



NAVIGATING THE FIRST-TIME KINDERGARTNERS' EMOTIONAL STRUGGLES: A TEACHER'S JOURNEY

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in handling emotionally struggling first-time enrollees in selected private schools in Butuan City, Philippines. Despite increasing research on early childhood emotional development, limited attention has been given to teachers' experiences in managing children's emotional difficulties during school transition. Anchored in Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Vygotsky's Social Development, a qualitative design with purposive sampling was employed, involving six kindergarten teachers who participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method. Finding from this study revealed four (4) major themes: navigating the emotional landscape of teaching, teachers' coping practices, personal and professional growth, and the need for support. Teachers from kindergarten experienced strain in emotions but it demonstrated the adaptive strategies by providing reassurance, routines establish, and creating a safe learning environment, while managing exhaustion from emotions through empathy, patience, reflection, and collaboration. These experiences contributed to the development of more flexible and emotionally responsive teaching practices. The study concludes that teachers play a vital role in facilitating children's emotional transition to school and be adequately supported to sustain effective practice. Thus, the study recommended that institutions strengthen support systems, provide targeted training on emotional management, and enhance parent-teacher partnerships.

Keywords: *kindergarten transition, separation anxiety, teacher experiences, emotional support, coping strategies, early childhood education*

INTRODUCTION

“Education is to allow the good in every person to break through the rock that imprisons it and bring it into the light where it can blossom and shed its radiance.”

– St. Marie Eugenie

The quote shows that education exists to teach knowledge to students while supporting their personal development and emotional safety and confidence building. Every child enters school with potential, but this potential can be hidden by fear, anxiety, and emotional struggles. The emotional challenges that children experience during their transition to kindergarten display themselves throughout early childhood education (Ahnert et al., 2020). Some people experience "rock" obstacles which include separation anxiety and unfamiliar environment fear and adjustment difficulties with routines. The teachers establish a vital function, which helps students to attain feelings of security and support, which enables their learning process (Pakarinen et al., 2020). Teachers require understanding of their approach to emotional situations because their behavior determines how students transition from fear to confidence and achieve school success.

Children experience their first extended separation from home when they begin kindergarten. At this stage, children are still developing emotionally, socially, and cognitively (Malik & Marwaha, 2022). The teachers are required to teach academic skills while they need to give students emotional support together with their special guidance. The teachers guide students to adapt from their home environment into a new classroom environment which introduces them to different people and classroom activities and school rules. The transition process presents difficulties for many children particularly for those who have never experienced parental separation before (Bowlby, 1982). Teachers must demonstrate these three qualities because they need to address all student needs which require them to show understanding of each student's situation. The students in the classroom see the teacher as a reputable adult who provides them with comfort and assurance while maintaining classroom stability during uncertain situations. The process of kindergarten teaching requires educators to plan lessons while they need to create programs which support the emotional development of their students.

Teachers who work with emotionally distressed students face both important work challenges. Teachers in many classrooms need to deal with students who continuously cry and cling to adults while refusing to join activities and withdrawing from them (Eun McDevitt & Recchia, 2020). The process of handling these behaviors needs people to possess emotional resilience and their operational methods plus their expert decision-making abilities. Teachers need to establish a balance between their responsibilities as educators and their duties as student caregivers while they handle their personal emotional needs. The situation becomes unmanageable when multiple students exhibit emotional distress simultaneously. Teachers continue to help students by providing comfort and establishing routines and implementing flexible learning methods.

Understanding the real life experience of teachers is important since it helps us understand what they see firsthand and how they respond to students who have

emotional problems. The kindergarten transition is known as one of the most important moments in a child's development. The research shows children often have separation anxiety when starting school, especially when they are away from those who care for them most (Bowlby 1982). The signs of separation anxiety can include crying, screaming, refusal to participate, trying to stay close to the teacher and etc. The new school environment, creating new routines and need new social skills can add to a child's fear, confusion, and discomfort (Kong & Zeng 2023). Some children adjust quickly, however, some of them may take weeks or months to adjust. Emotional struggles will affect a child's ability to participate in activities, form relationships with other children, and learn. As such, teachers are key to supporting children through a successful transition by offering support through reassurance, creating secure places to play, and directing their students through new activities.

In addition, teachers themselves experience emotional challenges when handling these situations. Teaching young children who are emotionally distressed requires continuous attention, patience, and emotional regulation. Studies have shown that teaching involves emotional labor, where educators manage their own emotions while responding to the needs of learners (Ferreira et al., 2021; de Ruiter et al., 2021). Teachers may feel frustration, stress, or exhaustion, especially when they are still learning how to respond effectively to children's behaviors. At the same time, they are expected to maintain a positive and supportive classroom environment. This dual responsibility can be emotionally demanding, particularly in classrooms with many pupils. In spite of all this, teachers continue developing various coping mechanisms like reflection, cooperation with peers, and modification of teaching techniques according to the needs of children.

Besides, the involvement of teachers is crucial when helping children struggling with emotional problems. Teachers assist children in feeling safe in school through routines, encouragement of social activities, and providing a warm and friendly environment for children (Jardí et al., 2023). The responsive nature of teachers and provision of psychological assistance are capable of alleviating anxiety and promoting faster adjustment to the new learning environment (Wang et al., 2024). It is noted that a positive experience at the beginning of school education positively impacts the future performance of students in educational and social contexts (Solang et al., 2024). Thus, it is evident that the work of teachers with children with emotional issues in the initial days of school can have a significant impact on children's further development. Nevertheless, although the role of teachers cannot be overstated, there are numerous difficulties they are likely to face.

The issues are even more pronounced when viewed within the context of the Philippines. Many Filipino children tend to develop strong family bonds, which can make it difficult for them to separate from their parents when starting school (Gonzales, 2021). Meanwhile, educators tend to apply their personal life experiences more than formal training in dealing with emotionally troubled learners (Lucero, 2023). There is thus an urgent need to further examine the lived experiences of educators in coping with such issues. Despite numerous publications about the emotional difficulties of children, few have investigated

the lived experiences of educators, especially in private educational institutions in urban areas such as Butuan.

The theories used as the basis for this research are Attachment Theory developed by John Bowlby (1969), and the Social Development Theory introduced by Lev Vygotsky (1978). According to the former theory, it is only natural for children to experience separation anxiety in the absence of their attachment figures and seek comfort and protection from people whom they trust (Bowlby, 1982). As such, within the educational setting, teachers usually become second caregivers who ensure that children feel comfortable and secure in their surroundings. Conversely, the latter theory stresses the significance of social interactions in children's learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). With the help of social interactions between teachers and other students, children eventually learn how to cope with various situations and emotions.

From her experience as a kindergarten teacher, the researcher has been exposed to the challenges that first-time kindergarten learners face with regards to separation anxiety. The learners cry, show reluctance to join the classroom activities, or find it hard to engage in activities in the classroom during the first days in class. As observed by the researcher, the signs of distress among the learners due to separation anxiety include crying, clinging to and withdrawal from the activities (Eun McDevitt & Recchia, 2020; Kong & Zeng, 2023). The learners do not only undergo the difficulties arising from separation anxiety but also the teachers who are faced with the challenge while also attending to other activities in the classroom. For example, preschool teachers should cater to both the learning and emotional aspects of students, which is not an easy thing for teachers to do (Mulyani et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this study is align to global educational goals, especially those related in promoting children's well-being and ensuring quality education. Supporting children's emotional needs are really important in creating a positive learning environment where they can feels safe, confident and ready to learn (Wang et al., 2024). At the same time, supporting teachers is also important, since their well-being directly affects on how they teach (Jennings&Min, 2023). By understanding the teachers experiences, this study try to contribute in making better support systems, policies and practices in early childhood education.

Despite the growing body of research about early childhood education, there is still a gap in understanding the lived experiences of teachers handling emotionally struggling first-time kindergarten enrollees. Many studies focus more on children's behavior and adjustment, but only few talks about how teachers manage their own emotion while supporting this children (Shapira & Amzalag, 2025; Smith & Lee, 2020). There is also limited research in the Philippine context that capture the real experiences of teachers in private schools (Go et al., 2020; Catama & Tejada, 2024). This gap highlight the need for a phenomenological study that explore deeper on teachers experiences. By giving teachers a voice, this study aim to uncover the challenges they face, the strategies they use and the insights they gain from their experience.

Ultimately, this study aim to understand how kindergarten teachers describe their experiences in handling emotionally struggling first-time enrollees, how they cope with the challenges they encounter and what insights they gain that affect their teaching practices. By doing this, the study hope to help improve early childhood education by supporting both teachers and learners. When teachers are better supported and understood, they is more capable to help children overcome their fears, adjust in school and reach their full potential (Saral & Acar, 2021). In this way, education becomes a process of helping every child grow and somehow show their radiance.

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored:

1. How do kindergarten teachers describe their experience in handling first-time kindergartners with emotional struggles?
2. How do kindergarten teachers cope with the challenges in handling first-time kindergartners with emotional struggles?
3. What insights have teachers gained from their experience that influence their current classroom practice?

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research approach to explore and understand the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in handling emotionally struggling first-time enrollees. Qualitative research focus on peoples experiences, thoughts and feelings, allowing the researcher to gain deeper understanding of real life situation rather than relying on numbers or statistics. It is especially useful in studies that aim to describe human experiences in detailed way. In this study, the goal is not to measure or generalize but to understand how teachers personally experience, interpret and respond to emotionally distressed children during their first days of school. This approach allow the voices of teachers to be heard and their experiences to be presented in more meaningful and authentic way.

Specifically, the study used a phenomenological research design, which focus on describing the essence of a shared experience among individuals. Phenomenology is appropriate for this study because it seeks to understand how people make sense of their experiences and what those experiences mean to them. In this case, the study explored how kindergarten teachers experience and manage situations involving children who show signs of emotional distress, such as crying, clinging, or refusing to participate in class. The design allowed the researcher to go beyond surface-level observations and examine the emotional, cognitive, and practical aspects of teaching in such situations. The study was guided by the idea that each teacher may experience the same situation differently, and all these experiences are valid and important in understanding the whole phenomenon.

The research was conducted in selected private schools in Butuan City, Agusan del Norte. These schools were chosen because they have active kindergarten programs and a typical classroom setup where teachers handle a number of pupils, including first-time enrollees. The participants of the study were six kindergarten teachers who had direct experience in handling emotionally struggling first-time pupils. A purposive sampling method was used, meaning participants were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the study. The teachers had at least one year of teaching experience in kindergarten, were currently handling or had handled first-time enrollees showing emotional distress, and were willing to participate in the study. This ensured that the participants could provide rich and meaningful insights based on their actual experiences.

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to freely share their experiences while still guiding the discussion based on the research questions. Each participant took part in three interview sessions, with each session focusing on one research question. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on the convenience of the participant. Each session lasts approximately 60 to 90 minutes. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. The use of open-ended questions allowed the teachers to express their thoughts, emotions, and strategies in their own words, resulting in rich and detailed data. To ensure accuracy and credibility, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts through member checking, allowing them to confirm or clarify their responses.

The data gathered was analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method, which is a systematic process for understanding lived experience. First, the researcher read all the transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data and understand the overall meaning of the participants' responses. Second, significant statements related to the phenomenon were identified and extracted from the transcripts. These statements highlighted teachers' experiences, emotions, and actions when handling emotionally struggling pupils. Third, meanings were formulated from these statements while staying as close as possible to the participants' original intent. Fourth, these meanings were grouped into clusters of themes based on similarities and patterns. Fifth, a full and detailed description of the phenomenon was developed by combining all the themes. Finally, the essence or core meaning of the experience was identified, representing the shared experience of teachers in handling emotionally struggling first-time enrollees. This process ensured that the findings were grounded in the participants' actual experiences.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were applied. Credibility was achieved through member checking, where participants verified the accuracy of their responses. Transferability was supported by providing clear descriptions of the research setting and participants, allowing others to determine if the findings apply to similar contexts. Dependability was maintained by keeping a detailed record of the research process, including decisions and changes made during the study. Confirmability was ensured by grounding the findings in the participants' responses rather than the researcher's personal opinions. The researcher also practiced reflexivity by

acknowledging personal experiences as an early childhood educator and consciously setting aside biases during data collection and analysis.

The ethical principles throughout the study were adhered to in full. School administrators approved the research prior to the study starting. Participation in the study was done with fully informed consent from the participants. Participants were provided with the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation and their right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. The identities of participants were also kept confidential by using pseudonyms. All data were stored securely and kept confidential. Participants were treated with dignity and the interview locations were designed to ensure that participants would have a safe and comfortable place in which to share their stories. No participant was harmed through the course of the study, and the well-being of each participant was the primary consideration at all times.

In summation, this methodology enabled the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of kindergarten teachers as they dealt with emotionally distressed students in their first year of school. The qualitative phenomenological approach used by the researcher with the systematic methods of analysis produced unique and valuable insights into the emotional and professional realities of teachers, which provided new perspectives on practices in early childhood education.

RESULTS

In this area of focus, the participant experiences during the course of the study will be compared to the lived experience of 6 kindergarten teachers who had to support emotionally struggling first-time kindergartners throughout the course of the participant's virtual-learning processes presented in adult-like fashions using adult-like terminology. Data collected through the use of Colaizzi's model were analyzed to determine significant statements (i.e., create meaning) and create themes/categorized analyses from such coding, etc.; using 4 significant/common themes that emerged: (1) Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Teaching, (2) Teacher's Coping Strategies, (3) Personal & Professional Development, (4) Need for Assistance. These four primary themes outline teachers' emotional/rational realities, coping strategies, and experiences while supporting children during their transition to kindergarten; as outlined above.

Table 1.

Theme 1: Navigating the Emotional Landscape of Teaching

Significant Statements	Sample Codes	Categories	Theme
<p>“Sauna masuko ko (<i>before, I would get angry</i>) kung naay bata nga sige'g scream kay dili ganahan mu-apil sa activity (<i>when there is a child who keeps screaming because he/she does not want to join the activity</i>).”</p>	<p>Feelings of Frustration</p>	<p>Emotional Struggles of Teaching</p>	<p>Navigating the Emotional Landscape of Teaching</p>

-Participant 6, Transcript 1, Page 45, Line 2265			
"Medyo struggle siya at first (<i>it was somewhat a struggle at first</i>)... mag kapa-kapa pa ko unsaon (<i>I was still figuring out what to do</i>)."- Participant no. 2, Transcript 2, Page 7, Lines 330-331	Stressful Teaching Moments		
"Honestly, usahay kapoy kaayo (<i>sometimes it is very tiring</i>). Mura kag ma-drain emotionally (<i>it feels like you are emotionally drained</i>)."- Participant no. 5, Transcript 2, Page 26, Lines 1299-1300	Emotionally Draining Experience	Emotional Exhaustion	
"dili ko kasabot sa akoang emotions (<i>I couldn't understand my emotions</i>)... nag-struggle gid ko to adjust (<i>I really struggled to adjust</i>). - Participant no. 2, Transcript 3, Page 7, Lines 330-331	Emotionally Upsetting Moments		
"I adjust my techniques para ma-accommodate sila (<i>so they can be accommodated</i>), aron dili nila ma-feel nga sila ra ang lisod kaayo (<i>so they won't feel like they are the only ones having a hard time</i>)."-Participant no. 2, Transcript 3, Page 7, Lines 330-331	Adaptive Teaching Approach	Adjustments	
"Dili tanan bata parehas og needs (<i>not all children have the same needs</i>)... So ang akong approach kay flexible (<i>my approach is flexible</i>), like I try to read the child first before ko mu-response (<i>I respond</i>)."-Participant no. 6, Transcript 2, Page 29, Lines 1462-1464	Flexibility in teaching		

At the start of the school year teachers often felt that the experience was emotionally and highly overwhelming. The main reason for this was when there were several children who were crying or not wishing to participate in class at the same time. Teachers described how these events made it challenging for them to concentrate on the teaching of the subject matter and how they experienced feelings of frustration, uncertainty, and emotional exhaustion throughout this period. As teachers gained experience, they learned the necessary adjustments needed to transition into a more flexible and more responsive - based upon the individual need of each child.

Table 2.
Theme 2: Teachers' Coping Practices

Significant Statements	Sample Codes	Categories	Theme
"Us, teachers should learn about the new trends and adapt jud to new things (<i>really adapt to new things</i>) kay lahi ra jud ang kids before	Adaptive Teaching Strategies	Adaptive Classroom Practices	Teachers' Coping Practices

(because children today are really different from before) kay technology nowadays can catch students' attention (because technology nowadays can catch students' attention)." - Participant no. 2, Transcript 3, Page 13, Lines 611-614			
"I have to experiment again another strategy... para maminaw siya sa akua (so he/she will listen to me)." -Participant no. 2, Transcript 3, Page 7, Lines 323-324	Strategy Adaptation and Experimentation		
"I decompress by listening to music while fixing the classroom or by sharing stories with my co-teachers." -Participant no. 6, Transcript 1, Page 46, Lines 1300-1301	Decompression and Stress Relief	Teachers' Self-Regulation	
"I pray to God for patience and strength. I prepare myself mentally, expecting that challenges might come, and I remind myself to stay calm." -Participant no. 1, Transcript 2, Page 3, Lines 103-104	Self-Regulation and Self-Calming		
"I just hug them, talk to them, or say, "I'll give you a star or a happy face." --Participant no.1, Transcript 1, Page 5, Lines 229-230	Verbal and Physical Reassurance	Relationship Building with the Children	
"I focus more on building connection first before instruction." -Participant no. 5, Transcript 1, Page 35, Lines 1735-1736	Building Trust and Connection		

In order to deal with the different challenges of their classrooms, teachers employed a variety of adaptive teaching strategies, including modifying different activities, pairing certain students together and trying various ways of presenting information. In addition, many teachers practiced self-regulation simply by reflecting upon past experiences, praying, or releasing their emotions through some form of expression.

The most effective means of reducing student stress was by developing strong bonds between the teacher and child through comfort, reassurance and providing positive reinforcement.

Table 3.
Theme 3: Personal and Professional Growth

Significant Statements	Sample Codes	Categories	Theme
"I became more compassionate sa mga bata (towards the children)." -Participant no. 3, Transcript 2, Page 19, Line 919	Leading with Kindness	Relationship Building and Empathy	PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
"In handling emotionally struggling child kinahanglan lang gyud ug taas nga pasensya (it really requires a lot of patience), be empathetic."	Patience and Empathy in Practice		

-Participant no. 2, Transcript 3, Page 13, Lines 621-622			
"I have 20 kids, and most of them have different personalities gid (<i>indeed/really</i>)... some of my strategies, mag contemplate ko (<i>I contemplate</i>) if this apply to this child." -Participant no.3, Transcript 2, Page 14, Lines 702-704	Observation Before Intervention	Inclusive Teaching Practices	
"Akong approach kay flexible (<i>my approach is flexible</i>)... It's really individualized."-Participant no. 6, Transcript 2, Page 29, Lines 1463-1466	Individualized Needs and Strategies		
I now understand that some children act out because of what happens at home." -Participant no. 1, Transcript 3, Page 2, Lines 62-63	Understanding Emotional Causes	Emotional-Centered Teaching Practice	
"I see crying as communication, not a problem." - Participant no. 6, Transcript 2, Page 35, Lines 1723-1724	Emotional Expression as Communication		

Based on the interviews from the teacher that their experiences resulted in a great deal of both personal and professional development. The majority of them reported increasing their capacities for empathy, patience, and understanding of children’s emotional needs. Additionally, many reported that they became more flexible, embracing child-centred practices and realizing that each individual child is unique. As a result of their experiences, teachers started to view children’s behaviors not as problems, but rather as emotional expressions that require understanding and support.

Table 4.
Theme 4: Need for Support

Significant Statements	Sample Codes	Categories	Theme
"First approach is I will ask how the child is at home... then I introduce what I observe in class." -Participant no. 4, Transcript 2, Page 23, Lines 1135-1138	Parent-Teacher Communication	Parent-Teacher Partnership	NEED FOR SUPPORT
"Parents tell me about their kids... that are first-timers. With that, I was able to adjust how to treat the kids." -Participant no. 1, Transcript 1, Page 3, Lines 102-104	Parent Collaboration and Involvement		
"with good feedback and appreciation from my principal. That motivated me to continue handling kindergarten." -Participant no.1, Transcript 1, Page 5, Lines 244-245	Institutional Feedback and Supervision	Administrative Support	
"As a new teacher, I've experienced a lot of struggles, a lot of adjustments... but somehow, with the help of other teacher and our principal, I	Professional Learning and Training		

was able to learn.” -Participant no.2, Transcript 1, Page 9, Lines 444-445			
“Sa family sab (<i>also with my family</i>) mas more ko nga mu-share sa akong husband (<i>I share more with my husband</i>)... and it helps me.” -Participant no. 2, Transcript 2, Page 12, Lines 607-608	Family Encouragement	Peer Support	
“I talked to my close friends and co-teachers. We shared experiences, gave advice to each other, and that helped lighten my feelings.” -Participant no.1, Transcript 1, Page 7, Lines 344-345	Experience Sharing		

According to the teachers, emotional support is important when dealing with students who have emotional problems. Parents and teachers communicating with each other provides children with a consistent message from both the home and school. Support from their colleagues, the administration, and their families helps them deal positively with stress so that they may better manage their classrooms.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the study show that when working with new Kindergarten children who have emotional issues is difficult and can also be difficult for the teacher as well as being important to support the child, this study demonstrated through the “Navigating the Teacher’s Feelings” theme that teachers had many different feelings about teaching, especially during the first days of school, as many of the children were upset and did not want to be involved in the activities which showed that there is an emotional labor to be done while working with children while also managing their feelings as teachers. Supporting this finding are other studies that indicate teaching is too emotionally taxing and so it can be even harder in an early childhood educational environment where the children require emotional support and attention from the teacher continuously throughout the day as well, thus making it more difficult for teachers to do their jobs. The second theme, “Teachers’ Coping Strategies” indicates that the teachers have developed their own strategies for dealing with these types of experiences in order to provide effective teaching. Research suggests that being responsive and adapting your teaching style to the students will help to reduce the student’s anxiety level and ultimately help to get the students to become engaged in class. Each of the three elements, flexible teaching strategies, structured routines, and the ability to build strong relationships, help teachers develop coping strategies. Additionally, the use of self-regulative strategies (such as spiritual reflection or prayer) demonstrates the efforts teachers make in managing their own emotions. These findings support the premise that for teachers to create a positive and supportive learning environment, they require the ability to manage their own emotions.

The “Personal and Professional Development” theme demonstrates that teachers don’t face only challenges, but they can also experience growth as a result of the challenges they face. Through repeated exposure to emotionally challenging situations, teachers

develop into more empathetic, patient, and understanding professionals. Teachers begin to view student behaviors that are ongoing as means of communication rather than as acts of defiance. These findings also support previous research that positive reflections on the teaching experience improve the quality of the teaching experience and strengthen the teacher-student relationship. Furthermore, this evidence supports the observed shift to child-centred inclusive and emotionally responsive teaching practices.

Finally, in the area of the “Need for Support”, findings indicate the critical role of effective support systems. Support systems in the form of parents, colleagues, and administrators provide teachers with resources to cope with the stress of teaching and develop skills for managing student behaviors in the classroom. The research shows that both schools and parents are vital components of successful early childhood education. However, the results indicate that many teachers utilize more informal or unstructured forms of support, indicating a need to develop additional formalized training and organizational structure to support teachers.

The findings also reflect the existing literature, but will add to our current knowledge of teachers' lived experiences, as seen by teachers in the Philippines. The results also show the resilience, adaptability, and potential for growth of teachers during difficult times. This research highlights the need to establish stronger support systems for teachers and provide training to develop the non-academic aspects of education, such as the emotional health of the teacher and the learner.

Conclusions

The study concludes that handling and supporting first-timers to kindergarten students, who are struggling emotionally, is a normal and rather challenging teaching case for teachers. The findings show that teachers are overwhelmed, unsure, and emotionally tired at the beginning of the school year, when many children cry, cling to the teacher, and refuse to participate. The need to process children's emotions and simultaneously regulate teachers' own emotions presents emotional labor characteristics in early childhood teaching. On the other hand, teachers become less controlling and more patient, flexible, and understanding as time goes on, even if it takes a while for them to get used to the whole thing. This proves that actual exposure to situations in the kindergarten classroom is a key factor in the development of successful kindergarten teaching strategies.

The study also shows that teachers adopt different strategies to cope with these emotional challenges. They also use a variety of common and personal coping strategies, including reworking activities, putting effort into developing routines, supporting environment, relationship building with students, reflection, catharsis, and faith. The strategies help the teachers to carry on with their activities even when the situation becomes too stressful or emotionally exhausting.

It was also found that these experiences help teachers to grow both personally and professionally. Impact on the development of the teacher's personality and

professionalism; They become more experienced in handling children's actions as expressions of feelings and not as misbehavior. Consequently, they become more child-centered in their teaching and more sensitive to children's emotions.

In addition, the study highlights the importance of support system for teachers. They get parental, co-teacher, and school administrator support, making it easy to manage stress and classroom problems. They assist the teachers to work and regulate their emotions effectively. Help from parents, co-teachers, school heads, and even family members makes a big difference in managing stress and improving classroom handling. Strong parent-teacher teamwork also helps make the child's adjustment smoother between home and school. However, many of these support systems are still informal, which shows the need for more organized and school-based support for teachers.

Overall, the study concludes that kindergarten teachers play a very important role in helping young children adjust emotionally in school. They are not only teachers, but also become an emotional support to the children. Therefore receiving emotional care is equally important, as receiving academic learning in early childhood education. This calls for improvements in teacher training, enhanced and continuous support for teachers, and programs that are geared towards improving the state of the teachers and emphasizing the importance of emotional support of children. This paper context sentence should be rewritten to say "With the right support, schools can create a more caring environment where young children feel safe, can better adjust to their surroundings, and begin their learning with greater confidence".

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Early Childhood Educators may:

- a. Continue to improve emotionally responsive practices, to include adaptive routines, individualized responsive support, and reflection strategies to manage emotional labor;
- b. Continue to create safe, supportive, and predictable classroom environments so children can emotionally regulate and develop socially; and
- c. Explore more collaboration strategies with parents to share guidance and reinforce consistency between home and school remains important.

2. School Administrators may provide stronger support systems for teachers by offering resources, professional development, and peer mentoring. By providing systems, teachers are recognized for their emotional labor and promoting team collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community can improve student adjustment and enhance teacher well-being.

3. Community leaders can create programs to improve early childhood education by helping families and educators in rural areas. Community leaders should be addressing systemic barriers that restrict resources, training and support to families.

4. Families will continue to work collaboratively with educators promoting the social-emotional growth of their kids. For instance, families provide a secure base for their kids while equally supporting the social-emotional needs of their kids in the school environment.

5. Future researchers could further contribute to the knowledge base surrounding how teachers offer emotional assistance and implement coping strategies across various school environments and diverse cultural situations. It is also suggested that future research look at how contextual variables such as school policies, parent involvement, classroom resources and institutional support systems influence teacher engagement and children's emotional self-regulation and adjustment,

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher completely followed all ethical standards while conducting this study at all times. Before beginning to collect data, he received permission from the relevant authorities at each school. All potential participants signed an informed consent form prior to beginning their participation in the study, which clearly explained the purpose of the research, the procedure to follow and their own roles in the research. All potential participants were told that participation was voluntary. All participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any point for any reason and that there would be no penalty for doing so. All potential participants' anonymity & confidentiality were maintained by using pseudonyms throughout the research. No identifying information ever appeared in the research documentation. All research data (including taped interviews & transcription) were stored securely so as to prevent unauthorized access to that information and complied with data privacy principles. Researchers made every effort to ensure that all participants did not suffer any harm, discomfort or pressure during their participation as subjects in this study. A conflict of interest for creating the research was not present, and each finding presented is honest with no bias. There was no incidence of plagiarizing or using uncited resources. AI was only used to improve language and structure of ideas, and the output was reviewed by the researcher to ensure that the final product represented their original thought and interpretation by the researcher without any outside influences. The result of the study will only be used for educational and research purposes.

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