environment where educators can thrive.

In program implementation, educators frequently navigate the delicate balance between idealistic aspirations and pragmatic realities. Kuzma et al. (2020) highlight the importance of striking this balance, advocating for thoughtful planning, collaborative resource-sharing, and ongoing professional development. While creativity and student engagement are vital, educators must navigate workload implications to maintain sustainable practices. By integrating these strategies, educational institutions can effectively marry utopian educational goals with practical considerations, promoting enduring success and meaningful impact in educational interventions.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Implication for Theory

Based on the comprehensive examination of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program and its implementation challenges, several implications for educational theory emerge. First, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) underscores the importance of acknowledging and accommodating diverse learning styles and strengths among students. The findings suggest that educational interventions must be tailored to cater to these varied intelligences to effectively enhance academic outcomes and value formation. However, the practical application of this theory within "Catch-Up Fridays" revealed significant barriers to resource allocation and organizational readiness. Therefore, educational theory should further emphasize the theoretical validity of accommodating multiple intelligences and the practical strategies and systemic supports necessary to implement such approaches sustainably in diverse educational contexts.

Then, the integration of Organizational Theory and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) sheds light on the structural and organizational challenges inherent in educational reform initiatives like "Catch-Up Fridays." CHAT's critique of the program's alignment with available resources highlights the need to integrate policy goals and operational realities within educational institutions. Organizational theory complements this perspective by emphasizing the internal inefficiencies and role ambiguities that hinder effective program implementation. These theoretical lenses underscore the importance of comprehensive planning, clear communication, and strategic resource management to bridge the gap between policy aspirations and practical execution in educational settings.

Moreover, the implications drawn from these theoretical perspectives suggest that while educational theories such as Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences offer valuable frameworks for understanding student diversity and learning needs, their application requires robust support structures and systemic readiness within educational institutions. Future research and educational practice should focus on developing practical guidelines and organizational frameworks that recognize the diversity of student intelligences and effectively translate theoretical insights into actionable strategies that promote sustainable educational reform and improved student outcomes.

4.2. Implications for Practice

Based on the "Catch-Up Fridays" program implementation findings, several practical implications can be drawn to enhance educational practices. First, educational institutions must prioritize comprehensive training and professional development for teachers. The program highlighted significant challenges related to workload management and the creation of engaging educational activities. Therefore, practical implications include investing in ongoing professional development that equips educators with the necessary skills to design differentiated lessons, cater to diverse learning styles, and effectively manage increased responsibilities without compromising their well-being.

Second, the program's implementation challenges underscore the critical need for improved communication and collaboration among stakeholders within educational settings. Clear communication channels are essential to align policy goals with classroom realities and ensure educators understand their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, fostering collaborative networks among educators, administrators, and support staff can facilitate resource-sharing, innovative teaching practices, and mutual support, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of educational initiatives like "Catch-Up Fridays."

Then, the practical implications emphasize the importance of strategic resource allocation and organizational support. Educational institutions should prioritize allocating adequate financial and material resources to support the implementation of educational programs. This includes providing access to pre-made educational resources, digital tools, and instructional materials that reduce the burden on teachers and enhance instructional quality. Additionally, optimizing administrative processes and support systems can streamline workflow, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and empower educators to focus more on student engagement and effective teaching practices.

Furthermore, the implications for practice from the "Catch-Up Fridays" program underscore the importance of investing in professional development, enhancing communication and collaboration, and optimizing resource allocation within educational institutions. By addressing these practical considerations, educational stakeholders can better support teachers, improve program implementation outcomes, and ultimately enhance students' educational experiences and outcomes.

4.3. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the "Catch-Up Fridays" program and its implications for theory and practice, several key recommendations can be proposed to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability in educational settings.

It is crucial to prioritize a robust professional development framework for educators implementing "Catch-Up Fridays." This should include ongoing training sessions focused on pedagogical strategies that cater to diverse learning styles, leveraging insights from Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. By equipping teachers with the skills to differentiate instruction effectively, address student variability, and manage

increased workload pressures, educational institutions can enhance the program's impact on academic and values formation goals. Moreover, professional development should emphasize stress management techniques and workload balancing strategies to mitigate burnout and ensure sustained engagement from educators.

Additionally, there is a pressing need to strengthen communication channels and collaboration among stakeholders within the educational ecosystem. Clear and transparent communication is essential to align program goals with practical implementation realities, as highlighted by organizational and activity theories. Establishing regular feedback mechanisms and forums for dialogue can foster a shared understanding of expectations, facilitate the exchange of best practices, and promote collective problem-solving. This collaborative approach enhances program coherence and builds a supportive community where educators feel empowered to innovate and adapt instructional practices to meet evolving student needs.

Furthermore, enhancing resource allocation and organizational support systems is critical for overcoming structural barriers identified during the program's implementation. Educational institutions should prioritize sufficient funding for instructional materials, digital resources, and professional development initiatives. Strategic resource allocation should reduce teacher reliance on personal resources and increase access to pre-made educational materials, thereby alleviating workload pressures and promoting instructional creativity. Additionally, optimizing administrative processes and support structures can streamline operational workflows, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and enhance the overall efficiency of program delivery.

Moreover, by implementing these recommendations, educational stakeholders can foster a conducive environment where the "Catch-Up Fridays" program can thrive. Emphasizing professional development, improving communication and collaboration, and enhancing resource allocation are pivotal steps toward ensuring that educational interventions not only meet their intended goals but also contribute positively to the holistic development of students within diverse educational contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines covering informed consent, confidentiality, fairness, and conflict of interest were adhered to in the study's conduct. An essential ethical principle, informed consent required a voluntary and thorough process to make sure subjects were fully informed about the study, comprehended the information given to them, and had the option to accept or reject the invitation to participate. After thoroughly explaining the study methodology, the researchers used in-person meetings and Facebook Messenger to get the participants' consent (Shaw, 2023). By preserving and protecting the participants' identities, the confidentiality principle—which is essential to participant protection—was upheld (Creswell, 2021). Respecting participants' convenience during data collection and ensuring no exploitation or coercion occurred upheld the principle of justice, emphasizing fairness. Additionally, researchers avoided any personal, financial, political, or academic influence on the study by placing themselves outside of participants' responses in order to maintain objectivity and reduce potential conflicts of interest (Thomas, 2021).

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of manuscripts.

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