



Literacy Champions: Lived Experiences of PhD Reading Scholars in the LiSQuP Program

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the lived experiences of the reading scholars in the LiSQuP program, engaging the stories of the scholars in their coursework. It utilized a phenomenological approach, capturing the authentic narratives of the participants, students of the reading program in the LiSQuP mechanism, and abstracting codes and themes from their responses. The findings of the study included four themes: LiSQuP's Demanding Standards, Academic and Personal Milestones in the LiSQuP Scholar Experience, Advancing Core Literacy Skills through LiSQuP Scholarship, and Innovative Literacy Strategies and Leadership in Reading Education. This study contributes to the discussions in different fields and trends, opening channels of discussion and explorations in the areas of professional development, scholarship of teaching, reading specialization, literacy approaches, and studies on LiSQuP scholarship. This material provides different trajectories of research opportunities in these fields, culling in related disciplines in the construction of more knowledge.

Keywords: Graduate School, LiSQuP, Professional Development, Reading Interventions, Reading Specialists

INTRODUCTION

In the hope of providing quality education, professional development (PD) programs were organized globally to ensure efficient instructional delivery in classrooms. Considering the diverse aspect of the scholarship of teaching, a variety of explorations in many subdisciplines gave opportunities for researchers to contribute. Darling-Hammond (2016) posted critical insights on the fields of teacher education, culling effective strategies in helping teachers optimize their practice. Nevertheless, the ever-evolving trends in the field of learning remained demanding, implicating teachers to earn better stances in terms of professional delivery. PD mechanisms were organized to help address this need. In the Philippines, one of the national

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provisions was the Linking Standards to Quality Practice (LiSQuP) initiative, a novel approach in the area of professional development.

LiSQuP was a collaborative program between the Department of Education (DepEd) and Philippine Normal University (PNU) (DepEd, [2021](#)). This professional development approach implemented graduate and post-graduate programs for the agency's teachers, requiring DepEd-linked requirements called Job-Embedded Learning (JEL) tasks. JEL allowed optimized standards to be presented which teacher-scholars could replicate and administer in their settings. Compared to the regular degrees offered at PNU given in twelve weeks, LiSQuP differs in having only 6 weeks of instructions. Moreover, considering the strong advocacy of PNU towards the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) (RITQ, [2020](#)), the program assumed developmental activities and specialized training geared towards its parameters. LiSQuP offered a specialized postgraduate program, the Doctor of Philosophy in Reading Education (PhD Read), and enlisted teachers across the country, inviting reading enthusiasts and turning them into literacy champions. With the agenda of improving the state of readers in their localities, the teacher-scholars went through the rigorous training of LiSQuP, excellently complying with the course requirements, and sharing best literacy approaches in their classes. Especially with the current concern on the state of reading due to the recent PISA results (Chi, [2024](#)), these scholars have been eager to contribute by being better professionals. Working across the intercultural demands of Filipino classrooms, the students learned how to find means to develop and upskill their pedagogical arsenal towards literacy (Manuel, [2025](#); Gatcho et al., [2024](#)). LiSQuP gave them the opportunity to be champions for this cause but not without challenges (Baja et al., [2024](#)).

Purpose of the Study

As a novel mechanism in the area of PD, this study provides fresh insights, giving materials that are helpful on how reading teachers can be given the best ways of helping them improve their literacy approaches. The scarce quantitative data on the operation of LiSQuP was given attention in this material, adding a layer of substantial contribution to its area and related fields especially on its role to the development and implementation of literacy techniques. Current trends relative to the scope of the study were given implicative thoughts, locally and globally, generating discussion and enticing explorations for further research.

This study was conducted to examine the experiences of reading scholars in the LiSQuP program, gleaning insights from their narratives as they undertook the scholarship of PhD Read towards being literacy experts.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study utilized the LiSQuP Development Framework (LDF) as its anchor for discussion and analysis, demonstrating growth in three aspects among its students; *character projection*, *cognitive processing*, and *career progression* (Manuel, [2024](#)). This framework is an appropriate lens in this conduct, considering that specific experiences under this mechanism may lead to the aforementioned developments.

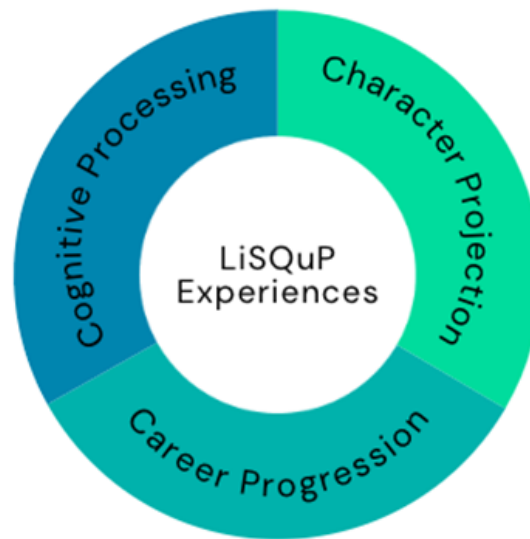


Figure 1. The LiSQuP development framework.

The Communities of Practice (COP) (Wenger, [1998](#)) is also an influential perspective in examining the experiences of the scholars. LiSQuP, as a common ground, is defined in COP's tripartite dimension of; *identity*, *function*, and *shared potential*. Moreover, it contributes to the study through the utilization of its six stages: *potential*, *coalescing*, *active*, *dispersed*, and *memorable*. Additionally, Wenger believed that learning possessed a fourfold framework, *meaning*, *practice*, *community*, and *identity*. The growth of the scholars coalesces the dynamics of COP's dimensions, framework, and stages, advancing the cause of literacy through their own development.

Conceptual Framework

This study followed a process that places the lived experiences of the reading scholars under the lenses of the two given theoretical frameworks, LDF and CoP. Since it assumed a phenomenological approach, the transcribed responses from the interviews were discussed and analyzed thematically. The tenets of both LDF and CoP were utilized in informing the discussion of the output, constructing identities of the scholars towards being reading experts, or *Literacy Champions*.

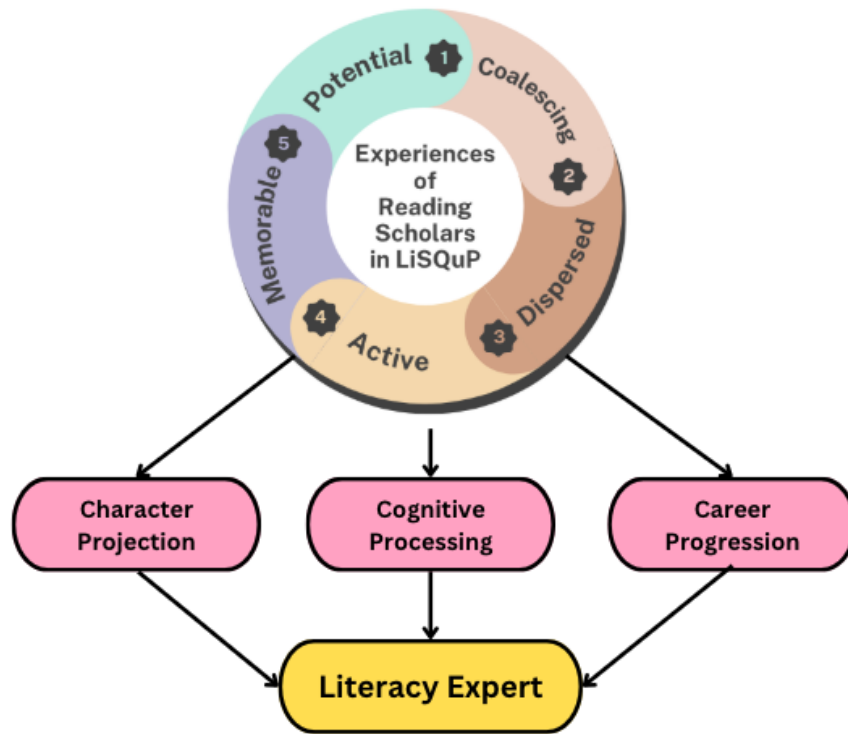


Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

Specific interests in the rearing of literacy champions under the provision of professional development mechanisms provided sub-themes in this section. The selection of the materials included the type of source, the relevance of the materials, and the publication year. The researchers had repeatedly gone over the themes and materials to ensure that the criteria were met for inclusion in this portion.

Professional Development of Literacy Specialists

While studies suggest that only high-quality studies of short PD have strong impact on learner's literacy (Basma & Savage, [2018](#)), the link between the two cannot be ignored. After all, PDs provide reading specialists with enhanced knowledge and skills that support literacy gains (Shelton et al., [2022](#)). Some of these influences were the positive impact in phonological awareness and development among children (Markussen-Brown et al., [2016](#)). PD activities focused on comprehension, vocabulary expansion and other reading foundational skills methodologies also displayed substantial insights in recent studies (Vaughn et al., [2022](#); Wake & Benson, [2016](#)). On the other hand, Kimathi & Bertram ([2019](#)) argued that the school culture and one's motivation to improve literacy pedagogies are essential to one's accumulation of effective approaches. Teachers should have the internal desire to improve as the prestige and effectiveness of PDs seems to rely on this inward aspect.

Various concerns in literacy for teacher training were also addressed in literature such as inclusive aspects (Gatcho et al., [2024](#)), community-based interventions (Manuel, [2024](#)), and supplemental intervention materials (Aparicio, [2023](#)). DepEd in-service training also included accommodation and modification practices for young readers (Andrade,

[2022](#)). While this is not an exhaustive list, the challenge of keeping up with these raised concerns are always haunting literacy specialists, knowing that new ones will pop up at the front of their classrooms.

The researchers explored these substantial insights and contributed to the study's discussion of the findings. The literacy trajectories of the PD programs and the issues raised in literature appreciate the projection of the experiences of the PhD Read scholars in LiSQuP.

Challenges in Doctoral Studies in Literacy

Literacy education possesses pressing problems which advanced studies can give account to (Rainey & Kwok, [2016](#)). Nevertheless, the pressure that these explorations produce stress the students, resulting in different challenges to their academic endeavors. Studies demonstrated that finding appropriate approaches, especially to specific circumstances, were challenging (Stuvland et al., [2019](#)). Similarly, literacy scholars who prepared for sidelined communities linked the critical race theory to their concerns and concluded the hardships of making their students develop a habit for reading (Wallace, [2018](#)). There were also scholars who were studying in non-English native countries about their hardships in finding the balance between social justice and neoliberal ideas, generating tensions in their conservative countries (Sondari, [2021](#)). As a supervising professor, Paudel ([2024](#)) also shared how his students struggled to produce their dissertation paper. He mentioned that their weak levels of proposal preparations, research proper, and defending their academic works have caused them immense trauma and depression. Related to this concern is the rarity of materials that reading scholars may appeal to for knowledge development (Holmberg et al., [2019](#)). This adds a layer of stress to the academic students as literature for research in the field of literacy is essential to their course work.

The challenges faced by scholars in literacy programs are helpful in this study as it provides significant insights on the experiences of reading scholars in LiSQuP. It sheds light on the challenges that scholars faced in their course work and were analyzed along the lines of these materials.

Reading Scholars and Professional Identity Formation

The interest in academic writing seems to flourish among those who take post graduate courses in literacy and other related disciplines (Choi et al., [2022](#)). While the research became specially interesting for these scholars, literacy specialists also enhanced their pedagogical knowledge, feedback to students, and coaching means (Parsons, [2018](#)). Professional development programs, especially graduate and postgraduate advances, exhibit opportunities for reading teachers to claim professional identities that have optimized, if not better, means of serving communities. According to Ciampa & Reisboard ([2020](#)), reading specialization advancement programs led graduate students to develop reflective practices, critical participatory inquiry, and action research leadership. Stevens & Hinchman ([2020](#)) did not ignore their personal identities on top of their professional careers, believing that they contribute to their academy-wrought identities.

The development that these studies demonstrate give vital materials which the researchers could draw from in abstracting the analysis of the

findings. As literacy enthusiasts demonstrated the opportunity to grow and form professional identities amidst professional advancements in literacy disciplines.

Studies on LiSQuP

Considering that this initiative is novel, the scarcity of materials dedicated was assumed. Baja et al. (2024) contributed their share in the area of professional development, providing insights on the challenges of the program. LiSQuP, apparently, as a joint initiative of DepEd and PNU, sought to promote teacher quality by designing its operation filtered in the rubrics of PPST parameters (Nivera et al., 2021). Apparently, LiSQuP possesses the capacity to enrich the pedagogical approaches, integrating recent innovations and integrations in multidisciplinary fields (Gonio & Bauyot, 2024). Cerna (2022) demonstrated enhanced teaching in helping students to read better, publishing action research and showing gratitude to a LiSQuP professor in one of the research classes. Manuel (2024) posited concurring ideas with these findings as he presented his LiSQuP experiences to have contributed to his professional and personal growth. On the other hand, Caingcoy (2024) revealed his findings that LiSQuP students struggled to accomplish studies concerning multivariate analysis.

The limited literature conducted in the name of LiSQuP could only be counted in one's fingers. Nevertheless, this small quantity of materials shared insights on how the mechanism has provided influence in the experiences of its scholars.

Highlighted Gap

This literature review presented numerous gaps in which this material can produce opportunities with. The most obvious is the limited studies on the implementation of LiSQuP, especially its capacity to bring in literacy experts. Mechanisms from other agencies with similar platforms, a collaboration with premium centers of teacher education, could have also contributed to the navigation of studies to help the researchers inform the flow of this study. Moreover, the formation of literacy experts could have been strengthened with more case studies, allowing better perception of specific professional development of reading specialists. While this study narrows its conduct to LiSQuP reading scholars and their experiences with post-graduate coursework, it opens doors for explorations for addressing these gaps.

METHOD

Research Design

Qualitative design was utilized in this study, approaching the conduct phenomenologically. The subjective aspect is highlighted in this material, emphasizing the lived experiences of the reading scholars in the LiSQuP initiative. The Husserlian approach, known for its introspective and first-hand learning (Creely, 2015), is an apt model to follow considering the intent of the study to dig deeper into the scholars' experiences in the program.

Participants

Purposive convenience sampling was utilized in the selection of participants. The criteria for selection included: *employment in any DepEd school, scholarship in the PhD Read Program, and academic course completion in LiSQuP*. The researchers considered the busy schedules of these scholars, opting for a convenience approach and interviewing only who agreed to participate in their most convenient time. Six (6) scholars agreed to participate in the study and were classmates with the researchers in the program. While the instructions were delivered online, the setting of its implementation was limited to Filipino teachers deployed across DepEd schools, hence its setting localized in the Philippines.

Instrument

Semi-structured interview questions were conducted to the participants, lasting around 15 minutes per participant. The flow included an introductory portion from the researcher to allow the scholars to be comfortable with the interview. The researcher prepared open-ended questions and helped them share their memorable and distinct experiences in the program. The questions were also framed to direct the sharing towards literacy approaches, and their gleanings to make their pedagogical techniques more efficient.

Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were administered online. Using Zoom, with its recording function and better time allowance, participants were able to answer interview questions. The recorded dialogues were transcribed, and in cases when it was spoken in Filipino, it was translated using Google Translate. Another form of interview utilized was through Facebook Messenger which had some of the participants answer interview questions through its platform. Since the messages in this channel were saved, it was easy to import the responses. Thematic analysis was utilized in analyzing the collected data, abstracting themes from it. For a more efficient coding system, separate coding and re-coding were administered by the researchers. The independently coded materials of the researchers were compared against each other to distill the substance of the data. The refined materials were drafted and abstracted into themes. The codes were based on the flow of the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researchers.

Table 1. Data abstraction example.

Data	Codes	Theme	Description
My entire experience can be summed up into three words, challenging, overwhelming, beneficial.	General LiSQuP Experience	LiSQuP's Demanding Standards	This theme talks about the challenges experienced by the scholars and their

insights
about their
journey.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers ensured that ethical standards were emphasized in the conduct of the study. The scholars were anonymized in the presentation of data to ensure their safety and security. Accountability, fairness, and integrity were given emphasis from the conception, proposal, and in the research proper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section highlights the data exported from the interviews, presenting the themes agreed upon by the three researchers. Four themes emerged from the responses, informing the analysis of the study.

Table 2. Abstraction codes.

Data	Codes	Theme	Description
My entire experience can be summed up into three words, challenging, overwhelming, beneficial.			
My experience is generally positive as it stretched me to remain scholarly in my work as a scholar and as a practitioner. The downside can be attributed to the time constraint.			
It was challenging because we were studying and working at the same time.			
My experience in LiSQuP was quite a roller coaster ride. Initially, I was hesitant to continue my journey in LiSQuP due to the numerous tasks and responsibilities that needed to be accomplished. I also doubted my ability to handle all the requirements necessary to pass the program. However, with the support of my colleagues and professors, I was able to persevere and successfully pass the comprehensive examination.	General LiSQuP Experience	LiSQuP's Demanding Standards	This theme talks about the challenges experienced by the scholars and their insights about their journey.

Challenging and enriching

Very challenging

It was too much to handle considering my responsibilities in my work place and my home. There were so many crying times for me.

I like looking at my tracker because it summarizes the outputs we've had and our reflection. But I like the use of Turnitin as it guides us in our scholarly journey even up to the comprehensive exam. The first few months of the LMS were kinda disastrous because of the glitches and we had to master also the its use because it was also new to us. What I appreciate the most too is the generosity of my professors sharing their resources and the friendship we created in our GCs.

The sharing of insights and graded presentation of our output and assignments

Whenever I reflect on my LiSQuP journey, I always remember Dr. Yu. She was one of our first professors in the program and was incredibly kind, loving, and considerate. Whenever we needed more time to complete our requirements, she would understand our situation and encourage us to finish. I am still very grateful to Dr. Yu, as she was one of my inspirations to continue my scholarship program at PNU.

I also recall my title defense, where the professors were very generous in offering recommendations and suggestions to improve our study.

They were approachable and attentive, allowing us to clarify any points that needed further explanation. I remember Dr. Heidi

Specific
LiSQuP
Memories

Academic
and
Personal
Milestones
in the
LiSQuP
Scholar
Experience

This theme shows the key learning experiences that are shared by the LiSQuP scholars in their academic and personal aspects of their scholarship.

saying, "Sure ka ba na PhD student ka? Mukha ka kasing high school."

1. completing assignments and tasks amidst the many demands of work
2. Joining classes in the middle of a deped activity
3. Virtual collaboration to complete tasks

In our section, we met various professors with various KSAV. We were blessed to have kind and considerate professors although there were few professors who made us struggle at some point.

LiSQuP developed a more proactive teacher and researcher in me.

It provided me with a strong anchor as I got immersed with literature and the rich experiences of my professors and colleagues.

I have gain some insights in the implementation of reading program in our school

Because of LiSQuP, I was able to discover and rediscover approaches to reading, specifically the brain-based approach to reading, which focuses on the brain's natural learning processes to improve reading comprehension, fluency, and retention.

I was able to provide targeted technical assistance to school heads and teachers in improving literacy status of learners

LiSQuP helped me to realize the importance of theory, practice, and research in terms of literacy. I became aware of these three in implementing reading projects and programs in our school.

Growth in
Foundatio
nal
Literacy
Abilities

Advancing
Core
Literacy
Skills
through
LiSQuP
Scholarshi
p

This theme reflects how scholarly immersion and applied research led to meaningful contribution s in literacy education.

It would be the brain-based reading strategies and the reflective teaching techniques.

When I created the Division Reading Framework and provided other resources that were based on literature and research from local and global context.

I have a reading program called R.E.A.D Clinic . It was originally crafted for learners in key stage 1.

However, since I was already assigned in High School, and upon learning that a lot of learners feel frustration and some syllabic reading, I can see that this reading intervention program can still be applied in High School.

In our school, I implemented reflective teaching, which allowed teachers to share their thoughts, challenges, and successes in teaching reading to their students. This approach enabled me to be more involved in addressing their concerns and providing the necessary technical assistance and solutions. As a result, it helped foster a greater passion for teaching reading among the teachers.

1. creation of literacy committee who shall oversee the school's reading status
2. Enhancing school heads' literacy leadership skills for technical assistance provision to teachers

As an elementary school teacher, I consider the Early Literacy and the Brain based learning in our reading intervention to help them develop their skills and improve in reading.

Developm
ent of
Literacy
Programs
and
Framework
s

Innovative
Literacy
Strategies
and
Leadership
in Reading
Education

The LisQup
Scholars
apply
research-
based
literacy
strategies,
which
implements
structured
reading
programs,
and foster
leadership in
literacy
advocacy.

LiSQuP's Demanding Standards

One of the common threads in the responses of the participants was the academic rigor offered by the LiSQuP program. Descriptions such as

“overwhelming”, “challenging”, and “roller-coaster ride” give the idea that the program provided uneasy tasks, requiring focus, time, and efforts from the scholars amidst their busy work schedules. Additionally, the participants also described their tasks as “numerous” and implicated challenges due to time-constraint. As PNU briefly states, this degree-granting professional development program would have semesters cut in 6 weeks per course (RITQ, [2020](#)). Additionally, the challenged students revealed by Caingcoy ([2024](#)) put a question on both the academic rigor, and the scholarly skill of the students, inquiring whose side is making the program difficult. On the other hand, while LiSQuP delivered challenging requirements, the participants believed that these are enriching and beneficial experiences. In a way, one can allude to the commonly used phrase for such courses, “No Pain, No Gain.”

Placing this theme under the LiSQuP Development Framework (LDF), the challenges that the scholars had to overcome were instrumental to positive changes (Manuel, [2024](#)). While the theme has limited insights on the results of the scholarship, one can assume that it would lead to professional development, as it ought to, and character improvement and knowledge expansion. This is similar to the findings of Parsons ([2018](#)) and Baja et al. ([2024](#)), postulating that postgraduate students ought to experience hardships in their academic journey and enjoy development in its way. While somewhat vague in its presentation, having an enriched experience in the program could mean a more developed knowledge or skill, another aspect of the LDF. This is a vital point to discuss as Choi et al. ([2022](#)) shared ideas on flourishing students in postgraduate classes, leveraging the difficulty of LiSQuP with its product. The Communities of Practice (COP) theory provides significant insights on this teacher enhancement program as LiSQuP brings in a common identity among its scholars, scholars who were challenged by its mechanism. Framing their challenging experiences through its six stages, their identity as overwhelmed students, a common depiction of postgraduate students (Paudel, [2024](#); Holmberg et al., [2019](#)), would be their means to getting better. As participants mentioned, the program possessed challenging tasks but the descriptions “beneficial” and “enriching” demonstrate its capacity to help teachers attain better versions of their professional stances. This strengthens their capacity to develop their literacy thought-actions to better places, allowing them to create enhanced plans based on their optimized professional identities.

Academic and Personal Milestones in the LiSQuP Scholar Experience

Second theme that emerged from the code abstraction and theme development was the academic and personal milestones of the scholars. The utilization of the Turnitin platform in course accomplishment introduced the students to the academic rigor of LiSQuP, displaying its standard with the accepted levels of similarity index and AI-generation. The expertise showcased by the instructors were augmented by their generosity, allowing the rookie researchers to learn from their fields and improve their academic competencies. Additionally, collaborative endeavors among the scholars were considered productive and fruitful among them. These academic milestones were deemed remarkable for the participants. The other subdivision of this

theme referred to the personal milestones of the scholars. In this area, the participants found the friendships that developed within the scholars themselves and with the instructors and support team were noteworthy in their experiences in the program. Distinctive and personalized feedback from the instructors such as being labeled “too young” for a postgraduate program, or giving encouragement to the challenged students were emphasized in the responses particularly for this theme. These two subdivisions in this theme were particularly given a premium in the analysis of the study against its frameworks.

The CoP provides a rubric in these experiences, culling in its six stages in analyzing the experiences. Wenger (1998) would have approved the utilization of this framework as an appropriate perspective in sifting and discussing the LiSQuP experience. As scholars who were recommended by their respective divisions, the scholars were assumed to possess the potential in their enrolment. In the first place, they were already labeled as reading specialists in their local settings. Fair enough, specialists are the target of particular PD programs (Shelton et al., 2022) and in the case of this mechanism, reading specialists. As social beings themselves, the LiSQuP adventure was meaningful due to their connections, via classmates, instructors, and the support team, and that their learning could be attributed to these networks. The credits that Stevens & Hinchman (2020) afforded to the personalities of scholars ought to be capitalized in the connections and fellowship in LiSQuP. The common identity helped, but nevertheless the personalities that each of the students had were also instrumental in making these networks work efficiently, despite their cultural differences, and proximity. Wenger’s consideration for development as literacy champions could be attributed to the identity wing of the CoP, emphasizing their projected professional output. While distinctively aiming for the production of literacy experts, the LiSQuP mechanism also valued the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) in its instructional delivery, creating a more specific approach in optimizing experts based on national standards (Nivera et al., 2021). These insights are also in line with the LDF, demonstrating the capacity of the program to improve teachers professionally, and personally. As Manuel (2024) attested in his autoethnographic study, LiSQuP could create such a product. The findings of Ciampa & Reisboard (2020) also coincide with the nature of the LiSQuP’s production as the development of reading specialists in terms of critical thinking and reflective inquiry, both of which may fall under LDF’s cognitive processing wing. This theme, while displaying overlaps between professional and personal embodiments, showcases the importance of its agenda especially among reading specialists.

Advancing Core Literacy Skills through LiSQuP Scholarship

As the country continues to grapple with the dismal performance of students in standardized reading assessments at both national and international levels, the call for reading specialization becomes increasingly pronounced in an attempt to increase achievement scores across key stage areas. The insights gathered from the scholarship of educators in professional development programs such as this prove to be strategic and

decisive, as the influence grows exponentially when communities of practice are built with an ecosystem of support from willing partners.

The shared LiSQuP experiences resulted in a more cohesive understanding of Reading Program Implementation in various educational contexts. As a result, it is hoped that more higher education institutions will offer a similar professional development program in partnership with generous sponsors who have the same vision to accelerate the capacities of educators and school leaders in advancing literacy education that will redound to improved learning outcomes of all children.

As the participants in the study mirrored the three salient points in the LiSQuP Development Framework espoused by Manuel (2024), their narratives invite attention to brain science that explores how reading instruction can be naturally supported in various learning environments. Their stories can also spark conversations among the executive officials in the Department of Education to create *plantilla* items that will institutionalize the role of reading experts in the sector to merit the recognition it deserves, considering that reading is a precursor to effective learning. Furthermore, the career progression illustrates the trajectory of a reading scholar as regards how far the influence can extend in building a community of readers alongside the appropriate compensation that goes with the position.

Innovative Literacy Strategies and Leadership in Reading Education

This theme included the advancement of reading strategies that the scholars developed during their LiSQuP coursework. Foundational concepts such as brain-based learning, reflective approaches, and early literacy were beneficial to the creation of literacy interventions of the students. The scholars developed strategies based on these theories in their own localities, approaching the reading levels of their students with research-based ideas. Some managed to create division-wide interventions, while there were who experimented on their respective places in different key stage levels. The more confident stances of the reading scholars provided avenues for leadership in literacy agendas.

These innovations at the end of the scholars may be discussed both with the LDF and CoP frameworks. In LDF, the professional advancement in leadership assumption, and development of innovative interventions may categorize their responses. As Manuel (2024) explained in the LDF, LiSQuP experiences make such productions. Moreover, it also assumes a character growth among the scholars as the confidence and critical thinking are necessary in the implementation of the programs. Similar enhancements were also observed in literacy graduate programs (Choi et al., 2022; Parsons, 2018), justifying that reading development still interests teachers in different settings. Wenger's (1998) CoP reinforced these strategical upskilling among the scholars as its fourfold wings help analyze these enhancements. For instance, the scholars' learning of foundational theories to literacy helped them understand better their local and interlinked contexts, allowing them to see their students beyond the visible. They managed to create interventions based on the meanings that they created and labeled on their own settings. This led to the practice of research and continuing testing of

their developed ideas, allowing them to be immersed in the community of reading scholars more. Gonio & Bauyot (2024) exemplified this model, creating reading interventions based on their foundational gleanings. As a temporary end, the scholars found themselves assuming the role of a reading expert, despite their present status as postgraduate students. Their identities as specialists and experts finally took hold of their hands in their development and implementation of reading interventions.

Implications to Current Trends and Related Fields

The findings of this material implicate current trends and related fields, culling in more interest in exploring their contributions to these.

Professional Development

As a general field, the insights generated in this conduct contribute to the present state of this area. Professional development has been a prominent field but nevertheless has a continuing demand for fresh insights due to its ever-evolving nature. The demanding challenges of LiSQuP, as presented by the respondents, ought to be given attention by PD developers as it could help teachers to improve in different aspects. Additionally, the generation of experts in LiSQuP may also be benchmarked by other institutions to help their local teachers produce similar results. The milestones narrated by the participants demonstrate important values which may strengthen present PD students in graduate schools to persevere in their course work and find hope that amidst the challenges of their program, there is a silver lining waiting for them at their completion. The LDF, while specifically developed for LiSQuP, gives essential information for such growth.

This study also showcases provisions of ease of tensions in PDs partly due to its intended output, recognizing that challenging accidents in such mechanisms lead to substantial attainment of goals. Especially in doctoral programs, concerns such as academic challenges (Rainey & Kwok, 2016), circumstantial difficulties (Stuvland et al., 2019), and research struggles (Paudel, 2024) are given rational meanings, given the themes of Personal and Academic Milestones in LiSQuP, and Innovative Literacy Strategies and Leadership in Reading Education. The responses were relevant to the development of PD mechanisms, not only for reading specialists, consequentially entertaining interdisciplinary aspects of PDs to be beneficial to other areas of knowledge. This arouses dialectic conversations among PD providers and how it can provide access to such potential, allowing flexibility in uncontrollable circumstances in such mechanisms.

Scholarship of Teaching

This study provided integral findings to the development of reading specialists. The rigorous way the teacher-scholars were trained provides enormous ideas in advancing teacher education. This implicates teacher education institutions (TEI), challenging their present states of instructional delivery and the academic rigor that their students go through. This study demonstrated that difficulties are breakthrough opportunities for graduate students, and that such challenging situations may also possess similar opportunities for students in TEIs. The themes developed in this material,

while exclusively for literacy, may be meritorious for examination. It opens research trajectories which growth may be assumed in similarly constructed TEI programs.

Present issues in the scholarship of teaching, especially in graduate levels, are given directions in the themes generated in this material. The discussions framed in the Communities of Practice (CoP) synthesize the responses regarding the teacher-scholars' narratives are insightful in helping create efficient teacher education graduate programs. Scholarly competencies such as reflective practices, critical participatory inquiry, and action research leadership are implicated in graduate school (Ciampa & Reisboard, [2020](#)). The stories of the participants addressed these demanded skills and turned into a part of their critical weaponry for academic accomplishment. The CoP's identity tenet colored this assumption of scholarly capacity from the scholar's end, cultivating proficiency in themselves, hence adding a layer of accumulated knowledge to the scholarship of teaching.

Reading Specialization

As a specific program for reading specialists, this study heavily contributes to this field. The foundational theories that were narrated by the scholars as part of their learning emphasizes its strong place in this area. Moreover, exploring the feasibility of reading specialists as potential permanent items also provides a channel for researchers in the field to spark interest among its enthusiasts. Considering that the Philippines has a dire need for a strong program that is dedicated to improving PISA-based reading skills, the opportunity to create discussions in this field may be given attention. Curricular modification in TEIs for reading majors may be considered for further development based on the themes generated in this study.

The creation of Literacy Champions in the context of this study bolsters present programs for reading specialists. Moreover, it boosts challenging curriculum design in terms of producing reading majors considering the product in this paper. This is integral to the assumption of literacy expertise among the scholars as such mechanisms are deemed capable of providing skill-developing channels (Stevens & Hinchman, [2020](#)). Policy and curriculum developers can take note of the proportionate level of difficulty to exact such growth in professional competencies specially in reading agenda.

Literacy Approaches

The last theme abstracted from the responses included the development and implementation of novel reading strategies based on research. The foundational theories in which these approaches were based ought to be examined repeatedly to find appropriate approaches to various settings. Case studies on these methods ought to be explored and contribute to the growing number of literacy approaches. Additionally, benchmarking on division-drafted implementations would give significant information about these strategies and should be capitalized on, adding another layer of contribution to this field.

These approaches developed by the researchers could be explored and tested in a scholarly manner. On top of adding to the pool of Scientific advances in the context of literacy approaches, future researchers could also strengthen their probes by appealing to these materials. The theme linked with the foundational development of the scholars and the implementation of approaches in their localities possesses substantial guidance in addressing similar settings. As Gonio & Bauyot (2024) observed among LiSQuP scholars, it can provide such mechanisms for strategy creation and provision. This also reinforces the career progression wing of the LDF as it specifies professional growth in this scene, constituting literacy mandates for teachers to consider.

Studies on LiSQuP Scholarship

As mentioned in the earlier section of this study, studies on LiSQuP are scarce. This study contributes to the growing materials relative to this program. The tension observed among the challenges of the program and the positive benefits that it gives the scholars could be explored in different lenses to promote its mechanism. It displays scholarly development on the end of the reading scholars. This may serve as a benchmark for studies for other students in other disciplines.

The utility of the LDF as an analyzing framework in this study advocates its use in different fields of expertise. It can magnify the potential growth that teacher-scholars can accumulate over its course. Considering the scarcity of LiSQuP-linked studies in the present, it would be helpful if the program continues for further studies. The growth that the respondents indicated in the responses also supports this endeavor, ensuring that the cost of this PD is worth every cent spent on each scholar. In light of the given inadequacies of the students (Caingcoy, 2024), the LiSQuP curriculum developers can reinforce tasks that help improve the demanded skills. Additionally, the use of the PPST as a guiding rubric in the implementation of the program could be examined and enhanced in the next cycle of implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to examine the lived experiences of the reading scholars in the LiSQuP program, engaging the stories of the scholars in their coursework. As a qualitative design, it utilized a phenomenological approach, capturing the authentic narratives of the participants and abstracting themes from their responses. The theoretical frameworks that were appealed to in the analysis of the themes were the LiSQuP Development Framework and the Communities of Practice. The findings of the study included four themes: *LiSQuP's Demanding Standards*, *Academic and Personal Milestones in the LiSQuP Scholar Experience*, *Advancing Core Literacy Skills through LiSQuP Scholarship*, and *Innovative Literacy Strategies and Leadership in Reading Education*. *LiSQuP's Demanding Standards* referred to the challenging experiences that the scholars had during their course work in the program. While the academic rigor was undeniable, it also led to the growth of the students in different perspectives. The second generated theme, *Academic and Personal Milestones in the LiSQuP Scholar*

Experience, showcased the different advancement of the participants which were emphasized in their narratives. Considering the specific program, Doctor of Philosophy in Reading Education, explored in this material, the theme *Advancing Core Literacy Skills through LiSQuP Scholarship*, painted the experiences of the participants with stories of core literacy skills advancement, granting foundational formulations that essential in constructing reading interventions. The last theme discussed in this study, *Innovative Literacy Strategies and Leadership in Reading Education*, focused on the developed reading strategies of the scholars, based on their exposure and immersion to the theories related to reading development. In a way, the themes were helpful in creating a version of the scholars that may deem their own professional stances as literacy champions.

Considering these conclusive items, the researchers recommend feasible action items that may be beneficial to the development of literacy champions in PD programs, and into the educational sector in a general manner. Continuing the program would provide more data that may be analyzed and synthesized alongside similar studies to strengthen its production. Additionally, providing rigorous PD programs, graduate programs or not, ought to be emphasized in deliveries considering the findings of this paper. Giving priority on research skills would also be helpful to students, immersing teachers in academic enterprises to grant them better navigation of PD programs, especially if the mechanism is similarly linked to graduate school. This would ease up research-based difficulties of teachers and develop a better culture of research in their localities. The literacy interventions developed by the scholars ought to be continuously tested for validity and productivity. This will help the national agency determine appropriate reading interventions and approaches that are productive to the reading populace. Moreover, it also culls a demand for reading specialist items, allowing a more focused work in division-based literacy agenda.

This study contributes to the discussions in different fields and trends, opening channels of discussion and explorations in the areas of *professional development, scholarship of teaching, reading specialization, literacy approaches, and studies on LiSQuP scholarship*. This material provides different trajectories of research opportunities in these fields, culling in other disciplines in the construction of more knowledge. This would spark significant discussions among researchers, reading specialists, TEI curriculum developers, and PD developers.

DISCLOSURE OF STATEMENTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicting interests in the conduct of this study, including financial and administrative concerns. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) platforms were not utilized in the construction and development of the study. Ethical considerations were given emphasis throughout the course of the paper.

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