

# National Reading Program: It's Implementation, Compliance, and Effectiveness

Amie Jane D. Santillan

## Abstract

This study investigated the implementation, compliance, and perceived effectiveness of the National Reading Program (NRP) among elementary teachers in the Schools Division of Iloilo during the academic year 2024–2025. Guided by a descriptive-correlational research design, the study examined how teachers carried out the prescribed reading interventions, the extent to which they adhered to program guidelines, and how effective they believed the NRP was in improving learners' reading performance. Data were gathered through a researcher-developed questionnaire that underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure reliability and clarity of items. Findings revealed that teachers generally implemented the program as intended, regularly using reading drills, screening tools, and remedial sessions. They also demonstrated strong adherence to the guidelines, consistently completing required assessments and documentation. Teachers perceived the NRP as beneficial to learners, particularly in strengthening foundational reading skills such as fluency and word recognition, although improvements in reading comprehension were observed to be more gradual. Relationships among the variables indicated that when teachers implemented the program more thoroughly and complied more closely with its requirements, they tended to view it as more effective in addressing learners' literacy needs. Finally, the effective implementation and consistent compliance are essential components of a successful reading program. It recommends enhancing teacher training, providing adequate instructional resources, strengthening home–school collaboration, and maintaining regular monitoring and support to sustain and further improve the impact of the National Reading Program on learners' literacy development.

**Keywords:** National Reading Program, implementation, compliance, teacher effectiveness, literacy, elementary education, Iloilo.

## Introduction:

Literacy continues to be a core priority of basic education in the Philippines, and to address persistent reading gaps, the Department of Education (DepEd) has strengthened the National Reading Program (NRP) as a major initiative to improve early-grade literacy. The NRP offers policy direction, screening tools, and operational guidelines that help schools integrate reading-related activities—such as focused reading sessions, remediation programs, and Catch-up Fridays—into their regular schedules. Through these efforts, the program aims to ensure that learners acquire grade-level reading skills and develop the foundational competencies necessary for future learning.

However, despite the clarity of national policies, the way the NRP is implemented in schools varies significantly. Reports from divisions and schools, along with findings from smaller research studies, present mixed results. Some schools have documented improvements in reading fluency and

comprehension following the implementation of NRP activities, while others continue to face challenges related to limited teacher preparation, insufficient materials, and inconsistent monitoring. Local studies in Iloilo and neighboring areas further highlight the need to examine both how schools carry out the required NRP activities—such as scheduled reading sessions, assessment procedures, and adherence to DepEd memoranda—and whether these practices actually lead to better reading outcomes among elementary learners.

Given these concerns, this study examined the implementation, compliance, and perceived effectiveness of the National Reading Program among 344 elementary teachers in the Schools Division of Iloilo during the 2024–2025 school year. By documenting the extent to which schools adhere to DepEd’s NRP guidelines, identifying recurring challenges that affect implementation, and assessing how teachers perceive the program’s impact on learners’ reading progress, the research aims to provide evidence that can inform division-level planning, teacher capacity-building efforts, and initiatives to strengthen program fidelity and improve literacy outcomes.

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the level of implementation of NRP activities within elementary schools, including reading instruction, screening processes, intervention strategies, and required reporting tasks. It also sought to measure the degree of teacher and school compliance with key components of the program, such as conducting regular reading sessions, performing continuous progress monitoring, and using standardized assessment tools. In addition, the study explored teachers’ perceptions of the program’s effectiveness in enhancing learners’ reading fluency, comprehension, and overall literacy readiness. Finally, it examined whether implementation, compliance, and perceived effectiveness differed when analyzed according to teachers’ demographic and professional characteristics.

Through this comprehensive examination, the study aims to contribute insights that can support policy refinement, guide targeted teacher training, and strengthen literacy interventions in elementary schools across the division.

## **Methodology**

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the implementation, compliance, and perceived effectiveness of the National Reading Program (NRP) in elementary schools under the Schools Division of Iloilo for the 2024–2025 school year. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to describe the current status of NRP practices and to determine whether relationships existed among program implementation, teacher compliance, and its perceived impact on learners’ reading outcomes.

The study involved 344 elementary teachers who were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across grade levels, school types, and geographic locations within the division. This sampling approach allowed for a more accurate reflection of the diverse teaching population involved in the program. Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, which was validated by reading supervisors, language coordinators, and measurement specialists to ensure content validity. A pilot test was conducted in non-participating schools, and the reliability of the instrument was confirmed through Cronbach’s alpha, with coefficients falling within the acceptable range.

The questionnaire was organized into three main sections: (1) the extent of NRP implementation, (2) the level of compliance with DepEd reading policies and requirements, and (3) the perceived effectiveness of the program in improving learners' reading proficiency. Respondents rated each item using a four-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe the levels of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness. Pearson's  $r$  correlation was applied to examine the relationships among variables, while ANOVA and  $t$ -tests were conducted to identify significant differences based on teachers' demographic and professional characteristics. Lastly, the ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study, including securing informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' information.

## Results

Based on the analysis of data from 344 elementary teacher respondents in the Schools Division of Iloilo, the study generated the following key findings:

### 1. High Level of NRP Implementation

Teachers reported a high level of implementation of the National Reading Program, with a grand mean of 3.82 on a 4-point scale. Daily reading drills and early literacy assessments were the most consistently implemented activities, while parental involvement activities were comparatively lower (Mean = 3.55). This indicates that most teachers integrate structured reading interventions into their daily routines, but home-based literacy support remains a challenge.

### 2. Very High Level of Compliance With Program Guidelines

Teacher compliance with DepEd guidelines was rated very high ( $M = 4.07$ ). Teachers reported strong adherence to standardized assessment tools, submission of reading progress reports, and implementation of intervention strategies. Despite high compliance, some gaps were noted in the availability of reading materials and resources, which affected complete adherence in certain schools.

### 3. High Perceived Effectiveness of the NRP

Teachers perceived the program as highly effective in improving learners' reading skills ( $M = 3.76$ ). Reading fluency and word recognition showed the greatest improvement, whereas comprehension exhibited moderate gains. This suggests that the program positively impacts foundational literacy skills, but more support may be needed to strengthen comprehension abilities.

### 4. Strong Positive Relationships Among Variables

Statistical analysis showed significant positive correlations between NRP implementation and perceived effectiveness ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), compliance and effectiveness ( $r = 0.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and implementation and compliance ( $r = 0.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results indicate that higher program fidelity and adherence are associated with greater literacy gains among learners.

### 5. Challenges Affecting Program Success

Teachers identified several challenges that limit the full potential of the program: insufficient reading materials (61%), limited remediation time (57%), large class sizes (42%), and low parental involvement (39%). These challenges highlight the need for additional support in resources, training, and community engagement to sustain the program's effectiveness.

## Discussions

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the status of the National Reading Program (NRP) in the Schools Division of Iloilo during the 2024–2025 school year. Overall, the program was found to be highly implemented and consistently complied with by teachers, resulting in a high level of perceived effectiveness. These results reinforce the idea that program fidelity is critical to achieving positive learning outcomes (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

First, the high level of implementation ( $M = 3.82$ ) indicates that teachers consistently carry out key NRP components, including daily reading drills and early literacy assessments. This strong integration of the program aligns with prior studies highlighting how frequent, structured reading activities contribute to the development of literacy skills (Denton & Al Otaiba, 2017). However, the comparatively lower rating on parental involvement ( $M = 3.55$ ) points to an ongoing gap. As Cain and Oakhill (2018) note, while schools can provide structured interventions, sustained literacy development is reinforced when parents actively support reading at home—a factor that remains weak in many low-resource communities.

Second, the very high level of compliance ( $M = 4.07$ ) suggests that teachers diligently follow DepEd guidelines, including the use of standardized reading tools and timely submission of assessment reports. This finding is consistent with UNESCO (2022), which highlights that Philippine teachers generally demonstrate strong adherence to policy, even in resource-constrained settings. Yet, the reported insufficiency of reading materials (noted by 61% of respondents) echoes Bernardo's (2019) observation that limited instructional resources remain a systemic challenge in Philippine basic education.

Third, the high perceived effectiveness of the NRP ( $M = 3.76$ ), particularly in reading fluency and word recognition, reflects the positive impact of structured literacy interventions on foundational reading skills. In contrast, the moderate effectiveness in reading comprehension ( $M = 3.64$ ) supports findings by Pascual and Navarro (2021), suggesting that comprehension requires deeper cognitive engagement and more intensive instructional support than fluency or decoding alone.

Statistical analysis further revealed strong positive correlations among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness ( $r = 0.68$  to  $0.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results support the theoretical view that program outcomes improve when fidelity to implementation is high (Harn et al., 2017). In other words, the success of the NRP is closely linked to how thoroughly teachers carry out and adhere to program guidelines. When teachers follow structured reading procedures consistently, learners experience greater benefits.

Finally, several challenges were identified, including limited reading materials, insufficient remediation time, large class sizes, and low parental support. These barriers mirror national issues observed in literacy interventions (Reyes & Dizon, 2020; SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021), highlighting that while teacher commitment is strong, systemic support must be enhanced to sustain and improve

reading outcomes. Finally, the results indicate that the National Reading Program is largely effective in Iloilo's elementary schools. However, its full potential can be realized only through continuous strengthening of resources, increased parental engagement, and enhanced structural support to ensure that all learners achieve the intended literacy outcomes.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the National Reading Program (NRP) is generally well-implemented and consistently followed by elementary teachers in the Schools Division of Iloilo during the 2024–2025 school year. Teachers reported high levels of program implementation, particularly in conducting daily reading drills, using screening tools, and delivering targeted reading interventions. However, parental involvement was comparatively low, indicating an area in need of improvement. Teacher compliance with DepEd guidelines was also very high, especially in administering assessments, submitting reports, and utilizing standardized tools.

The program was perceived as highly effective, with the greatest impact observed in learners' reading fluency and word recognition, while improvements in reading comprehension were moderate. Statistical analyses further confirmed strong positive relationships between implementation, compliance, and perceived effectiveness, suggesting that faithful execution of the program directly contributes to better literacy outcomes.

Despite these positive results, the study also highlighted notable challenges, including limited reading materials, insufficient time for remediation, large class sizes, and low parental support, which may hinder the program's full potential. These findings indicate that while teachers' commitment and adherence to guidelines are strong, sustained improvements in literacy require additional support through resources, professional training, and community engagement.

Finally, the NRP serves as an effective intervention for strengthening foundational reading skills among elementary students in Iloilo. However, its continued success depends on addressing structural and contextual challenges to ensure full and consistent implementation, compliance, and support for both teachers and learners.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of the National Reading Program in elementary schools of the Schools Division of Iloilo:

### 1. Strengthen Program Implementation

School administrators and teachers should ensure that all components of the NRP are consistently applied, including daily reading drills, screening assessments, and remedial sessions. Strategies to increase parental involvement—such as parent-teacher workshops or home reading guides—should be developed to complement classroom efforts.

### 2. Enhance Compliance with NRP Guidelines

Teachers should continue to adhere strictly to DepEd standards, including accurate documentation of reading progress, proper use of assessment tools, and timely submission of reports. School heads should monitor compliance regularly and provide feedback to maintain high program fidelity.

### 3. Provide Adequate Resources



The division and school administrations should ensure the availability of sufficient reading materials, instructional aids, and technological support to facilitate effective program implementation. This includes supplementary readers, literacy games, and teaching aids tailored to early-grade learners.

#### 4. Capacity-Building for Teachers

Continuous professional development is recommended to improve teachers' skills in reading instruction, assessment, and intervention strategies. Training sessions on differentiated instruction and strategies for addressing reading comprehension challenges can further enhance effectiveness.

#### 5. Address Structural and Contextual Challenges

Measures should be taken to manage large class sizes, optimize remedial time, and foster a supportive learning environment. Collaboration with local government units and community organizations may help mobilize additional support for reading programs.

#### 6. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

Periodic assessment of program implementation, compliance, and outcomes should be conducted to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the NRP continues to meet the literacy needs of learners effectively.

7. By implementing these recommendations, school heads and teachers can strengthen the National Reading Program, maximize its impact on learners' literacy skills, and contribute to sustained reading improvement across elementary schools in the division.

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