

Implementation of SHARP: A Summer Home Reading Program for Early Learners

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Date received: April 22, 2025

Date revised: September 1, 2025

Date accepted: September 15, 2025

Originality: 92%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 8%

Recommended citation:

Arca, Q., & Ortizo, G. (2025). Implementation of SHARP: A summer home reading program for early learners. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(10), 339-347. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.304>

Abstract. The study assessed the implementation of the Summer Home Assistance in Reading by Parents (SHARP) Program for Early Childhood Education. It developed an enhanced implementation and contextualization of the SHARP Program based on the study's findings. A validated survey questionnaire with five (5) indicators each was used and was answered by 30 participants chosen following the inclusion criteria from the schools located in Cluster II, Lake Sebu District. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted using mean percentage and Pearson-coefficient correlation coefficient to determine the extent of implementation, as well as the contextualization, and the significant relationship between SHARP Program implementation and contextualization. The results showed that the implementation of the SHARP Program was extensive. Meanwhile, the extent of contextualization of the SHARP Program revealed a high extent of contextualization; however, the content of reading materials demonstrated a moderate extent of SHARP Program contextualization. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between the implementation and contextualization of the SHARP Program. Essential recommendations were made regarding early childhood education. This implies that the program requires further enhancement to become more effective. This means that the program needs further enhancement to become more effective. This allows the researcher to create an enhanced matrix that can be adapted to further help with the implementation of the program.

Keywords: Contextualization; Early childhood education; Enhancement; Implementation; SHARP program

1.0 Introduction

Reading is one of the most vital factors contributing to the holistic development and success of an individual. It serves as the cornerstone of elementary education and a necessary prerequisite for acquiring extensive new knowledge in later stages of life. It is widely acknowledged that reading is a fundamental skill essential to the academic growth and development of learners. Globally, reading has played a significant role in the development of nations. Its impact on individuals and societies cannot be underestimated. In recognition of this, schools – particularly in the Philippines – are emphasizing improving learners' reading skills. Programs and interventions are being implemented to support and guide students, giving educators hope that learners will eventually recover from learning losses, especially in reading comprehension. Through these initiatives, schools are building the most critical foundation for learners, promoting activities that develop their ability to read, analyze, and comprehend. Such efforts aim to cultivate a future generation of vital, intelligent, and competent individuals.

Despite these efforts, literacy remains a persistent challenge, particularly in addressing academic achievement gaps. In the United States, literacy problems are especially alarming among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2015), 64% of all fourth-grade students were reading below grade level, with an even higher percentage—82%—among low-income students. A study by Reardon (2013) further underscores that socioeconomic status is one of the most powerful predictors of academic achievement, including reading proficiency.

In the Philippines, the situation is equally concerning. The latest UNICEF assessment indicates a learning poverty rate of more than 85%, meaning a significant majority of 10-year-olds cannot read or understand a simple story. While this is a slight improvement from the World Bank's previous estimate of 90%, it remains a staggering figure (Tugade, 2023). Only about 15% of school-aged children in the Philippines can read simple texts, equating to just three out of every 20 children. This alarming statistic is attributed, in part, to the prolonged school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, which lasted over 70 weeks as of mid-February.

According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Philippines ranked lowest in Reading out of 79 participating countries (OECD, 2019). Only one in five Filipino learners aged 15 met the minimum proficiency level in overall reading literacy. Similarly, the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEAPLM) indicated that just 10% of Grade 5 learners achieved the minimum proficiency expected at the end of primary education (UNESCO, 2020). The World Bank (2022) reported that as of June, the country's learning poverty stood at 90.9%.

These findings suggest that foundational reading skills were not effectively acquired in the early grades. PISA 2018 data also showed that students who repeated grades in elementary school scored significantly lower in reading—by at least 52 points—than their peers. Notably, students who spent at least three years in early childhood education had a higher likelihood (37%) of achieving Level 2 proficiency in reading. A longitudinal study by Juel (1988) demonstrated that children who fall behind in reading in the early grades tend to remain behind in later academic years, highlighting the urgent need for early intervention.

Reading deficiencies negatively affect all other academic subjects. When a learner fails to master foundational reading skills, they are likely to struggle across the curriculum. Early identification of at-risk readers is essential for timely intervention. Wanzek et al. (2018) emphasized that intensive early reading interventions are effective in improving outcomes for struggling readers, especially when implemented consistently and with fidelity.

To address these concerns, the Department of Education in the Philippines continues to provide training, resources, and guidelines for school-based reading programs. One such initiative is the *Every Child a Reader Program* (ECARP), which mandates schools and regional divisions to implement reading interventions based on assessment data. The program reinforces the idea that reading is the foundation of all other learning areas; therefore, students must develop strong reading skills to succeed academically.

Aligned with this national initiative, the Division of South Cotabato launched efforts to intensify reading programs across its jurisdiction. As part of this movement, district reading coordinators were tasked to implement the *Summer Home Assistance on Reading by Parents* (SHARP) Program. This initiative aims to bridge reading gaps and enhance learners' academic performance. Assessment data indicate that a significant number of learners fall into the "frustrated readers" category, requiring instructional supervision and support. Preliminary interviews suggest that while the SHARP program is a promising intervention, challenges remain in its implementation and contextualization. Reading materials, in particular, need to be adapted to better meet the needs of target learners.

Given these concerns, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to explore the effectiveness of the SHARP program and to contribute to the development of improved, contextualized reading materials that can better support struggling readers.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive-quantitative research design. It aimed to determine the implementation of the

Summer Home Assistance in Reading by Parents (SHARP) Program of the Early Childhood Learners in Lake Sebu District 1, Cluster 2 Schools. It is designed to answer questions on the extent of the implementation of reading remediation, the facts on its implementation, the significance of the relationship of the variables, and the enhancement of the current Summer Home Assistance in Reading by Parents (SHARP) Program implemented to address the gap in the reading development of the learners. The use of a descriptive-quantitative research design makes a promising approach for investigating a specific variable within a particular population and for gathering relevant data. When it comes to studying attitudes, previous studies suggest that using questionnaires is appropriate. Hence, the researcher utilized this as a tool to conduct a face-to-face survey. Descriptive-quantitative research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens. In the context of the study, it is employed to describe individuals' events or conditions by examining them in their natural state while onboard. Descriptive-quantitative research, according to Gay et al. (2018), involves collecting data to answer questions and determine and report the way things are.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the extent of the SHARP program's implementation in terms of goals. The SHARP program demonstrates a high extent of implementation in achieving its goals, particularly in aligning with the Department of Education's mission and vision ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.76$). However, the understanding of the goal among stakeholders ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.01$) showed only a moderate extent, indicating room for improved communication and engagement.

Table 1. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Goals*

Indicators	Mean	Description
This is clear to all program implementers.	4.07	High Extent
Communicated and explained to the stakeholders.	3.93	High Extent
Well-understood by the stakeholders.	3.50	Moderate Extent
Aligned with the mission and vision of the Department of Education.	4.37	High Extent
Consonant to the provision of RA 10157 (An Act institutionalizing the Kindergarten Education into the Basic Education System).	3.77	High Extent
Overall	3.93	High Extent

These findings are aligned with Howlett et al. (2019) and Locke & Latham (2015), who emphasize the impact of clear, specific goal-setting on behavioral change and learning outcomes.

Table 2. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Objectives*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Specific in terms of the provisions and the required processes.	3.93	High Extent
Measurable in terms of the expected outcomes.	3.73	High Extent
This is attainable considering the available human and material resources.	3.53	Moderate Extent
Realistic as to the context of the implementers.	3.73	High Extent
Time-bound considering its scope and framework.	3.40	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.67	High Extent

Table 2 presents the extent of SHARP program implementation in terms of objectives. The program exhibits high implementation across most SMART criteria, particularly in specificity ($M = 3.93$) and realism ($M = 3.73$). However, time-bound components ($M = 3.40$) and attainability ($M = 3.53$) received only moderate ratings, suggesting potential barriers in planning and resource alignment. The overall mean ($M = 3.67$) still indicates a generally strong performance. This aligns with McPherson et al. (2015), who note the SMART framework's utility in structuring achievable and measurable program objectives.

Table 3. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Activities*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Congruent with the goals and objectives.	4.17	High Extent
Appropriate for the developmental needs of the target learners.	3.23	Moderate Extent
Suitable for the learners' capacity.	3.80	High Extent
Well-facilitated by the implementers.	4.33	High Extent
Within the context of the parents and the learners.	3.67	High Extent
Overall	3.84	High Extent

Table 3 presents the extent of the SHARP program's implementation in terms of activities. Activities were implemented to a high extent overall ($M = 3.84$). Facilitator-led implementation scored highest ($M = 4.33$), reinforcing the program's operational strength. However, activities tailored to developmental needs lagged ($M = 3.23$), signaling a need to enhance learner-centered design. Aydemir and Deniz (2020) support these insights, noting that meaningful engagement hinges on developmentally appropriate, enjoyable, and well-resourced activities.

Table 4. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Materials Used*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Readily available.	3.80	High Extent
Developed based on the developmental needs of the learners.	3.23	Moderate Extent
Adequate for the number of learners.	4.03	High Extent
Contextualized.	3.63	High Extent
Localized.	3.47	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.63	High Extent

Table 4 presents the extent of SHARP program implementation in terms of materials used. Instructional materials were rated as highly adequate in number ($M = 4.03$) and generally contextualized ($M = 3.63$). Still, materials explicitly developed for learners' developmental needs scored lowest ($M = 3.23$), along with localization ($M = 3.47$), both at moderate levels. These gaps suggest a need for more learner-centric and culturally relevant resources.

Table 5. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Process*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Aligned with the goals and objectives.	4.17	High Extent
Well-supervised by the implementers.	4.17	High Extent
Within the context of the parents and learners.	3.73	High Extent
Providing a venue for creativity and innovation.	3.67	High Extent
Rigorous enough to achieve the expected outcomes.	3.40	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.83	High Extent

Table 5 presents the extent of SHARP program implementation in terms of process. Implementation processes were perceived positively, particularly in terms of alignment with goals and adequate supervision (both $M = 4.17$). However, rigor toward expected outcomes was seen as a weaker area ($M = 3.40$), indicating a need to reinforce instructional standards and critical thinking opportunities within the process. Overall, implementation processes were rated at a high extent ($M = 3.83$).

Table 6. *Extent of SHARP Implementation in Terms of Evaluation*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Includes teachers' and parents' implementation experiences.	3.93	High Extent
Involves stakeholders and beneficiaries.	3.93	High Extent
Provides the formative process to gather immediate feedback from implementers.	4.03	High Extent
Provides the summative process to serve as a basis for further improvement.	4.20	High Extent
It is aligned with the goal and objectives.	4.23	High Extent
Overall	4.07	High Extent

Table 6 presents the extent of SHARP program implementation in terms of evaluation. The program's evaluation mechanisms received the highest overall mean ($M = 4.07$) among implementation aspects. Alignment with goals ($M = 4.23$) and use of summative assessments ($M = 4.20$) reflect a strong evaluation design. Still, although all indicators showed high ratings, stakeholder experience integration remains the least emphasized. These findings echo Bredekamp (2015), who highlighted the pivotal role of formative and summative evaluations in continuous program improvement.

Table 7. *Extent of SHARP Contextualization in Terms of Learners' Reading Readiness*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Learners' involvement is based on the previous results of EGRA and/or PHIL-IRI.	4.23	High Extent
Learners are actively involved in the process.	4.07	High Extent
They are evaluated and grouped by their grade level.	3.67	High Extent
They are sub-grouped according to their reading level.	4.30	High Extent
They are ready for the different reading activities.	3.77	High Extent

Table 7 presents the extent of SHARP contextualization in terms of learners' reading readiness. Contextualization strategies for reading readiness scored high across all indicators ($M = 4.01$). Sub-grouping based on reading levels ($M = 4.30$) was especially effective, highlighting the program's responsiveness to learner diversity. The relatively lower rating for grade-level grouping ($M = 3.67$) suggests that ability-based grouping might be more impactful in early literacy efforts. UNICEF (2012) affirms that reading readiness involves a combination of cognitive, emotional, and physical development, underscoring the importance of such differentiated strategies.

Table 8. *Extent of SHARP Contextualization in Terms of Face Validity of Reading Materials*

Indicators	Mean	Description
Reading materials include activities relevant to the skills to be emphasized.	3.90	High Extent
They enhance engagement and creativity among the learners.	3.70	High Extent
The technical aspect, such as the font size, margin, and spacing, is appropriate.	4.33	High Extent
The gamified activities are adapted to enhance the engagement of the learners.	3.47	Moderate Extent
They are interactive and suitable for individual, pair, or group activities.	3.43	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.77	High Extent

Table 8 presents the extent of SHARP contextualization in terms of face validity of reading materials. While materials scored high overall ($M = 3.77$), technical formatting ($M = 4.33$) received the highest praise, reflecting the materials' clarity and accessibility. However, interactivity ($M = 3.43$) and gamified content ($M = 3.47$) were rated moderately, suggesting that improving learner engagement features could enhance effectiveness. Botsoglou et al. (2017) and Bhandari (2023) emphasize that user-friendly, engaging, and visually effective materials are crucial to motivation and learning outcomes.

Table 9. *Extent of SHARP Contextualization in Terms of Content of Reading Materials*

Indicators	Mean	Description
The contents of the reading materials conform to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound).	3.70	High Extent
They target the development of macro skills.	3.77	High Extent
They possess an adequate number of items.	3.47	Moderate Extent
The directions are clear and specific.	3.20	Moderate Extent
The level of difficulty is appropriate to the target learners.	3.27	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.48	Moderate Extent

Table 9 presents the extent of SHARP contextualization in terms of the content of reading materials. The content of reading materials showed a moderate extent of contextualization overall ($M = 3.48$). While materials targeting macro skills ($M = 3.77$) were perceived positively, clarity of instructions ($M = 3.20$) and appropriateness of difficulty ($M = 3.27$) were areas for growth. This indicates a need to improve instructional design and alignment with learner proficiency levels. As Nikolopoulou (2022) states, content validity ensures that materials reflect all dimensions of the construct they intend to measure, which is essential for effective literacy intervention.

Table 10. *Extent of SHARP Contextualization in Terms of Post-Assessment*

Indicators	Mean	Description
The assessment process is valid, indicating that it measures what it intends to measure.	3.80	High Extent
It is clear and specific.	3.90	High Extent
It covers all levels of reading.	3.77	High Extent
It utilizes the results to improve the skills of learners further.	3.97	High Extent
It utilizes the results to improve the reading intervention/remediation program.	3.90	High Extent
Overall	3.87	High Extent

Table 10 presents the extent of SHARP contextualization in terms of post-assessment. Post-assessment strategies were well-regarded ($M = 3.87$), particularly for their use in informing instructional adjustments ($M = 3.97$) and clarity ($M = 3.90$). All items were interpreted as high extent, confirming that assessment results are being used effectively to guide remediation and enrichment.

Table 11 presents the significant relationship between the SHARP program's implementation and contextualization. Statistical analysis revealed strong positive correlations between program implementation and contextualization components, with all p -values $< .001$. This affirms that successful implementation is significantly

enhanced when materials and methods are contextually grounded. This supports the assertion that contextualization is a crucial factor in the success of reading interventions, particularly in early education settings. Materials that reflect local culture, language, and learner readiness foster stronger engagement, understanding, and retention.

Table 11. Significant Relationship Between SHARP Program's Implementation and Contextualization (Df=28)

C o n t e x t u a l i z a t i o n	SHARP		Implementation					
	Indicators		Goal	Objectives	Activities	Materials Used	Process	Evaluation
	Readiness	Pearson's R	0.79	0.82	0.56	0.77	0.87	0.86
		p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Face Validity	Pearson's R	0.77	0.76	0.57	0.81	0.89	0.77
		p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Content	Pearson's R	0.56	0.58	0.59	0.70	0.59	0.62
		p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Post Assessment	Pearson's R	0.81	0.80	0.70	0.84	0.86	0.86
		p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Thematic analysis of teacher responses yielded two overarching themes that explain the barriers to practical home reading assistance in the SHARP program: Participatory obstacles to parental involvement, and socioeconomic constraints limiting support. These themes underscore the critical role of family engagement and resource availability in the successful contextualization and implementation of SHARP, particularly within the context of early literacy development.

Table 12. Experiences of Teachers in SHARP Program Implementation Considering Home Reading Assistance

Themes	Core Ideas
1. Barriers to parental involvement in participatory activities.	1.1. Poor educational background. 1.2. Financially unstable.
2. Socioeconomic constraints limiting support.	

Theme 1: Barriers to Parental Involvement in Participatory Activities

Many teachers noted that a significant obstacle to helping with home reading is parents' limited educational background and literacy skills. This gap hinders parents' ability to support their children's early reading development effectively. Representative excerpts include:

"Parents lack knowledge on how to teach beginning reading... some parents are also illiterate... they did not understand some reading texts." [P1, L3-8]

"Insufficient knowledge of parents, lack of cooperation... slow in reading comprehension." [P2, L5-7]

"Parents have difficulty in understanding SHARP materials... they cannot teach what they do not know." [P4, L1-13]

"Some parents are not able to comprehend or write. That is why teachers do some tasks." [P5, L18-21]

These insights confirm that low parental literacy undermines the expected partnership between school and home in implementing reading interventions. This challenge is especially pronounced in contexts where parents themselves have limited schooling.

This finding aligns with Hosseinpour et al. (2015), who emphasized that parents' educational attainment and involvement are strongly associated with children's learning outcomes. Similarly, Epstein (2011) stresses the importance of family-school partnerships and notes that the lack of such collaboration disproportionately affects learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Theme 2: Socioeconomic Constraints Limiting Support

Financial instability emerged as a second key factor affecting parental involvement. Teachers reported that economic pressures reduce parents' capacity and availability to assist with reading tasks at home. Supporting quotations include:

“It is hard due to factors encountered, such as financially challenged parents.” [P2, L1–3]

“Teachers might encounter difficulties accessing adequate resources or support from families.” [P3, L6–9]

“Parents choose to spend their time at work rather than partner with us in teaching.” [P4, L8–10]

These responses point to a conflict between survival needs and educational support roles, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas. This is supported by Joseph & Ikechi (2018), who concluded that children from economically disadvantaged households often underperform academically due to limited access to learning materials and minimal home support. The findings are also consistent with UNESCO (2015), which identifies poverty as a primary barrier to parental engagement in early childhood education initiatives.

These findings have multiple implications for both the implementation and contextualization of the SHARP program.

First, the strong correlation between SHARP implementation and contextualization (as identified in Table 11) confirms that practical home-based components must be aligned with the community’s realities. This suggests that enhancing the home-school partnership—especially in marginalized communities—will be essential for the sustained success of the program.

Moreover, while the SHARP program effectively targets reading gaps, the barriers in parental capacity and support hinder full implementation, particularly for Grades 1 to 3 learners. Addressing this requires: revising materials to be more parent-friendly, with visual instructions or multilingual options; conducting parent literacy workshops alongside learner interventions; and institutionalizing the program beyond summer, as a regular part of daily instruction.

These adaptations would not only promote sustainability but also reinforce the developmental goals outlined in RA 10157 (The Kindergarten Education Act), emphasizing early literacy, developmental appropriateness, contextualization, and rigor.

The results affirm that SHARP is a valuable intervention in addressing early reading challenges and reducing the number of “potential readers”—learners on the cusp of reading proficiency. However, for long-term impact, the program must be integrated throughout the school year, not just during summer, be adapted to local parental literacy and economic contexts, and be institutionalized through policy revisions that embed contextualization practices at all levels of implementation.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the results and findings, the SHARP Program demonstrates a high level of implementation (60–79%) across its key components, including goals, objectives, instructional activities, materials, processes, and evaluation. Likewise, the contextualization of the program—specifically in reading readiness, validation of materials, and post-assessment—also reached a high extent. However, the content of reading materials showed only a moderate level of contextualization (40–59%), indicating a need to better tailor materials to the cultural, linguistic, and contextual realities of the learners. A significant relationship was found between the extent of SHARP implementation and its contextualization, suggesting that stronger and more coherent implementation enhances the relevance and effectiveness of the program across varied settings.

Despite these promising outcomes, qualitative findings highlight a critical challenge: the limited participation of parents in supporting reading at home. Teachers consistently reported that low literacy levels, limited educational backgrounds, and financial instability hinder many parents from engaging in home reading assistance. These challenges go beyond what teachers alone can resolve and require systemic interventions.

To address these issues and ensure the sustainability of the SHARP Program, several actionable recommendations are proposed. For school leaders and teachers, there is a pressing need to enhance the contextual relevance of

reading materials by incorporating local stories, cultural references, and familiar scenarios. Teachers should be involved in co-developing content that reflects learners' lived experiences. Furthermore, the SHARP Program should be implemented year-round, not only during summer, and fully integrated into the daily reading routine for learners in the early grades. Home-school engagement should also be strengthened through orientation sessions, introductory literacy workshops for parents, and the provision of simplified or translated reading guides that accommodate varying levels of parental literacy.

At the policy level, educational leaders and DepEd officials should institutionalize SHARP as part of local and regional basic education development plans. This includes securing dedicated funding, supporting the development of localized materials, and providing continuous training for reading coordinators and teachers. To address parental constraints, collaboration with local government units and NGOs is recommended to give incentives or supplemental support—such as learning kits or basic needs packages—in exchange for parent participation. Community reading hubs or learning spaces can also serve as support systems for learners with limited home assistance. Finally, it is essential to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to regularly assess the fidelity of implementation, the effectiveness of contextualization, and actual learner outcomes. By applying these practical and policy-driven strategies, the SHARP Program can evolve into a more inclusive, impactful, and sustainable literacy intervention.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

All authors contributed significantly to the development of this research paper. The study was conceptualized and designed collaboratively. Data collection and analysis were carried out jointly, with each author contributing to different aspects of the investigation. All authors participated in drafting the manuscript, reviewing its content, and approving the final version for submission. Each author agrees to be accountable for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for granting me the strength, knowledge, and wisdom throughout this research journey, and to all those who contributed to the success of this study, either directly or indirectly.

My sincere thanks go to my advisor, Dr. Gaudy C. Ortizo, for his invaluable guidance and continuous encouragement from the beginning up to the end, leading to the success of this study. I am also grateful to my research panel members, Rosabella P. Ranara, MAEd, Alma S. Hordista, Ph.D., Evelyn N. Demape, MA, and Joanne C. Punsalan, MBA, for their thoughtful suggestions and feedback that enriched my work.

Special thanks to my research validators, Dr. Jose Antonio A. Guntalid, Dr. Alma S. Hordista, and Eden A. Moreno, MAEd, for their critical evaluation and insightful feedback. To my statistician, Dr. Rogen A. Doronila, for his time in sharing his expertise.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the personnel of the Schools Division of South Cotabato, headed by the Schools Division Superintendent, Leonardo M. Balala, CESO V, with the support of the Public Schools District Supervisor, Dr. John Arnel B. Suscano, and the school heads of Lake Sebu East District, for their invaluable support throughout this study. Their assistance in providing resources, information, and cooperation was crucial to the success of this research. I sincerely appreciate their professionalism and commitment to advancing education, which greatly contributed to the smooth progress of this study. Also, with utmost sincerity, thanks to the respondents who participated in this study, whose time, experiences, and honest responses were invaluable to this research.

Finally, I owe a massive debt of gratitude to my family—my parents, Mr. Wilson M. Arca Sr. and Mrs. Elizabeth Ambol-Arca, and my siblings, Wilson Jr., Celina, Zandrex, and John Paul. Your love, patience, and constant support have been the foundation of my success. Your belief in me and your sacrifices meant the world.

To my significant other, Carrel C. Broces, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey. Your steadfast support, patience, and encouragement have been my anchor throughout this research journey. Your belief in me, even when I doubted myself, has been a constant source of motivation.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this research. Your support has had a lasting impact on this project.

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