Self-efficacy of Early Childhood Education Pre-Service Teachers after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, on the self-efficacy of second-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students at Quezon City University during the first semester of AY 2023-2024. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research assesses how participation in the program influences students' perceived teaching competence and confidence. Quantitative surveys were used to measure changes in self-efficacy before and after the program, focusing on areas like classroom management and instructional strategies. Qualitative data from interviews or focus groups provided deeper insights into participants' experiences. Findings show a positive impact on participants' self-efficacy, with significant improvements in their confidence and perceived teaching abilities. The study highlights the importance of experiential learning programs like Tara, Basa! in shaping the self-efficacy of future educators, offering valuable insights into improving teacher education and early childhood education practices.

Keywords: Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, self-efficacy, early childhood education, pre-service teachers, teaching competence

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of young learners, with reading being central to shaping their overall growth [1]. Early educational experiences are closely linked to a child's cognitive processes, which are vital for academic success [2], [3]. Recognizing the diverse needs of young learners, tutoring programs have emerged as a valuable tool to address individual learning requirements, providing personalized support that extends beyond traditional classroom settings [4], [5]. These programs have proven effective in creating adaptive learning environments that foster better educational outcomes for young children.

In response to challenges in equitable access to quality education, tutoring programs are critical in providing additional support, especially for children facing socio-economic disadvantages [6]. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines launched the 'Tara, Basa!' Tutoring Program in 2023 to address foundational literacy challenges among elementary students while offering short-term employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged university students [7]. The program aims to support both children's academic development and provide employment avenues, creating a multi-faceted approach to educational improvement and community empowerment [8].

This study focuses on the impact of the 'Tara, Basa!' Tutoring Program on the self-efficacy of second-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students at Quezon City University (QCU) during the first semester of AY 2023-2024. The research examines how participation in the program influences perceived teaching competence and confidence in areas such as classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and early childhood reading. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how such programs can enhance the professional development of pre-service teachers, particularly

in the context of early childhood education.

The research is grounded in Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which suggests that individuals' beliefs in their abilities to perform tasks influence their actions and outcomes [9], [10]. Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes observational learning, and constructivist learning theory, which focuses on active knowledge construction, further inform the study's framework. The research evaluates the Tara, Basa! program's impact on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy using Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological states—and explores the program's effectiveness in enhancing teaching competence, focusing on classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement.

The findings of the present study will provide insights into how the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program influences the perceived teaching competence and confidence of future educators. It will assess whether participation in the program significantly improves these dimensions, offering empirical evidence to inform teacher preparation programs and educational policies. The research will also gather participants' insights on how their experiences in the program have shaped their self-efficacy beliefs, which can help refine QCU's curriculum and teaching strategies, ensuring that future educators are better equipped to meet the challenges of early childhood education.

METHODS

The study examines the influence of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, on the self-efficacy of second-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students who actively engaged in the tutoring program. The study employed a mixed-methods approach. It was conducted Quezon City University during the first semester of AY 2023-2024.

The survey was conducted prior to the actual start of the program sometime on August 1 to 4, 2023 and a week after the end of the program, sometime in December 13 to 16, 2023. The pre-program survey was conducted only once, same as with the post-program surveys. The focused group discussion was held via Google Meet on December 16, 2023.

The general population of this study includes all Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students in Quezon City University who joined the 'Tara, Basa!' Tutoring Program as Learning Facilitators (LFs). From the general population of 136 Learning Facilitators, a total of 101 sample respondents were asked to answer the survey questionnaire and invited to a focused group discussion.

To get the sample size, researcher used the Raosoft sample size calculator, this software is design to calculate or generate the sample size of a research or survey. With the 5% margin of error, 95% of confidence level, 136 population size, and 50% of response distribution, the result was 101, as the sample size. The researcher used a systematic simple random sampling technique to select a sample that aimed to be representative of the population. This method was considered appropriate for the study.

Quantitative methods include pre- and post-program surveys assessing self-efficacy beliefs regarding classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and overall teaching efficacy. The survey questionnaire was a researcher-made survey questionnaire, and its contents were based on the existing relevant literature and studies particularly to classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and overall teaching efficacy, and to tutoring programs in general. Qualitative data, gathered through interviews or focus groups, offers deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the program's impact on their self-efficacy.

To determine the pre- and post-program surveys' validity, three experts from the field of education were asked to validate the form and content of the survey questionnaire. Their feedback and recommendations were reflected in the final form of the instrument. In addition, to test the instrument's reliability, the researcher asked fifteen LFs who are not part of this study to answer the questionnaire. The calculated Cronbach alpha is 0.79 which is considered as 'Acceptable'.

For data collection, an online survey through Google Forms was conducted, ensuring a more accessible and efficient means of gathering information. Following the completion of these prerequisites, the researcher tallied

and summarized the collected data. And for focused group discussion, the researcher organized an online Google Meeting with the respondents. Fifty-seven (57) of the respondents or equivalent to 56% attended the invitation, and the discussion lasted for an hour.

The researcher employed descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to interpret collected data. In addition, the researcher also utilized the dependent sample t-test for inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Perceived teaching competence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teaching early childhood reading

Table 1 presents the perceived teaching competence of respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, focusing on classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teaching early childhood reading.
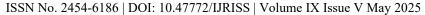
Table I Pre- and Post-Program Teaching Competence of The Respondents in Terms of Classroom Management

Classroom Management	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Planning and delivering effective reading lessons.	1.95	0.80	SC	3.48	0.50	C
2. Maintaining a positive and disciplined classroom environment.	2.08	0.81	SC	3.51	0.50	C
3. Adapting and adjusting teaching methods to accommodate the varying needs and abilities of young learners.	2.06	0.82	SC	3.52	0.50	C
4. Fostering collaboration with parents or caregivers to support reading development outside the classroom.	2.07	0.83	SC	3.39	0.49	MC
5. Continuous professional growth.	1.97	0.77	SC	3.52	0.50	C
Over-all	**2.03**	**0.81**	**SC**	**3.49**	**0.50**	**C**

The Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program has had a significant positive impact on the perceived teaching competence of participants, particularly in areas such as planning and delivering effective reading lessons, maintaining a positive classroom environment, and adapting teaching methods. Respondents reported notable improvements, with mean scores for these competencies rising from slightly competent to competent levels after the program. However, collaboration with parents or caregivers showed only a moderate increase in perceived competence, indicating that this area may require further attention. The program also contributed to substantial improvements in continuous professional growth, with scores shifting from slightly competent to competent.

These improvements in teaching competence align with existing research on the effectiveness of teacher professional development and the importance of targeted support for educators. The focus on early childhood literacy instruction is particularly relevant, as research underscores the critical role of literacy in early childhood education and the need for evidence-based teaching strategies [11]. Additionally, the emphasis on continuous professional growth and parent collaboration mirrors the broader literature, which highlights the value of ongoing teacher development and family engagement in improving educational outcomes. Despite these positive findings, the moderate competence in parent collaboration suggests room for further development in fostering meaningful school-family partnerships.

Table 2 provides the perceived teaching competence of respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring

Program, specifically focusing on instructional strategies for teaching early childhood reading.

Table II Pre- And Post-Program Teaching Competence Of The Respondents In Terms Of Instructional Strategies

Instructional Strategies	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Planning and delivering lessons that help children understand the fundamentals of sound-letter correspondence.	2.08	0.76	SC	3.48	0.50	C
2. Expanding children's vocabularies through various strategies such as read-aloud sessions, word games, context-based learning, and incorporating vocabulary-rich activities into the curriculum.	2.00	0.80	SC	3.48	0.50	C
3. Using different techniques such as guided reading, reciprocal teaching, and discussions to enhance students' understanding of the text.	1.99	0.78	SC	3.55	0.50	C
4. Adapting instructional strategies to cater to different learning styles, abilities, and interests within the classroom.	1.93	0.86	SC	3.55	0.50	C
5. Using interactive educational apps, multimedia resources, or online platforms that supplement traditional teaching methods.	2.04	0.85	SC	3.47	0.50	C
6. Seeking and applying feedback to refine instructional practices.	2.01	0.83	SC	3.49	0.50	C
7. Enhancing knowledge and skills in teaching early childhood reading.	2.04	0.85	SC	3.47	0.50	C
Over-all	**2.01**	**0.82**	**SC**	**3.50**	**0.50**	**C**

The Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program significantly enhanced participants' perceived teaching competence, particularly in instructional strategies for early childhood reading. Respondents showed notable improvements across multiple aspects, such as planning and delivering lessons on sound-letter correspondence, expanding children's vocabularies, enhancing textual comprehension, and adapting instructional strategies to different learning styles. These areas saw a shift in mean scores from "slightly competent" to "competent" levels, with improvements in integrating technology and incorporating feedback to refine teaching practices. Overall, the program demonstrated a comprehensive positive impact on the participants' ability to employ diverse and effective strategies in early childhood reading instruction.

The program's improvements in instructional competence align with research highlighting the importance of evidence-based practices for early literacy development [12]. The observed positive shifts in planning phonics lessons, building vocabulary, and improving reading comprehension reflect best practices in early childhood literacy, such as phonics instruction and vocabulary development. Additionally, the integration of interactive educational apps and multimedia resources emphasizes the growing importance of technology in teaching and learning [13]. The program's success in fostering professional growth in these areas contributes to the participants' overall development as early childhood educators.

Table 3 shows the perceived teaching competence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, specifically focusing on student engagement, and it reveal significant improvements across various dimensions.

Table III Pre- And Post-Program Teaching Competence Of The Respondents In Terms Of Student Engagement

Student Engagement	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Using interactive read-aloud sessions, literacy games, storytelling, role-playing, and other hands-on experiences that make reading enjoyable and meaningful.	2.04	0.82	SC	3.50	0.50	C
2. Creating a personalize reading experiences by offering a variety of books, texts, and genres to cater to diverse tastes and abilities.	2.12	0.78	SC	3.56	0.50	C
3. Establishing a classroom culture that values and celebrates reading achievements, fostering a sense of accomplishment and motivation.	2.06	0.83	SC	3.50	0.50	C
4. Employing strategies to encourage participation, maintain attention, and manage potential distractions, enabling a conducive environment for reading engagement.	2.01	0.83	SC	3.49	0.50	C
5. Using educational apps, digital storytelling platforms, or multimedia resources that complement traditional reading materials.	1.94	0.77	SC	3.45	0.50	C
6. Adapting effective instructional methods and materials to meet the varying needs and abilities of individual students.	1.77	0.77	NC	3.52	0.50	C
7. Engaging parents or caregivers to support reading at home.	1.82	0.83	SC	3.52	0.50	C
Over-all	**1.97**	**0.81**	**SC**	**3.51**	**0.50**	**C**

The evaluation of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program's impact on perceived teaching competence in student engagement reveals significant improvements across various aspects. Respondents showed marked progress in using interactive strategies, such as read-aloud sessions, literacy games, and hands-on experiences, with mean scores shifting from "slightly competent" to "competent" levels. Similarly, there were notable advancements in creating personalized reading experiences, establishing a classroom culture that values reading achievements, and employing strategies to encourage participation and manage distractions. The integration of educational apps and multimedia resources also saw positive results, with substantial improvement in adapting instructional methods to meet varying student needs.

In addition, the program demonstrated its effectiveness in engaging parents or caregivers in supporting reading at home. Overall, the pre-program mean score of 1.97 (slightly competent) increased significantly to 3.51 (competent) after the program, reflecting a notable enhancement in perceived teaching competence across all student engagement aspects. These improvements underscore the success of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program

in fostering a more engaging and enriching learning environment, with participants demonstrating increased proficiency in employing a range of strategies to actively involve students in their learning process.

Table 4 present the perceived teaching competence of respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in terms of teaching early childhood reading and it reveals significant advancements across various dimensions.

Table IV Pre- And Post-Program Teaching Competence Of The Respondents In Terms Of Teaching Early Childhood Reading

Teaching Early Childhood Reading	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Conveying the concepts of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to young learners.	1.92	0.78	SC	4.06	0.83	C
2. Employing diverse and effective instructional strategies, such as read-aloud sessions, guided reading, shared reading, literacy centers, and other developmentally appropriate techniques to engage and support children's reading skills.	1.98	0.82	SC	3.99	0.78	C
3. Assessing students' reading abilities accurately and use this information to differentiate instruction, providing appropriate support and challenges to meet individual needs.	1.96	0.85	SC	3.87	0.82	C
4. Creating positive, inclusive, and literacy-rich classroom environment that fosters a love for reading.	1.93	0.80	SC	3.96	0.80	C
5. Establishing strong partnerships with parents or caregivers to promote reading at home and reinforce learning in the classroom.	2.04	0.85	SC	4.04	0.85	C
6. Adapting effective teaching methods and materials to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and interests within the classroom.	2.08	0.80	SC	3.94	0.81	C
7. Continuous learning and professional growth.	2.11	0.82	SC	4.19	0.83	C
8. Managing the classroom effectively.	2.11	0.82	SC	4.01	0.78	C
Over-all	**2.02**	**0.82**	**SC**	**4.01**	**0.81**	**C**

The evaluation of perceived teaching competence among respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program highlights significant improvements across multiple areas related to teaching early childhood reading. Key areas of growth include the ability to convey foundational reading concepts, such as phonemic awareness and fluency, with mean scores rising from slightly competent to competent levels. Additionally, respondents showed increased proficiency in using diverse instructional strategies, accurately assessing students' reading abilities, and creating positive, inclusive classroom environments. Other notable improvements were observed

in building partnerships with parents and caregivers, adapting teaching methods to diverse learning styles, and managing classrooms effectively.

The program also fostered a greater commitment to continuous professional growth, as respondents demonstrated substantial progress in their engagement with ongoing learning. Overall, the aggregated results revealed a marked shift in perceived teaching competence, with mean scores moving from slightly competent to competent, reflecting the program's success in enhancing educators' abilities to support early literacy development. The program's holistic approach, addressing both pedagogical skills and professional development, was reflected in the substantial improvements across all measured areas.

These findings align with existing literature on effective early literacy instruction, emphasizing the importance of foundational reading concepts, diverse teaching strategies, positive learning environments, and professional growth [14], [15].

Table 5 summarizes the significant differences in perceived teaching competence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program across various domains, including classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and overall teaching competence.

Table V Difference In Perceived Teaching Competence Of The Respondents Before And After The Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program

Teaching Competencies	Mean	t-val	df	p-val	Sig.
Classroom Management	2.03 3.49	-35.2757	4	.000	yes
Instructional Strategies	2.01 3.50	63.4596	12	.000	yes
Student Engagement	1.97 3.51	30.5581	12	.000	yes
Teaching Competence	2.02 4.01	46.1115	14	.000	yes

The evaluation of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program reveals significant improvements in teaching competence across multiple dimensions. Classroom management showed a substantial improvement, with mean scores rising from 2.03 to 3.49 post-program, highlighting an enhanced ability to manage the classroom environment effectively. Instructional strategies also saw a notable increase, from 2.01 to 3.50, demonstrating a stronger capacity to employ diverse teaching methods. Similarly, student engagement scores improved significantly, increasing from 1.97 to 3.51, indicating better strategies for keeping students engaged. Overall, teaching competence showed a remarkable improvement, with the mean score shifting from 2.02 to 4.01, reflecting a comprehensive enhancement in all areas of instruction.

The statistical analysis confirms the significance of these improvements, with p-values consistently below .001 across all aspects, indicating that the positive changes are highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. These findings suggest that the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program has effectively enhanced participants' abilities in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The program's impact on overall teaching competence underscores its success in professional development and its ability to positively influence educators' teaching practices.

Perceived level of teaching confidence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teaching early childhood reading

Table 6 outlines the perceived level of teaching confidence of respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program across various dimensions, specifically focusing on classroom management.

Table VI Pre- And Post-Program Confidence Level Of The Respondents In Terms Of Classroom Management

Classroom Management	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Selecting appropriate reading materials.	2.07	0.85	LC	3.91	0.81	HC
2. Managing disruptive behaviors effectively.	1.96	0.81	LC	4.04	0.82	HC
3. Using differentiated instruction.	1.87	0.78	LC	3.86	0.77	HC
4. Communicating with families to encourage reading at home.	1.98	0.84	LC	3.97	0.78	HC
5. Seeking out professional development opportunities, gather feedback, and reflect on practices to refine teaching methods and enhance effectiveness in promoting reading skills among young children.	1.78	0.77	LC	4.06	0.79	HC
6. Designing engaging activities.	1.93	0.78	LC	3.98	0.81	HC
7. Employing diverse teaching strategies to cater to different learning styles.	2.01	0.83	LC	3.85	0.78	HC
Over-all	**1.94**	**0.81**	**LC**	**3.95**	**0.80**	**HC**

The findings from the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program demonstrate significant improvements in teaching confidence, particularly in classroom management. Prior to the program, respondents reported low confidence (LC) in key areas such as selecting appropriate reading materials, managing disruptive behaviours, and employing differentiated instruction. However, post-program assessments showed substantial increases in confidence, with mean scores rising from low to high confidence (HC) levels across all these dimensions. For example, the ability to manage disruptive behaviours improved from a mean of 1.96 to 4.04, while confidence in selecting appropriate reading materials increased from 2.07 to 3.91. These results suggest that the program effectively enhanced participants' ability to handle various classroom challenges.

The improvements also extended to other critical aspects of classroom management. Respondents showed increased confidence in engaging families to encourage home reading, with the mean score rising from 1.98 to 3.97. Additionally, confidence in designing engaging activities moved from 1.93 to 3.98, and in employing diverse teaching strategies, scores improved from 2.01 to 3.85. The overall classroom management confidence saw a significant boost, with the mean score shifting from 1.94 to 3.95. These positive changes reflect the program's effectiveness in equipping educators with the necessary skills and confidence to create supportive and enriching learning environments for young learners.

While the results are promising, there are limitations to consider. The lack of a control group means the observed improvements may not be solely attributed to the program, as external factors could have influenced the respondents' confidence levels. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where respondents may have overstated their improvements. Future research could address these limitations through control groups, objective measures of teaching effectiveness, and longitudinal studies to evaluate the program's long-term impact. Despite these limitations, the findings highlight the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program's success in enhancing educators' confidence in managing classrooms and using effective teaching strategies, suggesting its potential to improve early childhood education outcomes.

Table 7 provides insights into the perceived level of teaching confidence among respondents before and after their participation in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, specifically focusing on instructional strategies.
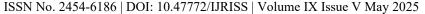
Table VII Pre- And Post-Program Confidence Level Of The Respondents In Terms Of Instructional Strategies

Instructional Strategies	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Teaching phonemic awareness (the understanding that words are made up of individual sounds) and phonics (the relationship between sounds and letters) using engaging and effective instructional methods.	1.88	0.80	LC	3.95	0.82	HC
2. Expanding children's vocabularies through various strategies such as read-aloud sessions, word games, context-based learning, and incorporating vocabulary-rich activities into the curriculum.	1.99	0.83	LC	4.02	0.85	HC
3. Teaching comprehension skills, including making predictions, summarizing, making connections, and asking questions.	2.08	0.83	LC	3.98	0.79	HC
4. Using differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of young learners.	2.17	0.86	LC	4.06	0.86	HC
5. Using technology as an instructional tool to enhance early childhood reading.	1.96	0.85	LC	4.09	0.87	HC
6. Seeking and applying feedback to refine instructional practices.	1.91	0.81	LC	4.00	0.87	HC
7. Committed to continuous learning.	2.03	0.79	LC	3.98	0.82	HC
Over-all	**2.00**	**0.83**	**LC**	**4.01**	**0.84**	**HC**

The results from the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program highlight significant improvements in participants' confidence across various instructional strategies for early childhood reading. Initially, participants demonstrated Low Confidence (LC) in areas such as teaching phonemic awareness and phonics, expanding vocabularies, and fostering comprehension skills, with pre-program mean scores ranging from 1.88 to 2.08. After the program, confidence levels increased markedly, reaching High Confidence (HC) with mean scores ranging from 3.95 to 4.02. The program's positive impact is particularly evident in phonics instruction, vocabulary enrichment, and teaching comprehension skills, all of which saw substantial improvements in participants' abilities to effectively teach these foundational reading components.

The program also fostered significant confidence growth in using differentiated instruction and integrating technology into early childhood reading. Pre-program scores for differentiated instruction and technology integration were 2.17 and 1.96, respectively, while post-program scores soared to 4.06 and 4.09, reflecting a substantial positive shift. Moreover, participants showed increased confidence in seeking and applying feedback to refine instructional practices, with scores rising from 1.91 to 4.00. These improvements suggest that the program not only enhanced specific instructional skills but also promoted a broader commitment to ongoing professional development and reflective teaching practices, which are crucial for fostering effective literacy instruction.

The comparison of the respondents' perceived level of teaching confidence in student engagement before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program presented in Table 8 reveals a substantial positive impact on various dimensions.

Table VIII Pre- And Post-Program Confidence Level Of The Respondents In Terms Of Student Engagement

Student Engagement	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Designing and implementing engaging reading activities that captivate young students' interest.	2.02	0.82	LC	4.02	0.77	HC
2. Providing opportunities for students to choose reading materials that align with their interests and preferences.	1.94	0.88	LC	4.01	0.83	HC
3. Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere that encourages risk-taking and exploration in reading.	2.21	0.83	LC	4.11	0.80	HC
4. Managing the classroom effectively.	1.98	0.89	LC	3.91	0.79	HC
5. Integrating technology effectively to enhance student engagement in reading.	2.10	0.83	LC	3.97	0.87	HC
6. Adapting instructional methods and materials to meet the varying needs and abilities of individual students.	1.99	0.81	LC	3.99	0.84	HC
7. Engaging parents or caregivers in supporting reading at home, fostering a collaborative effort to reinforce reading habits and skills beyond the classroom.	2.05	0.86	LC	3.85	0.75	HC
Over-all	**2.04**	**0.85**	**LC**	**3.98**	**0.81**	**HC**

Prior to participating in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program, educators displayed low confidence in various aspects of student engagement, such as designing and implementing engaging reading activities, providing opportunities for student choice, and managing the classroom effectively. Pre-program assessments revealed mean scores ranging from 1.94 to 2.21, all reflecting Low Confidence (LC). However, post-program results showed a remarkable shift, with confidence levels rising significantly in these areas, reaching High Confidence (HC) with mean scores between 3.85 and 4.11. Notable improvements were also observed in other aspects, such as integrating technology, adapting instructional methods, and engaging parents or caregivers, all of which saw substantial increases in confidence.

The program's impact was particularly evident in empowering educators to create positive, supportive learning environments that foster student motivation and participation in early childhood reading. The improvement in confidence levels across various dimensions, including classroom management, student engagement, and the use of technology, suggests that the program effectively equipped educators with the necessary skills to enhance their teaching abilities. For instance, the increase in confidence in integrating technology and adapting instructional methods indicates the program's focus on innovation and adapting to diverse learning needs, while the improvements in engaging parents highlight the importance of collaboration in supporting literacy development.

Table 9 presents a comparison of the respondents' perceived level of teaching confidence in early childhood reading before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program. The focus areas include possessing understanding in early literacy development, employing instructional strategies, assessing reading abilities, creating a positive classroom environment, communicating with families, adapting teaching methods, and seeking professional development.

Table IX Pre- And Post-Program Confidence Level Of The Respondents In Terms Of Teaching Early Childhood Reading

Teaching in Early Childhood Reading	Pre-program			Post-program		
	X	SD	V.I	X	SD	V.I
1. Possessing a strong understanding of early literacy development, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.	1.97	0.81	LC	3.92	0.83	HC
2. Employing diverse and effective instructional strategies, such as read-aloud sessions, guided reading, shared reading, literacy centers, and other developmentally appropriate techniques to engage and support children's reading skills.	2.06	0.88	LC	3.80	0.77	HC
3. Assessing students' reading abilities accurately and use this information to differentiate instruction.	1.87	0.82	LC	4.16	0.77	HC
4. Creating a positive, inclusive, and literacy-rich classroom environment that fosters a love for reading.	2.00	0.84	LC	4.02	0.81	HC
5. Communicating effectively with families about the importance of reading and ways to support it outside school.	1.91	0.81	LC	4.11	0.79	HC
6. Adapting appropriate teaching methods and materials to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and interests within the classroom.	1.96	0.82	LC	4.11	0.79	HC
7. Seeking opportunities for professional development, attending workshops, engaging in peer collaboration, and actively seeking out resources to improve their teaching practices in early childhood reading.	2.02	0.77	LC	4.10	0.77	HC
Over-all	**1.97**	**0.82**	**LC**	**4.03**	**0.80**	**HC**

The Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program demonstrated a significant positive impact on educators' confidence in teaching early childhood reading. Prior to the program, educators expressed low confidence across several key areas, such as understanding early literacy development, using diverse instructional strategies, assessing students' reading abilities, and fostering a positive classroom environment. However, after participating in the program, educators reported substantial improvements in all of these dimensions. Confidence levels in areas like communication with families, adapting teaching methods to diverse learning needs, and seeking professional development opportunities also showed remarkable increases, transitioning from low to high confidence.

The most notable improvements were seen in areas such as understanding early literacy development (from 1.97 to 3.92) and assessing students' reading abilities for differentiated instruction (from 1.87 to 4.16). Additionally, educators became more confident in creating an inclusive classroom environment (from 2.00 to 4.02) and in engaging effectively with families (from 1.91 to 4.11). The overall perceived confidence in teaching early childhood reading also rose significantly, with a pre-program mean of 1.97 and a post-program mean of 4.03, underscoring the program's effectiveness in boosting educators' self-assurance across various facets of early childhood education.

Table 10 reveals the significant difference in perceived teaching competencies before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program reveals substantial improvements across various domains.

Table X Significant Difference

Teaching Competencies	Mean	t-val	df	p-val	Sig.
Classroom Management	1.95 3.95	41.5528	12	.000	yes
Instructional Strategies	2.00 4.01	48.0597	12	.000	yes
Student Engagement	2.04 3.98	42.1963	12	.000	yes
Teaching Competence	1.97 4.03	38.1707	12	.000	yes

The Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program led to significant improvements in educators' confidence across several key areas. In Classroom Management, the mean score increased from 1.95 to 3.95, with a t-value of 41.5528 (p < .001), indicating a substantial positive impact on educators' ability to manage classrooms effectively. Similarly, in Instructional Strategies, confidence rose from a mean score of 2.00 to 4.01, with a t-value of 48.0597 (p < .001), reflecting enhanced confidence in using diverse and effective teaching methods. Educators also showed a significant increase in Student Engagement, with the mean score rising from 2.04 to 3.98, and an overall improvement in Teaching Competence, which increased from 1.97 to 4.03.

These results suggest that the program effectively enhanced educators' teaching competence and their ability to engage students, manage classrooms, and apply diverse instructional strategies. The statistically significant changes across all areas of the study demonstrate the program's success in boosting educators' confidence and empowering them to implement more effective teaching practices. These findings underline the value of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in providing professional development that directly contributes to improved instructional outcomes.

Insights of the respondents towards their experiences and perceptions regarding the program's impact on their self-efficacy

The following presents the outcomes of the Focused Group Discussion, delving into the rich insights shared by participants regarding their experiences and perceptions of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program's impact on their self-efficacy. Through a series of targeted questions, participants were encouraged to reflect on specific instances, teaching strategies, and challenges encountered during their involvement in the program, providing a comprehensive exploration of the nuanced ways in which their self-confidence and beliefs about their capacity to positively influence early childhood literacy development were shaped. The diverse range of responses sheds light on the multifaceted influence of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program on the self-efficacy of aspiring early childhood educators.

Notable response of the participant to the question "*Can you describe a specific instance or experience during your participation in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program that significantly influenced your confidence in your ability to support early childhood literacy development?*"

> **Participant A:** "*One particular moment that stands out was when I witnessed a struggling reader grasp a concept after using a multisensory approach. This significantly boosted my confidence in tailoring teaching methods to individual needs.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*How did this experience impact your perception of your self-efficacy as a future educator in this field?*"

> **Participant B:** "*Being part of Tara, Basa! made me realize that I can make a difference. My self-efficacy as a future educator soared, knowing that with dedication and the right strategies, I can contribute positively to a child's literacy journey.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*In what ways do you feel the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program has contributed to your understanding of effective teaching strategies for early childhood literacy?*"

> **Participant C:** "*The program emphasized the importance of interactive reading and incorporating storytelling. These strategies not only engaged the children but also enhanced their comprehension skills. It broadened my perspective on what effective teaching in early childhood literacy entails.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*Could you share examples of strategies or techniques you found particularly impactful and how they influenced your confidence in your teaching abilities?*"

> **Participant D:** "*Using picture books and encouraging dialogues during reading sessions proved to be impactful. The children responded positively, and witnessing their progress heightened my confidence in my teaching abilities.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*Reflecting on your involvement in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program, how do you believe it has shaped your perceptions of your role as an educator in promoting literacy among young children?*"

> **Participant E:** "*Tara, Basa! taught me that fostering a love for reading is as crucial as teaching the mechanics. It has reshaped my role as an educator, emphasizing the importance of being a literacy advocate beyond the classroom.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*Have there been any shifts in your confidence levels or beliefs about your capabilities in this regard?*"

> **Participant F:** "*I started with uncertainties, but as the program progressed, I felt more capable. The small victories in overcoming challenges, like engaging reluctant readers, boosted my confidence significantly.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "Considering the challenges, you might have encountered while participating in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program, how did you navigate these obstacles, and what impact did overcome them have on your self-perception as an aspiring early childhood educator focused on literacy development?"

> **Participant G:** "*Challenges were inevitable, but overcoming them, whether it was adapting to different learning styles or addressing behavioural issues, strengthened my belief in my ability to navigate obstacles and succeed in fostering literacy.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*Beyond specific skills or knowledge gained, can you discuss any changes in your overall self-assurance or belief in your capacity to positively impact young children's reading abilities resulting from your involvement in the Tara, Basa! Tutoring program?*"

> **Participant H:** "*Beyond gaining specific skills, Tara, Basa! elevated my overall confidence. I now firmly believe that I can contribute positively to young children's reading abilities, instilling a sense of empowerment in me.*"

Notable response of the participant to the question "*How do you envision applying these newfound or reinforced self-efficacy beliefs in your future teaching practices?*"

> **Participant I:** "*I envision applying the self-efficacy beliefs cultivated in Tara, Basa! by creating inclusive and engaging literacy environments. This program has equipped me to adapt and innovate, ensuring every child has the opportunity to develop a lifelong love for reading.*"

The qualitative exploration of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program reveals a profound impact on participants' self-efficacy and effective teaching strategies in the context of early childhood literacy development. Participants shared specific influential experiences, such as witnessing breakthroughs in struggling readers and employing

multisensory approaches. The program significantly boosted confidence levels, with participants realizing their potential to make a positive difference in children's literacy journeys.

The contribution to understanding effective teaching strategies was evident, emphasizing the importance of interactive reading, storytelling, and impactful techniques like using picture books and fostering dialogues during reading sessions. Participants recognized the broader role of educators, not only teaching mechanics but also becoming literacy advocates beyond the classroom.

The study reflects shifts in confidence levels, with participants evolving from initial uncertainties to a sense of capability and empowerment, especially through small victories in overcoming challenges. Navigating obstacles strengthened their belief in successfully fostering literacy, showcasing the program's effectiveness in building resilience and confidence.

Beyond gaining specific skills, the Tara, Basa! program elevated participants' overall self-assurance, instilling a firm belief in their capacity to positively contribute to young children's reading abilities. The envisioned application of self-efficacy beliefs includes creating inclusive and engaging literacy environments, showcasing the program's potential to equip educators to adapt and innovate in fostering a lifelong love for reading in every child.

The qualitative data unveils a transformative impact on participants, illustrating the potential of targeted programs like Tara, Basa! to shape educators into advocates for early childhood literacy development. The study emphasizes the importance of such initiatives in fostering confidence, effective teaching strategies, and a holistic approach to educators' roles in promoting literacy among young children.
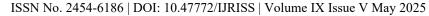
DISCUSSION

The study evaluates the impact of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program on educators' perceived teaching competence, highlighting significant improvements across multiple dimensions, including classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and early childhood reading. Participants showed a marked increase in their confidence levels, with mean scores shifting from slightly competent to competent across these areas. Notably, the program helped educators improve their ability to plan and deliver effective reading lessons, integrate technology, and adapt teaching methods to diverse learning styles, leading to substantial gains in teaching competence.

The program also had a positive effect on student engagement, fostering a more interactive and supportive learning environment through read-aloud sessions, literacy games, and hands-on activities. Participants observed improvements in their ability to establish a positive classroom culture that values reading achievements. Additionally, the program supported the development of effective partnerships with parents and caregivers, although this area remained moderately competent and could benefit from further attention. Overall, the findings suggest that the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program was successful in improving participants' teaching strategies and boosting their confidence, positively influencing their overall teaching effectiveness.

Qualitative data from focus group discussions further emphasized the program's transformative impact on participants' self-efficacy and teaching practices. Educators shared experiences of overcoming challenges and employing multisensory approaches to support struggling readers, which contributed to increased confidence in their ability to foster literacy development. The program helped participants recognize their broader role as literacy advocates and instilled a belief in their capacity to positively influence children's reading journeys. These insights underscore the importance of professional development programs like Tara, Basa! in shaping educators' roles and enhancing their ability to create engaging, inclusive learning environments for early childhood literacy.

CONCLUSION

Findings indicate a positive influence of the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program on the self-efficacy of these pre-service teachers. Analysis of quantitative data reveals significant improvements in participants' confidence and perceived abilities to effectively engage young learners. Qualitative analysis delves into specific areas of teaching efficacy impacted by the program and personal reflections on its influence on their teaching aspirations.

Particularly, the perceived teaching competence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teaching early childhood reading exhibited significant positive shifts. Pre-program, participants showed slightly competent levels across these dimensions, but post-program assessments indicated a marked improvement to competent levels.

Specifically, improvements were noted in areas such as planning and delivering effective reading lessons, adapting instructional strategies, fostering student engagement through interactive activities, and conveying foundational concepts in early childhood reading, reflecting the program's effectiveness in enhancing teaching competence.

Moreover, the perceived level of teaching confidence of the respondents before and after the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teaching early childhood reading also experienced substantial positive changes. Initially, participants exhibited low confidence levels across these dimensions, but post-program assessments showed a significant enhancement to high confidence levels. This improvement in confidence suggests that participants gained reassurance and belief in their abilities to effectively manage classrooms, employ diverse instructional strategies, engage students, and teach early childhood reading, underscoring the program's success in bolstering teaching confidence.

Insights from the respondents regarding their experiences and perceptions regarding the program's impact on their self-efficacy revealed transformative effects. Participants reported evolving from initial uncertainties to feelings of capability and empowerment, attributing their increased self-efficacy to small victories in overcoming challenges and witnessing positive outcomes in student learning. Moreover, participants recognized the broader role of the program in shaping them into advocates for early childhood literacy development, instilling a firm belief in their capacity to positively contribute to young children's reading abilities. These insights highlight the program's potential to not only enhance teaching competence and confidence but also to foster a sense of purpose and advocacy among educators in promoting literacy among young children.

The present study emphasizes the importance of experiential learning initiatives like Tara, Basa! in improving the self-efficacy of future educators, with implications for educational policies and practices. Understanding how such programs shape pre-service teachers' beliefs about their teaching abilities is crucial for enhancing teacher education programs and the quality of early childhood education overall.

Based on the results and discussion, several recommendations can be made for educational practitioners and policymakers to apply the insights from the Tara, Basa! Tutoring Program in improving teacher preparation programs and tutoring initiatives in early childhood education. Firstly, practitioner training programs should incorporate elements that focus on diverse instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and methods to foster student engagement, mirroring the success of the Tara, Basa! program. This can include workshops, seminars, or courses specifically designed to enhance educators' skills in these areas. Additionally, policymakers should allocate resources to support the implementation of similar tutoring initiatives in early childhood education settings, ensuring access to professional development opportunities that prioritize the development of confidence and competence in educators. Furthermore, ongoing support and mentorship should be provided to educators' post-program participation to sustain the positive outcomes and facilitate continuous growth in teaching practices.

Lastly, collaboration between educational institutions, policymakers, and community stakeholders can facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of comprehensive approaches to early childhood literacy development, ensuring a collective effort in promoting high-quality education for young learners.

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