

Problems Encountered in Teaching Kindergarten and Teachers' Coping Strategies

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Abstract:

Kindergarten education plays a crucial role in shaping a child's future academic success, yet teachers often face challenges such as diverse learning styles, classroom behavior issues, curriculum constraints, and limited parental involvement. This study, conducted in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City during the 2023-2024 school year, aimed to assess the problems faced by kindergarten teachers and their coping strategies. It involved 160 teachers from various districts, using a descriptive-correlational approach and a survey instrument to gather data. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation, and t-tests were applied. Findings revealed that teachers struggled with managing student behavior, organizing classrooms, and engaging parents. To cope, teachers most frequently used both emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies. The study also found a significant relationship between the problems teachers faced and the coping strategies they employed, with variations based on teachers' educational backgrounds. Based on these results, it was recommended that teachers participate in professional development programs to better manage classroom challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Kindergarten education is a crucial stage in a child's development, laying the foundation for their future academic success. However, educators often encounter various problems, such as managing diverse learning styles, classroom behavior issues, curriculum constraints, and parental involvement difficulties. These problems can impact the quality of education provided to young learners and the overall effectiveness of kindergarten programs. This study explored the specific problems encountered by Kindergarten teachers and identified effective coping strategies to improve teaching practices and enhance students' learning experiences in this critical educational stage.

The Department of Education Order (DO) No. 36, series of 2002, affirms the agency's commitment to the Education for All (EFA) objectives, particularly Goal 1 of the Dakar Framework, which aims to expand early childhood care and education. This political initiative was mandated to uphold the goals and objectives of the global framework. Furthermore, Republic Act 10157 institutionalized kindergarten education into the basic education system, making the Philippines the last country in Asia and one of the three countries worldwide with a 10-year curriculum. This act, along with R.A. 10533, is part of the educational reforms implemented by the Department of Education DepEd.

In line with these reforms, the DepEd formulated the Implementing Rules and Regulations, as stated in the 2012 DepEd Order No. 32. The qualifications and professional development of kindergarten teachers are outlined in Sections 10 and 11, requiring them to have at least 18 units in Early Childhood Education or its equivalent. These guidelines ensure that kindergarten teachers can deliver quality

education in various learning environments, including classrooms, childcare settings, and natural environments.

Numerous studies in the field of early childhood education have highlighted the unique problems faced by educators in kindergarten settings. Research by Johnson and Smith (2018) underscores the complexities of managing diverse learning styles and individual needs within a kindergarten classroom. Moreover, studies by Brown et al. (2019) have emphasized the impact of curriculum constraints on teachers' instructional practices and the overall learning experience of young children. These insights provide valuable context for examining the problems encountered by Kindergarten teachers and the coping strategies they utilize to address them effectively.

One prevalent issue faced by Kindergarten teachers is classroom behavior management. Young children in Kindergarten settings often exhibit a range of behaviors that can disrupt the learning environment and impede the teaching process. Research by Wilson (2020) demonstrates the significance of effective behavior management strategies in promoting a positive classroom atmosphere and enhancing student engagement. Understanding how teachers cope with behavior challenges is essential for optimizing classroom dynamics and fostering a conducive learning environment for all students.

In addition to behavior management, another key challenge for Kindergarten teachers is parental involvement and communication. Building strong partnerships with parents is crucial for supporting children's development and learning progress. Studies by Garcia and Martinez (2019) have highlighted the importance of effective parent-teacher collaboration in enhancing student outcomes and creating a cohesive learning community. Exploring teachers' coping strategies in fostering parental engagement can provide valuable insights into strengthening the home-school connection and promoting positive educational outcomes for young learners.

Furthermore, Kindergarten teachers often grapple with adapting instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their learners. Research by Lee et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of differentiation in teaching practices to accommodate varying learning styles and abilities in Kindergarten classrooms. Understanding how teachers navigate these problems and deploy effective coping strategies can enhance students' learning experiences. By examining the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and the coping strategies employed by teachers, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of early childhood education and inform the development of targeted support strategies to empower educators in their crucial roles.

Literature and Related Studies

This section explores various studies related to research taken from books, articles, journals, periodicals, etc., that have a bearing on the subject of the study. It includes the respondents' characteristics, such as highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and the highest level of training attended. Furthermore, problems encountered in teaching kindergarten and teacher's coping strategies are also considered.

Respondents' Characteristics

The characteristics of teachers, encompassing variables such as highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and highest level of training attended, influence their ability to address challenges and implement effective coping strategies.

The study examines the benefits of continuous professional development for teachers in kindergarten education. Adams et al. (2019) have highlighted the importance of ongoing training and support for teacher resilience and effectiveness in the classroom. By exploring coping strategies for professional development challenges, the study aligns with the literature on promoting teacher growth and learning in early childhood education.

Highest Educational Attainment

Recent studies highlight the significance of a teacher's highest educational attainment in shaping their professional identity and effectiveness. For instance, a study by Martínez and Sánchez (2019) emphasizes that higher educational qualifications correlate with enhanced pedagogical practices and student outcomes. Additionally, Vishnevsky et al. (2021) indicate that teachers with advanced degrees often possess greater digital competencies, which are increasingly vital in contemporary education settings. This suggests that ongoing professional development and higher educational attainment are critical for teachers to adapt to evolving educational demands and improve their instructional methodologies.

Field of Specialization

The field of specialization plays a crucial role in defining a teacher's professional identity and effectiveness. According to Kritt and Budwig (2022), specialization not only influences teaching practices but also affects how teachers perceive their roles within educational institutions. Teachers who specialize in areas such as STEM or Special Education often engage in targeted professional development that enhances their instructional strategies and student engagement. Furthermore, research by Zabalza-Beraza and Zabalza-Cerdeiriña (2022) indicates that specialization can increase job satisfaction and a sense of professional fulfillment as educators feel more competent and confident in their subject matter.

Teaching Experience

The number of years a teacher has been in service is linked to their professional growth and identity development. Beijaard (2019) notes that experienced teachers often undergo significant transformations in their teaching philosophies and practices. They develop resilience and adaptability, which are essential for navigating the complexities of modern classrooms. Trautwein (2018) further supports this by demonstrating that veteran teachers tend to exhibit deeper reflective practices, enabling them to refine their instructional approaches based on accumulated experiences. This evolution underscores the importance of valuing experience as a critical component of teacher professionalism.

Highest Level of Training Attended

Training experience is integral to a teacher's professional development, influencing both their pedagogical skills and overall effectiveness in the classroom. A study conducted by Fermin et al. (2024) highlights the impact of continuous training on teachers' ability to implement innovative teaching strategies that meet diverse student needs. Moreover, findings from the research on Filipino teacher professional development during the "new normal" underscore that ongoing training is essential for enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills, particularly in adapting to technological advancements in education (Fermin et al., 2024). This indicates that comprehensive training programs are vital for

fostering a culture of lifelong learning among educators, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes.

Problems Encountered in Teaching Kindergarten

Teaching kindergarten often presents a multitude of problems that educators must navigate to provide an effective learning experience. These problems can be grouped into several factors: behavior management, attention span, curriculum demands, parental involvement, class size, and resource availability.

Behavior Management

Behavior management is critical in early childhood classrooms, as disruptive behaviors can derail the learning process. Teachers often face challenges in addressing aggression, tantrums, and inattentiveness. Deslandes et al. (2019) emphasize that proactive strategies, such as setting clear rules and reinforcing positive behavior, can mitigate disruptions. Similarly, Costa et al. (2021) have found that positive reinforcement tools, such as behavior charts, help reduce classroom disruptions and improve the overall learning climate.

Additionally, cultural factors can influence behavior management. Klassen and Tze (2019) have highlighted that teachers in diverse classrooms often need tailored approaches to address the unique behavioral tendencies of students from varying cultural backgrounds. This highlights the necessity for cultural competence as part of professional development.

Attention Span

Short attention spans are a natural characteristic of kindergarten learners, and teachers must design lessons to maintain engagement. Zentall et al. (2019) showed that movement-based activities, such as dance and storytelling, enhance attention and engagement among young children. Antoniou and Vouyoukas (2021) have further emphasized gamified learning as an effective strategy to capture and sustain learners' focus.

Moreover, transitioning between activities without losing attention is a challenge. Serrano-Ibáñez et al. (2020) have pointed out that mindfulness techniques, like short breathing exercises, can be used as transitions to refocus learners and prepare them for the next task.

Communication

Effective communication in Kindergarten is a critical aspect of early childhood education, yet it often presents challenges due to the diverse language development of young children. According to research by Snow (2020), communication skills in early childhood are not uniform, with some children struggling to articulate their thoughts or follow complex instructions. Teachers frequently encounter children who have limited vocabulary, difficulty with pronunciation, or challenges understanding spoken language, which can hinder their participation in class activities. As young learners are still developing their language skills, miscommunication between teachers and students can lead to frustration, misunderstandings, and behavioral problems. This issue is particularly evident in multilingual classrooms, where children may speak different languages or dialects, further complicating the teacher's ability to communicate effectively.

To address these problems, teachers must adopt strategies that facilitate communication and language development. Research by Whitehurst and Lonigan (2018) underscores the importance of providing rich language environments in the classroom, where teachers model proper language use, engage in frequent dialogue with students, and offer opportunities for language practice. Visual aids, gestures, and simple language are often employed to bridge gaps in communication and ensure that students can understand key concepts. Additionally, studies have shown that incorporating storytelling, songs, and rhymes into lessons can significantly enhance language acquisition in young children (Cameron, 2021). By fostering an environment where communication is supported through multiple modes, teachers can help their students build the language skills necessary for academic success.

Classroom Organization

Classroom organization is another significant challenge for kindergarten teachers, as they must create an environment that supports both learning and social interaction for young children. Pianta et al. (2022) have highlighted that an organized classroom is crucial for promoting effective learning, particularly in early childhood settings where students benefit from structured yet flexible environments. The physical layout of the classroom, including the arrangement of learning stations, seating arrangements, and storage areas, can impact the flow of activities and the teacher's ability to maintain order. Research by Sabol and Pianta (2022) suggests that well-organized classrooms contribute to positive teacher-child interactions, which are essential for fostering a supportive learning environment. However, organizing a classroom to meet the developmental needs of young children while also ensuring safety and accessibility is no easy task, especially in schools with limited resources.

Teachers often face problems in balancing structure and flexibility within the classroom. According to research by Emmer and Sabornie (2019), classroom organization requires constant adjustment, as teachers must cater to diverse learning styles, attention spans, and behavior patterns. Teachers who can adapt their classroom setups to accommodate different activities, transitions, and learning modes are better able to foster a productive environment. A study by Hamre et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of clear routines and expectations in early childhood education, which can help reduce confusion and improve student engagement. Teachers who are able to establish a consistent and well-structured classroom routine can mitigate behavioral issues and ensure that students remain focused on their learning tasks.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is another critical factor in kindergarten education. Teachers often encounter problems with inconsistent or minimal participation from parents. Nurlaily et al. (2019) have found that active parental engagement improves learning outcomes but noted that many parents are unaware of how to effectively support their children's education. Workshops and regular communication can bridge this gap and foster stronger collaboration. On the other hand, over-involvement or unrealistic expectations from parents can also create pressure on teachers. Carmen et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of setting boundaries and providing parents with clear guidelines to ensure their involvement is constructive.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the significance of parent-teacher collaboration in kindergarten education. This aligns with Garcia and Martinez's (2019) research, which highlights the benefits of strong partnerships between parents and teachers in supporting student learning and development. The

study contributes to the literature on the importance of home-school partnerships in kindergarten education by examining coping strategies for fostering collaborative relationships with parents.

Coping Strategies

Teachers employ various coping strategies to manage the problems of teaching kindergarten. These strategies can be broadly categorized into emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping.

Coping strategies present one of the most challenging aspects for teachers, as they must manage problems in difficult situations. Teachers need to maintain their emotions and well-being when faced with a stressful scenario. Coping strategies help identify and alleviate the effects of professional crises, reducing disorientation and leading to reflection and growth. Understanding the emotions and experiences associated with professional crises supports the psychological and professional development of teachers (Sadovnikova et al., 2019).

Emotion-Focused

Emotion-focused coping involves managing the emotional responses to problems rather than addressing the root cause directly. Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and yoga, are commonly used by teachers to reduce coping levels for problems. Serrano-Ibáñez et al. (2020) have found that mindfulness-based interventions significantly improve teachers' emotional well-being and resilience.

Self-compassion is another effective emotion-focused coping strategy. Jazaieri et al. (2018) emphasize that teachers who practice self-compassion experience less burnout and are better equipped to handle classroom problems. This approach fosters a positive mindset and helps teachers maintain their emotional health despite external pressures.

Problem-Focused

Problem-focused coping entails actively addressing the problems encountered in the classroom. This includes attending professional development workshops, seeking mentorship, and adopting innovative teaching methods. Collie et al. (2020) highlight that teachers who engage in problem-solving activities report higher levels of job satisfaction and effectiveness.

Additionally, resourcefulness is a key component of problem-focused coping. Carmen et al. (2020) note that teachers who adapt their teaching strategies and materials to suit their specific classroom needs are better equipped to handle challenges and improve student outcomes.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to determine the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and teachers' coping strategies in select districts, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, School Year 2023-2024.

Specifically, this aims to describe the respondents' characteristics, assess the respondents' problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten, find the respondents' level of coping strategies, determine the significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and teacher's coping strategies; and test the significant difference in the respondents coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Arnold Bakker and Evan-gelia Demerouti's Job-Demands Resources Theory. This theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the research study entitled "Problems Encountered in Teaching Kindergarten and Teachers' Coping Strategies." According to the JD-R Theory, job demands, such as the problems faced by the teachers, can lead to burnout or reduced performance if not balanced by sufficient job resources. In this study, the independent variable, problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten, encompasses behavior management, attention spans, communication barriers, classroom organization, and lack of parental involvement. These problems represent the job demands that significantly strain teachers' physical and emotional well-being, particularly in the early childhood education setting, where nurturing and individualized attention are essential. If these demands are not addressed or mitigated, they can negatively affect the teacher's job satisfaction and performance.

On the other hand, the JD-R Theory also emphasizes the role of job resources, which can include coping strategies and support mechanisms that teachers use to handle these demands. In the context of this research, the dependent variable, coping strategies, represents these resources. Emotion-focused coping strategies, such as problem-management techniques and emotional regulation, help teachers manage their feelings during difficult situations, while problem-focused coping strategies, such as planning and seeking support, allow them to directly address and resolve classroom challenges. The JD-R Theory suggests that when teachers have effective coping strategies and access to supportive resources, they are better equipped to balance their job demands, leading to improved well-being and effectiveness in their roles.

The inclusion of the moderating variable, teacher's characteristics, further aligns with the JD-R Theory by highlighting how individual differences, such as highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, highest level of training attended, and, can influence the balance between job demands and resources. Teachers with higher qualifications, specialized training, or extensive experience may have better tools and strategies to cope with kindergarten teaching problems. The JD-R framework thus underscores the interplay between the demands faced by kindergarten teachers and the resources they employ to cope with them, which is central to the study's exploration of problems and coping strategies in the teaching profession. This theoretical lens not only validates the study's objectives but also provides a structured approach to examining how teachers can achieve resilience and maintain their professional effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

This study investigates the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and teachers' coping strategies employed by the teachers, with respondents' characteristics serving as moderating variables.

The independent variables problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten is patterned and modified by Sengul (2019), who explored the problems faced by primary school teachers in classroom management. Specifically, this study considers five (5) dimensions: behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parent involvement, adapting them to the kindergarten setting where early childhood learning dynamics are distinct from higher levels.

The dependent variables on coping strategies are derived from Jennings's study (2021). This study focuses on two primary coping strategies, emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, which teachers employ in response to the problems they encounter in the Kindergarten classroom.

Additionally, this study considers moderation variables under the respondents' characteristics, including highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and highest level of training attended. These factors are expected to influence how Kindergarten teachers perceive problems in their classrooms and the coping strategies they adopt. By examining these relationships, the study aimed to provide insights into how Kindergarten teachers navigate classroom problems and the role of their educational background and professional experience in shaping their coping strategies.

Moreover, teacher training programs can be tailored to address the specific needs and problems faced by teachers based on their characteristics. For example, teachers with more years of experience may benefit from advanced training programs that focus on problem management and resilience-building techniques, while novice teachers may require additional support in developing effective coping strategies to handle the demands of the profession.

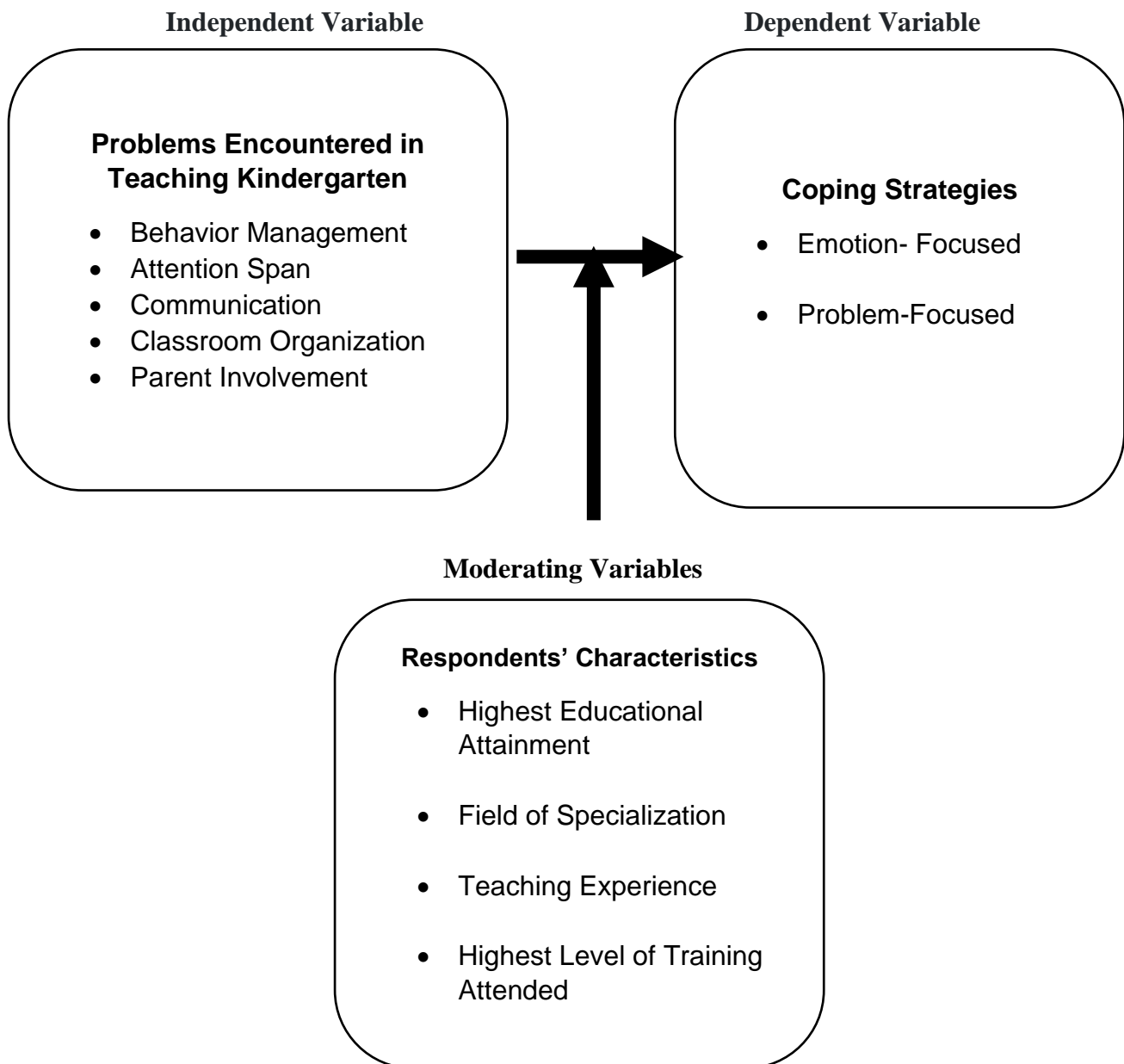


Figure 1. A Schematic Presentation Showing the Interplay of the Independent, Dependent and Moderating Variables of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and coping strategies among teachers in School Year 2023-2024.

Specifically, this study intended to answer the following questions:

1. How are the respondents distributed as to their characteristics in terms of highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience and highest level of training attended?
2. How do the respondents assess the problems they encountered in teaching Kindergarten considering behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parents' involvement?
3. What is the respondents' level of coping strategies as regards to emotion- focused coping strategy and problem-focused coping strategy?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of the problems they encountered in teaching kindergarten and their level of coping strategies?
5. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study hold significant importance in the field of early childhood education. By shedding light on the problems faced by Kindergarten teachers and exploring coping strategies to address these problems,

The study provides regional and division personnel with a deeper understanding of the problems faced by Kindergarten teachers in their classrooms. The insights can inform policymakers on the development of teacher training programs and the allocation of resources aimed at addressing behavior management, learner attention span, communication issues, classroom organization, and parental involvement. By focusing on effective coping strategies, the study enables them to support initiatives that promote teacher resilience and professional growth, ensuring the delivery of high-quality early childhood education.

District supervisors can use the findings to design targeted interventions and professional development sessions that address specific problems identified in kindergarten teaching. The study highlights the importance of fostering collaboration among educators and stakeholders, guiding supervisors to create a supportive environment that empowers teachers to adopt adaptive and strategic coping mechanisms. These efforts can lead to improved teaching practices and better learning outcomes.

For school heads, the study offers practical insights into the problems encountered by their Kindergarten teachers and the coping strategies they employ. This knowledge can inform leadership practices, enabling school heads to provide necessary resources, mentorship, and a conducive teaching environment. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of fostering partnerships with parents and stakeholders to create a nurturing learning environment for young learners.

The study is particularly significant for Kindergarten teachers as it provides evidence-based strategies to manage classroom problems effectively. By showcasing adaptive coping strategies, the study promotes professional growth and resilience among teachers, helping them navigate the demands of their roles. The emphasis on reflective practice and self-care also encourages teachers to prioritize their well-being, fostering a positive and sustainable work culture.

The study ultimately benefits learners by promoting a nurturing and stimulating learning environment. By addressing problems such as behavior management and classroom organization and strengthening the

teacher-parent partnership, the study ensures that young learners receive the quality education that supports their holistic development. A classroom led by resilient and well-supported teachers fosters better engagement, learning outcomes, and overall growth for Kindergarten pupils.

Scope and Limitations

This study specifically examined the correlation between the problems encountered by Kindergarten teachers and coping strategies. The respondents' characteristics considered in this study include the highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and the highest level of training attended related to Early Childhood Education (ECE). The coping strategies of teachers were assessed based on emotion-focused and problem-focused. The study intends to explore whether there is a significant relationship between these variables among Kindergarten teachers.

However, it is important to note that this study has certain limitations. Firstly, the analysis is limited to the variables mentioned above and does not consider other factors that may influence coping strategies, such as personal traits or external factors. Additionally, the generalization of the findings may be restricted as the study only includes Kindergarten teachers from the schools in the South, East 1, North 1, North 2, Central District, and West 1, District of the Division of Cagayan de Oro. Therefore, caution was exercised when extrapolating the results to other contexts or populations.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methods and procedures employed in the study. It encompasses the research design, study setting, participants, sampling technique, research instruments, variable categorization, scoring system, data collection process, statistical analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. This design aimed to examine the association or correlation between the variables of interest without manipulating or intervening in any variable. This approach allows researchers to identify patterns and associations as they naturally occur, providing insights into the strength and direction of relationships between variables, as explained by PhiloNotes. (2020). The study collected data from a sample of Kindergarten teachers and measured their characteristics variables such as highest educational attainment, teaching experience, field of specialization, and highest level of training attended, as well as their coping strategies in teaching (including emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping, which involved adaptation to challenging circumstances and emotional regulation in the classroom).

Sampling Technique

In the research exploring the interplay of the encountered problems and coping strategies of teachers in various districts of Cagayan de Oro City, the universal sampling method was employed as the sampling technique. In this case, all teachers from the South, East 1, North 1, North 2, West 1 District, and Central Districts of Cagayan de Oro City were considered for participation in the research. By including all teachers from these districts, the universal sampling method ensured that the study captured a comprehensive and representative view of educators' experiences across different educational settings within the city.

The procedure for implementing the method in this study involved reaching out to all teachers within the identified districts through their respective Public Schools District Supervisors and School Heads. The researcher collaborated with the Division's office to obtain a list of all teachers in the South, East 1, North 1, North 2, West 1, and Central Districts. Subsequently, invitations to participate in the study were extended to every teacher on the list, ensuring that no one was excluded from the opportunity to contribute their insights and perspectives. The researcher provided clear instructions and guidelines for participation, emphasizing the voluntary nature of involvement and the importance of each teacher's voice in shaping the findings of the study. Through this systematic approach, the universal sampling method enabled the research to gather a wealth of diverse experiences and perspectives from teachers across different districts of Cagayan de Oro City.

Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this study is patterned and modified from the tool developed by Sengul (2019) in their study titled "A Study on the Problems of Primary School Teachers Regarding Classroom Management." The adaptation and refinement of the instrument were tailored to align with the context of kindergarten teaching, ensuring its relevance and applicability to the current research objectives. The instrument is divided into three main parts:

Part 1 focuses on respondents' characteristics and professional information to analyze potential moderating effects on the problems encountered and coping strategies. It included the highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and highest level of training attended. These variables provide critical insights into the relationship between teachers' backgrounds and their ability to manage and cope with the problems in kindergarten teaching.

Part 2 of the survey questionnaire determined the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten. This section measured the specific problems faced by Kindergarten teachers. The categories were adapted from Sengul's framework to reflect common issues in early childhood education, such as behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parent involvement.

Part 3 is the coping strategies, identifying the coping strategies employed by Kindergarten teachers in response to the problems they encounter. The strategies are categorized into two types: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. This was patterned and modified from Jennings's study (2019).

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure for this study on Kindergarten teachers in Cagayan de Oro City began with seeking ethical clearance from the appropriate research ethics committee to ensure that the rights and confidentiality of the participants were protected. Once ethical approval was obtained, and once the research instruments had been validated and proven reliable, the researcher drafted a permission letter and consent form, which was endorsed by the Dean of the Graduate School of PHINMA Cagayan de Oro College.

Further, this letter was then submitted to the School Division Superintendent (SDS) for approval to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval from the SDS, the researcher sought permission from the Public School District Supervisor (PSDS) before visiting the schools where the respondents were located. With the approval of the PSDS, the researcher then approached the kindergarten teachers in the selected schools in Cagayan de Oro City to seek their permission to participate in the study. The researcher provided clear and detailed information about the study objectives, the nature of the

questions, and assurances regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses. Upon obtaining consent from the teachers, the researcher distributed the structured research questionnaire, either in physical form or electronically, depending on the teachers' preference. The questionnaire was accompanied by clear instructions on completing it and a deadline for submission.

The researcher was available to address any questions or concerns that the respondents had during the data collection process. Once the questionnaires were completed and collected, the researcher proceeded to analyze the data to derive insights and conclusions that contributed to understanding the experiences and challenges faced by kindergarten teachers in Cagayan de Oro City.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the variables in the study. Moreover, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) was used to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten and teacher's coping strategies.

In addition, T-test and F-test were used to determine the significant difference in the respondents' coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the paper presents the results of the data analysis based on the problems of the study. Thorough and critical interpretations follow each of the tabular presentations of the data gathered from the respondents of the study. Related literature and studies are cited in support of the findings of the problems.

Results

Problem 1. How are the respondents distributed according to their characteristics in terms of highest educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and highest level of training attended?

The data reveals key insights into the educational backgrounds, specializations, experience, and training of kindergarten teachers in Cagayan de Oro. Most respondents (35%) have pursued some graduate coursework, indicating a desire for professional growth and higher-level career opportunities, such as coordinator or principal positions. A smaller percentage (1.9%) have attained doctoral degrees, reflecting the pursuit of further specialization and leadership roles. Regarding field specialization, nearly half (49.4%) have a Bachelor in Elementary Education, while 35% specialize in Early Childhood Education, highlighting a strong focus on foundational teaching. A small percentage (6.9%) have specialized in other fields like Filipino, English, and Mathematics, yet have pursued graduate studies to enhance their qualifications. In terms of teaching experience, 44.4% of respondents have been in service for 5 to 10 years, indicating a moderate level of experience, while 5% have over 20 years of experience, demonstrating long-term commitment. As for professional development, the majority (31.9%) have attended Division-level training, reflecting their engagement in continuous growth, with fewer having attended regional or national-level programs. These findings highlight the teachers' commitment to enhancing their knowledge and skills to improve their instructional effectiveness and career progression, as they seek professional advancement through education and training.

Problem 2. How do the respondents assess their problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten considering behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parents' involvement?

Table 10 shows a summary of respondents' assessment of the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten. The overall mean of 2.92 (SD=0.83) indicates that the respondents find the five problems as Moderately Severe. This finding indicates that educators frequently face significant issues in the kindergarten teaching environment. The standard deviation of 0.83 reflects moderate variability in responses, indicating that while many teachers consistently encounter these challenges, the extent varies among individuals.

This finding aligns with recent research highlighting the multifaceted problems in early childhood education. A study by Lucero (2023) identified key difficulties faced by Kindergarten teachers, including managing classroom behaviors, addressing diverse learning needs, and enhancing communication with learners. These problems underscore the necessity for targeted professional development and support systems to equip educators with effective strategies for fostering positive learning environments in Kindergarten settings.

In particular, the variable **behavior management** obtained the highest mean score of 3.08 (SD=0.94), which indicates that this problem is found to be **Moderately Severe**. This result highlights the ongoing problem of creating a structured and conducive learning environment while addressing diverse behavioral issues in the classroom. This means that teachers frequently encountered moderately severe problems related to managing student behavior in the classroom. This suggests that while educators were able to address some behavioral issues, the ongoing struggle to maintain a structured and conducive learning environment was significant. The findings underscored the necessity for targeted interventions and professional development programs that equipped teachers with effective behavior management strategies, enabling them to better support diverse student needs and enhance overall classroom dynamics.

Behavior management plays a critical role in maintaining order and fostering a positive atmosphere where all students can focus on learning. However, the high mean score suggests that teachers often need to dedicate considerable effort and time to this aspect, which may detract from other instructional responsibilities (Simonsen & Myers, 2021). The implication of this finding is the necessity for schools to prioritize teacher training in evidence-based behavior management strategies. Research indicates that proactive approaches, such as setting clear expectations, providing consistent reinforcement, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships, can significantly reduce disruptive behaviors and improve classroom climate (Reinke et al., 2021). Additionally, integrating social-emotional learning into the curriculum can help students develop self-regulation skills, reducing the burden on teachers to manage behavior proactively.

Conversely, the variable, **attention span** obtained the lowest mean of 2.83 (SD=0.69), which means that the respondents found this problem as **Moderately Severe**. It can be noticed that although this variable got the lowest mean as compared to other variables, it has the same interpretation which is moderately severe. While issues related to students' ability to sustain focus and concentration are prevalent, they may not be as severe or disruptive as other factors like behavior management.

The challenge of maintaining students' attention is critical, as attention span directly impacts learning outcomes, classroom engagement, and the effectiveness of instructional strategies (Toste et al., 2022). Furthermore, educators need to adopt innovative teaching strategies that cater to the varying attention

spans of students. Incorporating active learning techniques, such as group discussions, interactive multimedia, and hands-on activities, can help sustain student engagement and improve focus. Furthermore, creating a structured classroom environment with clear transitions between activities can mitigate attention-related challenges. Research also emphasizes the importance of integrating regular brain breaks and mindfulness practices to help students refocus and recharge during lessons (Greenberg et al., 2022).

Problem 3. What is the respondents' level of coping strategies in terms of emotion-focused and problem-focused?

Table 13 presents a summary distribution of the respondents' **level of coping strategies**. The overall mean of 2.82 (SD=0.80) with the description **Most of the Time** indicates that the respondents have a high level of coping strategies. The result implies that the respondents frequently engage in various coping strategies to manage problems, which may include both emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies. The implications of these findings are significant for understanding the adaptive behaviors of the respondents. High engagement in coping strategies implies that respondents are actively attempting to navigate and mitigate the problems in their environment. This proactive approach is essential in fostering resilience and maintaining psychological well-being, particularly in challenging circumstances (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2021).

Moreover, a high level of coping strategy usage suggests that individuals are equipped with strategies to handle problems, potentially reducing the risk of problem-related mental health issues. However, it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness and balance of the specific strategies employed. Over-reliance on certain coping strategies, such as emotion-focused strategies without problem-solving actions, might limit long-term problem-management effectiveness. This underscores the need for interventions or programs aimed at enhancing coping skills and promoting a balance between problem-focused and Emotion-Focused strategies to support sustainable problem management and overall well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 2021).

In particular, the variable **emotion-focused** coping strategy obtained the highest mean score of 3.00 (SD=0.81), which means that the respondents have a **High Level** of using this strategy. The data indicates that educators frequently rely on approaches such as reframing problems, seeking emotional support, or engaging in activities to alleviate problems. This implies the necessity of institutional support for emotional resilience in educators. Schools and educational organizations should prioritize mental health initiatives, including workshops on emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and problem management. Such programs can empower teachers to cope effectively with emotional problems while maintaining their professional responsibilities. Additionally, this finding highlights the importance of fostering a school culture that encourages open dialogue about emotional problems and provides avenues for support, such as peer mentoring and counseling services. An emotion-focused coping strategy is essential for maintaining psychological well-being in the teaching profession, which is often characterized by high levels of problems, emotional demands, and interpersonal challenges (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2022).

On the contrary, the variable **problem-focused coping strategy** obtained the lowest mean of 2.65 (SD=0.80), indicating a **High** in the application of this strategy. The implication of this finding is significant for educational institutions and teacher support systems. It highlights the need to create an environment where problem-focused coping strategies are encouraged and facilitated. This can include

providing access to resources, professional development programs, and collaborative opportunities that enable teachers to address problems proactively. For instance, training on time management, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving can empower educators to adopt more effective approaches to managing problems.

The relatively lower mean implies that while teachers recognize the value of these strategies, they might face barriers such as limited time, resources, or institutional support, which constrain their ability to consistently employ problem-solving approaches (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2021).

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of the problems they encountered in teaching kindergarten and their level of coping strategies?

Table 14 shows the result of a statistical test on the **relationship between the respondents' assessment of the problems** they encountered in teaching Kindergarten and their level of coping strategies. The data reveals that the problems encountered based on behavior management ($r=.459$, $p\text{-value}<.001$), attention span ($r=.406$, $p\text{-value}<.001$), communication ($r=.458$, $p\text{-value}<.001$),

Classroom Organization ($r=.397$, $p\text{-value}<.001$), Parent's Involvement ($r=.395$, $p\text{-value}<.001$), and the overall measure ($r=.464$, $p\text{-value}<.001$) shows a significant relationship with coping strategies. The p-values is less than .001, which means that the null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of the problems they encountered in teaching Kindergarten and their level of coping strategies, is rejected.

The finding indicates that the problems kindergarten teachers face in their teaching environment significantly influence their ability to employ effective coping strategies. This relationship highlights the intertwined nature of professional difficulties and personal resilience strategies. When teachers encounter issues such as a lack of resources, large class sizes, or insufficient administrative support, their problem levels may increase, potentially impeding their ability to utilize constructive coping strategies. Conversely, educators with access to effective coping strategies, such as social support, professional development opportunities, and self-care practices, may better manage these problems, minimizing their impact on teaching quality and well-being.

This finding underscores the importance of institutional support systems in mitigating teacher problems. Schools and policymakers should prioritize initiatives such as providing adequate teaching resources, fostering a supportive work culture, and offering regular problem management training. Studies have shown that teacher problems not only affect their mental health but also impact student outcomes (Kyriacou, 2021). Therefore, addressing the problems faced by educators is essential for creating a productive and nurturing educational environment for young learners. Moreover, this relationship implies that teacher training programs should include modules on coping strategies to equip educators with tools to manage problems effectively. According to Jennings et al. (2021), professional development interventions focusing on emotional resilience and mindfulness can significantly reduce teacher problems and improve classroom dynamics. These efforts are crucial in ensuring that educators remain effective, motivated, and satisfied in their roles.

Problem 5. Is there a significant difference on the respondents' level of coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics?

Table 15 describes the difference in the respondents' level of coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics. The data reveals that highest education attainment ($F\text{-value}=3.508$, $p\text{-value}=.009$)

has shown a significant difference in the respondents' level of coping strategies. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, which states that there is no significant difference in the respondents' level of coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics.

In connection with this, the finding indicates that teachers' highest educational attainment significantly influences their coping strategies. This implies that as educators pursue higher levels of education, they may acquire advanced skills, knowledge, and professional development experiences that enhance their capacity to manage problems. For instance, teachers with postgraduate degrees might have had exposure to courses on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, or stress management, equipping them with more effective coping mechanisms compared to their counterparts with lower educational attainment.

This result underscores the importance of continuing education and professional development in enhancing teachers' resilience and well-being. Schools and educational institutions should encourage and support teachers in pursuing advanced degrees or additional certifications, particularly those focusing on problem management and mental health. Furthermore, tailored problem management programs may need to be implemented to address the varying needs of teachers based on their educational background. According to Bhagat and Haque (2022), higher educational attainment often correlates with better problem-solving skills and emotional regulation, which are critical in handling stress effectively in high-pressure teaching environments.

The implications extend to policy and curriculum development in teacher education programs. Including modules on coping strategies and self-care in both pre-service and in-service training programs could help bridge the gap for teachers with varying educational levels. Moreover, recognizing the role of education in coping could guide administrators in providing differentiated support systems, ensuring that all teachers, regardless of their educational background, are equipped to handle the problems inherent in their profession.

However, respondents' characteristics in terms of their highest educational attainment, which has an F-value 3.508, field of specialization (F-value=1.480, p-value=.222), teaching experience (F-value=1.061, p-value=.368), and the highest level of training attended (F-value=1.521, p-value=.199) shows no significant difference on their level of coping strategies. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The study revealed significant insights into the problems Kindergarten teachers face and the coping strategies they employ. Teachers commonly identified behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parent involvement as the primary problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten. These issues were perceived to contribute to elevated problem levels, making effective coping strategies essential for maintaining teacher well-being and instructional quality.

The correlational analysis showed a significant relationship between the respondents' problems encountered in teaching and the coping strategies employed. Teachers who frequently faced problems in behavior management and classroom organization tended to rely more on emotion-focused coping strategies. In contrast, teachers who experienced problems with parental involvement and communication were more likely to employ problem-focused strategies, such as proactive planning or seeking professional development opportunities.

Further, the study also highlighted variations in coping strategies based on the characteristics of teachers. For instance, teachers with more years of experience demonstrated a greater tendency to employ problem-focused strategies, suggesting that experience contributes to the development of adaptive

coping strategies. Similarly, teachers with higher educational attainment showed a balanced use of both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, indicating the value of professional preparation in addressing classroom problems.

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents held a master's degree, with some having earned units toward a doctorate degree. Additionally, most respondents specialized in Elementary Education, reflecting their focused expertise in this field. The data also revealed that the majority had been in service for 5 to 10 years, demonstrating a considerable level of professional experience. Furthermore, most respondents had participated in training sessions at the division level, highlighting their commitment to professional development and capacity-building initiatives.

On the second problem of the study, the respondents' assessment of the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten revealed notable issues across various areas. In terms of behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parents' involvement obtain, an overall mean score which indicates that the respondents assessed these variables to be occurring **Most of the Time**. The result discloses that most of the respondents found their problems in teaching Kindergarten to be **Moderately Severe**. These findings highlight the recurring nature and significant impact of these problems in the Kindergarten teaching environment.

The third problem, which focuses on the respondents' level of coping strategies, they have evaluated across different approaches, revealing significant insights. For both strategies, namely, emotion-focused coping strategy and problem-focused strategy, the data reveals that the overall mean scores indicate that the respondents have applied the indicators **Most of the Time**. This implies that they have a high level of application for the two coping strategies. These findings suggest that respondents frequently relied on both emotional and problem-solving strategies, indicating a balanced approach to coping with problems. The next problem of the study presented an analysis that examined the relationship between the respondents' assessment of the problems encountered in teaching kindergarten and their level of coping strategies. The results indicated a significant relationship between coping strategies and problems related to behavior management, attention span, communication, classroom organization, and parent involvement. Additionally, the overall measure of problems encountered showed a strong correlation with coping strategies. Since all p-values were less than .001, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the problems encountered in teaching kindergarten and the respondents' level of coping strategies was rejected. This suggests that the more problems respondents faced, the more they relied on coping strategies.

Finally, Problem 5 shows the statistical analysis of the differences in the respondents' level of coping strategies when grouped according to their characteristics. The results indicated that the respondents' highest educational attainment significantly influenced their coping strategies, as reflected by an F-value of 3.508 and a p-value of .009. Since the p-value was less than the significance threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis—stating that there is no significant difference in coping strategies based on the respondents' characteristics was rejected. This finding suggests that educational attainment played a role in shaping the respondents' approaches to coping with problems.

Conclusion

The summary result of the respondents' assessment of the problems encountered in teaching Kindergarten shows that behavior management obtained the highest mean of 3.08 and standard deviation

of 0.94. This implies that teachers frequently encountered moderately severe problems related to managing learners' behavior in classroom settings.

The findings emphasized the necessity for targeted intervention and professional development programs that equipped teachers with effective behavior management strategies, enabling them to better support diverse need and recognizing each child's uniqueness.

Recommendations

To enhance Kindergarten learners' attention span, teachers should use interactive, developmentally appropriate strategies and structured routines. Professional development in attention span-enhancing techniques and minimizing classroom distractions is essential. Schools should provide engaging resources like visual aids and hands-on instructional materials. Corroboration with parents reinforces attention-building activities at home and in school.

Further research on effective strategies should guide classroom intervention. Ultimately, a patience and supportive teaching approach ensures a conducive learning environment.