

Challenges Faced by Public School Teachers in Teaching Pupils in the Third District of Bohol

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Article History:

Received: 13 April 2024

First Decision: 15 May 2024

Published: 22 June 2024

Abstract

The study presented the challenges faced by public Kindergarten Teachers in the Third Congressional District of Bohol, Philippines. Employing descriptive survey method, data from 226 Kindergarten Teachers across 19 municipalities were analyzed to identify challenges based on class types and schedules. The demographic profile of respondents revealed a young workforce aged 20–40. Majority of which are holding a Bachelor of Elementary Education degree specializing in Early Childhood Education. All respondents were LET Board passers and had participated in relevant workshops. The study confirmed compliance to the mandated teacher-pupil ratio of 1:25, with a total student population of 5,868. Findings demonstrated significant differences in challenges faced by teachers based on class type. Teachers managing multi-grade classes reported more difficulties compared to those handling single-grade classes. The findings suggest potential violations of DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, which mandates separate kindergarten classes in multi-grade schools. This result heightened the challenges faced by multi-grade teachers. The research provides information for the development of teacher programs, and informing policy adjustments. It will also serve as a reference for future studies on the challenges in teaching kindergarten that aims to enhance the experiences of students in public schools.

Keywords: teaching challenges, Kindergarten teachers, multi-grade classes, single-grade classes, kindergarten, Third District of Bohol



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INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten is a critical year for all children – a year of transition from preschool program or home to formal schooling. Most children arrive in kindergarten filled with curiosity, wonder and an enthusiasm to learn about themselves, others and the world. A teacher's role and responsibility are to nourish this hunger for knowledge, and to motivate and challenge the students as well as to protect and nurture them.

Teaching kindergarten is most definitely not easy. To teach young children, you will have to have patience, concentration, and clear educational goals in mind. Pupils in kindergarten come in literally not knowing any letters or numbers, and unlocking the keys to Literacy and Math. So, a kindergarten teacher has to be extra cautious in her field.

Kindergarten teachers have a lot of the same responsibilities as other teachers but also have to take into account that most of their students will be experiencing school for the first time. They must teach students basic skills in reading

and writing in addition to showing them how to behave in the classroom and play nicely with others, whether it's in a group setting or doing artwork quietly on their own. The teacher's methods of educating will have to be changed to meet the needs of each individual student.

According to the Ministry of Education (2006), early educators face insurmountable challenges in meeting their professional obligations. Aside from the traditional roles that teachers have assumed, they are now expected to serve as curriculum specialists, diagnosticians, healthcare providers, family counselors, adult educators, program managers, child development experts, child advocates, mental health specialists and many others too numerous to list. At the same time, the teaching profession is confronting new notion of pedagogy and more intense scrutiny by professional groups.

As a Kindergarten Teacher of a public school in the Division of Bohol, with the earnest desire to help other kindergarten teachers, the researcher wants to find out the common

challenges encountered in teaching pupils with the end in view of proposing a Kindergarten Pupil's Management Plan.

This study investigates the challenges faced by public kindergarten teachers. The researcher believes the findings might benefit kindergarten teachers by helping them develop better teaching strategies, students by fostering better understanding of their teachers, schools by allowing them to address teacher challenges, school principals by informing them of problems and solutions, kindergarten coordinators by giving them insights into teacher situations, division supervisors by allowing them to improve the curriculum, the Schools Division Superintendent by providing data for teacher development programs, and parents by helping them prepare their children for kindergarten. Finally, the research serves as a reference point for future researchers on challenges in teaching kindergarten.

LITERATURES

The Role of the Teacher. Early childhood educators fulfill a complex and multifaceted role. The Montessori Method exemplifies this by highlighting the role of a "director" who guides children's exploration within a prepared environment (Montessori, 2009). This resonates with the Philippines' Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, which emphasizes teachers' responsibility for upholding high-quality education and student well-being (Philippines, Department of Education, 2017). Beyond instruction, early childhood educators play a crucial role in building relationships with families and communities, using assessments effectively, and ensuring a stimulating learning environment (Damolo-an et al., 2016).

Teacher Impact on Student Learning. Research demonstrates the significant impact teachers have on student learning. A teacher's knowledge base directly influences the quality of instruction students receive, ultimately impacting their academic growth (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Effective teachers go beyond simply delivering content. They strategically utilize conversations to scaffold student

learning, adapting their approaches to cater to the individual needs of each child (Hi, 2002). This focus on individualized instruction allows teachers to maximize learning potential for all students.

Challenges and Support for Teachers. Despite their crucial role, early childhood educators face various challenges. Studies highlight the importance of a supportive school environment. When schools address teacher needs and empower them to utilize their talents effectively, it fosters a positive climate that benefits both teachers and students (Al Halwani, as cited in Damolo-an et al., 2016). Conversely, traditional teaching methods, unclear objectives, and classroom issues like violence or lack of resources can hinder student learning and create difficulties for teachers (Al Hajj, as cited in Damolo-an et al., 2016; Al-Amarats, 2003). Curriculum implementation presents another challenge, as teachers navigate the balance between mandated curriculum requirements and the diverse needs of their students within the realities of their classrooms (Erden, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

Design. This research adopted the descriptive survey method to determine the degree of seriousness on the challenges faced by public kindergarten teachers in the Third Congressional District of Bohol, Philippines.

Populations, Samples, Sampling Technique. The study was conducted across all public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District of Bohol namely: Sevilla, Bilar, Batuan, Carmen, Sierra Bullones, Pilar, Alicia, Mabini, Candijay, Anda, Guindulman, Duero, Jagna, Garcia Hernandez, Valencia, Dimiao, Lila, Loboc, and Loay. The respondents of the study were thirty-seven (37) kindergarten teachers handling single class with morning/afternoon session in one school; one hundred sixteen (116) kindergarten teachers handling single class with morning and afternoon session in different school; thirty-nine (39) kindergarten teachers handling multi-grade classes and thirty-four kindergarten teachers (34) handling single

class with kindergarten pupils during morning and graders during afternoon session with a total number of two hundred twenty six (226) kindergarten teachers. Complete enumeration was employed in the selection of participants. The researcher respected and highly observed confidentiality of the gathered data.

Instrumentation. The study used semi-modified questionnaire extracted from the thesis entitled “Problems Met by Instructors Handling Freshmen Students” (Baldapan et al., 2016). The instrument was further enhanced with add-ons on the challenges faced by the kindergarten teachers of Sevilla District.

Part I of the questionnaire contained the personal information of the kindergarten teacher respondents. Part II focused on the challenges faced by the kindergarten teachers. All the responses on the scale had a numerical value of 1-4, and a verbal interpretation of “not a challenge” to “serious challenge,” where 1 was not a challenge, 2 was less serious challenge, 3 was moderately serious challenge, and 4 was serious challenge. In validating the instrument, pre-testing was conducted to the kindergarten teachers of Sevilla district.

Data Gathering Procedure. In the preparation for data gathering, necessary communications were secured. The researcher sent a letter request to the Dean of the College of Advance Studies for permission to conduct the study. A formal letter was secured from the office of the Division Kindergarten Coordinator noted by the Division Superintendent and to the District Kindergarten Coordinator noted by the Schools District Supervisor of the respective districts for the permission to administer the questionnaire to all the Kindergarten Teachers of the Third District of Bohol.

To identify the number of kindergarten teacher respondents, the researcher coordinated with the office of the Department of Education - Division of Bohol and asked for School Form where the list of kindergarten teachers can be found.

The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to every district office through the central kindergarten teacher. The answering of the questionnaire was done during free periods or during their Learning Action Cell (LAC) session. The respondents were given ample time to answer the questionnaire since it was collected by the researcher one week from the date of distribution.

Statistical Techniques. Statistical techniques were used to derive the data of the study. Frequency counts and simple percentage were used to describe the profile of the public kindergarten teachers. Weighted Mean Score (WMS) was used to determine the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers. Lastly, Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine the significant difference on the challenges faced by the kindergarten teachers.

RESULTS

Profile of the Kindergarten Teachers. Table 1 presents the profile of the Kindergarten Teachers. Majority of the Kindergarten Teachers fall under 20-40 age bracket while only 26 out of 226 teachers fall under 41-65 years old. In terms of gender, female respondents outnumbered the male. Out of 226, only 26 were female and 200 were male. With respect to civil status, most of them were married. While majority of the highest educational attainment achieved by the Kindergarten Teacher respondents was Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BEED) with Early Childhood Education (ECE) Units. In terms of years in teaching experience, most of them have been in the field for 3 years. In addition, data showed that most Kindergarten Teacher respondents attended workshops related to ECE. More so, all of them were passers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) Board Examination. Lastly, in terms of class handled, most type of classes handled were the morning and afternoon sessions at different schools.

Table 1
Profile of Kindergarten Teachers in the Third District of Bohol

CATEGORY		F	%
AGE	Young (20-40)	200	88.50
	Old (40-65)	26	11.50
	Total	226	100.00
GENDER	Female	219	96.90
	Male	7	3.10
	Total	226	100.00
CIVIL STATUS	Single	29	12.83
	Married	197	87.17
	Total	226	100.00
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	BEEd	29	12.83
	BEEd with ECE units	90	39.82
	BEEd with Masteral Units	50	22.12
	BEEd with Masteral Units in ECE	10	4.42
	BEEd/ECE, Masteral Units in ECE	42	18.58
	BSed, Masteral Units in ECE	5	2.21
	Total	226	100.0
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	1 year	13	5.75
	2 years	25	11.06
	3 years	88	38.94
	4 years	20	8.85
	5 years	24	10.62
	6 years	21	9.29
	7 years	12	5.31
	8 years	6	2.65
	9 years	6	2.65
	10 years	4	1.77
	11 years and above	7	3.10
	Total	226	100.00
SEMINARS ATTENDED	Demonstration Related to ECE	58	25.66
	Demonstration, Workshops Related to ECE	130	57.52
	Workshops Related to ECE	145	61.06
	Total	333	144.24
ELIGIBILITY	LET	226	100.0
	PBET	0	0
	Total	226	100.0
CLASSES HANDLED	Handling Single Class with morning/afternoon sessions in one school	37	16.37
	Handling Single Class with morning/afternoon sessions in different school	116	51.33
	Handling Multi-grade Class	39	17.26
	Handling Single Class with kindergarten pupils during morning and graders during afternoon session	34	15.04
	Total	226	100.0

Public Kindergarten Class Profile. Table 2 presents the profile of 5,868 kindergarten students in the third district of Bohol, with a nearly equal split between genders (52.11% female, 47.89% male). This aligns with the mandated 1:25 teacher-pupil ratio as outlined in DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2016. While gender balance avoids classroom differentiation concerns, Stromquist (2007) highlights that teachers often unintentionally reinforce traditional gender stereotypes due to limited training. To optimize student development, educators should embrace gender equality, promote cross-gender interaction, and challenge gender biases.

Table 2
Gender Profile of the Kindergarten Pupils

Category	F	%
Female	3058	52.11
Male	2810	47.89
TOTAL	5868	100.00

Degree of Seriousness of the Challenged face by Public Kindergarten Teachers. Table 3 revealed variations in the degree of seriousness across different challenges. Kindergarten teachers handling a single class with both morning and afternoon sessions at the same school (Type 1) reported "less serious challenges" in classroom management (mean = 2.36) and support system (mean = 2.11). However, school facilities (mean = 1.58) and professional competencies (mean = 1.64) were perceived as "not a challenge" for this group. Notably, classroom management presented the most significant concern among all challenges for Type 1 teachers, suggesting difficulties managing withdrawn behaviors, disruptions, bullying, frequent absences, individual learning differences, and large class sizes (Stromquist, 2007).

Table 3
Analysis on the Degree of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered by the Kindergarten Teachers

Type of Kindergarten Teachers	Classroom Management		School Facilities		Support System		Professional Competencies		Average
	WMS	D.I	WMS	D.I	WMS	D.I	WMS	D.I	
1	2.36	LSC	1.58	NAC	2.11	LSC	1.64	NAC	1.92
2	2.55	MSC	1.80	LSC	2.42	LSC	2.00	LSC	2.19
3	2.36	LSC	1.51	NAC	2.79	MSC	2.51	MSC	2.29
4	2.45	LSC	1.45	NAC	2.78	MSC	3.06	MSC	2.43

Legend:	
RANGE	DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS
1.00 - 1.75	- (NAC) Not a challenge
1.76 - 2.50	- (LSC) Less serious challenge
2.51 - 3.25	- (MSC) Moderately serious challenge
3.25 - 4.00	- (SC) Serious challenge

TYPE OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS BASED ON CLASS SCHEDULE	
1	- kindergarten teacher handling morning and afternoon session in one school
2	- handling morning and afternoon session in different school
3	- handling kindergarten pupils during morning session and graders during afternoon session
4	- multi-grade teacher

Similarly, teachers handling a single class with sessions in different schools (Type 2) faced "moderately serious challenges" in classroom management (mean = 2.55). School facilities (mean = 1.80), support system (mean = 2.42), and professional competencies (mean = 2.00) were considered "less serious" challenges for this group. Here again, classroom management emerged as the most pressing concern, indicating potential difficulties similar to those faced by Type 1 teachers.

For teachers handling a single morning class for kindergarteners and an afternoon class for

graders (Type 3), "moderately serious challenges" arose in support system (mean = 2.79) and professional competencies (mean = 2.51). Conversely, classroom management (mean = 2.36) and school facilities (mean = 1.51) were perceived as "less serious" challenges. This group identified professional competencies as the most critical area of concern, highlighting challenges like limited gasoline allowance, lack of school supplies, unstable weather conditions, insufficient funding, inadequate resources, and communication difficulties with parents.

Overall, kindergarten teachers across all class types (Types 1-4) reported "less serious challenges" with average weighted mean scores ranging from 1.92 to 2.43. However, teachers handling multi-grade classes (Type 4) consistently faced the most challenging situations (mean = 2.43) compared to other class types. Their primary concerns within professional competencies included limited opportunities for professional development, data management (both paper and digital), time management, technology skills, and difficulties submitting results online. As Axelrod (2016) suggests, addressing professional competency challenges is crucial, as it can transform into high-quality teaching and influence student learning. Kindergarten teachers should be encouraged to pursue continuous professional development through programs, seminars, and conferences on topics such as developmentally appropriate practices, early intervention, child growth and development, early language, literacy, and numeracy (ELLN), Mother Tongue proficiency, and best practices in MTB-MLE implementation. By continuously honing their skills, kindergarten teachers can become more effective educators.

Significant Difference of the Challenged face by Public Kindergarten Teachers. Table 4 reveals the analysis on the difference of the challenges faced by a public kindergarten teachers handling Single Class with morning/afternoon sessions in one school (type 1), kindergarten teachers handling morning and afternoon session in different school (type 2), kindergarten teachers handling kindergarten

pupils during morning session and graders during afternoon session (type 3) and multi-grade teacher (type 4) in terms of classroom management, school facilities, support system and professional competencies.

Table 4
Significant Difference between the Four Types of Classes Handled by Public Kindergarten Teachers

Test Statistics	Test Variable	Computed Value	Significant level (2 tailed)	Accepted Significant level	DF	Decision
Kruskall-Wallis Test	Classroom Management	9.44*	0.024	0.05	3	Reject Ho
	School facilities	16.61**	0.001	0.05	3	Reject Ho
	Support system	22.56**	0.00	0.05	3	Reject Ho
	Professional Competencies	74.76**	0.00	0.05	3	Reject Ho

Kruskal -Wallis Test indicated that the four variables (classroom management, school facilities, support system and professional competencies) varied significantly from each other. This finding further explained that challenges faced by the four types of kindergarten teachers differ from each other since the significant level of each category were 0.024, 0.001, 0.00, and 0.00 respectively and is lower than the accepted significant level of 0.05 at 1% level of significance except for the classroom management which is at 5% significant level. Thus, the null hypotheses were rejected. The main cause of the differences between the four types of classes handled by a public kindergarten teacher was their class schedules. The most affected type of class based on their class schedule was the multi-grade teacher (type 4) because as stated on the DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, in multi-grade schools where the number of enrolments is less, classes should still be organized (Kindergarten class should be conducted separately).

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the challenges faced by public Kindergarten Teachers in the Third District of Bohol during the school year 2015-2016. The demographic profile revealed a young workforce with most teachers falling within the 20-40 age bracket and possessing a BEED degree with Early Childhood Education specialization. Additionally, all teachers were

LET Board passers and had attended workshops related to ECE. Interestingly, the data indicated a discrepancy between reported gender (mostly female respondents) and actual teachers (mostly male). This inconsistency warrants further investigation.

The teacher-pupil ratio in public kindergarten schools adhered to the mandated 1:25 standard, with a total student population of 5,868. The analysis of challenges faced by teachers categorized by class type revealed significant differences. Notably, teachers handling multi-grade classes (Type 4) consistently reported more challenging situations compared to teachers with single-grade classes. This finding aligns with the significant difference test results, suggesting that class schedules significantly impact the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers. The potential violation of DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, which mandates separate kindergarten classes in multi-grade schools, might contribute to these challenges for Type 4 teachers.

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