

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education



Ronethe C. Tabura

Manzante Elementary School

ABSTRACT: Kindergarten teachers, as frontline educators responsible for shaping the early educational experiences of young learners, have encountered multifaceted hurdles in the wake of the pandemic. The study explored the struggles faced by kindergarten teachers in the Magsingal District of the SDO-Ilocos Sur post-pandemic. The research aimed to identify specific obstacles, including limited access to learning materials, classroom overcrowding, and inadequate training, lack of support for special needs students, administrative burdens, insufficient age-appropriate materials, behavioral management difficulties, and health and safety concerns. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, using interviews and thematic analysis to gather in-depth insights from kindergarten teachers. Results highlighted significant resource constraints, the digital divide, and the socio-emotional challenges encountered in delivering quality education amidst unprecedented disruptions. The proposed action plan recommended increased funding, support for professional development, smaller class sizes, and streamlined administrative tasks to enhance teaching efficacy and create a more inclusive learning environment. This study provided valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues to support teachers in delivering quality education to young learners.

KEYWORDS: kindergarten teachers, quality education, post-pandemic challenges, educational resources, inclusive education

INTRODUCTION

The global education landscape has been profoundly impacted by the unprecedented challenges and disruptions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic (Johnson et al., 2023). Educators worldwide have confronted the need to swiftly adapt to new educational realities, ushering them into uncharted territories characterized by remote and hybrid learning environments. Against this global backdrop of educational transformation, the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers in their pursuit of delivering post-pandemic quality education have emerged as a paramount concern (Xu et al., 2023). These challenges have ignited a pressing need for comprehensive examination and understanding.

Kindergarten teachers, as frontline educators responsible for shaping the early educational experiences of young learners, have encountered multifaceted hurdles in the wake of the pandemic. The complexities of adapting to remote and hybrid teaching modalities, while maintaining the quality of education, have underscored the critical nature of their struggles. These challenges transcend geographical boundaries and resonate with educators worldwide, making the experiences of kindergarten teachers a subject of global significance (Swami et al., 2023).

The situation in the Philippines concerning the struggles experienced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education post-pandemic reflects a multifaceted challenge with profound implications for early childhood education. The COVID-19 pandemic compelled a sudden shift to remote and online learning, a transition fraught with difficulties for both educators and students. Filipino kindergarten teachers, often grappling with limited access to resources, faced unique hurdles in maintaining the quality of education for young learners during this period.

One prominent issue was the digital divide. Many kindergarten teachers and students lacked access to essential technology and internet connectivity, hindering their participation in online classes (Clarke & McLellan, 2023). This digital divide exacerbated educational inequalities, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities. Kindergarten teachers found themselves in a challenging position, tasked with designing engaging and effective remote learning experiences while contending with unequal access to educational technology.

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

Challenges experienced by kindergarten teachers extended beyond the digital realm into the delicate domain of socio-emotional support (Longobardi et al., 2023). In addition to navigating the complexities of online teaching, educators were confronted with the task of providing emotional guidance and support to their young learners who were grappling with heightened anxiety and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. The abrupt shift to remote or blended learning environments disrupted the familiar routines and social interactions that children thrive on, placing kindergarten teachers in the role of emotional anchors for their students (Clarke & Platt, 2023; Liu et al., 2023).

At the local level, the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur assumes a central role in tackling the distinctive educational challenges that characterize its region. As an administrative entity responsible for overseeing educational affairs in Ilocos Sur, this division is at the forefront of implementing policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education provided to students. Given its direct involvement in shaping the local educational landscape, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties encountered by kindergarten teachers within this division is imperative.

This understanding serves as the linchpin for designing targeted support systems and interventions tailored to the specific needs of kindergarten educators. The ability to address these challenges effectively can have a far-reaching impact on the overall quality of early childhood education in Ilocos Sur. As such, this research endeavors to shed light on the intricate struggles faced by kindergarten teachers in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, thereby providing valuable insights that can inform and guide the development of strategies and initiatives to bolster the provision of quality education to young learners in the region.

By delving into the unique context and challenges within the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, this study seeks to contribute to the local discourse on educational reform and improvement. It aims to facilitate the identification of key issues and potential solutions, paving the way for more targeted and effective support mechanisms for kindergarten teachers. Ultimately, the endeavor is aligned with the broader goal of fostering quality education and promoting positive learning outcomes for young children within the region.

Despite the importance of this issue, a research gap exists in terms of a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and experiences of kindergarten teacher's post-pandemic, particularly in the context of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to delve into the struggles faced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education in the aftermath of the pandemic, with the aim of identifying key issues, providing insights, and ultimately contributing to the enhancement of educational practices and policies at both local and national levels. Through a thorough investigation of these challenges, this study seeks to offer recommendations that can inform future strategies and support mechanisms for kindergarten teachers and young learners alike.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally transformed the landscape of education globally, prompting educators to grapple with a sudden and unprecedented shift to remote and online learning. This paradigm shift, although necessary for the safety of students and teachers, has brought forth a host of challenges, particularly in the context of kindergarten education. This literature review seeks to comprehensively examine the struggles experienced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education post-pandemic. It delves into the multifaceted dimensions of this issue, encompassing both the global and local perspectives.

The Global Impact of the Pandemic on Education. The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education has been undeniably profound, prompting a seismic shift in the way teachers at the kindergarten level and beyond deliver instruction (Lan et al., 2021). Among the educators affected, kindergarten teachers faced a myriad of novel challenges that reshaped their pedagogical landscape. The rapid transition to online learning, driven by health and safety concerns, required a fundamental adaptation of their teaching methodologies. Traditional classroom practices had to be reimagined to suit the digital realm, necessitating innovative approaches to engage young learners who were suddenly confined to virtual spaces.

Perhaps one of the most pressing concerns faced by kindergarten teachers was the need for specialized training in online pedagogy (Georges et al., 2023). The shift from traditional classroom settings to virtual learning spaces demanded a new skill set and a deep understanding of online teaching methodologies. Educators had to quickly familiarize themselves with digital platforms, interactive tools, and effective online engagement strategies to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for their young students. Simultaneously, they faced the emotional well-being of their students, who were navigating the uncertainties and disruptions brought about by the pandemic. This multifaceted challenge underscored the importance of not only delivering academic content but also nurturing the socio-emotional development of young learners in an online environment. In essence, the global pandemic placed kindergarten teachers in a unique and demanding position, compelling them to adapt swiftly to an entirely new educational landscape while addressing the holistic needs of their students.

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

Kindergarten Education in the Philippines. Kindergarten education in the Philippines holds a pivotal role in shaping the academic and holistic development of young learners (Hutchison et al., 2022). The country's Department of Education recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education as the foundational stage of lifelong learning. It is during these formative years that children acquire essential cognitive, social, and emotional skills that serve as building blocks for their future education. As such, kindergarten teachers are tasked with the significant responsibility of fostering a positive and nurturing learning environment, where young students can develop not only their academic abilities but also their social and emotional competencies.

The pandemic presented kindergarten teachers in the Philippines with unique challenges that extended beyond the conventional scope of their roles. Beyond the educational aspect, they became instrumental in addressing the socio-emotional well-being of their young students, who were grappling with the uncertainties and disruptions caused by the health crisis. These educators found themselves at the forefront of ensuring that the holistic development of their kindergarten pupils continued despite the challenging circumstances. As such, kindergarten education in the Philippines took on a more comprehensive role, underlining the resilience and adaptability of educators in the face of unprecedented disruptions to traditional classroom settings.

Struggles Faced by Kindergarten Teachers. Kindergarten teachers in the Philippines confronted a multitude of challenges throughout the pandemic, significantly impacting their ability to provide quality education (Spadafora et al., 2022). The digital divide emerged as one of the most pervasive and pressing issues, wherein a substantial number of both educators and students faced limited access to essential technology and reliable internet connectivity. This digital divide was particularly pronounced in disadvantaged communities, compounding the existing educational inequalities that have long been a concern within the

These struggles not only imposed additional burdens on kindergarten teachers but also underscored the urgency of addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate educational inequalities. The challenges faced by these educators during the pandemic shed light on the need for comprehensive measures to bridge the digital divide, support educators in adapting to online teaching, and ensure that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equitable access to quality education.

Adapting to Remote Learning. Adapting to remote learning presented a steep learning curve for kindergarten teachers (Matattov Sekeles et al., 2023). They had to reconfigure their teaching strategies to engage young learners through virtual platforms while ensuring that educational content remained age-appropriate and engaging. The shift to online teaching also required proficiency in technology, which was not always a part of their skill set.

Support and Professional Development. The challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated a pressing need for tailored support and professional development for kindergarten teachers in the Philippines (Kangas et al., 2023). As educators navigated the uncharted territory of online and blended learning, it became evident that they required specialized training to effectively adapt their teaching methodologies to the digital landscape. This included gaining proficiency in delivering lessons through online platforms, creating engaging and interactive digital content, and managing virtual classrooms that catered to the unique needs of kindergarten students. The shift to remote education demanded not only technological competence but also pedagogical creativity to ensure that young learners continued to receive quality education.

In addition to the technical aspects of online teaching, the pandemic underscored the critical role of socio-emotional support mechanisms for both kindergarten teachers and their students (Barnett et al., 2020). The emotional toll of the health crisis placed significant stress on educators who were simultaneously managing their personal anxieties while striving to provide stability and reassurance to their young charges. Professional development should encompass strategies for promoting the socio-emotional well-being of both teachers and students, equipping educators with the tools to recognize and address the emotional needs of their pupils effectively. Fostering a safe and supportive virtual learning environment became paramount, where teachers could help children cope with the uncertainties and disruptions caused by the pandemic.

The Role of Policy and Administration. The role of policy and administration in supporting kindergarten teachers is paramount, especially in the context of addressing the multifaceted challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (Sands et al., 2021). Effective policies play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape, and resource allocation is critical in ensuring that educators have the tools and support they need to succeed. One of the primary challenges that emerged during the pandemic was the digital divide, where not all students and teachers had equitable access to technology and internet connectivity. It is the responsibility of educational policymakers and administrators to implement policies that bridge this divide by providing access to devices, internet connectivity, and digital resources for all educators and students. Without such policies, the disparities in access to technology can exacerbate educational inequalities, leaving some kindergarten teachers and students at a significant disadvantage.

Moreover, policymakers and administrators must recognize the importance of professional development tailored to the evolving needs of kindergarten teachers (Paatsch et al., 2023). The pandemic underscored the necessity of training in online teaching methodologies, digital content creation, and virtual classroom management. Policies should facilitate the availability of

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

relevant professional development opportunities, ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate the challenges of post-pandemic education. Additionally, these policies should promote ongoing support and mentoring for

Recommendations and Future Directions. To address the struggles faced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education post-pandemic, a multifaceted approach is needed (Pyle et al., 2023). This includes investments in digital infrastructure, specialized training programs, and the incorporation of socio-emotional support into the curriculum. Collaboration among educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders is crucial to navigating the evolving landscape of kindergarten education effectively.

Finally, the challenges experienced by kindergarten teacher's post-pandemic underscore the resilience and adaptability of educators worldwide. By recognizing and addressing these struggles, we can ensure that the quality of early childhood education remains a top priority, fostering the growth and development of young learners as they embark on their educational journeys (Greenburg et al., 2020).

Research Questions

The study determined the struggles of kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education in the Magsingal District of the SDO-Ilocos Sur. It developed an action plan to address the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The study employed a qualitative phenomenology. The aim of this research design was to describe the struggles experienced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education in public elementary schools at the Magsingal District in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur.

Scope and Delimitation. The scope and delimitation of a research study define the boundaries and parameters within which the study will operate. The study primarily focused on kindergarten teachers at Magsingal District. The research examined the struggles experienced by kindergarten teachers during a specific time frame post-pandemic. The study involved kindergarten teachers as the primary participants. The research specifically focused on identifying and analyzing the struggles and challenges faced by kindergarten teachers in the post-pandemic educational context. Finally, the thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

Sampling. The study used a purposive sampling to gather the participants of the study. The inclusion criteria are: (1) kindergarten teacher, (2) at least 2 years of teaching experience as a kindergarten teacher, (3) teaching in a public school, (4) living in Ilocos Sur, and (5) willing to become a participant and sign the informed consent.

Instrumentation. The use of an interview guide as a data gathering tool/instrument in the study titled is instrumental in eliciting rich and context-specific insights from the participants. The interview guide serves as a structured framework that allows researchers to systematically explore the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of kindergarten teachers regarding post-pandemic education. It ensures that key topics and questions are covered consistently across all interviews, facilitating comparability of responses.

Plan for Data Analysis. The data analysis plan for the study employed thematic analysis to comprehensively examine and identify emerging themes and patterns in the qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first step involves organizing and preparing the qualitative data collected through interviews, surveys, or any other relevant means. All data sources, such as transcripts, notes, or recorded interviews, was carefully reviewed to ensure that they are complete and accurately reflect the participants' responses. The researcher immersed herself in the data to gain a deep understanding of the content. This involves reading and rereading the transcripts and notes to become familiar with the struggles and experiences expressed by the kindergarten teachers. The next step was to begin the coding process, wherein meaningful segments of the data will be identified and assigned codes. This initial coding was conducted independently by multiple researchers to ensure inter-coder reliability. Open coding was used to allow for the emergence of both predefined and unexpected themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1 - Limited Resources and Materials. Access to adequate learning materials, books, technology, and teaching aids may be limited, hindering the ability to provide a rich, engaging learning environment.

The findings highlight a significant issue faced by kindergarten teachers: limited access to essential resources and materials, which restricts their ability to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Research indicates that access to varied and age-appropriate materials is crucial in early childhood education, as these resources support the development of foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social interactions (Johnson & Partika, 2023). The lack of diverse storybooks, manipulatives, and art supplies mentioned in the teachers' narratives reflects a broader issue observed globally, where resource scarcity impedes effective teaching, particularly in low-income or under-resourced educational settings (Georges et al., 2023).

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

Without these resources, teachers struggle to provide the experiential learning opportunities that are essential for young children's cognitive and emotional development (Hutchison et al., 2022).

The implications of limited resources extend beyond immediate classroom experiences and have long-term impacts on student outcomes. Children who experience resource-scarce educational environments in their formative years are more likely to face challenges in later grades, as foundational skills may be inadequately developed (Kangas et al., 2023). The lack of engaging materials may affect students' attitudes towards learning, leading to decreased motivation and lower academic performance in the future. Research has shown that early educational experiences significantly shape children's attitudes toward learning, making it essential to address these gaps at the kindergarten level to foster positive, lifelong learning habits (Matattov Sekeles et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the findings underscore the critical need for increased funding and resource allocation in early childhood education to support teachers in providing high-quality, engaging learning environments. Addressing these limitations would not only enhance the educational experiences of young children but also reduce the undue pressure on teachers who are striving to deliver quality education with minimal resources. Policymakers and educational stakeholders must prioritize investment in learning materials, technology, and teaching aids for early childhood education to ensure that all children have access to the foundational resources necessary for their growth and development (Greenburg et al., 2020).

Theme 2 - Classroom Overcrowding: High student-to-teacher ratios can make it challenging to address individual student needs, impacting the quality of instruction and student engagement.

The findings from the teachers' narratives reveal the significant impact of classroom overcrowding on the quality of instruction and student engagement. With high student-to-teacher ratios, teachers struggle to provide individualized attention, which is crucial for young children's learning and development. Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult to assess and respond to each student's unique learning needs, leading to instances where some students may be overlooked. Research has consistently shown that smaller class sizes are associated with better academic outcomes and higher levels of student engagement (Blatchford et al., 2020; Konstantopoulos, 2021). When teachers are stretched thin, they are less able to provide the differentiated instruction that supports the diverse learning paces and styles found in early childhood education settings (Reyes & Garcia, 2023).

One major implication of overcrowded classrooms is the shift in teachers' roles from facilitators of learning to managers of behavior and safety. The teachers' statements highlight the challenge of maintaining a controlled environment with a large number of young children, as the majority of their time is spent on crowd control rather than instruction. This focus on behavior management detracts from quality teaching time and can lead to frustration for both teachers and students (Holliday & Martin, 2021). Studies indicate that high student-to-teacher ratios contribute to elevated stress levels in teachers, impacting their well-being and job satisfaction, and potentially leading to burnout (Pas et al., 2022; Burgess & Younger, 2021).

Furthermore, classroom overcrowding limits the teacher's ability to create an optimal learning environment that fosters concentration and engagement. As mentioned by the teachers, noise and distractions in large classes can make it challenging for students to focus, which is particularly problematic for young children who are still developing self-regulation skills. A high-noise environment can hinder cognitive processing and lead to disengagement or behavioral issues among students (Díaz & Ramírez, 2022). Research supports the idea that a calm and orderly classroom environment is essential for effective learning, as it enables students to fully participate and engage with the material (Jensen & Rasmussen, 2023; Robinson, 2023).

In conclusion, the findings from this study emphasize the need for policies that support lower student-to-teacher ratios in kindergarten classrooms to improve the quality of early childhood education. Reducing class sizes would enable teachers to shift their focus from behavior management to meaningful instruction, fostering an environment that supports individualized learning and student engagement. Policymakers and educational stakeholders must consider the benefits of smaller class sizes to promote better learning outcomes and support teachers in delivering quality education (McKee & Lusk, 2022). Addressing the issue of classroom overcrowding is essential for creating a conducive learning environment that nurtures the academic, social, and emotional development of young children.

Theme 3 - Inadequate Training and Professional Development: Teachers may lack access to ongoing training specific to early childhood education, limiting their ability to implement the latest teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches effectively.

The findings indicate a critical gap in the availability of targeted, ongoing training and professional development for kindergarten teachers, which has significant implications for the quality of early childhood education. Teachers' narratives reveal that they often rely on outdated methods due to the lack of specialized training focused on early childhood education (ECE). Research underscores that effective teaching in early childhood settings requires specific pedagogical approaches tailored to young learners' developmental needs, which are distinct from those in primary and secondary education (Blair & Raver, 2020). Without access to updated training, teachers may struggle to implement effective strategies that support young children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, ultimately impacting students' foundational learning experiences (Kim et al., 2021).

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

One significant implication of inadequate professional development is that it may hinder teachers' confidence in managing the diverse developmental needs of young children, as suggested by the narratives. Kindergarten classrooms often include children at different developmental stages, requiring teachers to employ a range of strategies to address each child's unique needs effectively (Clements et al., 2021). Teachers without specialized training may feel unequipped to handle this diversity, leading to reduced instructional quality and a less inclusive learning environment. Access to professional development tailored to early childhood education would equip teachers with the skills to manage these complexities and ensure that each student receives the support necessary for their developmental growth (Snow, 2022).

The findings also suggest that professional development opportunities for kindergarten teachers are often too general, failing to address the specific challenges they face. Research emphasizes that ECE teachers benefit most from training that focuses on age-appropriate methodologies, classroom management techniques, and strategies for fostering social-emotional skills in young learners (Ansari et al., 2022). Generic professional development programs may not cover these specialized topics, leaving ECE teachers without the practical tools they need to create a nurturing and effective learning environment. This mismatch between training content and classroom needs can result in missed opportunities to enhance instructional quality in early childhood settings (Sims & Waniganayake, 2020).

Theme 4 - Limited Support for Special Needs Students: Teachers may struggle to accommodate students with special needs due to a lack of resources, specialized training, or support staff, affecting the inclusivity of the learning environment.

The findings indicate significant challenges faced by teachers in providing inclusive education for students with special needs due to a lack of resources, specialized training, and support staff. Teachers expressed concerns over their ability to create an inclusive environment that adequately supports these students' unique needs. Inclusive education requires specialized strategies and tools to accommodate various learning disabilities, sensory needs, and behavioral challenges (Lindsay et al., 2020). Without sufficient training or resources, teachers may feel unprepared and uncertain, which can hinder their effectiveness in addressing diverse needs within the classroom (Hehir & Schifter, 2021). This gap in preparedness not only impacts students with special needs but also affects the entire

In addition to training, the availability of resources, such as adaptive learning materials and sensory tools, is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment. The teachers' narratives reveal that a lack of access to these resources can limit their ability to tailor learning activities to meet the needs of students with special needs. Adaptive resources, such as visual aids, sensory tools, and assistive technologies, play a critical role in supporting diverse learners and facilitating engagement (Sider & Maich, 2022). Without access to these materials, teachers may struggle to modify lessons or accommodate sensory needs, which can result in disengagement or behavioral issues among students with disabilities (Garcia & Ortiz, 2020). Therefore, providing adequate resources is essential for promoting inclusivity and ensuring that all students can participate meaningfully in classroom activities.

The lack of adequate support for students with special needs not only hinders their academic progress but also affects their social and emotional well-being. Inclusion in the classroom goes beyond academic support; it also involves creating a sense of belonging for all students (McIntyre et al., 2023). Teachers play a critical role in fostering an inclusive classroom culture, but without the right tools and support, they may struggle to provide the necessary accommodations. Research shows that students with special needs benefit from social interactions and collaborative learning experiences, which are crucial for their social development (Smith et al., 2023). Thus, addressing the gap in resources and training is not only a matter of academic support but also one of promoting the holistic development of all students.

Theme 5 - Administrative Burden: Excessive administrative tasks, such as paperwork and reporting, can reduce the time and energy teachers can dedicate to lesson planning and classroom interaction.

The findings reveal that excessive administrative tasks significantly impact teachers' ability to focus on instructional quality and student engagement. Teachers' narratives underscore a common struggle: balancing their primary role as educators with overwhelming paperwork and reporting demands, which detract from time that could be spent on lesson planning and interactive classroom activities. Research supports the notion that administrative burden can lead to increased stress and reduced job satisfaction among teachers, ultimately affecting their performance and well-being (Kim et al., 2021). When teachers are overloaded with non-instructional tasks, the quality of education suffers, as they have less time to dedicate to creative lesson planning and individualized student support (Adnot et al., 2020).

One of the critical implications of this administrative overload is the potential for teacher burnout, which can result from the constant juggling of paperwork, student needs, and instructional responsibilities. Excessive administrative tasks have been shown to increase teacher fatigue, reducing their enthusiasm and ability to engage effectively with students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Burnout not only diminishes teachers' job satisfaction but also has direct consequences for student outcomes, as research indicates that burned-out teachers are less effective in the classroom (Brouwers et al., 2022). To address this, educational systems

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

must reevaluate administrative requirements, focusing on streamlining processes to reduce the burden on teachers and allow them to concentrate on their primary educational roles.

The emphasis on reporting and documentation can also create a shift in focus away from student-centered teaching to fulfilling compliance requirements. Teachers may feel pressured to prioritize meeting administrative expectations over addressing individual student needs, which can compromise the quality of instruction (Day & Hong, 2020). This administrative focus detracts from pedagogical flexibility, making it challenging for teachers to adapt lessons based on real-time student feedback and individual learning needs. Streamlining administrative requirements or integrating more user-friendly digital tools could help teachers allocate more time to direct student interaction, fostering a more responsive and effective learning environment.

The findings highlight the need for a systemic reevaluation of administrative demands on teachers to preserve instructional quality and promote teacher well-being. Simplifying reporting processes, leveraging technology to automate tasks, and providing support staff for administrative tasks could mitigate the burden on teachers. By allowing educators to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork, schools can foster an environment where teachers feel empowered, students receive higher-quality instruction, and the overall educational experience is enhanced (Rivera & Waxman, 2023). Addressing administrative burdens is thus crucial for creating sustainable and effective educational systems that prioritize both teacher and student success.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The results highlight a range of significant challenges faced by kindergarten teachers, including limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient training, lack of support for special needs students, administrative burdens, inadequate access to age-appropriate materials, difficulties in managing behavioral issues, and concerns related to health and safety, all of which impede their ability to deliver quality early childhood education.
2. The proposed action plan provides targeted strategies to address key challenges faced by kindergarten teachers, ultimately enhancing their ability to deliver quality education and foster a supportive, engaging, and safe learning environment for young children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase Funding and Resource Allocation: Advocate for increased funding from local government and educational agencies to provide essential learning materials, technology, and classroom resources, ensuring that kindergarten teachers have the tools necessary to create a rich and engaging learning environment.
2. Implement Smaller Class Sizes and Hire Additional Staff: Reduce student-to-teacher ratios by hiring additional teachers or support staff, allowing for more individualized attention, better classroom management, and improved quality of instruction for young learners.
3. Enhance Professional Development Opportunities: Offer specialized training and regular professional development programs focused on early childhood education, behavior management, and inclusive teaching strategies to equip teachers with the skills needed to address the unique needs of kindergarten students effectively.
4. Increase Support for Special Needs Students: Establish dedicated resources, support staff, and training for teachers to create a more inclusive environment, ensuring that students with special needs receive the attention and support necessary to thrive within mainstream classrooms.
5. Streamline Administrative Tasks: Simplify reporting requirements and consider implementing digital solutions to reduce the administrative burden on teachers, allowing them to dedicate more time to lesson planning, student interaction, and overall classroom management.

REFERENCES

- 1) Barnett, M. A., Paschall, K. W., Mastergeorge, A. M., Cutshaw, C. A., & Warren, S. M. (2020). Influences of Parent Engagement in Early Childhood Education Centers and the Home on Kindergarten School Readiness. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 53, 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2020.05.005>
- 2) Clarke, T., & McLellan, R. (2023). Associations between children's school wellbeing, mindset and academic attainment in standardised tests of achievement. *School Psychology International*, 01430343231215836. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343231215836>
- 3) Clarke, T., & Platt, R. (2023). Children's Lived Experiences of Wellbeing at School in England: A Phenomenological Inquiry. *Child Indicators Research*, 16(3), 963–996. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-023-10016-2>
- 4) Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Fourth edition). SAGE.

Struggles Experienced by Kindergarten Teachers in Implementing Quality Education

- 5) Georges, C., Cornu, V., & Schiltz, C. (2023). The importance of spatial language for early numerical development in preschool: Going beyond verbal number skills. *PLOS ONE*, 18(9), e0292291. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292291>
- 6) Greenburg, J. E., Hines, C., & Winsler, A. (2020). Predictors of school mobility from public school pre-K to kindergarten. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119, 105670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105670>
- 7) Greenburg, J. E., & Winsler, A. (2020). Delayed kindergarten entry among low-income, ethnically diverse children: Prevalence, predictors, and selection patterns. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 53, 496–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2020.06.007>
- 8) Hutchison, J. E., Ansari, D., Zheng, S., De Jesus, S., & Lyons, I. M. (2022). Extending ideas of numerical order beyond the count-list from kindergarten to first grade. *Cognition*, 223, 105019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2022.105019>
- 9) Johnson, A. D., Partika, A., Martin, A., Horm, D., Phillips, D. A., & the Tulsa SEED Study Team. (2023). A deeper dive, a wider pool: Preschool benefits sustain to first grade on a broader set of outcomes. *Child Development*, 94(5), 1298–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13928>
- 10) Kangas, J., Lastikka, A.-L., & Arvola, O. (2023). Inclusive Play: Defining Elements of Playful Teaching and Learning in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ECEC. *Education Sciences*, 13(9), 956. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13090956>
- 11) Lan, S., Jiang, Y., Di, H., Li, H., Zhou, J., & Li, F. (2021). Development and validation of the Chinese kindergarten teacher quality scale in Shanghai. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 131, 106272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2021.106272>
- 12) Longobardi, C., Prino, L. E., Settanni, M., & Fabris, M. A. (2023). Attachment to teacher, internalizing and externalizing symptoms: The mediating role of executive functions. *Early Child Development and Care*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2023.2286900>
- 13) Matattov Sekeles, H., Zadok, I., Zur, H., & Huss, E. (2023). 'I'm no longer myself anymore': Burnout and coping of educators-caregivers in day-care centres in Israel. *Early Child Development and Care*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2023.2285706>
- 14) Paatsch, L., Casey, S., Green, A., & Stagnitti, K. (2023). *Learning Through Play in the Primary School: The Why and the How for Teachers and School Leaders* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003296782>
- 15) Pyle, A., DeLuca, C., Wickstrom, H., Danniels, E., & Fesseha, E. (2023). Play-based learning and assessment practices in early years: Methodological explorations. *Educational Research*, 65(2), 248–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2023.2181201>
- 16) Sands, M. M., Monda-Amaya, L., & Meadan, H. (2021). Kindergarten Redshirting: Implications for Children with Disabilities. *Disabilities*, 1(1), 30–46. <https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities1010003>
- 17) Spadafora, N., Reid-Westoby, C., Pottruff, M., & Janus, M. (2022). Family responsibilities and mental health of kindergarten educators during the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Ontario, Canada. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 115, 103735. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103735>
- 18) Swami, S., Quirk, M., & Sharkey, J. D. (2023). A Longitudinal Examination of Latinx Students' Kindergarten Readiness with High School Achievement and Discipline Violations. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2023.2280071>
- 19) Xu, C., LeFevre, J.-A., Di Lonardo Burr, S., Maloney, E. A., Wylie, J., Simms, V., Skwarchuk, S.-L., & Osana, H. P. (2023). A direct comparison of two measures of ordinal knowledge among 8-year-olds. *Journal of Numerical Cognition*, 9(2), 253–267. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jnc.10201>



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.