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From Readiness to Reality: Exploring Teachers' Challenges in Implementing the Contextualized Kindergarten Curriculum

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Abstract

This study determined and analyzed the extent of readiness in the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum and the challenges encountered by teachers in public elementary schools in the Division of Cebu City. It employed the mixed method using quantitative – qualitative technique. The study was conducted in DepEd's Cebu City Division, wherein the 40 Kindergarten teachers and eight school heads were used as respondents and participants to answer the adapted instrument on contextualizing Kindergarten curriculum. The gathered data were treated using descriptive and inferential statistics as well as thematic analysis. The study reveals that teachers are always ready on the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum. Also, the study finds that there is a significant relationship between age, educational qualification, and years of teaching experience of teachers in the use of available materials. Also, there is a significant difference on the school environment when grouped by its clustered

district. The study concluded that the implementation of the contextualized Kindergarten curriculum based on availability of instructional materials, forms of learning, evaluation method of learners, and school environment were always made available for teachers to use. After the school heads' answers were transcribed, coded, categorized and analyzed, there were three themes that came out namely: preparation time, development of instructional materials, and the need for teacher training. The implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum has received different feedback from teachers. Their expressed challenges are categorized into: Language Difficulties, Preparation Time, and Instructional Materials Development. The researchers recommend that the proposed action plan be implemented, assessed, and monitored for better implementation of the contextualized Kindergarten curriculum in DepEd's Cebu City Division.

Keywords: Contextualization, Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten Curriculum, Mixed Method, Cebu City

Introduction

The Kindergarten Curriculum Framework (KCF) draws from the goals of the Matatag Basic Education Curriculum Framework and adopts the general principles of the National Early Learning Framework (NELF). Kindergarten learners need to have a smooth transition to the content-based curriculum of Grades 1 to 12. The Department of Education (DepEd) requires the Kindergarten teachers to utilize the contextualization of instruction. The curriculum, teaching materials, and assessment in schools across the country speak and use their mother-tongue or common language learned naturally by the student, as a result of being in the nurturing care of the people who raised them. The Contextualization Curriculum have a strong foundation and interest in Philippine culture. It makes us unique as a nation. The Matatag Enhanced Basic Education Program aims to strengthen the mother tongue as it serves a foundation for understanding and mastery. A Contextualized curriculum help students learn language to improve achievement in ways that benefit them and study skills by teaching the skills using the meaningful contexts for long-term goals to equip students the skills they need in the real world. The much-needed flexibility and options regarding the K-12 education allows for best preparation of our young students to become responsible and successful in their future endeavors. The language of the place that learners were born to or where they live is the primary medium of instruction in schools. It effectively learns an information and readily do the assigned learning activities for teaching and learning in kindergarten. Teachers' role in the implementation of curriculum brings about consistency dealing on what they have been putting into practice. Nevertheless, situating into contextualization with the wonders where and how they are living in a community has associated with ethncal purposes, with very little accordance on cultural diversity. In the

contextual curriculum, learners are encouraged to learn within the compatible environment for effective learning. This research was conducted in the selected public schools in Cebu City. The selected schools are as follows: Cebu City Central School, Ermita Extension School, Lusaran Elementary School, Kang-atis Elementary School, Pardo Elementary School, Pardo Extension Elementary School, Bonbon Elementary School, Dr. Emilio Osmeña Sr. Integrated School. The Department of Education through the Division of Cebu City have kindergarten education programs for the five years old. Using a purposive convenience sampling technique, there were 40 Kindergarten teachers to serve as the respondents which will be carefully selected by the researcher. Also, the researcher chose the eight school heads as participants in the research. This study utilized an adapted questionnaire patterned from the work of Daniel L. Stufflebeam’s CIPP evaluation model (2007) [48]. CIPP stands for assessment of Context, Input, Process, Product. The instrument was an information sheet and detailed checklist of manifestations and activities found in the kindergarten setting in which can tell about the efficiency of the usage of contextualization in the kindergarten curriculum.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed method using the quantitative – qualitative technique. It aimed to describe the extent of classroom implementation, challenges, and opportunities of the contextualized kindergarten curriculum. Conklin and Hayhoe (2011) [13], describe mixed method research as a dynamic approach to inquiry that combines or associates both styles in the same research and data. The researcher gains in comprehensive scope and depth of effective combination and structure, which is greater than either approach alone (Pathak *et al.*, 2013) [42]. McLeod (2019) [33] defined this technique to research as useful when this integration provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of each alone. It keeps an eye on the issue of purpose and validity. Colaizzi’s method (1978), explained by McLeod (2019) [33] of data analysis as constant and rigorous while making use of multiple reasons for detailed triangulation. Application of this dimensional process ensures the credibility and reliability of its results and allows researchers to reveal emergent themes and their interwoven relationships. An in-depth interview was

conducted between the researcher and the teacher and school head to objectively gather qualitative data regarding the implementation of a contextualized kindergarten curriculum as used in their teaching. Challenges and issues regarding the performance of the said curriculum were recorded and transcribed. After which, the data was recorded and interpreted to reveal the manifestations and activities relevant to contextualization of kindergarten curriculum.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting the study “From Readiness to Reality: Exploring Teachers’ Challenges in Implementing the Contextualized Kindergarten Curriculum” the researcher observed the highest ethical standards. All participating school principals informed of the study’s purpose, procedures, and their role, and written consent will be obtained prior to the interviews. Participation will be voluntary, with the assurance that participants may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. To protect the identities of participants and their schools, confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained through the use of codes or pseudonyms, while all interview data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes. The study also upholds the principles of respect and non-maleficence, ensuring that no harm, discomfort, or undue burden is placed on participants, and that their perspectives are reported objectively. Furthermore, the researcher is committed to integrity and accuracy by presenting findings truthfully without misrepresentation or fabrication of data. Finally, the study complied with the ethical protocols and guidelines set by DepEd, the school division, and the researcher’s academic institution.

Results and Discussion

The gathered data has been tabulated and treated using statistics and thematic analysis.

Profile of the Respondents

Tables 1 to 4 present the profile of the respondents of the study. In this section, the profile was categorized as age and gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of working experience, the class, and participation to appropriate training.

Table 1: Age and Gender Profile of the Teacher Respondents

	Age (in years)	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
	21 - 25	2	10.00	0	0.00	2	5.00
	26 - 30	10	50.00	7	35.00	7	42.50
	31 - 35	3	15.00	8	40.00	11	27.50
	Above 35	5	25.00	5	25.00	10	25.00
	Gender						
	Female	20	100.00	17	85.00	37	92.50
	Male	0	0.00	3	15.00	3	7.50
A	Number of Appropriate Training and Seminars Attended						
	1-2	8	40.00	7	35.00	15	37.50
	3-4	4	20.00	7	35.00	11	27.50
	5	8	40.00	6	30.00	14	35.00
B.	Training 1						
	Contextualized Kindergarten Blocks of Time on the Use of Ukelele						
	Attended	20	100.00	20	100.00	40	100.00
	Not Attended	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00

C. Contextualized Kindergarten Blocks of Time on the Use of Ukelele for Transition of Song							
	Attended	12	60.00	12	60.00	24	60.00
	Not Attended	8	40.00	8	40.00	16	40.00
D. Training 3 Curriculum Contextualization Training							
	Attended	20	100.00	20	100.00	40	100.00
	Not Attended	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
E. Training 4 Writing Workshop on Contextualization							
	Attended	12	60.00	11	55.00	23	57.50
	Not Attended	8	40.00	9	45.00	17	42.50
F. Training 5 Mainstreaming Local Materials to the K-12 Curriculum							
	Attended	8	40.00	6	30.00	14	35.00
	Not Attended	12	60.00	14	70.00	26	65.00

The table shows that the majority of the teacher respondents have participated appropriate training and seminars of 1 or two (15 respondents, 37.50%). Also, it shows that of the five trainings conducted by DepEd, the trainings on Contextualized Kindergarten Blocks of Time on the Use of Ukelele, and the trainings on Curriculum Contextualization recorded the 100% attendance among the Kindergarten teachers. Looking closely at the table, it shows that the trainings on Mainstreaming on Local Materials to the K-12 Curriculum got the lowest attendance with 14 respondents (35.00%).

Also, the table shows that in the North District and South District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that Kindergarten teachers attended trainings on Contextualized Kindergarten Blocks of Time on the Use of Ukelele, and the trainings on Curriculum Contextualization with 100% attendance among the Kindergarten teachers. These data imply that the Kindergarten teachers need more training related to Contextualization of the Kindergarten Curriculum. Having attended in training on contextualization contributes to development and

enhancement of pedagogical skills among teachers. These capabilities contribute to their teaching strategies which directly affect the learning of the students. Furthermore, the training helps the teachers understand deeply the context of contextualization and effectively use this to improve students' outcomes.

Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum

Tables 7 to 9 present the results of the perceived extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum. Such readiness is classified into four aspects: Availability of Materials, Forms of Learning, Evaluation of Learners, and the School Environment.

Availability of Instructional Materials

Table 7 shows the results on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Availability of Materials.

Table 2: Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum as to Availability of Materials

S. No	Indicators	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
A. Availability of Materials							
1	Contextualized or localized learning materials such as pictures, graphs, and maps in teaching.	3.50	Always	3.50	Always	3.50	Always
2	Recycled materials like newspapers, bottles, magazines and plastic in making projects.	3.50	Always	3.30	Always	3.40	Always
3	Math counters as manipulatives (pebbles, sticks) to promote hands on learning.	3.85	Always	3.75	Always	3.80	Always
4	Real objects in presenting a lesson when needed.	3.50	Always	3.20	Sometimes	3.35	Always
5	Audio-visual Instructional Materials available in school (TV, DVD player, flash drives)	3.30	Always	3.55	Always	3.43	Always
6	Prescribed workbook given by the school.	2.90	Sometimes	2.80	Sometimes	2.85	Sometimes
7	Updated worksheets or pictures from the Internet or websites.	3.60	Always	3.30	Always	3.45	Always
8	Songs, short stories and videos downloaded from the Internet or websites.	3.65	Always	3.50	Always	3.58	Always
9	Musical instruments (ukulele, flute, localized percussion)	3.10	Sometimes	2.80	Sometimes	2.95	Sometimes
10	Contextualized contents and labels found on learning centers such as comfort room.	3.45	Always	3.00	Sometimes	3.23	Sometimes
Aggregate Mean:		3.44	Always	3.27	Always	3.35	Always

Table 7 shows that the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Availability of Materials got the overall mean of 3.35 (Always). Of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Math counters as manipulatives (pebbles, sticks) to promote hands-on*

learning, got the highest mean of 3.80 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Prescribed workbook given by the school*, got the lowest mean of 2.85 (Sometimes).

Also, the table shows that the teacher respondents in the North District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals

that of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Math counters as manipulatives (pebbles, sticks) to promote hands on learning*, got the highest mean of 3.85 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Prescribed workbook given by the school*, got the lowest mean of 2.90 (Sometimes).

Also, Table 8 shows that the teacher respondents in the South District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Math counters as manipulatives (pebbles, sticks) to promote hands on learning*, got the highest mean of 3.75 (Always). Whereas, the indicators, *Prescribed workbook given by the school*, and *Musical instruments (ukulele, flute, localized percussion)*, got the lowest mean of 2.80 (Sometimes).

These data imply that the Kindergarten teachers use materials that are common in the locality for easy recognition and identification of the Kindergarten learners. Also, the data imply that as usual, the public schools do not have enough printed learning materials such as workbooks for the Kindergarten learners to use. DepEd must allocate sufficient funds for the learning resources such as the books, manuals, and course materials for Kindergarten teachers and learners to use. The absence of sufficient learning materials may lead to poor instructional delivery in the Kindergarten curriculum.

According to Dowhower and Beagle (1998) [17] it is a must to have plenty reading materials in a classroom to encourage

emergent literacy. Teachers must have a designated reading and writing areas in the classroom to develop these literacy skills. The study concluded that these needed reading materials were not available in most classrooms. Thus, school failed to nurture children’s literacy skills to the fullest.

The study of McGill-Franzen *et al.* (1999) [32] discovered the effects of reading materials and supplies and teachers’ training to children’s achievement. They compared the literacy development of children taught by teachers with enough reading materials, supplies, and appropriate training with teachers who have enough supplies but lack of training. The finding revealed that children who were with the teachers with enough reading materials, supplies, and attended training performed better than those with the teachers who have enough reading materials but do not attend training. Thus, the availability of reading materials and supplies does not guarantee improved achievement among students.

Forms of Learning

Table 8 shows the results on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Forms of Learning, which is categorized into two aspects: Literacy, and Numeracy.

Table 3: Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum as to Forms of Learning

S. No	Indicators	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
B.1 Literacy							
1	Links language concept from students’ prior knowledge during meeting time.	3.80	Always	3.50	Always	3.65	Always
2	Allows students to discover new vocabulary words.	3.80	Always	3.50	Always	3.65	Always
3	Applies their knowledge to real world situations during teacher-supervised activity.	3.90	Always	3.65	Always	3.78	Always
4	Works as a team during work periods, or games.	3.65	Always	3.85	Always	3.75	Always
5	Takes what they have learned and apply to new situations or concepts.	3.75	Always	3.65	Always	3.73	Always
	Aggregate Mean:	3.78	Always	3.63	Always	3.71	Always
B.2 Numeracy							
1	Links language concept from students’ prior knowledge during meeting time.	3.80	Always	3.60	Always	3.70	Always
2	Allows students to discover new vocabulary words.	3.75	Always	3.65	Always	3.70	Always
3	Applies their knowledge to real world situations during teacher-supervised activity.	3.80	Always	3.65	Always	3.73	Always
4	Works as a team during work periods, or games.	3.65	Always	3.75	Always	3.70	Always
5	Takes what they have learned and apply to new situations or concepts.	3.70	Always	3.65	Always	3.68	Always
	Aggregate Mean:	3.74	Always	3.66	Always	3.70	Always
	Overall Aggregate Mean:	3.76	Always	3.65	Always	3.71	Always

Table 8 shows that the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Forms of Learning got the overall mean of 3.71 (Always). On the aspects of Literacy, of the five indicators, the indicator, *Applies their knowledge to real world situations during teacher-supervised activity*, got the highest mean of 3.78 (Always). Whereas, the indicators, *Links language concept from students’ prior knowledge during meeting time*, and *Allows students to discover new vocabulary words*, called the lowest mean of 3.65 (Always). Also, the table shows that the teacher respondents in the North District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the five indicators, the indicator, *Applies their knowledge to real world situations during teacher-supervised activity*, got the highest mean of 3.90 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Works as a team during work periods, or games*, got the lowest mean of 3.65 (Always). Also, Table 8 shows that the teacher respondents in the South District of the Cebu City

Division, the study reveals that of the five indicators, the indicator, *Works as a team during work periods, or games*, got the highest mean of 3.85 (Always). Whereas, the indicators, *Links language concept from students’ prior knowledge during meeting time*, and *Allows students to discover new vocabulary words*, got the lowest mean of 3.50 (Always).

The data suggest that the understanding of the concept of learning is based on the premise that the child is responsible for its own learning. The learners learn from the teachers and books. Teachers and books as transmitters of ideas and thoughts. In order to change this assumption, the processes of learning in the contextualization need to be integrated. Risnick (2007) highlighted the imaginative approach to learning in kindergarten. Children are encouraged to imagine, create, play, share, reflect and imagine. He believed that this approach can develop creative and critical thinkers. These individuals are likely to succeed in the

modern society. This approach to learning emphasized technology-based strategies that aid kindergarten or learners in general.

On the aspects of Numeracy, of the five indicators, three indicators, *Applies their knowledge to real-world situations during teacher-supervised activity*, got the highest mean of 3.73 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Takes what they have learned and apply to new situations or concepts*, got the lowest mean of 3.68 (Always). Also, the table shows that the teacher respondents in the North District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the five indicators of numeracy, the indicators, *Links language concept from students' prior knowledge during meeting time*, and *Applies their knowledge to real world situations during teacher-supervised activity*, got the highest mean of 3.80 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Works as a team during work periods, or games*, got the lowest mean of 3.65 (Always).

Also, Table 9 shows that the teacher respondents in the South District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the five indicators, the indicator, *Works as a team during work periods, or games*, got the highest mean of 3.75 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Links language concept from students' prior knowledge during meeting time*, got the lowest mean of 3.60 (Always). The data imply that the Kindergarten learners must be taught how to apply their

knowledge to real-world situations during a classroom activity. This means that the Kindergarten learners should develop skills and subject-matter content needed by the, thus, contribute to being a problem solver. Conezio and French (2002) [12], believed that children have innate capabilities to learn. They are wired to learn and adapt to the world around them. Thus, opportunities and experiences are significant to their learning. This is how the brain stored information and create concepts. Carver *et al.* (2000) [9] studied a program for application of learned concepts to real life situations. The study revealed that learners were not able to connect lessons learned to real-life scenario. The low level of motivation among learners is a contributing factor. The study Eshach and Fried (2005) [20] revealed that children love to explore nature. Their curiosity of the surroundings helps develop basic science skills like observation. This early exposure to science can develop positive concept of the subject and feed their curious minds. Thus, science can be part of the kindergarten curriculum.

Evaluation of Learners

Table 9 shows the results on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Evaluation of Learners.

Table 4: Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum as to Evaluation of Learners

S. No	Indicators	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
C. Evaluation of Learners							
1	Early Childhood Education Development (ECCD) Checklist	3.95	Always	3.80	Always	3.88	Always
2	Portfolio	3.90	Always	3.90	Always	3.90	Always
3	Kindergarten Non-numerical Progress Report	3.65	Always	3.75	Always	3.70	Always
4	Quarterly Written Progress Examination	3.30	Always	3.60	Always	3.45	Always
5	Formative Assessment	3.65	Always	3.70	Always	3.68	Always
6	Demonstration / Performance-based task	3.75	Always	3.75	Always	3.75	Always
7	Field trips / site visits	2.00	Seldom	2.15	Seldom	2.08	Seldom
8	Conference	3.30	Always	3.25	Always	3.28	Always
9	Anecdotal Record	3.50	Always	3.35	Always	3.43	Always
10	Peer Assessment	3.35	Always	3.26	Always	3.31	Always
	Aggregate Mean:	3.44	Always	3.45	Always	3.45	Always

The study shows that the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to Evaluation of Learners got the overall mean of 3.45 (Always). Of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Portfolio*, got the highest mean of 3.90 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Field trips and site visits*, got the lowest mean of 2.08 (Seldom). Also, the table shows that the teacher respondents in the North and South Districts of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Portfolio*, got the highest mean of 3.90 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Field trips and site visits*, got the lowest mean of 2.00 (Seldom) and 2.15 (Seldom) for North and South Districts respectively.

The data imply that portfolio assessment system will help improve the ability for Kindergarten learners for properly use, manage, and monitor for he Kindergarten learners' learning outcomes. According to Liu *et al.* (2004) [29] that a portfolio is a purposeful collection of a learner's work that tells the achievement and growth over time. Portfolio

assessment is part of the movement toward authentic teaching and assessment as teachers are exposed to holistic philosophies and use for instruction more authentic materials (Lam, 2019) [27]. Towles-Reeves *et al.* (2009), alternative assessment is needed especially with inclusion. Students with special needs are commonly assessed through alternative assessment. The study of Supovitz *et al.* (1997) revealed that Kindergarten teachers are the best persons to evaluate their own learners' work. However, the debate is still on-going whether a portfolio is enough source of data about the learners. The reliability and validity of a single source of data are the issues on assessment. These issues are critical in making learning and administrative decisions.

School Environment

Table 10 shows the results on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to School Environment.

Table 5: Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum as to School Environment

	Indicators	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
D. School Environment							
1	Benchmarks school performance.	3.25	Always	3.15	Sometimes	3.20	Sometimes
2	Establishes and model high social and academic for all.	3.35	Always	3.45	Always	3.40	Always
3	Broad agreement among the entire school faculty about the central mission of the school	3.55	Always	3.55	Always	3.55	Always
4	Supportive and encouraging behaviour from the school administrators.	3.65	Always	3.60	Always	3.63	Always
5	School administrator deals effectively with pressures from outside the school that might affect teaching.	3.50	Always	3.50	Always	3.50	Always
6	Designs rich environments that provide opportunities for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes.	3.60	Always	3.60	Always	3.60	Always
7	Active parental participation.	3.75	Always	3.25	Always	3.50	Always
8	Secure resources in school.	3.50	Always	3.32	Always	3.41	Always
9	Discussions on issues such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and ICT.	3.60	Always	3.60	Always	3.60	Always
10	Working without expectations in transformation leadership.	3.65	Always	3.70	Always	3.68	Always
Aggregate Mean:		3.54	Always	3.47	Always	3.51	Always

The data on Table 10 show that the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the curriculum as to School Environment got the overall mean of 3.51 (Always). Of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Working without expectations in transformation leadership*, got the highest mean of 3.68 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Benchmarks school performance*, got the lowest mean of 3.20 (Sometimes). Also, the table shows that the teacher respondents in the North District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Active parental participation*, got the highest mean of 3.75 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Benchmarks school performance*, got the lowest mean of 3.25 (Always). Table 10 shows that the teacher respondents in the South District of the Cebu City Division, the study reveals that of the ten indicators, the indicator, *Working without expectations in transformation leadership*, got the highest mean of 3.70 (Always). Whereas, the indicator, *Benchmarks school performance*, got the lowest mean of 3.15 (Sometimes). The data imply that transformational leadership of Kindergarten teachers does not emphasize the expectations which can affect their goals and actions. The significant expectation is teacher efficacy. This is the teachers' beliefs that would greatly affect whatever they do. If the teacher believes that he has the capabilities of

improving his learners, then it would likely happen. Ross and Gray (2006) [46] discovered a significant impact of transformational leadership on teacher efficacy and commitment. Teacher efficacy affects commitment to foster partnership with community. Moreover, transformational leadership affects directly or indirectly on the commitment of teachers toward schools' mission-vision. The study of Geijsel *et al.* (2009) [22] reiterated that the teachers' psychological facets significantly affect teachers' involvement in professional development. According to Boberg (2013) [4] concluded that transformational leadership affects commitment to the organization, potential development, and productivity. But, this fact was ignored in schools especially those implementing the No Child Left Behind reform. The teacher efficacy is the most influential factor. It affects and mediates the effects of beliefs and leadership behaviors.

Summary Table on the Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum

Table 11 presents the summary table of the results on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum.

Table 6: Summary Table on the Extent of Readiness of the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum

	Indicators	North District (n = 20)		South District (n = 20)		Overall (N = 40)	
		Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
A.	Availability of Instructional Materials	3.44	Always	3.27	Always	3.35	Always
B.	Forms of Learning	3.78	Always	3.63	Always	3.71	Always
C.	Evaluation Method of Learners	3.44	Always	3.45	Always	3.45	Always
D.	School Environment	3.54	Always	3.47	Always	3.51	Always
Overall Mean:		3.55	Always	3.46	Always	3.51	Always

Table 11 shows that of the four aspects on the extent of readiness of the teacher respondents in the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum, the aspect on Forms of Learning got the highest overall mean of 3.71 (Always), followed by School Environment at 3.51 (Always), Evaluation Method of Learners at 3.45 (Always), and Availability of Instructional Materials. Also, the data show that in the North and South Districts of the Cebu City that the aspect on Forms of Learning

(Literacy and Numeracy) got highest overall mean of 3.78 (Always) and 3.71 (Always) respectively. Whereas, the aspects on Availability of Instructional Materials, and Evaluation Method of Learners got the lowest overall mean of 3.44 (Always), and 3.27 (Always) respectively.

Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kindergarten curriculum adheres to the holistic

development of the learner. As such, it is learner-centered where the teacher is the facilitator of the teaching-learning process. The Matatag Kindergarten Curriculum Guide from the Department of Education which is the prescribed framework in teaching is written in English; however, the worksheets and instructional materials are written in the Mother Tongue of the learners. This poses some challenges on its implementation. To determine the challenges encountered by both the teachers and the school heads, an interview was conducted to solicit information on its implementation. Their personal experiences and observations comprise the qualitative data derived from the interview among the teachers and the school heads. They were organized, coded, and categorized in order to identify certain patterns and themes that emerged from their responses.

Themes that Emerged from the School Head's Responses

After the school heads answers were transcribed, coded, categorized and analyzed, there were three themes that came out namely: preparation time, development of instructional materials, and the need for teacher training.

Preparation Time: During the onset of the contextualized kindergarten curriculum, school heads were amazed on the specified guidelines which need to be immediately implemented. As a result, the lack of time to ensure proper dissemination of information and familiarization of the curriculum became an issue among school heads. The school heads expressed that the implementation of the contextualized kindergarten curriculum entailed a lot of preparation at their part because it is something new and that the guidelines mandated from the Department of Education require several preparations. As expressed by the school heads:

SH # 1

"Although kindergarten teachers are not required to write learning plans, they struggle in preparing worksheets and visual aids."

SH #2

"The preparation of some teachers of the materials to be used. There are teachers who even stay longer in school after class hours to accomplish the classroom activities to be used the next day."

SH # 6

"The teachers need time for the preparation of some activities and learning materials, given their tasks as a class adviser it takes time to really finish tasks on time."

SH # 7

"The provision of kindergarten pupils with opportunities to engage in meaningful learning experiences with locally relevant concepts but teachers need enough time to make all these."

With the demands of the new curriculum and the amount of preparation needed, it was expected that more time is required to accomplish specific tasks to implement the contextualized kindergarten curriculum effectively in the classroom. Moreover, it requires a clear understanding of the expected outcomes and the competencies that are expected to be developed.

Development of Instructional Materials: One of the factors that affect the need for developing instructional materials is the fact that instructional materials vary from one region to the other. Others have to use whatever available materials in the locality to contextualize its relevance and usability so students can relate as this is the idea behind contextualization. One of the major concerns is using the learners' mother tongue as the medium of instruction. As expressed by one of the respondents,

SH # 4

"Sometimes children find it difficult in learning the Cebuano language, in retention learning. Although we practise the use of native language in teaching from the beginning of their Circle Time as the progression of activities continue."

SH #8

"Even teachers have difficulty translating words in the mother tongue of the children because the curriculum guide given by DepEd is in English but the medium used in the classroom is Cebuano."

In addition, there is also the need to develop instructional materials by teacher and by school so as to unify the delivery of lessons and activities. As stated by these respondents:

SH #2

"We develop quality instructional materials and provide teacher guide that support teaching."

SHS #5

"Since we are situated in a mountainous school, we need to put more effort in reproducing instructional materials and individualized worksheets."

SH #6

"We are challenged to bring quality instructional materials to our learners. We need technological advancements in our school for meaningful learning."

SH #4

"There must be a unified contextualized activities."

SH #6

"The school needs more technological materials and trainings for mastery of curriculum."

SH#8

"Not about limited to Instructional materials (IMs) but teachers' conviction and art of delivering the goods to the clients, anyway with the School Head TA these are addressed little by little"

Need for Training: Since the Matatag Kindergarten Curriculum is a new mandate from the Department of Education, it is expected that teachers and even school heads have to be fully equipped with an explicit knowledge and understanding of its nature, characteristics, and implementation mode.

As such, a series of training is necessary for helping both teachers and school heads internalize and apply certain principles without sacrificing content. The intention is to

make teachers and school heads alike to be ready and well prepared in their implementation. As conveyed by the school heads, most of them expressed the need for training and more training to be confident in delivering the expected outcome of the curriculum in the classroom. Here are some excerpts of their responses:

SH#1

"Inadequate training and heavy workloads."

SH #2

"More trainings and workshops to enhance the contextualized curriculum."

SH #3

"Teachers need more training and seminar-workshop to have deeper knowledge and familiarization in implementing a contextualized curriculum."

SH #7

"There is a need for alignment alongside Montessori approach and increased understanding into the requirements of teachers to effectively implement it."

SH #8

"Unified training /refreshment of teachers handling Kinder especially the newly hired be given by the education program specialist".

Themes that Emerged from the Kindergarten Teachers

The Kindergarten curriculum upholds the holistic development of the learner. It ensures that all learners have equal access to educational opportunities. The implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum has received additional feedback from teachers. Kindergarten teachers as the leading implementers of the contextualized kindergarten curriculum in the classroom, had been experiencing different mindsets and were bombarded with different expectations. Their expressed challenges were categorized into Language Difficulties, Preparation Time, and Instructional Materials Development.

Language Difficulties: One important feature of the Kindergarten curriculum is a localized and contextualized curriculum. As a result, the use of local materials available within the environment of the school is encouraged. However, considering the fact that the Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten is written In English but the instructional materials and delivery is in the local language, teachers are confronted with difficulties in the correct translation of some words in the mother tongue of the learners.

R1

"There are difficulties in the matters of language. I ran out of the appropriate terms. So, I code switched to English or Filipino instead of Visayan language."

R2

"Using unfamiliar binisaya words in teaching that creates confusion to the learners."

R4

"There is confusion in using the bisaya language. If what is the convenient term to use for my learners I just adapt to it "

R6

"The use of differentiated instruction adds to the bulk of making activities in the local language."

R8

"I have limited Cebuano vocabulary. Also, this caused the children confusion. I used to diligently observe this before but I was just frustrated"

R14

"We are urged to improvise and make materials in mother tongue. Initially, we manage to contextualized some materials. This is difficult for me because I am newly hired teacher."

Preparation Time: The implementation of the contextualized Kindergarten curriculum has prompted teachers to prepare activity and develop instructional materials in the mother tongue to address the competencies expected in the curriculum. When the contextualized kindergarten curriculum was implemented, teachers were pre-occupied with a lot of responsibilities in putting together the needed content, materials, assessment measures and teaching and learning activities as prescribed by the curriculum guide. As a result, teachers need a lot of preparation time to work on matters related to its classroom implementation. As echoed by the teachers during the interview, they expressed that they need more time to prepare for their instructional materials and even in preparing themselves for varied classroom tasks. These were their sample responses:

R5

"Time in preparing the IMs and classroom activities."

R10

"A lot of instructional materials to prepare every day, different theme per week and varied worksheets and we have to memorize what is stated in the learning plan."

R12

"Different activities to prepare to cater varied types of learner. uses Binisaya terminology even if some students understand English term to some concept, example number 11-we say eleven but we have to say napulo'g usa. something related to that."

R13

"Because of time consuming teaching aids to construct I have to be flexible. I was frustrated before when I observe this. I cannot cater to all of the demands. This time, I used the worksheets available in the net."

Instructional Materials Development: One of the most important elements in the implementation of the new contextualized kindergarten curriculum is the availability of the instructional materials that will be used in the classroom for both the teacher and the students. Instructional materials are the tools that enhance learning that is why it is necessary to have relevant and contextualized resources to aid the learning of concepts. The reality is that there is a very

limited materials available that is why teachers are expressing their sentiments in making their own instructional materials at their own expense without having them validated by content experts. The challenges experienced by the teachers reflect the limited availability of instructional materials that they can use in their classes. As result, they have to make their own materials for their own classes. These are their expressed concerns:

R3

“Making of modules in kindergarten curriculum. We extend tedious hours even at home. How I wish the government can provide workbooks for all students.”

R5

“We have to consider a lot of things in making instructional materials specially availability of materials in each activities.”

R6

“Making of instructional materials is really needed to keep the students busy or else they are going to be restless the entire period”

R7

“Instructional materials for many students then some are not available online.”

R11

“it’s difficult to reproduce teaching aids. on my part, I have to extend my time at home to create individualized worksheets.”

R13

“There are lack of teaching materials and equipment. Unavailability of materials for some children. They cannot afford to buy the materials. The unequal class sizes. I have more students than the set standard.

As stated in DepEd Order No. 51 series of 2014, localization and contextualization related curriculum content and competencies to the social and educational context of the communities being served. As such, the principle behind the use of local materials including the use the mother tongue requires teachers to be creative and resourceful in taking into consideration the availability of local materials that allow for exploration and discovery on the part of the teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study confirmed that the contextualized Kindergarten curriculum, as emphasized in the MATATAG educational refinement, continues to face several implementation challenges. These challenges stem from limited availability of instructional materials, insufficient teacher preparation time, varying school contexts, and inadequate localized resources. Both teachers and school heads expressed that, although they are committed to implementing the curriculum, constraints such as language difficulties in using the mother tongue, lack of orientation and training, and insufficient instructional support hinder its full realization. The findings highlight that the readiness of teachers is often overshadowed by the realities in their respective school environments, especially in clustered school districts where

resources remain scarce. In light of these findings, it is recommended that following actions to strengthen the implementation of the Matatag Kindergarten curriculum pre-implementation collaboration, teacher training and development, leadership and mentoring, and instructional materials development.

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