

Teaching the Littlest Learners: Insights from Kindergarten Educators

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Abstract:- This phenomenological study qualitatively examined the encounters, coping strategies, and educational insights derived from the experiences of eight kindergarten educators in the Talomo District, Division of Davao City, as they instructed young students. Identified themes in their experiences encompassed creating a playful learning environment, tailored instruction for diverse needs, and engaged families in education. Coping mechanisms utilized included managing time effectively, undergoing professional development, and engaging the family in education. Educational insights encompassed the importance of family and community partnership, development of resilience, and to be flexible and adaptable. These findings underscore the varied skills required in guiding the education of young students. Additionally, delving into teachers' experiences not only contributes to a nuanced comprehension of contemporary teaching demands but also offers valuable insights for both educators and educational institutions, potentially leading to enhancements in classroom management and teaching strategies.

Keywords:- Little Learners, Kindergarten Educators, Davao City, Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem and its Setting

Educating the youngest students offers a special perspective on the dynamic field of early childhood education. Early childhood educators have a crucial influence on the complex educational paths that early children take, which are replete with setbacks, victories, and epiphanies. This study dives into these committed professionals' daily lives, providing a captivating account of their contacts with inquiring minds and their endeavors to establish supportive, welcoming, and stimulating learning environments. Kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong usually use a play-based, holistic approach that emphasizes socialization, language, and numeracy foundations. In order to prepare kids for the bilingual environment of the region, this approach integrates both English and Chinese and offers opportunities for play, discovery, and creativity in addition to scheduled learning. Teachers prioritize developing students' socioemotional abilities, promoting their independence, and cultivating a love of learning (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2021; Chan & Wong, 2019). The kindergarten system in Hong

Kong also places a high priority on parental assistance and involvement.

For kids ages three to six, kindergarten instruction, or "école maternelle," is an essential part of the educational system in France. French kindergarten teachers emphasize the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of their students in a child-centered, holistic manner. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on learning via play, letting kids explore and learn at their own speed. Furthermore, phonics and early reading exercises play a big part in the emphasis on language development and literacy skills. While social and emotional growth is promoted by encouraging a sense of community, respect, and cooperation among pupils, math ideas are introduced through practical exercises and games (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, 2020; Bousquet, 2018).

Early childhood education is highly esteemed in China, where kindergarten teachers employ a systematic and comprehensive approach. The curriculum integrates play-based learning with academic activities to progressively introduce early literacy and numeracy skills with an emphasis on fundamental Chinese characters and numbers. In order to promote cooperation, respect, and healthy interpersonal skills, educators place a strong emphasis on social and emotional development. Chinese kindergartens are known for their strict routines and sense of discipline, which is intended to instill in the kids the value of critical life skills like listening, following instructions, and working independently. Play and creativity are welcomed, but academic preparation is also given a lot of attention because it is thought to be crucial for future success in China's cutthroat educational system (Yan, 2018; Zhang, 2020; Xu, 2016).

Kindergarten teachers in the Philippines use a child-centered and developmentally appropriate method to support kids' overall growth in the areas of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. In order to promote curiosity and creativity, the curriculum places a strong emphasis on active learning through play-based learning, interactive games, storytelling, and hands-on activities. In line with the tenets of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), it is recommended to use the child's mother tongue to support language development and a seamless transition to formal schooling. Formative assessment methods are essential for tracking student development and adjusting instruction to meet

individual requirements. In order to acknowledge the critical role that families play in promoting early learning, collaboration with parents and caregivers is actively encouraged. Kindergarten education is made accessible to all, including those with special needs, through efforts to ensure inclusivity (Department of Education [DepEd], 2011; Pimentel, 2015; DepEd, 2012; DepEd, 2010; DepEd, 2016; DepEd, 2014).

This study intends to gather and analyze kindergarten teachers' experiences, with a special focus on the Talomo District, Division of Davao City. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the professional teaching journey and provide important insights into the essence of educating the youngest learners.

B. Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of kindergarten teachers as they teach the littlest learners, providing a reference for future researchers in this area. Additionally, the results aim to shed light on the experiences, mechanisms, and insights derived from the narratives of the informants. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the experiences of kindergarten teachers in teaching youngest learners?
- How do kindergarten teachers cope with challenges encountered in teaching youngest learners?
- What educational management insights are gained from the experiences of the informants?

Furthermore, the study aims to gain insights and experiences from kindergarten teachers in their unique teaching contexts. By addressing these questions, the study hopes to contribute to the professional development of educators and the improvement of early childhood education practices.

C. Theoretical Lens

This research is based on three fundamental theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979). According to the five levels of Bronfenbrenner's theory, a human is impacted by a multitude of interdependent systems in their environment: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The study delves into the ways in which a child's development and learning experiences are influenced by the interplay between their immediate surroundings (microsystem) and external elements (exosystem) in the setting of kindergarten education. With the aim of providing a developmentally appropriate education, this holistic framework emphasizes the necessity of comprehending the child's full ecological setting, which includes family, community, and wider society factors. Via the introduction of the idea of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), which denotes the distinction

between what a kid can accomplish on their own and with assistance, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory highlights the importance of language, cultural environment, and social interaction in cognitive development. This idea emphasizes the value of group projects and the teacher's ability to guide students through the ZPD so they can realize their greatest potential. It is particularly applicable to kindergarten classrooms.

Through higher-order needs like self-esteem and self-actualization, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs describes the growth of human needs. When it comes to teaching kindergarten, this approach highlights how crucial it is to establish a secure and caring learning environment where kids' basic needs—like food, physical comfort, and emotional stability—are satisfied. Children are unable to fully participate in the educational process and work toward higher-order requirements, including forming wholesome relationships and boosting self-esteem, unless these basic needs are met. This idea can help educators prioritize the well-being of their students as a necessary condition for successful learning and development by helping them identify and meet the unique needs of every kid. A complete framework for comprehending and improving the educational experiences of young learners is offered by these theories when taken together.

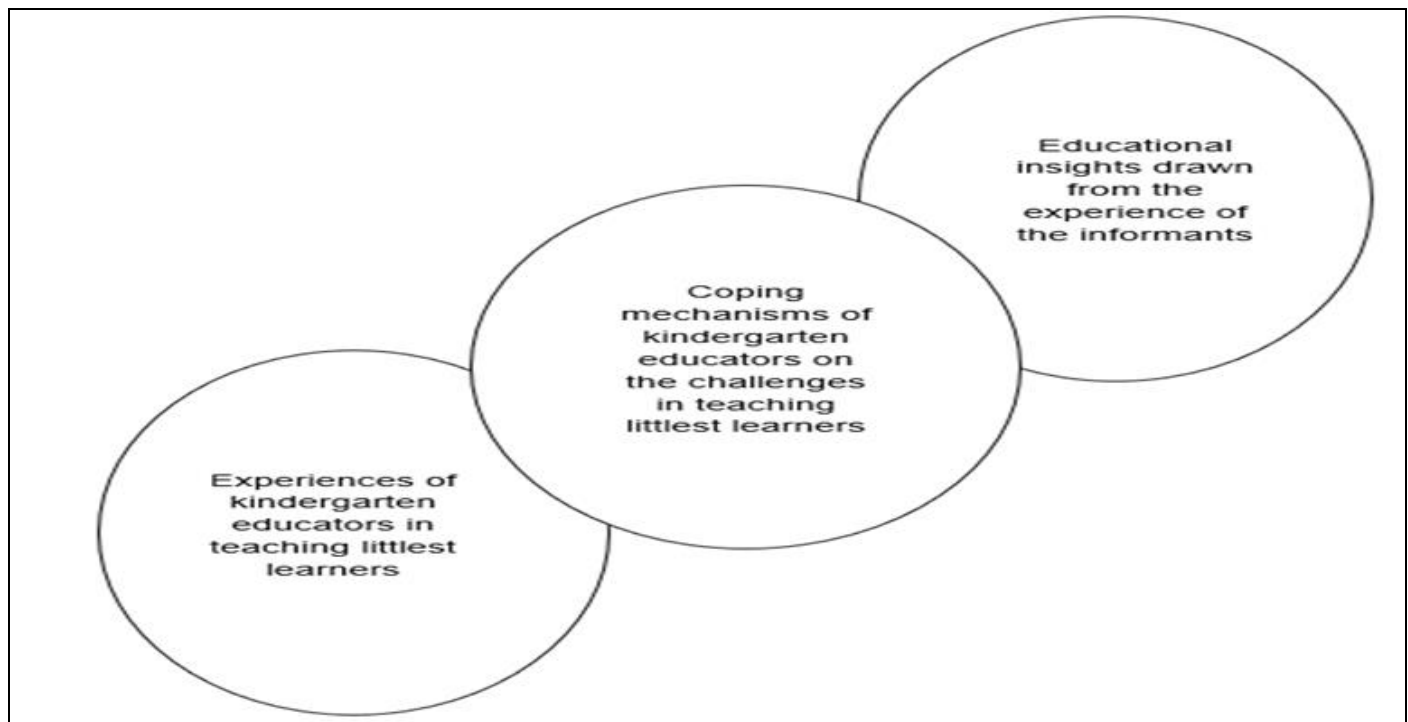


Fig 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

II. METHOD

A. Design and Procedure

This study examined the experiences and emotions of kindergarten teachers when instructing young students using a qualitative phenomenological research design. In order to characterize the nature of a phenomena, phenomenology, according to Creswell (2012), concentrates on the similarities among lived experiences within a certain group. Documents, observations, artwork, and interviews with those who witnessed the event personally were used in the data collection process. To create a shared understanding of the event, the data were read again and again, with themes and phrases grouped into clusters of meaning. According to Maxwell (2013), phenomenology looks for unadulterated, pure data and frequently uses bracketing—taking notes, for example—to reduce researcher bias.

According to Corbetta (2003), in-depth interviews are essential to phenomenological research in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of individuals' perspectives. According to Creswell (2012), open-ended questions are used in qualitative research interviews, and replies are recorded, frequently using audio cassettes for uniform transcribing. The narrative underlying participants' experiences is revealed through these interviews. Triangulation and the conversion of important statements into meaning clusters founded on phenomenological and psychological ideas are two methods used in data analysis. The goal of the final report is to give a thorough account of the event. The necessity of having a strong foundation in phenomenological philosophy, the difficulty of bracketing personal experiences, and the decision of when to share personal observations are some of the challenges.

Phenomenological techniques are effective tools for comprehending subjective experiences and getting insights into motivations and actions because they place a strong emphasis on personal perspective and interpretation.

B. Research Participants

In order to reach saturation—the point at which adding more participants produces no further information—qualitative analyses usually ask for smaller sample sizes than quantitative ones. For phenomenological investigations, Creswell (1998) suggests five to 25 individuals, while Morse (1994) suggests at least six. Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose saturation for sample size. The size of a qualitative sample is determined by the goals of the study, available time, and resources; there are no hard and fast guidelines (Patton, 1990). Eight kindergarten teachers from Talomo District, Division of Davao City were involved in this study. They were chosen based on a set of criteria, including expertise teaching young students and having worked for at least five years. In order to verify that participants fulfilled particular requirements and preserve the validity of the results, purposeful sampling was employed (Creswell, 2014; Marshall, 1996).

C. Data Analysis

The interview data in this study were analyzed using Creswell's Model in conjunction with theme analysis. According to Creswell (2012), themes are compiled codes that constitute central concepts. The researcher became fully involved in the data, reading it over and over again and creating labels for significant traits. Relevant data was compiled under each subject as a result of the coding, which recorded both semantic and conceptual readings. The themes were then thoroughly defined and examined for

coherence (Andersen, 2013). Environmental triangulation was utilized to improve validity by identifying affecting factors by examining data in various contexts and at different times, resulting in consistent conclusions (David, 2015; Naeem & Saira, 2019). Ultimately, the data was combined with pre-existing material to create a cogent narrative.

D. Analytical Framework

This study's framework analysis was adaptable, enabling data analysis to occur both during and after data collection. A five-step process—familiarization, identification of a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation—was used to sift, chart, and categorize data according to important concerns and themes throughout the analysis stage (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Immersion in the data was necessary for familiarization, with the researcher making notes on key concepts and recurring themes from audiotapes, field notes, and interview transcripts. The next step was to identify a thematic framework, where material was filtered and classified based on the identification of emerging themes from the data. Indexing entailed categorizing data segments according to certain themes, frequently with the aid of a number reference system (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). In order to ensure that ideas, typologies, and associations accurately reflected the attitudes and beliefs of the participants, mapping and interpretation also involved assessing important traits and developing a schematic diagram to direct the interpretation of the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

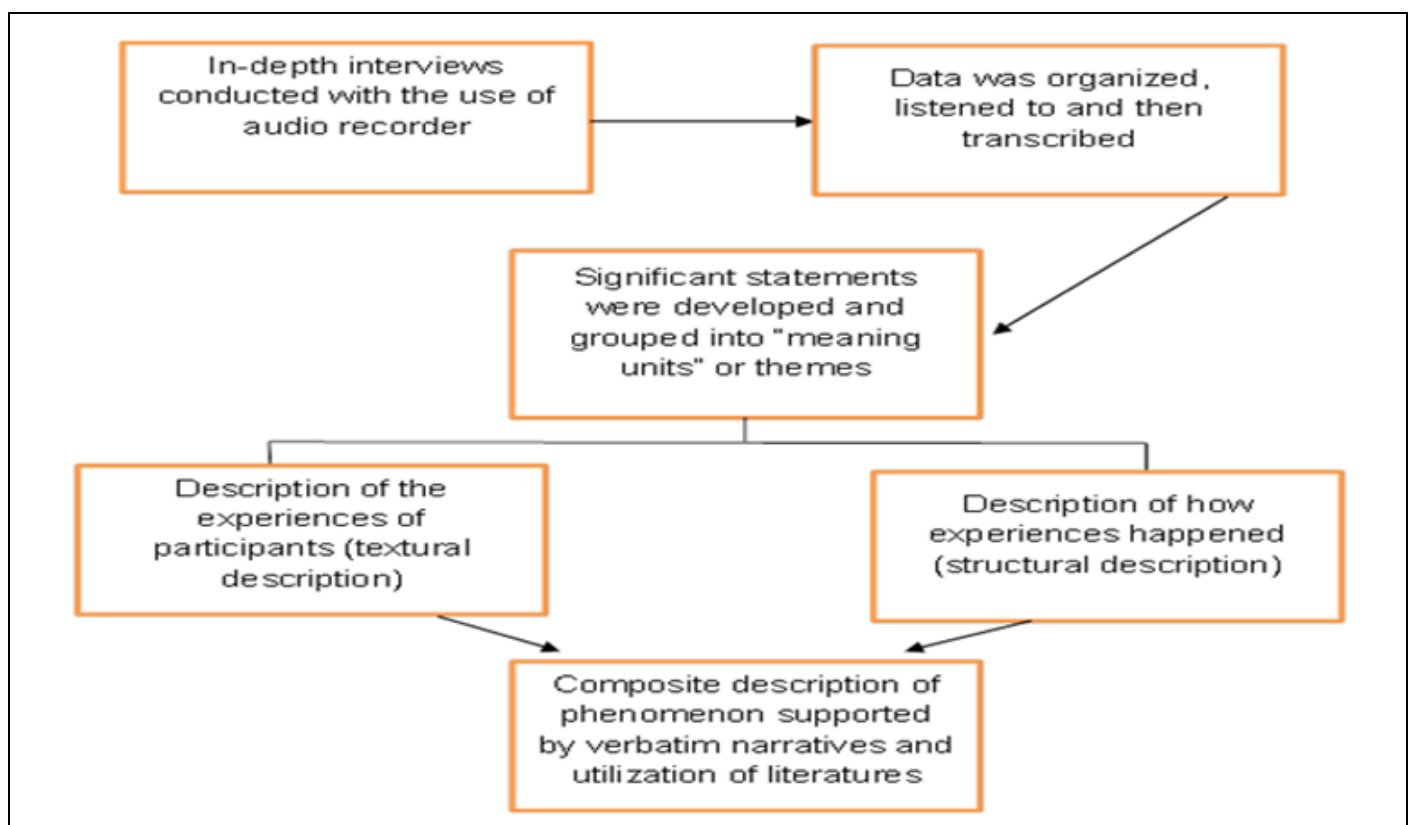


Fig 2: The Analytical Framework of the Study

E. Ethical Considerations

The research study prioritized ethical considerations, stressing the significance of upholding participants' rights and guaranteeing informed consent (McLeod, 2009; Walker, 2007 as referenced by Pillerin, 2012). The goal of the study, which concentrated on the experiences of kindergarten teachers, was to offer insightful information while upholding moral standards including risk mitigation, voluntary involvement, and secrecy (McLeod, 2009; Walker, 2007 as referenced by Pillerin, 2012). Pseudonyms were employed to conceal participants' identities, and participants were guaranteed both safety and secrecy throughout the study (McLeod, 2009; Walker, 2007 as quoted by Pillerin, 2012). Transparency was also stressed by the researcher, who gave participants access to study

results and chances to confirm their information (McLeod, 2009; Walker, 2007 as referenced by Pillerin, 2012). Furthermore, the investigator guaranteed the suitability and sufficient resources for carrying out the investigation, exhibiting reverence for regional customs and cultural perspectives without resorting to lying (McLeod, 2009; Walker, 2007 as referenced by Pillerin, 2012).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Experiences of Kindergarten Educators in Teaching Littlest Learners

Given the substantial influence kindergarten instructors have on young children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, their experiences

instructing children ages 3 to 6 are vital to the field of early childhood education. These teachers cater to the individual requirements of every child by using age-appropriate teaching strategies and designing stimulating, age-responsive learning settings (Pianta et al., 2009). Their work underscores the value of parental participation for holistic early childhood development (Epstein, 2011) and emphasizes the need for inclusive, supportive, and culturally sensitive learning environments (Bennett, 2016). We learn a great deal about the tremendous influence of early education on forming the future of young learners via their experiences.

➤ *Theme #1: Created a Playful Learning Environment*

Kindergarten teachers believe that children learn best when they are actively engaged in activities and are having fun, so they feel that creating a lively learning environment is essential when educating young learners. Building blocks, art supplies, puzzles, and imaginative play centers are just a few examples of the age-appropriate tools and activities that can be used to create an atmosphere that fosters curiosity and hands-on discovery (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). Thematic play areas or science exploration stations are examples of setups that encourage a love of learning, and these items are chosen to inspire creativity and critical thinking.

Furthermore, teachers of kindergarten place a strong emphasis on the value of unstructured play and open-ended activities. This approach lets kids select their own pursuits and take charge of their education, which improves their social and cognitive development as they work together and interact with classmates (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). With accessible furniture and materials that foster ownership and autonomy, the classroom is set up to promote independence and stimulate exploration (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). In order to foster a sense of shared discovery and delight in the learning process, educators play a crucial role by modeling excitement for learning, encouraging youngsters to approach tasks with interest and positively, and engaging in activities alongside their pupils (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009).

• *Here are the Transcripts:*

As a kindergarten teacher, I strive to create a playful learning environment where every day is an adventure of joy and discovery. From colorful, hands-on activities to imaginative storytelling, my aim is to make learning feel like a delightful game. (Participant 1)

In my kindergarten classroom, chaos isn't a disruption but rather a sign of a vibrant, playful learning environment. I've learned that a bit of messiness often leads to the most magical moments. (Participant 4)

Creating a playful learning environment for my kindergarten students involves recognizing the value of small moments. Every step, no matter how tiny, is a leap in their educational journey. Whether it's mastering the alphabet, conquering a puzzle, or simply sharing with a friend, these small victories contribute to a joyful

atmosphere where learning is celebrated in every form. (Participant 7)

As a kindergarten teacher, my goal is to cultivate curiosity by turning the classroom into a haven for exploration. From science corners filled with intriguing objects to storytelling sessions that transport them to new worlds, I've seen how nurturing their natural inquisitiveness not only makes learning fun but also lays a foundation for a lifelong love of discovery. (Participant 8)

➤ *Theme #2: Tailored Instruction for Diverse Needs*

Educating kindergarten teachers to address the requirements of a diverse student body is an essential part of their job description. Teachers modify their approaches and materials to meet the needs of each student, taking into account the diverse talents, backgrounds, and learning styles that children bring to the classroom (UNESCO, 2021). According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000), this entails diversifying instruction using visual aids, manipulatives, and interactive activities that accommodate various learning styles. It also entails offering tailored support to kids who require further help, such as with early literacy skills.

In addition, educators tackle linguistic and cultural diversity by modifying instructional materials to be inclusive and culturally aware, guaranteeing that every kid feels valued and represented (Bennett, 2016). Implementing customized solutions that benefit kids with specific learning requirements is made easier when specialists and support personnel, such as speech therapists and special education professionals, work together (Pianta et al., 2009). Creating an inclusive classroom where diversity is valued encourages children to feel accepted and part of a community, which increases empathy and improves everyone's educational experience (Bennett, 2016).

• *Here are the Transcripts:*

Tailoring instruction for diverse needs is a daily adventure. Each child is unique, and I've found that adjusting my teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles allows every young mind to shine. (Participant 2)

In my kindergarten classroom, I've learned that storytelling is a powerful tool for tailoring instruction. By incorporating diverse characters and experiences in our tales, I aim to make every child feel seen and represented. This not only sparks interest but also fosters an inclusive atmosphere where everyone's story is valued. (Participant 3)

Teaching kindergarten means embracing flexibility. Tailoring instruction involves recognizing that young learners follow different paths to understanding. I strive to ensure that each child progresses at their own pace, building a strong foundation for future learning. (Participant 5)

In my classroom, I've found that tailoring instruction often involves engaging multiple senses. Young learners thrive when they can touch, see, and hear the concepts they're exploring. (Participant 6).

➤ *Theme #3: Engaged Families in Education*

One of the most important things kindergarten teachers can do to support young learners' growth is to engage families in their education. Given the critical role that parents and other caregivers play in the early years of a child's development, educators place a high value on creating solid home-school partnerships in order to offer dependable assistance (Epstein, 2011). In order to keep parents updated on their child's growth and classroom activities, it is necessary to maintain open lines of communication through a variety of channels, such as meetings, newsletters, and emails (Epstein, 2011). By providing resources and activities that carry over classroom lessons into the home setting, educators also promote family involvement in learning and promote a collaborative approach to education (Epstein, 2011). In order to ensure that educational methods are sensitive to the needs and expectations of families, teachers also actively seek out and respect parental input on choices and policies regarding the classroom (Epstein, 2011). In addition, educators value cultural diversity and work to establish welcoming environments that honor and promote the languages and cultural origins of all participating families (Bennett, 2016). Together, these initiatives improve learning outcomes and foster the entire development of even the youngest students.

• *Presented below are the Transcripts:*

I've discovered that engaging families in education often means tapping into the treasure trove of knowledge within each household. By encouraging parents to share their skills or cultural traditions, we transform our classroom into a vibrant mosaic of diverse experiences. (Participant1)

In my kindergarten class, families aren't just spectators; they are active participants in their child's learning journey. From interactive workshops on early literacy to math game nights, involving parents in hands-on activities creates a dynamic and supportive educational community. (Participant 3)

Engaging families in education is not just about academic progress; it's about celebrating every milestone, big or small. From class performances and art exhibitions to special family-themed events, creating opportunities for parents to actively participate in their child's achievements strengthens the sense of pride and joy within our kindergarten community. (Participant 6)

I've discovered that engaging families in education often means tapping into the treasure trove of knowledge within each household. By encouraging parents to share their skills or cultural traditions, we transform our classroom into a vibrant mosaic of diverse experiences. (Participant 8)

B. Coping Mechanisms of Kindergarten Educators on the Challenges Encountered in Teaching Littlest Learners

Teachers of kindergarten students must have coping strategies because they face a variety of difficulties while instructing young students. These demands for adaptation and resilience cover behavior management, child development, and designing stimulating learning settings (Epstein, 2011). To effectively manage these obstacles and guarantee that students have a positive educational experience, educators use research-based practices, look for peer support, and engage in self-care (Pianta et al., 2009; UNESCO, 2021). Through the application of these coping strategies, teachers are able to promote their kids' lifetime learning while also navigating the challenges of early childhood education (Epstein, 2011).

➤ *Theme #1: Managing Time Effectively*

Kindergarten teachers must be adept at managing their time in order to tackle the many obstacles associated with early childhood education. To enhance instructional impact and create engaging learning environments, they carefully plan classes and coordinate daily routines (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Without rushing through classes or missing important chances, educators can guarantee that crucial learning goals are accomplished by prioritizing tasks and creating explicit targets (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Additionally, the way a classroom is organized is critical to creating a seamless learning environment by reducing interruptions and promoting seamless transitions between activities (Marzano & Simms, 2013).

Kindergarten teachers provide specific time for targeted student help in addition to planned and organized lessons, recognizing and meeting a range of learning requirements (Hannafin et al., 2013). With this method, teachers may give specific help to each student, letting them study at their own speed and guaranteeing that all students participate in the process. In addition, teachers use reflective practices to evaluate and improve their methods of instruction, which fosters ongoing professional development and increases their efficacy in the classroom (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Kindergarten teachers that employ efficient time management techniques not only successfully manage the difficulties of early childhood education, but they also establish nurturing settings in which the youngest students can flourish and acquire critical skills.

• *Shown below are the Transcripts:*

Managing time effectively in my kindergarten class involves incorporating structured playtime into our daily routine. By carefully planning engaging activities that align with educational goals, I create a balance between learning and play. (Participant 1)

Collaborative efforts are key to effective time management in my kindergarten classroom. Partnering with fellow teachers allows us to divide responsibilities, ensuring that each aspect of the curriculum receives the attention it deserves. (Participant 4)

Reflecting on my teaching practices has become an integral part of effective time management. Regularly assessing what worked well and what could be improved helps me fine-tune my lesson plans and teaching strategies. (Participant 7)

In the bustling world of kindergarten, providing a visual roadmap for the day helps both me and my students stay on track. The simple act of checking off completed tasks not only adds a sense of accomplishment but also instills a valuable lesson in time awareness from an early age. (Participant 8)

➤ Theme #2: Undergoing Professional Development

Kindergarten teachers must pursue professional development in order to successfully deal with the challenges of working with young students. Due to the dynamic nature of early childhood education, teachers must remain current on research, best practices, and trends in the field in order to deliver the best possible instruction and assistance (Epstein, 2011). Opportunities for professional development, like workshops, seminars, and online courses, give teachers cutting-edge pedagogical approaches and research-backed techniques, improving their capacity to successfully meet the varied needs of their pupils. Furthermore, professional development helps teachers adopt a growth mindset by empowering them to see obstacles as chances for their own and their careers' advancement, which benefits their students (Dweck, 2006).

In addition to teaching techniques, professional development frequently covers classroom management, behavior intervention tactics, and social-emotional learning methodologies. These areas are critical for helping young learners acquire social and self-regulation abilities (Hemmeter et al., 2017). Additionally, by creating a network of peers who can assist one another, these opportunities help educators meet the demands of their profession by encouraging cooperation, experience sharing, and creative teaching methods (Little, 2003). Kindergarten teachers that participate in continuous professional development not only improve their efficacy as teachers but also help to provide safe, stimulating learning environments for the youngest students.

• Demonstrated below are the Transcripts:

Embracing professional development is like embarking on a continuous learning adventure in my kindergarten class. This commitment to ongoing growth not only benefits my professional skills but also enhances the learning environment for my young students. (Participant 1)

Professional development is a journey of self-discovery and reflection. Regularly assessing my teaching practices, seeking feedback, and implementing constructive changes form the core of my growth as a kindergarten teacher. This reflective approach not only refines my skills but ensures that my young learners benefit from the most effective and innovative educational practices. (Participant 3)

Coping with the demands of teaching young learners involves more than just academic development. Embracing a holistic wellness approach in professional development, which includes strategies for managing stress, fostering emotional intelligence, and promoting work-life balance, equips me to navigate the dynamic challenges of the kindergarten classroom. (Participant 6)

As a kindergarten teacher, staying flexible in my approach allows me to embrace new methodologies and pedagogical trends effectively. This adaptability ensures that I am well-equipped to cater to the diverse needs of my young learners in an ever-evolving educational landscape. (Participant 8)

➤ Theme #3: Self-Care

Kindergarten teachers should set priorities and use stress-reduction strategies in order to deal with the pressures that come with their line of work. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) found that instructors who used stress-reduction tactics—like deep breathing exercises, time-management skills, and reaching out to others for support—reported feeling less burned out and more satisfied with their jobs. In a similar vein, proactive coping strategies—like self-care routines, boundary-setting, and taking up hobbies or leisure activities—have been linked to reduced levels of burnout and increased job satisfaction (McIntyre et al., 2017). Additionally, Panagioti et al. (2017) discovered that among kindergarten teachers, regular physical activity, hobbies, leisure pursuits, and mindfulness practices significantly decreased burnout and boosted job satisfaction.

Based on the findings of this study, the kindergarten teachers prioritize self-care to cope with the challenges they face in their profession.

• Below are the Transcripts:

Amidst the hustle of teaching and additional responsibilities, I've learned that self-care is non-negotiable. I've incorporated daily rituals like meditation and short walks, providing moments of calm. This helps me recharge, ensuring I bring my best self to both the classroom and other duties. (Participant 2)

Recognizing the importance of self-care has been a game-changer. I allocate time for activities I love, whether it's reading, gardening, or spending quality time with loved ones. This not only rejuvenates me but also ensures I approach my responsibilities with a refreshed mindset. (Participant 3)

Self-care isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. I've embraced mindfulness practices, ensuring I take short breaks during the day to refocus. Additionally, setting realistic expectations and learning to say no when needed has helped maintain my well-being while handling additional tasks. (Participant 5)

Fulfilling extra responsibilities can be overwhelming, but self-care is my anchor. I prioritize sleep, stay hydrated, and practice mindfulness. These simple habits have a profound impact, allowing me to navigate challenges with resilience and maintain a positive outlook. (Participant 6)

C. Insights Gained from the Experiences of Kindergarten Educators in Teaching Littlest Learners

Kindergarten teachers' insights are incredibly valuable when it comes to early childhood education. Through their commitment to teaching, these committed educators get a profound grasp of the distinct needs, problems, and potentials of their pupils, which informs both their teaching practices and the larger conversation on early education (Pianta et al., 2009). By gaining a thorough understanding of developmental phases and important milestones, they are able to customize instruction and provide developmentally appropriate activities that promote social, emotional, and cognitive growth in children (Pianta et al., 2009). The significance of play-based learning and hands-on experiences is also recognized by educators, who recognize the positive effects these approaches have on kids' curiosity, creativity, and general development (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009).

Kindergarten teachers also get knowledge on the value of community and parental involvement in promoting children's learning. They understand the critical role that families play in a child's educational journey and create practical plans for building healthy relationships with parents and other caregivers (Epstein, 2011). These findings underline the necessity of a collaborative approach to early childhood education by highlighting the connections between the family, school, and community in influencing the educational experiences of young learners.

➤ Theme #1: Importance of Family and Community Partnership

Among the most significant insights kindergarten teachers have learned about instructing the youngest students is the value of family and community involvement. These teachers understand how important it is for families and the larger community to be involved in their children's education. This realization goes beyond the classroom, highlighting the ways in which the community, school, and home are all intertwined in influencing young learners' early educational experiences (Epstein, 2011).

Teachers learn how important it is to collaborate and communicate openly with parents and other caregivers. They understand that in order to keep families updated about their child's progress, classroom activities, and areas where extra support may be required, open lines of communication through frequent parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, emails, and phone calls are crucial (Epstein, 2011). It is ensured by this kind of communication that parents take an active role in their child's education and welfare. Kindergarten teachers also discover how important it is for families to be involved in their children's educational journeys. In order to expand

learning outside of the classroom, they offer parents tools, techniques, and recommendations (Epstein, 2011).

Teachers also understand how important it is to learn about the distinct family situations and cultural backgrounds of their students. With the help of this understanding, they can adapt their teaching strategies to be inclusive and culturally sensitive, fostering an atmosphere where each kid is treated with respect and value (Bennett, 2016). Kindergarten teachers gain an appreciation for the variety of viewpoints and customs that families bring to the classroom. In addition to involving families, educators learn how critical it is to form alliances with the larger community. They acquire knowledge about the advantages of working with nearby companies, groups, and individuals to enhance the educational opportunities for their young students (Epstein, 2011).

• Shown Below are the Transcripts:

My experience in kindergarten education has illuminated the paramount importance of family and community partnerships. Establishing a strong connection with families lays a solid foundation for a child's educational journey. (Participant 1)

I've come to view the home as an extension of the classroom. Engaging parents in the learning process not only bridges the gap between school and home but also ensures a seamless, continuous educational experience. (Participant 4)

Understanding the synergy between family and community partnerships has led me to view education as a holistic ecosystem. A supportive network involving parents, caregivers, and the wider community ensures that our kindergarten classroom isn't an isolated entity but rather a vital part of a collaborative learning environment. (Participant 7)

Family and community partnerships empower parents to actively participate in their child's educational journey. Through regular updates, workshops, and interactive events, parents gain insights into our curriculum and teaching methodologies. This shared understanding not only enhances parental confidence in supporting learning at home but also strengthens the bond between school and family. (Participant 8)

➤ Theme #2: Development of Resilience

As kindergarten teachers work with young learners, they come to understand the importance of resilience development. Teachers understand resilience as being essential to a child's current well-being as well as their lifetime emotional strength. Resilience is defined as a child's ability to overcome adversity and adjust to challenging circumstances (Garmezy, 1993). This knowledge informs their approach to teaching, enabling them to establish a secure and supportive learning environment that promotes experimentation and problem-solving while acknowledging that failures and exploration are necessary for the development of resilience (Garmezy,

1993). Teachers also set a good example for resilience by handling setbacks and overcoming obstacles; this allows them to impart important lessons that go beyond the classroom (Brackett et al., 2010).

Educators also discover the value of positive reinforcement in fostering resilience in kids by recognizing their hard work and perseverance and encouraging a development mindset in them (Walker et al., 1998; Dweck, 2006). Additionally, they incorporate social-emotional learning curricula, imparting empathy, emotional control, and problem-solving techniques to provide students the tools they need to handle challenging circumstances (Hemmeter et al., 2017). Educators also recognize the need of building strong relationships with parents, caregivers, and the community at large in order to offer extra levels of support (Christenson et al., 2017). To sum up, these understandings of resilience guide instructional approaches that prioritize a caring atmosphere, provide resilience modeling, positive reinforcement, social-emotional learning, and help children create supporting networks. These tactics enable kids to confront obstacles with courage and flexibility.

- *Presented Below are the Transcripts:*

Teaching kindergarten has taught me that the development of resilience is a crucial educational goal. By introducing age-appropriate challenges and encouraging a growth mindset, I witness young learners overcoming obstacles with a newfound sense of determination. (Participant 2)

Creating a positive and nurturing classroom environment is fundamental to fostering resilience in kindergarten students. Celebrating small victories, providing a safe space for expressing emotions, and emphasizing the importance of trying again to contribute to a culture where setbacks are seen as part of the learning process. (Participant 3)

Teaching kindergarten students that their abilities can be developed through effort, learning from mistakes, and embracing challenges as opportunities for improvement cultivates a mindset that fuels resilience. This approach lays the groundwork for a positive attitude towards learning and problem-solving. (Participant 5)

Encouraging collaboration, empathy, and supportive relationships among students helps create a community where they learn to navigate challenges together. This sense of camaraderie not only enhances the educational experience but also contributes to the development of resilience in each young learner. (Participant 6)

➤ *To be Flexible and Adaptable*

One of the most important lessons kindergarten teachers have learned in the difficult work of instructing the youngest students is the importance of flexibility and adaptability. Teachers are aware that young children are naturally dynamic, changing their needs, interests, and learning styles quickly. This realization motivates teachers

to modify their instructional techniques, tactics, and strategies in order to successfully engage students and support their individual developmental journeys (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). When it comes to lesson design and classroom management, flexibility is crucial because it enables teachers to swiftly modify activities that might not be engaging for students and preserve a pleasant learning environment (Marzano & Simms, 2013).

Teachers also discover how important it is to modify lessons to fit each student's unique learning needs, taking into account the fact that kids learn in a variety of ways and at varying rates. Teaching strategies that are flexible can accommodate a range of learning styles and skills, allowing every kid to develop in accordance with their own unique trajectory (Pianta et al., 2009). Teachers also stay up to date on evolving research and evidence-based practices, implementing fresh approaches that better suit the requirements of their young students (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). This adaptability extends to assessment methods, where alternative approaches like observation-based and portfolio assessments provide a comprehensive view of each child's development (Pianta et al., 2009), and classroom management, where strategies are adjusted based on the developmental stage and individual characteristics of the children (Marzano & Simms, 2013).

In summary, kindergarten teachers must possess the critical understanding that flexibility and adaptability are essential for instructing the youngest students. Their approach to lesson design, classroom management, and tailored instruction is informed by this realization. Teachers may build a dynamic and responsive learning environment that meets the different needs and developmental trajectories of their young pupils by embracing flexibility and adaptability.

Demonstrated below are what the participants have said:

Each day is a new adventure, and adapting to the evolving needs of my young learners is key. Whether it's adjusting lesson plans on the fly or embracing spontaneous teachable moments, flexibility ensures that the classroom environment remains engaging and responsive to the ever-changing dynamics of early childhood education. (Participant 1)

Recognizing that each child learns differently, I've learned to adjust teaching methods, pace, and materials to accommodate diverse learning styles. This approach not only fosters a more inclusive environment but also ensures that every young learner receives personalized support for optimal growth. (Participant 3)

Flexibility in educational management often involves seizing unexpected teachable moments. Whether sparked by a curious question or a spontaneous event, these moments offer valuable opportunities for exploration and learning. (Participant 6)

In the world of kindergarten education, unpredictability is the norm. Embracing this reality and maintaining flexibility in both lesson delivery and classroom management is vital. (Participant 8)

IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A. Conclusion

Several major themes about their experiences instructing the youngest students surfaced from interviews with kindergarten teachers. Educators stressed the significance of providing a playful learning environment above all else. They know that young children learn best when they are having fun and are actively involved in the learning process. In addition to encouraging curiosity, this method offers interactive exploration and experiential learning opportunities, both of which are critical for the development of young children. Through fostering this atmosphere, teachers hope to encourage each child's innate curiosity to investigate, try new things, and learn about their surroundings.

In addition, kindergarten instructors emphasized the value of individualized training to fulfill a range of requirements. They understand that every child has different skills, experiences, and learning preferences when they join the classroom. Because of this, teachers modify their approaches, resources, and plans of instruction to make sure every student has the chance to reach their greatest potential. This method is essential for addressing individual differences and offering tailored assistance, which improves learning outcomes all around.

Educators also emphasized how crucial it is to involve families in schooling. They recognize how important parents and other caregivers are to a child's educational process. Teachers who build great relationships with families foster a supportive and cooperative network that goes beyond the classroom. By working together, we can make sure that kids get comprehensive and consistent support for all aspects of their development, which will help them succeed in early education and beyond.

B. Future Directions

Examining how kindergarten teachers educate the youngest pupils illuminates the intricacies of the classroom setting for these students. The results point to a number of possible future directions, including the creation of focused professional development programs to improve teachers' early childhood education skills, the development of creative teaching strategies and curriculum modifications that better suit the dynamic nature of young learners, the encouragement of collaborative initiatives between educators, parents, and communities to support holistic child development, and the improvement of educational policies and practices to better teach the youngest students. In order to effectively fulfill the unique needs of their young learners, educators can improve their practices going ahead through ongoing professional development, peer collaboration, reflective teaching methods, and proactive parent communication.

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