Exploring Teachers' Apprehension on Drop-Out Reduction Program in the Post-Pandemic Period: A Thematic Analysis

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Abstract:
This study investigates and analyzes the concerns of junior high school teachers in Davao City regarding the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) in the post-pandemic period. The research aims to comprehend how teachers perceive and understand the DORP, which is an intervention program designed to support and retain students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs). Qualitative methods, specifically thematic analysis, are utilized to examine the themes and patterns emerging from the teachers’ concerns. The study specifically addresses the following questions: 1. what specific concerns do public school teachers in Davao City have regarding the Dropout Reduction Program? 2. How do these concerns hinder their decision-making process in enlisting their Students at Risk of Dropping Out in the Dropout Reduction Program? By exploring these questions, the research provides insights into the teachers’ perspectives on the DORP and identifies their challenges and concerns in implementing the program. The study's findings contribute to understanding teacher apprehension and offer valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness of dropout reduction initiatives in the post-pandemic educational landscape. The study recommends an awareness campaign to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of the Dropout Reduction Program, ultimately leading to improved regular attendance of students at risk of dropping out.

Keywords: Dropout Reduction Program (DORP), Post-pandemic period, Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs), thematic analysis, Awareness scheme

Introduction
The implementation of a comprehensive program aimed at reducing dropout rates is of utmost importance in addressing the growing number of students prematurely leaving school. Such a program seeks to provide effective interventions and support systems to ensure the educational success and long-term well-being of students (Köse, 2022; Galanou et al., 2010). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented global challenges that have had far-reaching impacts on economies, societies, and politics. One significant crisis triggered by the pandemic is the disruption it has caused in the education sector (Bizlinks, 2021).

Lockdowns and quarantines have resulted in an alarming 87% of the world's student population experiencing educational disruptions, leaving 1.52 billion learners unable to attend schools and educational institutions (UNESCO Learning Portal, 2020). The suddenness, uncertainty, and volatility of the pandemic caught the education
system off guard, demanding swift responses to address the rapidly evolving learning landscape. This global health crisis has exacerbated the longstanding issue of student dropouts in the Philippines, intensifying a problem that already existed before the pandemic (Malin Dog-Uy, 2020). The sudden shift to remote learning, coupled with economic hardships and other challenges brought about by the pandemic has significantly increased the number of students leaving school.

In the past two years, schools worldwide have faced extensive closures due to the pandemic. However, in November 2022, the Department of Education issued a clear directive mandating a full return to face-to-face classes. The order explicitly states that schools cannot solely rely on distance learning or blended learning unless they are already implementing Alternative Modes. Furthermore, there is a call to resume and implement various school programs, including the reading remediation program, alternative learning system, and dropout reduction program. These initiatives aim to provide support to students and address the educational challenges posed by the pandemic (American Psychological Association, 2012).

The Dropout Reduction Program (DORP), implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd), aims to tackle the increasing dropout rates in both public and private elementary and secondary schools. The program’s objective is to improve student learning outcomes and ensure equal access to quality education for all Filipino students. The DORP Handbook (2008) emphasizes the use of formal, non-formal, and informal approaches within the program.

The DORP operates within the legal framework provided by the Education Act of 1982 and Republic Act 9155 (Congress of the Philippines, 2001), which uphold the right of every individual to relevant and high-quality education, regardless of factors such as gender, age, creed, socio-economic status, physical and mental condition, race or ethnic origin, and political affiliation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) further underscores the importance of equal educational opportunities for all children. Education agencies are tasked with implementing effective strategies to promote regular student attendance and minimize dropout rates within the school system.

Despite the institutionalization of the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) as a means to address student dropouts, teachers express anxiety and apprehension about implementing the program. They face challenges in identifying and enlisting students at risk of dropping out due to various factors and considerations. In this study, teachers' apprehension is defined as their fear or anxiety about implementing DORP in their classrooms and enlisting potential SARDOs in the program (Goldast, Ghanizadeh, & Beigi, 2021).

Framework and Rationale

The primary objective of this study was to investigate teachers' apprehension regarding the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) and assess the extent to which the program objectives have been achieved since the full implementation of face-to-face classes in the 2022-2023 school years. This research endeavour holds significant importance for classroom teachers, DORP coordinators, and school administrators who play a crucial role in addressing the issue of students at risk of dropping out. Furthermore, it aims to provide valuable guidance for teacher-advisers in effectively implementing and sustaining the program through continuous monitoring and evaluation at both the classroom and school levels.

The theoretical framework employed in this study is Program Theory, which provides insights into how and why a program is expected to function. It involves a systematic approach to collecting, analyzing, and utilizing information to address questions related to program effectiveness and efficiency (Sedani & Sechrest, 1999). To examine and validate the program’s underlying assumptions as stated in the DORP Program Handbook (2008), Owen’s fifth Outcome Evaluation (2011) was adopted as a guiding framework.
In addition to Program Theory, this study also draws upon the research of Dweck (2012) on growth mindset as another theoretical foundation. According to Dweck (2012), mindset refers to an individual's beliefs and thoughts about themselves and their abilities. This study recognizes the significance of teachers in the field of education who possess a growth mindset, as they are often more effective and actively seek ways to enhance their teaching practices.

By integrating these theoretical foundations, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards the DORP, as well as examine the correlation between their mindset and the program's effectiveness. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on dropout prevention and provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers in designing and implementing effective strategies to reduce dropout rates (RTTNews Staff Writer, N/D.).

**Related Articles and Studies**

The Philippines is currently grappling with a growing issue of student dropouts in secondary schools, a problem that has been exacerbated by the global health crisis. In the 21st century, the rise of a knowledge-based economy has underscored the crucial role of education in national development and employment prospects. However, dropout rates continue to be a prevalent problem in both public and private secondary schools worldwide (Archambault et.al, 2022).

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020), more than 1.6 billion children in over 190 countries were out of school, depriving them of vital foundational skills necessary for future work opportunities. These young individuals urgently need alternative pathways to acquire basic skills that align with the demands of the labor market, ultimately improving their social and economic conditions (OECD, 2020; UNICEF, 1989). In the United States, the Alliance for Excellent Education (2021) estimated a high school dropout rate of 5.3%, representing a 1.19% increase from 2019, with a higher concentration among students from low-income families. The status dropout rate, which indicates the percentage of 16- to 24-year-olds lacking a high school credential, was 5.3% in 2020, accounting for approximately 2.0 million individuals (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on education. Tsolou, Babalis et al. (2021) highlight that the process of dropping out often begins in the early years of primary school and is influenced by a combination of factors, including individual, family, school, and social parameters. Additionally, Wilson and Tanner-Smith (2013) conducted a study on dropout prevention and intervention programs, revealing that effective school and community-based initiatives can contribute to reducing dropout rates. In the educational context, teachers' apprehension plays a crucial role as it affects student engagement in class activities. Pham (2021) explains that understanding teachers' apprehension toward dropout reduction programs is vital, as teachers are instrumental in motivating students at risk of dropping out and fostering their academic success.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education faces the challenges of low student achievement and high dropout rates (DORP Handbook, 2008). The agency reports that approximately 5.6 million students between the ages of 6 and 15 have left school and failed to return. The Asia News (2021) further supports these findings, stating that around six million Filipino children drop out of school (Digal, 2013). The DepEd Central Office in Manila shared data indicating that 30% of the 91 million Filipinos below the age of 18 have not completed secondary education (Dropout reduction program manual, 2008). Moreover, nearly four million students were unable to enrol in the current school year, representing a significant reduction from previous years (Department of Education, 2020).

In the Division of Davao City, particularly in the Third Congressional District, high dropout rates
among secondary students persist despite efforts from teachers, authorities, barangay officials, parents, and the community. Poverty is often cited as a major contributing factor, along with limited awareness of the importance of education within the community. Other factors include parents' poor health, illness or physical disabilities, lack of adequate support, and the need to contribute to the family's livelihood (Doll, Eslami, & Walters, 2013).

School managers, through the School DORP Coordinator, have taken proactive measures to address the escalating dropout rates. Classroom teachers, particularly advisers, are encouraged to implement remedial instruction and various programs to improve students' skills and foster a sense of belongingness. The goal is to reduce the dropout rate and provide necessary support to keep students engaged in their education (Suryaningsih, 2021).

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to qualitatively explore teachers' apprehension towards the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) in the post-pandemic period. Specifically, it aims to examine how public junior high school teachers in Davao City perceive and understand the DORP. At this stage of the research, the Dropout Reduction Program is broadly defined as an intervention program designed to support students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs) and encourage their continued enrollment in school. The study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What specific concerns do public school teachers in Davao City have regarding the Dropout Reduction Program?
2. How do these concerns influence teachers' decision-making process when it comes to enrolling SARDOs in the Dropout Reduction Program?

Based on these research questions, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the particular concerns that public school teachers have about the Dropout Reduction Program.
2. Examine how these concerns impact teachers' decision-making process when enlisting SARDOs in the DORP.
3. Understand the underlying factors contributing to teachers' apprehension towards the Dropout Reduction Program.
4. Explore the potential impact of teachers' apprehensions on the overall effectiveness and implementation of the Dropout Reduction Program.
5. Provide recommendations and strategies to address teachers' concerns, enhance their engagement, and improve their participation in the Dropout Reduction Program.

With the belief that the program will have a significant impact on reducing dropout rates among students in public schools, the DORP was officially initiated and intensified during the first quarter of the 2022-2023 school year in the post-pandemic period. This was done to give at-risk students the opportunity to remain in school until they complete their studies. Although there has been some improvement in terms of the number of students enrolled in the program, the issue of students leaving school still persists. Therefore, this qualitative inquiry into teachers' apprehension regarding the implementation of the DORP in public secondary schools in Davao City has been undertaken.

Methodology

The study utilized thematic analysis as the research method, which is commonly employed to analyze qualitative data, particularly textual data such as interviews or transcripts. In this method, the researcher carefully examines the data to identify recurring themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning. The study followed a six-step process of thematic analysis, including familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and naming themes. This descriptive mode of inquiry aims to understand the apprehension of teachers towards the Dropout Reduction Program and
uncover underlying structures and congruity in meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

For the selection of participants, purposive sampling, specifically the typical sampling method, was employed. This method is used to select individuals who are likely to exhibit behavior similar to their counterparts (Bambenger, Rought, & Mabry, 2006; Dynarski et al., 1989). Fifty participants were selected, consisting of 20 male and 20 female grade 10 public junior high school teachers and class advisers, along with 5 DORP coordinators and 5 school heads (da Costa, Bispo, & Pereira, 2018). The selection was based on their expressed interest in the study, ensuring the concealment and confidentiality of their personal circumstances, as outlined in research ethics.

To capture the experiences of the participants, a combination of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and semi-structured interviews was conducted. Each teacher-participant participated in both the FGD and the interview, which spanned a period of three days. Each session lasted between fifteen to twenty minutes. The data were collected using a set of guide questions derived from Owen's Fifth Evaluation Form (2011) and the Evaluation Questions from the DORP Manual (2008).

The central question guiding the discussions was: "What are your concerns regarding the Dropout Reduction Program implemented in our school?" Subsequent sub-questions were also posed to delve deeper into specific aspects of the program:

**Sub-Question 1:**
Does the Dropout Reduction Program effectively support and retain students at risk of dropping out?
To what extent does it prevent students-at-risk from leaving school?
Do you believe that both teachers and students have a sufficient understanding of the program?

**Sub-Question 2:**
Is the School Dropout Reduction Program Council functioning as intended?

How can it enhance its performance?

**Sub-Question 3:**
Do students at risk of dropping out utilize the Supplementary Learning Program (SLP) to develop their mastery of essential learning competencies?
Are these modules readily accessible to them?

By employing thematic analysis and conducting FGDs and interviews, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers’ apprehension towards the Dropout Reduction Program and explore the specific concerns and perspectives of the participants.

**Results and Discussion**

To validate the responses collected from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews, as outlined in Table 1, it can be inferred that the fundamental assumptions presented in the DORP Manual (2008) remain valid and hold significance in understanding the outcomes of the dropout intervention program. Specifically, assumption number 7 of the DORP states that the school's dropout rate would decrease if the school implements a robust and effective DORP Program that is collaboratively planned and managed by the school head, teachers, students, parents, and other key stakeholders. However, the prevailing perception among teachers reveals their lack of motivation to enrol their SARDOs in the DORP due to inadequate understanding and information about the program.

The DORP Manual (2008) provides guidelines and strategies for implementing a Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) in educational institutions. The focus group discussion and interviews mentioned in the statement were conducted to gather insights and feedback from Grade 9 teachers regarding the DORP program. The data coding matrix, as represented in Table 1, is used to organize and analyze the collected responses from the teachers.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative research method, was employed to gain insights into teachers’ perspectives regarding various indicators related
to the implementation of DORP. This method facilitated the identification of recurring patterns and themes within the dataset, shedding light on the experiences and perceptions of the participating teachers. Through systematic data analysis, key ideas, concepts, and patterns of meaning were extracted.

The analysis yielded distinct patterns and themes within each of the examined indicators: Teachers' Apprehension of DORP, Information Efficiency, Instructional Delivery, and Material Availability. These themes offer a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing DORP in the educational context. The following presents the results of the analysis.

Table 1. Data Coding Matrix from Responses of Teacher-Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Questions</th>
<th>Repeated Words</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Dropout Reduction Program effectively support and retain students at risk of dropping out?</td>
<td>The SARDOs were not completely retained in school.</td>
<td>The program was not properly understood.</td>
<td>It was not adequately explained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent does it prevent students-at-risk from leaving school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you believe that both teachers and students have a sufficient understanding of the program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the School Dropout Reduction Program Council functioning as intended?</td>
<td>The Council's presence was not well acknowledged.</td>
<td>Participants had no knowledge of its existence.</td>
<td>It was not observed in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How can it enhance its performance?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do students at risk of dropping out utilize the Supplementary Learning Program (SLP) to develop their mastery of essential learning competencies?</td>
<td>Not all SARDOs are able to utilize the SLP due to the unavailability of modules.</td>
<td>There are no modules provided.</td>
<td>Insufficient learning materials are given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are these modules readily accessible to them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sample Responses Culled from Transcripts

"I'm not entirely sure if the SARDOs will stay in school because of DORP because they don't really know what it is, and us teachers, we don't have deep knowledge about DORP here in the school," expressed TP1 when asked about her understanding of the DORP in school. This statement clearly indicates that the implementation of the Dropout Reduction Program in the school was not adequately explained to the teachers, who, in turn, would have to explain the concept of the intervention program to their SARDOs.

In response to the question, most of the teacher-participants shared their thoughts, stating, "How can we encourage our students who want to quit and join DORP when we ourselves don't have sufficient knowledge about the program? That's why our students end up dropping out."

Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) is an intervention program aimed at reducing the dropout rate in schools by implementing strategies and initiatives to support at-risk students and provide them with necessary resources and support.

Regarding the functioning of the School DORP council, it did not appear that almost all the teacher-participants in the study replied that they have never seen nor have any idea if such a council exists in the school. TP2 stated, "I have heard about the DORP implemented in our school, yet I never paid attention to what the program is all about, and I guess there is no existing DORP council in the school." This statement was further supported by the majority
of the participants, who said, "Honestly, it seems like there is no DORP council here in the school."

When asked about their thoughts on how to improve this intervention program for SARDOs, all the participants agreed that an orientation about DORP should be conducted for them to better understand it and improve its services, especially for students at risk of dropping out.

Regarding the availability of learning modules for SARDOs, one of the teachers, TP3, straightforwardly asked, "Are there modules available?" TP4 followed up by expressing his hesitation in enlisting SARDOs in the DORP, stating, "To be honest, the reason why we teachers here in the school are hesitant is that there are no learning modules for the students...we can't afford the expenses for the numerous materials they need."

These responses indicate that students at risk of dropping out may not be motivated to continue in the program because they lack the financial means to acquire necessary learning materials. TP5 further emphasized, "Without available modules, students will never achieve mastery of the basic learning competencies in specific subjects, leading them to eventually drop out of school."

Learning modules refer to educational materials, such as textbooks, workbooks, or online resources, designed to support students' learning and provide structured content for specific subjects or skills. These materials play a crucial role in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of change</td>
<td>FC1</td>
<td>Teachers express concerns about the challenges of adopting DORP.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of familiarity</td>
<td>LF1</td>
<td>Teachers mention limited knowledge or experience with DORP.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived challenges</td>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>Teachers anticipate obstacles when implementing DORP.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to validate the responses gathered from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews, as outlined in the data coding matrix (refer to Table 2), it can be inferred that the fundamental assumptions outlined in the DORP Manual (2008) hold true and are significant in comprehending the outcomes of this dropout intervention program.

Specifically, assumption number 7 of the DORP states that the school's dropout rate would be reduced if the school possesses a strong and effective DORP Program that is collaboratively planned and managed by the school head, teachers, students, parents, and other key stakeholders.

The prevailing apprehension among teachers, characterized by fear of change, lack of familiarity, and perceived challenges, is further explored and validated to capture the specific theme surrounding teachers' anxiety. This highlights their lack of motivation to enrol their SARDOs in the DORP program in this post-pandemic period.

The DORP Manual provides guidelines and strategies for implementing a Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) in educational institutions. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members, to effectively address the issue of school dropouts. The manual aims to create a comprehensive and coordinated approach to dropout prevention and intervention.

The concept of information deficiency, as perceived by the participants (refer to Table 3), refers to their lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding about the Dropout Reduction
Program (DORP). This deficiency is evident in the patterns observed regarding communication channels, clarity of information, and timeliness of information. Both teachers and students lack a proper understanding of the intervention program, DORP, in the school, which leads to hesitancy in trusting its effectiveness in assisting students at risk of dropping out.

Table 3. Theme 1 Information Efficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication channels</td>
<td>CC1</td>
<td>Teachers primarily rely on email for receiving DORP-related information.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of information</td>
<td>CI1</td>
<td>Teachers struggle to understand the instructions and guidelines provided.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of information</td>
<td>TI1</td>
<td>Teachers experience delays in receiving timely updates or information.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mostly, teachers primarily rely on email for receiving DORP-related information. However, they often struggle to comprehend the instructions and guidelines provided regarding the program's processes. Moreover, teachers experience delays in receiving timely updates or information related to relevant data necessary for determining and including students as prospective SARDOs. These experiences align with recommendations made by others, who have emphasized the importance of providing orientation for specific programs, as it serves as a foundation for establishing efficient services for the intended beneficiaries (Mayhew, 2012).

Table 4. Theme 2 Instructional Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical strategies</td>
<td>PS1</td>
<td>Teachers use student-centered approaches like project-based learning.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>DG1</td>
<td>Teachers adapt instruction to address diverse learning needs of students.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement and student involvement</td>
<td>EI1</td>
<td>Teachers use interactive methods and technology to engage students.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective communication and timely provision of information are crucial elements in the successful implementation of any educational program. Providing clear and comprehensive orientation to teachers and staff can enhance their understanding and engagement, enabling them to effectively support and guide students at risk of dropping out. Orientation programs are often recommended to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed about the objectives, strategies, and procedures associated with intervention programs like DORP.

In the school setting, it is crucial to thoroughly explain any implemented programs or policies to all teachers and non-teaching staff, ensuring they have the necessary knowledge and understanding of the appropriate processes and procedures that can enhance their performance. Insufficient information can diminish teachers' enthusiasm in motivating students to continue their education. This supports the notion that providing orientation for specific programs in schools emphasizes the role of teachers as agents of change and development, highlighting the need for comprehensive orientation programs for educators (Pham, 2021).
of SARDOs (Students at Risk of Dropout) through motivated teachers or DORP coordinators. From the perspective of program implementers, it involves allocating sufficient time to familiarize teachers and students with the program through training and orientation. However, the functioning of the DORP Council in terms of alternative modes of instructional delivery was not observed, which contradicts the principle that instructional delivery is a process whereby teachers employ a range of instructional strategies to communicate and interact with students regarding academic content and promote student engagement (Arlington University of Education, 2010).

The results show that the patterns leading to these variables were pedagogical strategies, differentiation, and engagement and student involvement (refer to Table 4). These observations from the participants align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of giving due consideration to face-to-face teaching, even when SARDOs are enrolled in the instructional mode of DORP. This further reveals that even in the alternative mode of instructional delivery, such as the DORP, teachers use student-centered approaches like project-based learning.

Effective instructional delivery is crucial in promoting student engagement, addressing diverse learning needs, and creating meaningful learning experiences for SARDOs. Teachers play a pivotal role in adapting instructional strategies, employing student-centered approaches, and utilizing technology and interactive methods to ensure effective instruction. Access to appropriate instructional materials and resources further enhances the quality of teaching and learning experiences for SARDOs.

Even before the pandemic, teachers have been at the forefront of addressing the challenge caused by the lack of instructional materials for students who are at risk of dropping out. They often struggle to access the necessary teaching resources. Although teachers were expected to

<table>
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<th>Pattern</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to resources</td>
<td>AR1</td>
<td>Teachers face challenges in accessing necessary teaching materials.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource adequacy</td>
<td>RA1</td>
<td>Teachers require additional resources to support effective instruction.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource utilization</td>
<td>RU1</td>
<td>Teachers effectively utilize available resources to enhance instruction.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers adapt instruction to address the diverse learning needs of students, especially SARDOs, and they utilize interactive methods and technology to engage all types of students. Simply filling out and answering modules without meaningful discussion may result in only partial awareness of what the students are actually gaining. The expertise of a real teacher lies in being able to assess a student’s performance and identify patterns to determine their individual needs (Burns, 2014).

In Table 5, it is shown that the patterns leading to material availability are access to resources, resource adequacy, and resource utilization. In this study, material availability refers to the immediate access to teaching aids that are essential for ensuring a higher quality of learning for SARDOs. It is widely acknowledged that teachers at all levels utilize a range of instructional materials, such as textbooks, presentations, and handouts, to enhance the effectiveness of their lessons. The quality of these materials directly influences the quality of teaching. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to possess the skill of identifying the best instructional materials.
provide additional materials to support effective instruction for these students, the reality is that such resources are scarce. According to Marbas (2013), instructional materials or educational resources play a crucial role in improving students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, as well as monitoring their understanding of information and contributing to their overall development. By offering students ample opportunities to share their experiences and facilitating long-term learning, their interest and engagement can be nurtured, even in the alternative delivery mode of learning used for students at risk of dropping out.

Furthermore, Figure 1 presents a thematic diagram summarizing the three themes that emerged from the analysis: Information Efficiency, Instructional Delivery, and Material Availability. These themes were derived from the shared experiences expressed by all the participating teachers.

![Figure 1. Thematic Diagram](image)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the lack of budget for module production is identified as the primary barrier for teachers participating in the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP). The cost of learning materials poses a significant challenge for programs like DORP, which aim to improve the academic performance of students at risk of dropping out. Insufficient understanding and knowledge about the program also hinder teachers' engagement, potentially due to inadequate information dissemination by implementers or school administrators.

The likelihood of students completing the program is considered a major obstacle in implementing a sustainable dropout intervention program. Additional concerns raised by teachers include doubts about program efficiency, maintenance, scarcity of service-oriented personnel, and personal resistance to availing the program.

Based on the analysis, the main reason for teachers' reluctance to enrol students at risk of dropping out in the DORP is their insufficient awareness of the program's benefits for the students. There is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the program's goals and objectives among teachers, even though it has been implemented in the school prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Limited understanding of the program, coupled with inadequate monitoring by the school's DORP coordinator and a lack of learning materials for the students, contribute to the low acceptance of the DORP among teachers.

To address these issues, the researcher proposes a schematic program for the proper implementation and evaluation of the DORP, following Owen's outcome evaluation model. The Dropout Reduction Program Implementation Awareness Scheme, presented in Figure 2, suggests a structured approach with thorough planning by the school head and delegation of responsibilities to the DORP coordinator. It includes the appointment of a Learning Session Monitoring Coordinator and Grade Level Coordinators to address the concerns of students at each level. A Materials and Module Coordinator will oversee module production, dissemination, and evaluation in coordination with the School DORP Coordinator. By implementing this scheme with adequate awareness monitoring, material procurement, and evaluation processes, students at risk of dropping out can be better supported to remain in school throughout the academic year, thereby alleviating challenges for both teachers and students.
Recommendation

Based on the analysis and findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Prioritize raising teachers' awareness about the importance of addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs) in the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP).
2. Conduct teacher education and reorientation sessions to familiarize teachers with the DORP and its privileges and responsibilities for enlisting SARDOs.
3. Provide clear communication and continuous support to reassure teachers of the school's commitment to supporting SARDOs through effective implementation of the DORP.
4. Convince reluctant teachers of the DORP's effectiveness and cost-effectiveness in reducing dropout rates and addressing the specific needs of SARDOs.
5. Allocate a budget for learning materials required for the DORP and acknowledge teachers' efforts in sustaining SARDOs through program implementation.
6. Implement an awareness scheme including regular training sessions, information dissemination, and continuous support to enhance teachers' knowledge and understanding of the DORP and improve SARDOs' regular attendance.

By implementing these recommendations, the school can create a supportive environment for SARDOs, ensuring their continued participation in the DORP and effectively reducing dropout rates.

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