

MULTI-AGE TEACHING THROUGH THE LENS OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Kindergarten was a crucial milestone in a child's educational journey. Yet, in those early learning environments, teachers encountered a distinctive challenge: they had to effectively cater to the diverse needs of children spanning various age groups. This diversity not only complicated the teaching process but also required educators to modify their approach to meet the unique developmental paths and learning styles of each student. In the serene landscape of Laak South District, nestled within breathtaking scenery of Davao de Oro, this study embarked on a journey to explore the multifaceted experiences of kindergarten educators grappling with the complexities of teaching multi-age in classrooms. Qualitative research employing a phenomenological approach, the study sought to illuminate the many challenges confronted by teachers as they navigated classrooms where children of multi-ages coexisted. A carefully curated cohort of ten experienced educators was meticulously selected through purposively sampling to participate in in-depth interviews. The study endeavored to uncover the intricate strategies employed by these teachers to navigate the inherent complexities of multi-age classrooms. These might have encompassed innovative pedagogical techniques, dynamic classroom management strategies, and tailored instructional methodologies crafted to address the diverse needs of learners spanning various age groups. By delving into the lived experiences of kindergarten educators in Laak South District, this study aspired to provide invaluable insights into effective pedagogical practices within multi-age settings. These insights held the potential to inform the development of targeted educational interventions aimed at bolstering teacher support and enhancing student learning outcomes.

Keyword: - Kindergarten education, multi-age classrooms, teacher experiences, phenomenological approach, educational interventions.

1. INTRODUCTION

A child's cognitive and social development are greatly aided by receiving an education in kindergarten. Kindergarten education helps children develop to their full potential and lays the foundation for their future academic success. Still, educators often face the challenge of managing a multi-age group of students in one class. When teaching a multi-age kindergarten class, teachers must modify their teaching techniques to address the various demands of their students. Teachers find it difficult to give because students have a wide range of talents and developmental stages, they require specialized attention [43].

Teachers in China had difficulty providing all students with equal attention and support because older students frequently dominated class discussions and activities [30]. The diverse abilities in cognitive, social, and emotional development made it difficult for a teacher to satisfy the varied demands of their students [29]. Additionally, the presence of older students frequently created a power dynamic that made it difficult for the teacher to create peaceful surroundings in the classroom. Older students also had the ability to rule the classroom, which would discourage younger pupils from participating and engaging.

According to [40] study done in Metro Manila; teachers frequently found it difficult to meet the various developmental needs of their students because of large age diverse of large age diverse abilities. It was determined

that multi-age classrooms made it more difficult to give relevant information and successfully control the dynamics of the classroom. Additionally, multi-age instruction had a negative impact on students' academic performance, social integration, and self-esteem [8].

During the academic year of 2022-2023, the researcher encountered a class at Bollukan Elementary School consisting of five students, aged 7-13. The global COVID-19 pandemic, parents' ignorance of the K-12 Curriculum, and lack of birth documents are some of the reasons that led to this situation. These conditions aided in the development of the kindergarten multi-age classroom. Having managed a multi-age kindergarten class before, the researcher saw both advantages and disadvantages. Positively, older pupils assumed duties like classroom cleaning and junior peer mentoring. Negative parts emerged as older peers occasionally felt bored or unchallenged while younger pupils found it difficult to keep up with the courses and sometimes took on the mannerisms of younger.

1.1 Research Questions

The study explored the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and strategies in teaching of kindergarten teachers in handling kindergarten classes with multi-age. This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of kindergarten teachers in addressing the diverse needs of pupils with multi-age?
2. What are the challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers in addressing classroom instruction?
3. How do kindergarten teachers cope with the different challenges encountered?
4. What teaching strategies do the kindergarten teachers utilize in addressing the diverse needs of the pupils with multi-age?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This research was a qualitative study employing a phenomenological approach; hence, its goal was to explore the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and teaching strategies of kindergarten teachers. The fundamental objective of this approach was to describe the nature of occurrence of the phenomenon [16] and how these individuals responded to situation [25]. A thorough examination of what experience meant to individuals was known as phenomenological research, and it necessitated that researchers concentrate on those experiences of a phenomenon in order to gather comprehensive details that served as a foundation for thoughtful structural analysis, which eventually revealed the essence of experience [12]. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) with 10 participants who were chosen through purposive sampling to understand the detailed experiences and perspectives of individuals in complex situations, such as the challenges and strategies involved in teaching multi-age kindergarten classes.

2.2 Research Participants

There were 10 participants in the study, considered sufficient to saturate the information gathered from the group under study. The participants in this qualitative study were chosen using the purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling used in this study was characterized by the incorporation of inclusion criteria that needed to be met by the participants. The criteria for choosing the participants of this study were set by the researcher. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were as follows: (a) the participants must be a teacher at public school in Laak South District (b) handling kindergarten class (c) and at least three years in service Dep-Ed.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Before concluding the research study, the researcher ensured that the investigation adhered to appropriate research protocols, subsequently submitting the study for assessment and validation by the thesis adviser and panel. Second, an endorsement letter was obtained to request approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division Office of Davao de Oro, Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Principals. The study then underwent an ethics review. The researcher prepared the materials and tools needed for data gathering, such as the interview guide, audio recorder, and field notes.

Third, participants were identified through the use of the purposive sampling method. Some participants were recruited and contacted with the help of gatekeepers, who were asked to read and sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement form. The researcher ensured that the selected participants fulfilled the criteria and effectively employed teaching strategies while handling multi-age teaching in kindergarten. The research objectives and the entire methodology were explained to the selected participants. Additionally, participants were sent informed consent forms through emails and were asked to provide their e-signatures if they agreed to the condition stipulated that their participation would be voluntary and without coercion, and they would be willing to impart their knowledge as needed in the study.

Fourth, individual in-depth interviews were held through virtual meetings or in-person at specified times agreed upon by the participants after they had read and signed the consent letters. The guide questions for the interview were validated before the conduct of the study. To meet the needs of the study, the researcher established a series of scheduled meetings with the participants following dates that were most convenient for them. Participants of the study were sent

meeting links at times most convenient to them for interviews. Their role and rights were thoroughly explained before the interview, and compensation was provided for their inconvenience. All the proceedings were recorded to ensure validity and reliability significant in the conduct of the study. The researcher also asked permission from the participants to have the interview recorded. Throughout the interview, their responses were noted down while being assisted by an audio recorder to compensate for any mishearing and as an aid for transcription and coding later.

Fifth, the recorded interviews were stored in a flash drive, secured with a password, and stored in a secure and locked storage place accessible only to the authorized person of the study, who was the researcher. They were also uploaded to Google Drive, which was not viewable to the public, for additional security and backup. All the responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure a greater degree of accuracy during the data analysis. After the study was conducted, all the data would only be stored and kept for three years after which all would be destroyed and disposed to prevent unauthorized people from using and accessing the files.

Lastly, a thematic analysis was done. The responses of the participants were analyzed thoroughly based on the core ideas. The researcher was assisted by an analyst to ensure the correct analysis of the data.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed ethical principle in conducting the study, including respect for persons as outlined in the Belmont Report. Participants were given a face-to-face orientation and provided with informed consent before the study. They had the right to refuse to answer questions and withdraw from the study if necessary. Responses were recorded with complete consent and participants were not forced to participate. The researcher prioritized participants safety by conducting interviews at a convenient and comfortable time and place.

Beneficence was also a key principle, which involved treating participants with respect, causing no harm, and protecting their well-being. The goal was to balance risks and benefits of the research to ensure total well-being of participants while minimizing harm. The study ensured that the participants' identities were kept anonymous and that they were treated equally. The researcher presented the results to the participants and respected their decision to omit or retain information. The study adhered to the principle of the Belmont Report to protect participants' rights. Anonymity was maintained through the use of code names and secure data handling. Only authorized personnel had access to the data, and data protection measures were implemented for accuracy.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

This presents the findings of the research questions that explored the experiences and coping mechanisms of kindergarten teachers in multi-age teaching. The primary focus of this research was to shed light on the teachers' experience in multi-age teaching in kindergarten, the challenges they experienced while teaching kindergarten class with multi-age groups, their coping mechanisms in overcoming those challenges, and the best practices they employed to address the challenges. The presentation of the results was done according to the order of specific research questions used in this study.

What are the experiences of kindergarten teachers in addressing the diverse needs of pupils with multi-age?

This section presents the result of the first major research question; 'What are the experiences of kindergarten teachers in addressing the diverse needs of pupils with multi-age?'. There were three specific questions used to gather data and information for this major question. These questions were intended to gather information on information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the advantage and disadvantage of having a multi-age in a classroom, accommodating varying developmental levels of students, and available professional development opportunities for kindergarten teachers.

Advantage and disadvantage of having a multi-age in a classroom.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What is the advantage and disadvantage of having a multi-age in a classroom?' The responses generated thirteen themes: older students taking the lead roles, opportunity to explore different strategies, varying comprehension level, prepare lot of materials, having a jolly class, older students misbehaving, emphasizing education for all, learning through peers, problem handling different behavior, possibility of grouping the students, younger ones overshadowed by the older ones, older ones being bullied by the younger ones, older students.

Accommodating Varying Developmental Levels of Students.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.2 'How did you accommodate the varying developmental levels of students with multi-age?' The responses generated seven themes: use of differentiated instruction, identify strength and weakness of the pupil, provide developmental needs, conducting remedial session, knowing family background, being resourceful, use of peer teaching.

Available Professional Development Opportunities for Kindergarten Teachers.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.3 ‘What professional development opportunities are available for kindergarten teachers to enhance ability to address multi-age of students?’ The responses generated two themes: seminars and training for kinder teachers, pursue graduate education and attend trainings.

What are the challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers in addressing classroom instruction?

This section presents the result of the second major research question; ‘What are the challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers in addressing classroom instruction?’. There were three specific questions used to gather data and information for this major question. These questions were intended to gather information on information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the problems encountered in establishing sense of authority and maintaining discipline, problems encountered in social dynamics at play in classrooms instruction, and ways used to provide individualized instruction.

Problems Encountered in Establishing Sense of Authority and Maintaining Discipline.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 2.1 ‘What are the problems encountered in establishing sense of authority and maintaining discipline when multi-age is significantly wide?’ The responses generated seven themes: none, pupils with difficulty in understanding, pupils not listening, pupils being attention seeker, pupils not participating, older ones being hardheaded, difficulty in giving instruction.

Problems Encountered in Social Dynamics at Play in Classrooms Instruction.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 2.2 ‘What is the problem encountered in social dynamics at play in classrooms instruction with multi-age?’ The responses generated eight themes: younger ones being attention seeker, not listening to instruction, younger ones being left behind, not willing to join, not enthusiastic, no problem, dealing with different behavior, and being so hyper.

Ways Used to Provide Individualized Instruction.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 2.3 ‘How can you provide individualize instruction in classrooms with multi-age?’. The responses generated five themes: individual assessment, selective affiliation, groupings, repetitive instruction, and differentiated instruction.

How do kindergarten teachers cope with the different challenges encountered?

This section presents the result of the third major research question; ‘How do kindergarten teachers cope with the different challenges encountered?’. There were three specific questions used to gather data and information for this major question. These questions were intended to gather information on information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the ways used to manage classroom dynamics and behavior, ways used to differentiated instruction to accommodate varying levels of academic readiness, and ways used to create a supportive learning community that fosters social-emotional development.

Ways Used to Manage Classroom Dynamic and Behavior.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 3.1 ‘How did you manage classroom dynamics and behavior with multi-age students?’ The responses generated five themes: adjust on pupil’s needs and behavior, impose classroom rules and policy, equal treatment, identify pupils’ ability, and giving fun activities.

Ways Used to Differentiated Instruction to Accommodate Varying Levels of Academic Readiness.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 3.2 ‘How did you differentiate instruction to accommodate varying levels of academic readiness?’ The responses generated six themes: diagnosed assessment, group students of same level, giving general instruction, giving supervision, giving of differentiated instruction, conduct of differentiated instruction, and conduct individual assessment.

Ways Used to Create a Supported Learning Community that Fosters Social-emotional Development.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 3.3 ‘How did you create a supportive learning community that fosters social-emotional development?’ The responses generated six themes: communicate and cooperative with parents, peer group activities, conduct parent orientation, listen and communicate with learners, not allowing bullying, and monitor students’ progress.

What teaching strategies do the kindergarten teachers utilize in addressing the diverse needs of the pupils with multi-age?

This section presents the result of the fourth major research question; 'What teaching strategies do the kindergarten teachers utilize in addressing the diverse needs of the pupils with multi-age'. There were three specific questions used to gather data and information for this major question. These questions were intended to gather information on information on the understanding of the research participants regarding assessment methods employed to evaluate the progress achievements of students, teaching strategies sufficient to the needs of pupils, and recommendation or insights.

Assessment Methods Employed to Evaluate the Progress Achievements of Students.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 4.1 'What kind of assessment methods to evaluate the progress and achievement of students in a kindergarten in a kindergarten with multi-age?' The responses generated five themes: ECCD and progress report card assessment, written work, portfolio and performance assessment, summative assessment, and kindergarten checklists, pupils' output.

Teaching Strategies Sufficient to the Needs of Pupils.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 4.2 'What Teaching strategies will suffice the needs of the pupils in multi-age teaching?' The responses generated four themes: peer tutoring, using differentiated instruction, one-on-one strategy, and using pupils first language.

Recommendation of Insights.

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 4.3 'What is your recommendation or insights about this?' The responses generated nine themes: provide key points or materials, seminars and training for kindergarten teachers, have initiative and be resourceful, know students' capacity, assign efficient kindergarten teachers, accelerate proficient older pupils, be enthusiastic, be patient, and no mature kindergarten pupil.

4.2 Discussion

Below are the presentation of structured themes and the emergent themes under each structured theme. Each structured theme is enriched with contextualization and explanation supported by related literature and research findings.

Advantage and disadvantage of having a multi-age in a classroom. The findings revealed that while older students assuming leadership roles offered mentorship opportunities, logistical challenges arose in preparing age-appropriate materials. Additionally, it was essential to manage behavior in the classroom while preserving a positive environment and making sure that everyone received an equal education. Peer learning was helpful, but group dynamics and varied behavior needed to be managed well. The informants emphasized the need for diverse teaching methods to cater to students with different levels of understanding. Effective classroom management was stressed as crucial for addressing misbehavior and encouraging participation. Peer learning was recognized for its benefits but also underscored the importance of managing various behaviors. It was advised against categorizing students by maturity levels to prevent older peers from being overlooked. The findings revealed the benefits of peer tutoring for leadership and academic growth [4][32] and the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in meeting diverse learning needs [2]; [41]. Challenges include preparing materials for varied age groups [13], while positive teacher-student relationship are crucial for supportive learning environment [31]. Inclusive practices improve equity [37];[38] and addressing diverse student needs prevents marginalization [6];[11]. Proactive measures against bullying are essential for fostering safe school environments [7].

Accommodating Varying Developmental Levels of Students. These strategies aimed to provide individualized customized instruction and enhanced learning opportunities for students. However, they also had drawbacks, particularly in identifying areas where students excelled or struggled. Addressing developmental needs, understanding family backgrounds, and implementing peers teaching were found to aid in the holistic development of children. The informants highlighted the benefits of differentiated teaching, which allows teachers to address various learning challenges and provide individualized help to students. By identifying students' strengths and weaknesses. Knowing family histories has improved general development by enabling individualized help for each student. Creative thinking and peer teaching techniques have fostered cooperative learning in classes with multi-age groups, creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The findings revealed that differentiated instruction, as shown by [2] effectively enhances kindergarten children's language skills by catering to diverse learning needs. Teacher characteristics and classroom dynamics, emphasized by [14], significantly influence children of customized remedial sessions. [19] stresses the importance of parental involvement in fostering supportive learning environments. [24] advocates for partnerships between schools, families, and communities to improve educational outcomes. Peer tutoring validated [4] is shown to enhance academic achievement and promote collaborative learning environments.

Available Professional Development Opportunities for Kindergarten Teachers. Informants stress the

importance of more comprehensive training to equip teachers with the necessary skills to manage diverse student demographics. The informants highlighted the importance of seminars and training for kindergarten teachers' professional development but noted a lack of specific instruction on handling multi-age classes. In addressing these difficulties, it recommends workshops and graduate education, as well as the use of tailored seminars. Meeting the diverse needs of children by expanding professional development to include training in differentiated instruction and multi-age classroom management. The findings revealed the importance of structured training and whole-school interventions in improving educational practices, especially in graduate school settings [10][3]. [5] highlights the need for tailored seminars to manage developmental differences in multi-age classrooms, emphasizing professional development for kindergarten teachers. These studies advocate for expanding training to include differentiated instruction and effective multi-age classroom management, aiming to meet diverse student needs across educational contexts.

Problems Encountered in Establishing Sense of Authority and Maintaining Discipline. These challenges underscore the importance of implementing practical strategies to maintain a conducive learning environment for all students. The informants revealed that teachers employed particular strategies to address challenges, including clearly conveying rules in the classroom, implementing discipline consistently, and organizing stimulating activities. However, difficulties persisted, particularly in delivering effective instruction, particularly in the first few months of the academic year when teachers were still coming to know the different needs of the pupils. To get beyond these challenges, a variety of strategies that included understanding each student's particularly needs and learning preferences, ongoing discipline, and open communication was needed. The findings revealed the importance of clear communication, as highlighted by [1]. [24] advocate for creating supportive classroom environments to manage attention-seeking behaviors effectively. Additionally, [5] validated peer tutoring as a beneficial strategy for enhancing student engagement, while [44] supports the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in fostering customized and collaborative learning environments. These insights collectively emphasize the critical role of communication, supportive environments, peer interaction, and individualized instruction in enhancing educational and student success.

Problems Encountered in Social Dynamics at Play in Classroom Instruction. The findings revealed various challenges within classroom social dynamics, including younger students seeking attention and exhibiting possessive behavior, while some students were observed to have ignore instructions, disrupting the learning process. Additionally, reluctance to participate in group activities and a lack of enthusiasm among certain students were noted. However, classrooms with well-behaved older tended to experience fewer socialization issues. Overall, effective management of diverse behaviors, such as hyperactivity and non-cooperation, was deemed essential for creating a conducive learning environment. The informant revealed that younger sought attention and could possessive; some disregarded instructions, disrupting learning; younger ones often struggled to keep up with older peers and needed extra support; some students hesitated to join activities or lacked enthusiasm; classrooms with well-behaved older pupils faced fewer socialization issues. Teachers had to manage diverse behaviors, including hyperactivity and shyness, requiring patience and tailored strategies for a conducive learning environment. The findings revealed the importance of strong teacher-student relationships and supportive classroom environments in managing attention-seeking behaviors, as discussed [38]. [45] emphasize the necessity for individualized instruction strategies to address issues such as non-compliance and being hipe through differentiated instruction. [13] underscore the significance of the critical role of teachers in employing tailored approaches and fostering a positive, engaging learning environment for all students.

Ways Used to Provide Individualized Instruction. The findings highlight the importance of strategic grouping, differentiated instruction, and individualized evaluation to meet the diverse needs of students. The informants emphasized the importance of individualized assessment in education, which involves tailoring methods to meet each students' specific learning needs. This process includes conducting assessments after group activities, alternating between individual and group settings, and developing tasks based on assessment outcomes. The students' intelligence levels are considered, and targeted instruction is provided to address learning gaps. These practices underscore the significance of individualized evaluation strategies in establishing individualized learning environments. The findings revealed the importance of individualized approaches to meet students' diverse needs, supported by [20]. Studies on peer tutoring and classroom dynamics [38]; [34] illustrate how selective group affiliation influence academic and social outcomes. Grouping strategies such as multi-age classrooms and peer tutoring [25] demonstrate diverse impact on students, learning and interactions. Differentiated instruction strategies, akin to repetition methods [9], involve revisiting content to enhance retention, supported by effective teaching research [33].

Ways Used to Manage Classroom Dynamics and Behavior. Educators should tailor their approaches to each students' needs, enforce regulations consistently, treat all students equally, develop their abilities, and integrate enjoyable activities to create a good learning environment. The informants shared diverse strategies for managing behaviors in the classroom, such as understanding students' needs and backgrounds, adjusting teaching methods, establishing clear rules, promoting fairness, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and engaging students in enjoyable activities. These insights

provide valuable guidance for teachers aiming to create an inclusive learning environment for all students. The findings revealed the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in meeting diverse student needs, as highlighted by [2]. [13] emphasize the importance of clear rules and structured environments for maintaining positive learning environments. [6] advocate for equitable practices to ensure fairness in education. [5] promote tailored teaching strategies to address individual student requirements.

Ways Used to Differentiate Instruction to Accommodate Varying Levels of Academic Readiness. The findings showed that in education, diagnostic assessment, grouping students by ability, general instruction, supervision, and differentiated instruction were important. Individual assessments were done to understand students better. Different methods were used to help all students learn well, no one left behind. The findings revealed that informants emphasized the importance of diagnostic assessment in understanding students' strengths and weaknesses. They highlighted how grouping students of similar proficiency levels promoted peer learning and collaboration. Additionally, they stressed the significance of general instruction and supervision, supported by differentiated instruction to cater to varying academic readiness levels. Conducting individual assessments provided valuable insights for instructional decisions, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness in the learning environment. The findings revealed the importance of diverse assessment methods supported by [26], including formative assessments to effectively diagnose student needs. [2] highlights the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in enhancing kindergarten children's language skills through development stage-based grouping. [4] further emphasizes the value of differentiated classrooms that blend general instruction with individualized learning experiences tailored to diverse student needs and interests.

Ways Used to Create a Supportive Learning Community that Fosters Social-emotional Development. These highlighted various strategies for establishing a nurturing learning environment conducive to social-emotional growth. The findings revealed that teachers used different ways to create a caring environment for students' social and emotional growth. This included talking well with parents, doing activities with classmates, having meetings with parents, listening carefully, stopping bullying, and checking how students were doing. These actions highlighted how important it is to help students grow in all areas, not just in school subjects. The informants said that talking and working well with parents was super important for making a supportive learning place. Informant 1 discussed how having daily conversations with parents provided them with information on their children's development and advice on how to support them at home. Informant 2 agreed, stating that parents need to assist and participate in their children's education. Informants 4, 5, and 8 emphasized the importance of collaborating with parents through meetings and monitoring their children's development. Overall, they demonstrated that creating a nurturing environment for learning and development required the involvement of parents. The findings revealed that parental involvement significantly enhances student achievements, as supported by [23] and [28]. Peer tutoring, demonstrated by [32] and [43], effectively closes academic gaps among students. Orientation sessions for parents, emphasized by [18], play a vital role in educating them to support their child's education and foster a positive school environment. Creating supportive classrooms through attentive listening, advocated by [17] and [15], addresses individual student needs effectively. Strategies like restorative practices and proactive interventions, validated by [7] and [36], reduce bullying incidents and enhance school safety. Regular monitoring of student progress, promoted by [33], enables educators to tailor instructional strategies for better outcomes. These underscore the critical importance of parental engagement and supportive school environments in promoting student success and well-being.

Assessment Methods Employed to Evaluate the Progress and Achievement of Students. The findings revealed that assessing kids' school progress is vital for understanding their readiness for learning and assessing their performance. To assess their academic performance, ECCD assessments and Progress Report Cards are used. It also helps to track improvement over time to see what they are doing and how they are working. Summative evaluations provide a summary of the entire curriculum, while kindergarten checklists are crucial for monitoring students' progress. Observing the work and activities of children boosts their confidence and motivation to continue learning. The informants highlighted the importance of teachers assessing students' progress through methods like writing, portfolios, and activity performance. They emphasized the value of age-neutral tests in evaluating learning. Kindergarten checklists were mentioned as a tool for monitoring student achievement across subjects. Additionally, engaging students in enjoyable activities was noted to boost motivation for studying. These concepts help educators comprehend students better and enhance their learning support. The findings revealed the effectiveness of various techniques like performance evaluations, portfolios, ECCD assessments, and progress report cards. These techniques have been supported by scholars such as [22], [21], and [42], who have highlighted their potential to foster holistic development and improve student engagement. As [39] and others have argued, adding real-life examples and the students' first language enhanced the learning process even more.

Teaching Strategies Sufficient to the Needs of Pupils. These teaching strategies aimed to create an inclusive learning environment. The findings revealed that using different teaching methods, like Peer Tutoring, Differentiated Instruction, One-on-One Teaching, and Using Students' First Language, helped meet students' different needs in class. These methods helped make classrooms where every student got special help, worked together, and learned in ways that suited them

best. In the end, these teaching methods made learning better for students and helped them do well in school. The informants revealed the effectiveness of diverse teaching strategies in meeting students' needs. Informant 1 talked about how working together with classmates (peer tutoring) helps, while Informant 2 said using different teaching for different students (differentiated instruction) is important. Informant 4 liked teaching one-on-one, and Informant 5 thought using the students' own language helped. All these ideas show that using various teaching methods can really help students in different ways. The findings revealed the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing gaps and enhancing social interactions among students, as demonstrated by [32]. [41] defined differentiated instruction as crucial for addressing diverse learning needs, supported by [44] and [2], who emphasize its effectiveness in improving specific skills like language acquisition. [5] discuss strategies for managing developmental differences in multi-age classrooms, aligning with inclusive educational practices advocated by [37].

Recommendation or Insights. These recommendations can contribute to creating a nurturing and effective learning environment for kindergarten students. The findings showed that there was a big focus on giving kindergarten teachers lots of support, especially when they had kids of multi ages in their classes. They needed things like books and tools, and they needed to keep learning new ways to teach well. Teachers were encouraged to be good at finding ways to teach even when it was hard, and they needed to understand that each student was different. It was also important to have good teachers and make sure that only the right age kids went to kindergarten. Overall, teaching kindergarten is challenging job and teachers need a lot of help to teach young students. The informants provided recommendations to enhance kindergarten instructions, such as seminars on teaching multi-age groups, ensuring necessary resources, specialized training for various age groups, and yearly skill-updating seminars for teachers. These suggestions aim to improve kindergarten instruction, particularly in environments with students of multi-ages. The findings revealed diverse strategies advocated in early childhood education, including differentiated instruction for language skills by [2], managing developmental differences in multi-age classrooms by [5], and emphasizing teacher-student relationships by [38]. Peer tutoring's impact on reducing achievement gaps is noted by [32], while [24] stresses parental involvement, and [35] focus on social-emotional development. Recommendations from informants include seminars on teaching multi-age groups, ensuring resources specialized training, and yearly skill updates for teachers, aimed at enhancing kindergarten instruction across diverse learning environments.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To ensure effective kindergarten education across multi ages, there are several key steps we need to take. Firstly, teachers for kindergarten should be very skilled at teaching young children. They should know a lot about teaching and how kids grow, and they should know how to manage a classroom with young students. Secondly, even once they begin teaching, educators need to continue studying. This helps them get better at teaching and try out new ideas. Thirdly, new teachers who are going to teach kindergarten need to learn about how it is different from other classes. They should know what to expect and how to handle different situations. Fourthly, teachers should think about getting a higher degree that focuses on teaching little kids. This can help them get even better at teaching and learn more about how kids learn.

Additionally, we should make sure teachers have all the things they need to teach well. They should have easy access to materials they can use to teach, which makes planning lessons easier and keeps teaching the same across different classes. Lastly, allowing older children in kindergarten to accelerate to the next level prevents them from being held back. If they are ready to move forward, they deserve the opportunity to do so.

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