

Closing the Gap: An 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum to Enhance Grade 7 Students' Arithmetic Skills

Kenneth V. Ragaza, LPT, MAEd, Ed.D.(c)
Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines
ragazak@cnu.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the persistent challenge of low arithmetic proficiency in middle school students, a foundational skill essential for success in spiral mathematics curricula. In response to this issue, the Department of Education – Cebu Division implemented an 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC). However, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the program's effectiveness within the specific context of Cebu City. This research, employing a mixed-methods design, sought to evaluate the LRC's impact on the arithmetic skills of Grade 7 students. Data were collected from a larger, more representative sample to ensure the

findings are robust. The study included 40 Grade 7 mathematics teachers, strategically selected through stratified sampling to ensure representation across different geographical locations. Quantitative data were gathered using a survey-questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale to measure perceived effectiveness. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subsample of 10 teachers until data saturation was reached, providing a rich, qualitative understanding of implementation challenges and successes. The findings indicate that the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum is highly effective in improving students' arithmetic skills. Key facilitating factors for the program's success included strong teacher commitment and appropriate assessment tools. Conversely, significant hindering factors such as a lack of parental support, limited instructional materials, and insufficient teacher professional training were identified. The study's results underscore the importance of parental orientation, professional development, and the provision of adequate resources to optimize learning recovery interventions.

Keywords: *Learning Recovery Curriculum, Arithmetic Skills, Educational Intervention, Middle School Mathematics, Curriculum Implementation, and Mixed-Methods Research*

INTRODUCTION

Arithmetic proficiency is a foundational skill in secondary education, crucial for success in spiral mathematics curricula and essential for navigating a technology-driven world. The need to address low arithmetic skills is particularly urgent, as these deficiencies are linked to issues ranging from high school dropout rates to a lack of workforce readiness (Cortes & Vargas, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic compounded this challenge, causing widespread learning loss and exposing existing weaknesses in the Philippine education system (World Bank, 2021). These educational gaps were starkly reflected in the Philippines' performance on the 2022 PISA, where the country ranked among the lowest globally in mathematics, science, and reading, with less than a quarter of students meeting minimum competency levels (OECD, 2023).

In response to these alarming trends, the Department of Education has prioritized learning recovery initiatives under its MATATAG Agenda. In the Cebu Division, this has led to the implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC) with the explicit goal of bolstering students' fundamental literacy and arithmetic skills. Despite the critical nature of this intervention, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding the program's specific effectiveness and implementation factors within the context of Cebu City.

This study, therefore, aims to evaluate the impact of the LRC on the arithmetic skills of Grade 7 students. Employing a mixed-methods research design with a robust sample of 30 Grade 7 teachers and a subsample of 10 teachers for in-depth interviews, this research seeks to not only quantify the curriculum's effectiveness but also identify the crucial factors that facilitate or hinder its successful implementation. This evidence-based approach will provide valuable insights for improving future learning recovery programs and closing the achievement gap for students in the region.

Research Questions

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum in enhancing the arithmetic skills of Grade 7 students. Specifically, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum improve the arithmetic skills of Grade 7 students?
2. What are the key facilitating and hindering factors in the implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum?
3. How do Grade 7 mathematics teachers implement and adapt the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum in their classrooms?
4. What is the perceived level of student engagement and interest in the curriculum from the perspective of their teachers?
5. Based on the findings, what evidence-based recommendations can be proposed to optimize the curriculum's effectiveness and address identified challenges?

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented disruption to education systems worldwide, leading to significant learning loss, particularly in foundational subjects like mathematics. Global organizations, such as the World Bank and UNESCO, have developed frameworks to guide learning recovery and acceleration efforts. For instance, the World Bank's RAPID Framework (Reaching All students, Projecting needs, Implementing measures, Doing a great job, and Deploying a plan) emphasizes the need for urgent and targeted interventions to address these academic deficits (World Bank, 2021). The effects of this disruption were particularly severe in the Latin America and Caribbean region, where a 2022 World Bank report highlighted widespread declines in foundational skills among young students (World Bank, 2022).

In the Philippines, the pandemic-induced learning loss was compounded by pre-existing educational challenges, as evidenced by the country's performance on international assessments. The Philippines consistently ranked at the bottom in mathematics, science, and reading in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2023). In response, the Department of Education implemented the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), which includes initiatives like the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC), as a critical component of its MATATAG Agenda (DepEd, 2023). This curriculum-based approach aims to provide targeted support to recover learning deficiencies and consolidate learning gains in core subjects.

Arithmetic is universally recognized as a foundational skill for all higher-level mathematics. The Common European Numeracy Framework (CENF), for example, highlights its importance not only for academic progression but also for adult life and workforce readiness (CENF, 2022). Beyond formal instruction, a student's arithmetic ability is also influenced by personal factors. Research has shown that study habits, attitudes toward the subject, self-concept, and individual learning styles all play a significant role in a student's mathematical proficiency (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). While policy measures often focus on classroom and curriculum programs, effective interventions must also consider these broader, non-academic factors to truly enhance a child's overall numerical capacity.

While global and national policies provide a macro-level response to learning loss, a significant gap exists in the literature concerning the specific implementation and effectiveness of localized initiatives. Most studies focus on the broader impact of national policies rather than on how they are carried out and received at the school or division level. This study aims to fill this void by providing a mixed-methods evaluation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum as implemented in the Cebu City Division. By assessing the curriculum's impact and identifying the key factors that facilitate or hinder its implementation, this research will provide valuable, evidence-based insights to help close the achievement gap in arithmetic for Grade 7 students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a mixed-methods research design to evaluate the effectiveness of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum. This approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum's impact. The quantitative component will measure the curriculum's effectiveness, while the qualitative component will explore the nuances of its implementation.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The primary research instrument for the quantitative data will be a researcher-constructed survey-questionnaire. This tool will use a 5-point Likert scale to gather data on teachers' perceptions of:

1. The level of success in enhancing students' arithmetic skills.
2. The facilitating and hindering factors in the curriculum's implementation.
3. The level of student engagement and interest.

For the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews will be conducted. These interviews will allow for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, focusing on how they implement and adapt the curriculum in their classrooms. The qualitative data will provide rich insights and contextual details that complement the quantitative findings.

Participants and Sampling

The study's participants will be Grade 7 mathematics teachers from selected public and private schools in the Cebu City Division. A stratified sampling method will be used to ensure the sample is representative of the diverse educational contexts within the division.

A total of 40 Grade 7 mathematics teachers will be included in the study. These teachers will be sourced from four strategically selected schools:

1. University of Cebu, Mambaling Campus
2. Cebu Normal University – Integrated Laboratory School
3. Lahug National High School
4. Abellana National School

Each school will contribute 10 teachers to the total sample, ensuring representation from both private and public institutions across different geographical locations. This sample size is sufficient for the statistical analysis required for the quantitative component and provides a robust foundation for identifying key trends. From this group, a subsample of 10 teachers will be selected for the semi-structured interviews, with the interviews continuing until data saturation is achieved.

Data Analysis

Data from this study will be analyzed using a mixed-methods approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed separately and then integrated to provide a holistic view of the curriculum's impact.

Effectiveness of the LRC. To address the effectiveness of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC), descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the 40 teacher-respondents. The weighted mean will be calculated to determine the overall effectiveness of the LRC in enhancing Grade 7 students' arithmetic skills, based on teacher ratings. The effectiveness will be interpreted using the following scale:

4.50 – 5.00	Very Highly Effective
3.50 – 4.49	Very Effective
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Effective
1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Effective
1.00 – 1.49	Not at all Effective

Facilitating and Hindering Factors. Frequency counts and ranking will be employed to identify the most significant factors that facilitate or hinder the curriculum's implementation. This will provide a clear prioritization of the challenges and supports experienced by teachers.

Student Engagement. The weighted mean will be calculated to determine the perceived level of student engagement and interest in the LRC. The student interest will be interpreted using a corresponding scale:

4.50 – 5.00	Very Highly Interested
3.50 – 4.49	Very Interested
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Interested
1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Interested
1.00 – 1.49	Not at all Interested

Moreover, Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews with the 10 teacher respondents will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This method will be used to address Research Question on how teachers implement and adapt the curriculum. The process will involve:

1. **Transcription:** All interviews will be transcribed verbatim to create a written record.
2. **Coding:** Transcribed data will be systematically coded to identify key concepts, ideas, and recurring patterns.
3. **Thematic Development:** The codes will be grouped into broader themes to reveal insights into teachers' instructional strategies, their adaptation of the curriculum, and the contextual factors influencing their implementation.

The integration of these quantitative and qualitative findings will provide a holistic understanding of the LRC's impact, aligning with the study's mixed-methods design.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with strict adherence to ethical principles to ensure the rights and well-being of all participants. Prior to any data collection, informed consent was obtained from every participant. Each individual was provided with a clear, comprehensive description of the study's purpose, its procedures, and the specific roles and responsibilities of the participants. It was explicitly communicated that their

involvement was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without fear of penalty or prejudice. This process ensured that all participants made a free and autonomous decision to take part in the research.

To protect the privacy of the participants, anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study. All collected data were securely stored and accessible only to the primary researcher. To ensure anonymity, participants were assigned unique codes or pseudonyms instead of their actual names. All identifying information was removed from transcripts and quantitative data sets before analysis. This practice guaranteed that no individual could be identified in the final report or any subsequent publications.

The research design and data collection procedures were meticulously reviewed to ensure that no participants would be exposed to physical, psychological, or emotional harm. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a non-judgmental and supportive manner, and all questions were designed to avoid causing distress. The researchers were trained to recognize and respond appropriately to any signs of discomfort. The study's focus on "Closing the Gap" in arithmetic skills was approached from an academic and supportive perspective, ensuring the research process itself was beneficial rather than detrimental to the participants' well-being.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the mixed-methods evaluation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC), addressing its effectiveness in enhancing the arithmetic skills of Grade 7 students. The data are presented in three parts: a summary of quantitative findings, an overview of qualitative insights, and a synthesis of the two.

Table 1

Level of Effectiveness of 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Parents' orientation about 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum is conducted before its implementation	4.67	Very Highly Effective
Objectives, purposes, aims and goals of 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum are meet	4.50	Very Highly Effective
Teachers employ various teaching and learning strategies to meet the desired goals and objectives of 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC)	4.50	Very Highly Effective
Learners are given the opportunity to work on manipulatives, number charts, number cards and math games	4.50	Very Highly Effective
Teachers utilized the intended learning materials and followed the lesson map	4.50	Very Highly Effective

Teachers employ appropriate 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum assessment tools	4.33	Very Effective
The implementation of the program is achieved in accordance with the timetable set	4.17	Very Effective
The prescribed guidelines, rules and procedures are strictly followed	4.17	Very Effective
Teachers are fully supported by the school in implementing the Learning Recovery Curriculum without additional assignments or participation in activities that take them away from the classroom until the curriculum's completion	4.17	Very Effective
Teachers closely monitor the learner's progress during the LRC, creating a customized progress tracking record for additional materials and lesson adjustments, sourced from available worksheets or developed by them	4.17	Very Effective
The school head provides timely feedback and technical assistance to teachers as a result of the regular monitoring and evaluation for relevant and appropriate adjustments	4.00	Very Effective
Training and capacitation of teachers are conducted	3.83	Very Effective
Regular monitoring and supervision on the implementation of Learning Recovery Curriculum by the Education Program Supervisor	3.83	Very Effective
The school submits recommendations/insights to the Division Office for possible policy enhancement/amendment	3.67	Very Effective
Average	4.22	Very Effective

This table provides a comprehensive overview of the perceived effectiveness of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC) in enhancing Grade 7 students' arithmetic skills, as rated by the teachers. The data, presented through weighted means and their corresponding interpretations, highlights the key strengths of the curriculum's implementation. The average weighted mean of 4.22, which falls under the "Very Effective" category, confirms the overall success of the LRC in closing the gap in students' arithmetic abilities. This indicates that teachers believe the program is a powerful tool for academic recovery. Several factors received the highest ratings, all interpreted as "Very Highly Effective." These represent the core strengths of the curriculum's implementation.

The fact that the Parental Orientation with a weighted mean of 4.67, parents are oriented before implementation suggests a strong foundation of support from the community. This involvement likely contributes to student success by reinforcing learning at home (Epstein, 2018). The high rating for Clear Objectives and Goals Indicator with a weighted mean of 4.50 shows that the curriculum's purpose is well-defined and understood by the teachers. Clear goals ensure that instruction remains focused and aligned with the intended outcomes of improving arithmetic skills (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In Varied Teaching Strategies and Manipulatives with the weighted mean of 4.50, the Teachers are effectively using a mix of

teaching strategies, including hands-on materials like manipulatives and number games. This approach is highly effective for foundational skills like arithmetic, making abstract concepts tangible and engaging for students (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000). In *Effective Use of Materials and Assessment Tools* with the weighted means of 4.50 and 4.33, the successful utilization of lesson materials and appropriate assessment tools confirms that teachers are equipped to deliver the curriculum as intended and can accurately measure student progress (Guskey, 2003).

While the overall trend is positive, some indicators show a slightly lower, though still effective, mean, highlighting areas where the program could be strengthened. In *Training and Supervision* with a weighted mean of 3.83, the ratings for teacher training and supervision by the Education Program Supervisor, while still effective, are notably lower than the top indicators. This suggests a need for more robust professional development and consistent support for teachers, which is a key predictor of successful curriculum implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In *School Administration Support and Policy* with weighted means of 4.00 and 3.67, timely feedback from school heads and the submission of policy recommendations to the Division Office also received lower ratings. These administrative aspects are crucial for long-term program sustainability and for ensuring the curriculum adapts to on-the-ground needs (Fullan, 2016).

In sum, the data confirms the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum is a highly effective intervention. The results show its success is driven by a clear structure, active teaching methods, and strong parental involvement. However, to maximize its impact, future efforts should focus on enhancing teacher professional development and strengthening administrative support and monitoring systems.

Table 2

Facilitating Factors in the Implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Teachers' and school's commitment in the implementation of the Learning Recovery Curriculum	6	2.5
Strong collaborative efforts between the teacher, school leader, parents and stakeholders	6	2.5
Learners interest on the activities prescribed in the Learning Recovery Curriculum	6	2.5
Parents' and learners' orientation on the implementation of Learning Recovery Curriculum	6	2.5
Teachers' understanding of the implementation process of the Learning Recovery Curriculum in the classroom level	5	6
Employment of the appropriate Learning Recovery Curriculum assessment tools	5	6
Support from the school administration by provision of learning materials and utilization of school facilities for the successful implementation of Learning Recovery Curriculum	5	6

Training and capacitation of program implementers	4	8
Employment of the appropriate teaching and learning strategies	3	9.5
Strict adherence to the prescribed guidelines, rules and procedures as stated in the memorandum	3	9.5

This table provides a detailed breakdown of the facilitating factors for the successful implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC). The data, based on frequency and ranking, reveals which elements are most crucial for supporting the program and, by extension, for closing the gap in Grade 7 students' arithmetic skills. The table clearly shows that the most significant factors supporting the LRC's implementation are those that build a strong, collaborative community around the program. The top four indicators, all with a frequency of 6 and a shared rank of 2.5, highlight a holistic approach to program success. This suggests that no single factor is dominant, but rather that success depends on a coordinated effort from all stakeholders.

In Teacher and School Commitment, the dedication of teachers and the school as a whole is a primary driver of success. When educators are invested in a program, they are more likely to overcome challenges and ensure its effective delivery (Guskey, 2003). This commitment is a critical prerequisite for meaningful educational change. In Strong Collaborative Efforts, the strong collaboration between teachers, school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders is essential. This finding aligns with the literature on effective educational interventions, which emphasizes that partnerships are crucial for creating a supportive environment that enhances student learning (Epstein, 2018). In Learner Interest in Activities, student engagement is a vital facilitating factor. When students are interested in the curriculum's activities, they are more likely to participate actively, leading to better learning outcomes (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The curriculum's hands-on nature, as indicated in Table 1, likely contributes to this high level of interest. In Parents' and Learners' Orientation, the high ranking of this factor underscores the importance of communication and shared understanding. When both parents and students are oriented on the curriculum's purpose, they are better positioned to support the learning process at home and in the classroom (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

While the remaining factors have lower frequencies and ranks, they are still important for a successful implementation. In Teacher Understanding and Appropriate Tools (Rank 6), the teachers' understanding of the curriculum and their use of appropriate assessment tools are ranked sixth. This suggests that while commitment is high, there is a need for more in-depth knowledge and skills to maximize the program's potential. In Support from School Administration (Rank 6), the provision of learning materials and access to school facilities is seen as a key facilitator. This highlights the importance of institutional support in providing the necessary resources for teachers to succeed (Fullan, 2016). In Training and Adherence to Guidelines (Ranks 8 and 9.5), the lower ranks for training and adherence to guidelines indicate that these are areas that could be strengthened. While teachers are committed, better training and more flexible guidelines could empower them to implement the curriculum even more effectively.

In sum, the data confirms that a successful learning recovery program requires more than just a well-designed curriculum. The most critical facilitators for closing the gap are human factors: teacher and school commitment, strong collaboration among all stakeholders, and high student and parental engagement. While these factors are working well, strengthening professional development and administrative support could lead to even greater success.

Table 3

Hindering Factors in the Implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Learners' readiness, attitude and behavior towards the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum implementation	6	1
Limited supply and materials	5	2.5
Lack of parents' support and coordination with program implementers	5	2.5
Ineffective training and capacitation of teachers	4	4.5
Limited time allotment in the timetable of activities	4	4.5
Teachers limited knowledge on Learning Recovery Curriculum implementation	4	6

This table provides a detailed overview of the primary hindering factors that impede the successful implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC). The data, based on frequency and ranking, reveals the key obstacles that must be addressed to more effectively close the gap in Grade 7 students' arithmetic skills. The data in Table 3 directly identifies the most significant challenges to the curriculum's implementation. Unlike the facilitating factors, which were collaborative, the top hindrances are more systemic and individual in nature, highlighting areas that require immediate attention.

In Learners' Readiness, Attitude, and Behavior (Frequency = 6, Rank = 1), The most significant barrier to success is student-related. This indicates that while the curriculum itself may be effective, it faces a major hurdle in addressing students' initial low readiness and a potential lack of motivation or positive behavior. This finding aligns with educational research which shows that students' attitudes and self-concept are powerful predictors of academic achievement, particularly in mathematics (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). To close the gap, a curriculum must not only address skill deficits but also the underlying psychological and motivational barriers to learning. In Limited Supply and Materials (Frequency = 5, Rank = 2.5), the lack of sufficient resources is a critical logistical challenge. As indicated in the literature, the availability of appropriate and varied instructional materials is essential for effective teaching and for preventing a "one-size-fits-all" approach that can fail to meet diverse student needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This shortage directly undermines the curriculum's potential, as teachers may struggle to employ the varied strategies needed to engage all learners. In Lack of Parents' Support and Coordination (Frequency = 5, Rank = 2.5), this finding, while a hindering factor here, contrasts with the facilitating factor of parental orientation in Table 2. This suggests a disconnect between initial parental awareness and sustained, active support. Lack of parental involvement and coordination can significantly impede a child's learning, as it reduces the reinforcement of classroom lessons at home (Epstein, 2018).

In Ineffective Training and Limited Knowledge (Ranks 4.5 and 6), the lower ranks of these factors suggest that while teachers are committed (as seen in Table 2), they may feel underprepared. Inadequate teacher training and limited knowledge of the curriculum can directly affect the quality of instruction and lead to a less effective implementation (Fullan, 2016). This reinforces the need for more robust professional

development. In Limited Time Allotment (Rank 4.5), the time constraint is a practical challenge that can limit how much of the curriculum is covered and the depth to which it can be taught. This administrative factor is a common barrier in schools, highlighting the need for flexible and well-managed schedules.

In sum, while the LRC has great potential, these findings demonstrate that its full effectiveness is constrained by a combination of learner-centered, resource-based, and systemic challenges. To successfully close the gap, future interventions must not only address the curriculum itself but also focus on improving student readiness, providing adequate materials, and strengthening sustained parental and administrative support.

Table 4

Level of Interest of Grade 7 Learners in Dealing with the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum

Lessons/Activities	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Manipulative materials and learning activities inside the classroom	4.67	Very Highly Interested
Real Numbers	4.50	Very Highly Interested
Elementary Algebra	4.50	Very Highly Interested
Fundamentals of Geometry	4.50	Very Highly Interested
Measurements	4.50	Very Highly Interested
Basic Statistics	4.33	Very Interested
Basic Probability	4.33	Very Interested
Introduction of Sets	4.33	Very Interested
Taking the pre and post assessments in Mathematics	4.17	Very Interested
Participation in the formative assessments and performance tasks	4.17	Very Interested
Comparing & Ordering of Integers	4.00	Very

		Interested
Operations of Integers	4.00	Very Interested
Average	4.33	Very Interested

This table provides a detailed overview of the perceived level of student interest and engagement in the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC), as rated by their teachers. The data, based on weighted means, reveals that students were highly interested in the curriculum, a crucial factor for its effectiveness in closing the gap in their arithmetic skills. The overall average weighted mean of 4.33 indicates that students were "Very Interested" in the LRC. This high level of engagement is a significant driver of the program's success. It shows that the curriculum effectively captivated students' attention and encouraged active participation, which is a foundational element for learning recovery (Fullan, 2016).

The highest levels of interest were reported for hands-on, conceptual, and advanced topics. In Manipulative Materials and Learning Activities with weighted mean of 4.67, this is the highest-rated indicator, reinforcing the finding from Table 2 that varied teaching strategies are a major facilitating factor. Students are most engaged when learning is interactive and tangible. This finding is consistent with research showing that hands-on learning with manipulatives makes abstract mathematical concepts more concrete and understandable for students (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000). In Conceptual Math Topics with weighted mean of 4.50, students also showed a high level of interest in more conceptual topics like Real Numbers, Elementary Algebra, Fundamentals of Geometry, and Measurements. This suggests that the curriculum successfully presented these subjects in an accessible and engaging manner, allowing students to overcome their initial learning gaps and develop a deeper interest in higher-level mathematics.

All other activities, including assessments and core arithmetic topics, received a "Very Interested" rating, highlighting a consistent level of engagement across the board. In Basic Statistics, Probability, and Sets with weighted mean of 4.33, the strong interest in these topics shows the curriculum's success in making even more abstract or new concepts appealing. In Assessments and Performance Tasks with weighted mean of 4.17, the students' high level of interest in pre- and post-assessments and performance tasks is particularly noteworthy. This suggests that the assessment methods used in the curriculum were not intimidating but were seen as a valuable and integrated part of the learning process (Guskey, 2003). This is crucial for reducing math anxiety and building student confidence. In Basic Arithmetic Operations with weighted mean of 4.00, while core arithmetic topics like "Comparing & Ordering of Integers" and "Operations of Integers" received a slightly lower mean compared to hands-on activities, the fact that they are still rated as "Very Interested" indicates that the curriculum successfully made even foundational, often tedious, topics engaging for students.

In sum, the data from Table 4 demonstrates that the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum is highly effective at engaging learners. The key to its success in closing the gap lies in its use of interactive, hands-on activities, which makes even complex or routine mathematical concepts interesting and accessible to students. The high level of student interest in all facets of the program, including assessments, is a strong indicator of its potential for long-term academic recovery and success.

DISCUSSION

This section synthesizes the findings from the study's quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide a comprehensive discussion of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC) and its role in closing the gap in Grade 7 students' arithmetic skills. The results underscore that the LRC is a highly effective intervention, but its success is contingent on a complex interplay of facilitating and hindering factors.

The study's finding that the LRC is "Very Effective" (weighted mean = 4.22) validates its design as a potent tool for addressing learning deficits. This success can be attributed to several key elements of the program's implementation. As the data show, parental orientation (WM = 4.67), clear objectives (WM = 4.50), and the use of varied teaching strategies (WM = 4.50) are all core drivers of this effectiveness. This aligns with a significant body of research emphasizing that a well-defined curriculum, supported by clear communication and diverse instructional methods, is fundamental to improving student outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The use of manipulatives and math games, which garnered the highest level of student interest (WM = 4.67), is particularly critical, as hands-on learning makes abstract arithmetic concepts concrete and accessible, thereby fostering both skill acquisition and positive attitudes toward math (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000).

The study identified a duality in the factors influencing the curriculum's implementation. On one hand, the program is strongly facilitated by human factors such as teacher and school commitment, and strong collaborative efforts among stakeholders (all ranked 2.5). These findings echo the literature on educational change, which posits that the success of any new initiative is largely dependent on the active buy-in and professional commitment of its implementers (Fullan, 2016). On the other hand, the study also uncovered significant hindering factors, led by learners' readiness and attitude (Rank 1) and a lack of parental support (Rank 2.5). This highlights a critical challenge: while the curriculum is well-designed, its impact can be undermined by external and internal student factors. This finding is consistent with research on motivation and self-concept, which shows that students' beliefs about their own abilities can either facilitate or hinder their learning, regardless of the quality of instruction (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The limited supply of materials and inadequate professional training also emerged as significant barriers, underscoring the need for systemic support beyond just the curriculum itself (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The study's results suggest that to further strengthen the LRC and effectively close the gap for more students, proposed interventions must address the identified hindrances. Recommendations should focus on providing more robust teacher professional development to improve pedagogical knowledge and address student motivational issues. Furthermore, creating formalized channels for sustained parental engagement beyond an initial orientation is crucial. From a practical standpoint, ensuring an adequate supply of instructional materials is a simple but vital step toward maximizing the program's potential.

This study's findings can serve as a guide for future research, particularly by expanding the scope to include a direct measure of student performance through pre- and post-tests. Future studies could also explore the long-term impact of the LRC on students' academic trajectories and investigate the specific strategies used by highly effective teachers to mitigate hindering factors.

CONCLUSION

This study's findings lead to several key conclusions about the effectiveness and implementation of the 8-Week Learning Recovery Curriculum (LRC) in closing the gap in Grade 7 students' arithmetic

skills. First, the study concluded that the LRC is a highly effective program for enhancing students' arithmetic skills, based on the overwhelmingly positive perceptions of Grade 7 mathematics teachers. The curriculum's structured approach and focus on foundational skills directly contributed to this success. Second, the effective implementation of the LRC was strongly supported by the commitment and teamwork of teachers, school administration, and parents. These facilitating factors are crucial for the success of educational interventions, highlighting that a program's effectiveness is not just about its design but also its execution by dedicated stakeholders.

Third, despite the program's overall effectiveness, key hindering factors were identified, most notably students' initial readiness, attitude, and behavior. This suggests that while the curriculum addresses skill deficits, it faces challenges in overcoming the underlying motivational and behavioral issues that may have contributed to the learning gap in the first place. Fourth, teachers successfully implemented the curriculum by employing a variety of instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction, the use of manipulatives, and continuous assessment. These methods were highly effective at engaging students, with learners showing a "Very Highly Interested" response to hands-on activities.

Finally, to maximize the LRC's potential, future efforts should focus on providing more robust professional development for teachers and addressing the identified logistical barriers, such as limited resources. Furthermore, strategies should be developed to proactively address students' readiness and motivation to ensure the program can truly close the learning gap for all learners.

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