



Contextualized Learning and Performance of Kindergarten Learners in Southwest Districts

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ABSTRACT

Contextualized learning is essential for academic success. This study investigated the utilization of contextualized learning and Kindergartens' performance in Southwest Districts, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, during the School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, this aims to find the respondents' level of utilization on contextualized learning; examined the respondents level of performance; and determine the relationship between the respondents' utilization of contextualized learning and the Kindergarten learners performance. The respondents of the study comprised one hundred fifty (150) purposively selected teachers and two hundred (200) Kindergarten learners of Southwest Districts. A researcher-made questionnaire was administered through a survey questionnaire to determine the utilization of contextualized learning. Data analysis involved descriptive statistic such as means, standard deviations and Pearson correlation coefficients. The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate a high level of utilization of contextualized learning. This highlights the importance of tailoring contextualized learning to children's specific developmental stages to maximize its positive impact on early childhood growth. It is conclude that collaborative learning strategies utilized by the teachers and reflect a strong commitment fostering students interaction and teamwork in the classroom. As a recommendation, school leaders should provide professional development programs that will equip teachers with learning approaches for an effective teaching.

Keywords: *Contextualized learning, performance of kindergarten learners*

INTRODUCTION

Contextualized learning in early childhood education focuses on making lessons relevant and meaningful to learners by incorporating elements from their local environment, culture, and everyday experiences. When lessons are framed using familiar environments, such as their home, neighborhood, or cultural traditions, children are more likely to stay engaged and show enthusiasm for learning. For example, teaching counting using local fruits or measuring using cups from home bridges the gap between abstract concepts and concrete experiences. This approach is particularly effective in the Kindergarten stage, where children are developing foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development. By using familiar settings and real-life contexts, educators can help children better understand and retain abstract concepts.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) promotes contextualized learning through its K to 12 curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to adapt lessons to learners' local backgrounds using both localization (use of community-specific materials) and indigenization (integration of Indigenous culture and practices). Policies such as DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015, and DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2016 emphasize the value of this approach in achieving inclusive, learner-centered instruction. Most recently, DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024 under the MATATAG Curriculum continues this emphasis by aligning teaching and assessment methods with learners' real-life situations.

In Kindergarten settings, contextualized learning is not only essential for cognitive development but also for enhancing motivation and engagement. Children are more likely to connect with lessons that reflect their daily lives, language, and cultural values. This connection fosters deeper understanding, emotional security, and stronger community ties key components of holistic early childhood care and development.

The main problem in the Southwest Districts is the lack of alignment between early childhood education programs and the local cultural, socio-economic, and environmental realities of the learners. While contextualized learning has the potential to make education more meaningful and effective, its implementation is hindered by several interconnected challenges. These include limited access to culturally relevant teaching materials, inadequate teacher training in contextualized methods, and significant disparities in parental involvement due to socio-economic pressures. Additionally, many schools in the region face resource constraints, such as shortages of basic learning tools and infrastructure, which make it difficult to provide hands-on, experiential learning opportunities. Language barriers

and the underrepresentation of local knowledge and traditions in the curriculum further widen the gap between children's home environments and their classroom experiences.

By tailoring educational practices to local needs, contextualized learning can bridge gaps in understanding and improve academic performance. It also promotes the development of critical social-emotional skills like empathy, cooperation, and communication by embedding local values and customs into everyday instruction. The integration of local experiences and knowledge allows for a more inclusive approach that resonates with both children and their families.

However, research presents mixed views on its effectiveness. While studies like those by Nguyen et al. (2020) and Pate et al. (2022) support contextualized learning as a means to boost engagement and cognitive development, others like Kim et al. (2021) argue that excessive focus on context may hinder abstract thinking and creativity. Additionally, Suharti et al. (2020) highlight the practical difficulties of applying this approach in rural areas due to limited resources and training. These varying perspectives underscore the need for more localized research, particularly in under-resourced areas such as the Southwest Districts.

This study aims to explore the extent to which contextualized learning is applied in Kindergarten classrooms in the Southwest Districts and how it affects student performance. By identifying both effective strategies and challenges, the research will contribute valuable insights into how localized learning can improve the quality of Early Childhood Care and Development in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City.

Understanding how contextualization works in actual classroom settings can help tailor teaching methods to better suit learners' needs. It also enables educators to design more relevant curricula that address regional disparities in educational access and achievement. Such improvements can lead to more equitable learning outcomes, reduced performance gaps, and stronger community-school relationships.

Moreover, the findings can support policy development and teacher training programs by offering data-driven recommendations. Empowering teachers to incorporate local content and experiences into their lessons not only enhances student learning but also fosters a sense of identity and belonging in young learners.

Lastly, the study on contextualized learning seeks to enhance early education practices by providing a deeper understanding of its impact on kindergarten pupils. It addresses existing gaps in the literature and aims to support the development of inclusive, culturally responsive, and sustainable programs in the Southwest Districts. Ultimately, these efforts can lead to improve learner performance, stronger communities, and more effective educational systems.

Literature and Related Studies

Utilization of Contextualized Learning

Contextualized learning is particularly effective in Kindergarten settings, where young children learn best through play, exploration, and direct interaction with their surroundings. Instruction that incorporates local contexts such as using the native language, community stories, and familiar objects engages learners more deeply and facilitates easier grasp of new concepts.

More recent studies, such as that by (Reyes and Tan 2024), reinforce these conclusions by showing that culturally relevant, localized instruction enhances student engagement and learning outcomes in diverse early childhood classrooms. These findings collectively highlight the critical role of culturally and environmentally grounded learning experiences in early education.

Knowledge Transfer

Children's ability to transfer knowledge across different contexts is a key aspect of cognitive development. When educational content is grounded in familiar settings, such as local customs, traditions, and community life, children are better equipped to apply their learning to broader, more abstract situations.

Recent research supports these foundational theories, showing that contextualized learning, where instruction is aligned with children's everyday experiences, enhances conceptual understanding and long-term retention (Hernandez & Zhao, 2023; Patel & Robinson, 2022). This approach enables learners to meaningfully connect classroom knowledge to real-world situations, fostering deeper engagement and more effective application of skills across various domains.

Collaboration among Learners

Collaboration among learners is a fundamental component of early childhood education. It promotes not only academic development but also essential social and emotional skills. According to Vygotsky, social interaction plays a central role in the development of cognition. His theory emphasizes that children learn best through social contexts, especially when engaging in cooperative tasks that require communication, shared problem-solving, and role-playing.

In the Kindergarten setting, collaboration helps pupils develop foundational skills such as turn-taking, listening, empathy, and collective decision-making. These experiences contribute to cognitive and social development.

Experience Opportunity

Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development was effectively operationalized through teacher scaffolding during play interactions. The study showed that when educators or peers provided timely socio-cultural guidance aligning with Vygotskian scaffolding the children demonstrated notable progress across cognitive components within their ZPD. These findings echo Piaget's notion that active, sensory-motor tasks bolster the construction of logic and problem-solving skills and confirm Vygotsky's assertion that learning is optimized through guided, culturally-relevant support.

Furthermore, the integration of Piagetian principles specifically the value of active, sensory-motor engagement highlights the importance of play as a cognitive tool, not merely a recreational activity. This means that the critical role of educators as mediators in the learning process, supporting both spontaneous exploration and structured inquiry. This emphasized that high-quality verbal scaffolding during early play is linked to long-term gains in executive functioning and problem-solving abilities, reinforcing the enduring impact of culturally responsive, interactive teaching methods (Rees & Bird, 2024).

Application

The K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum of the Philippines, as mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd), underscores contextualization and localization as key strategies to make learning more meaningful and responsive to learners' needs. According to DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, contextualization helps bridge the gap between home and school environments, particularly in early grades where familiarity can reduce anxiety and support smoother transitions into formal schooling.

Several studies within the Philippine context Dela Cruz,(2020) have found that when lessons are adapted to reflect local culture, language, and environment, learners demonstrate higher levels of participation, better comprehension, and improved academic performance. These outcomes are particularly evident in kindergarten classrooms where children's developmental readiness requires content that is both accessible and meaningful.

Performance of Kindergarten Learners

Existing research highlights the critical role of phonemic awareness developed through phonics instruction in Kindergarten performance. Saldua (2023) found that integrating structured phonics training using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) significantly improved phonemic awareness among Filipino Kindergarteners, demonstrating better mastery of letter-sound relationships compared to traditional approaches (Saldua, 2023). Beyond literacy, school readiness comprising cognitive, fine motor, and socio-emotional skills predicts later academic success. Thus, a holistic approach to early childhood education that combines phonics-based literacy instruction with support for broader developmental domains is essential for fostering well-rounded learners prepared for future academic demands.

Socio-Emotional

Research consistently shows that socio-emotional skills in early childhood, including the ability to regulate emotions and navigate social relationships, are crucial predictors of long-term academic and social success. Children who develop strong socio-emotional competencies tend to perform better academically, form positive peer relationships, and exhibit greater resilience when facing challenges.

Self-regulation enables children to sustain attention, follow instructions, and cope with frustration, all of which are vital for effective learning. More recent studies, such as those by Thompson and Lee (2023), further support these findings by highlighting the role of culturally responsive socio-emotional learning programs in enhancing self-regulation and academic outcomes among diverse early learners. This body of research underscores the importance of integrating socio-emotional skill development within early childhood education to foster holistic growth and prepare children for future challenges.

Gross Motor

The development of gross motor skills is particularly important for social interaction, self-regulation, and cognitive skills in early childhood. (Piaget's 1952) theory of cognitive development emphasizes that children learn by interacting with their physical environment. This interaction often involves physical movements that help solidify learning concepts, such as using their bodies to understand spatial relationships or developing hand-eye coordination.

Fine Motor

Early childhood is a critical period for foundational skill development, and among the most essential are fine motor skills, small muscle movements that enable children to perform everyday tasks with precision and control. In early childhood education, incorporating developmentally appropriate, hands-on activities is vital for fostering fine motor development. Engaging children in manipulative play such as building with blocks or molding clay alongside creative tasks like drawing, cutting, and pasting, enhances their muscle coordination and hand-eye control. Practical life activities, including zipping, buttoning, and tying, further contribute to the development of precision and dexterity.

More recent studies reinforce this connection, emphasizing that fine motor skills are foundational for early writing, self-care, and cognitive tasks (Chen & Hart, 2023; Wilson & Ortega, 2022). In Kindergarten classrooms, where structured learning and play-based experiences intersect, educators must intentionally embed fine motor

activities into daily routines to promote holistic development. Doing so ensures that children are not only building academic readiness but also acquiring essential functional skills that support independence and confidence.

Self- Help

Developing self-help skills is a critical aspect of early childhood growth, laying the foundation for independence, confidence, and self-regulation. Self-help skills refer to the ability of children to independently perform daily activities necessary for personal care, such as feeding themselves, dressing, brushing teeth, using the bathroom, and taking care of their personal belongings. These skills are vital for the development of independence, confidence, and self-regulation in young children. Research by Baylon et al. (2024) further highlights that parental engagement significantly enhances the development of these self-help skills among Kindergarten children, strengthening the connection between home support and children's emerging autonomy and school readiness. This evolving scholarship underscores the importance of a holistic early education approach that integrates structured self-help skill-building with active caregiver involvement.

Receptive Language

Receptive language the ability to understand and process spoken language is fundamental for acquiring knowledge, engaging in social interactions, and participating meaningfully in classroom activities. Kindergarten pupils with well-developed receptive language skills can better interpret teacher instructions, comprehend stories, and respond appropriately to questions. These abilities are essential for school readiness and academic performance.

Recent research by Martinez and Lopez (2023) supports these findings, highlighting that early interventions targeting receptive language can significantly enhance literacy outcomes among young learners, particularly in multilingual contexts. Together, this research underscores the importance of fostering receptive language skills within early childhood education to promote foundational literacy and academic achievement.

Expressive Language

Expressive language plays a critical role in early learning, enabling children to actively participate in classroom discussions, ask questions, retell stories, and communicate their understanding of academic concepts. This underscores the importance of fostering expressive language in educational environments that promote collaboration and dialogue. Contemporary research continues to affirm the connection between expressive language and key developmental domains. Expressive language is strongly associated with literacy acquisition, cognitive growth, and socio-emotional competence (Snow, Burns; Taylor & Kim, 2023). Children who can effectively express their thoughts and feelings are more likely to engage in meaningful learning, follow multi-step instructions, and build positive relationships within the classroom (Lopez & Choi, 2022). These abilities not only support academic achievement but also contribute to overall school readiness and long-term educational success.

Cognitive

Contextualized learning has been increasingly recognized as a vital approach in early childhood education, particularly for its role in supporting cognitive development by making content more meaningful and accessible. Contemporary research further supports that contextualized learning enhances attention span, memory recall, and conceptual understanding, especially among kindergarten pupils (Santos & Lee, 2022; Thompson et al., 2023).

For example, incorporating familiar, community-based elements such as using local fruits to teach mathematical concepts translates abstract ideas into tangible experiences, making learning more engaging and effective. This approach aligns with constructivist theories, emphasizing that meaningful learning occurs when new information is connected to prior knowledge through culturally relevant and authentic contexts (Nguyen, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory, emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in shaping cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, learning is a socially mediated process where children acquire knowledge through guided interaction with more knowledgeable individuals, such as teachers or peers. This theory aligns with the principles of contextualized learning, as it underscores the importance of culturally relevant and meaningful educational experiences in facilitating early childhood development. The contextualized learning adopted in this study emphasizes the integration of local culture, traditions, and real-life scenarios into teaching strategies to enhance students' engagement and performance.

In this study, Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory is applied by framing contextualized learning as a means to support and enhance kindergarten pupils' cognitive development through culturally relevant and socially interactive experiences. The learning environment is designed to reflect the children's cultural backgrounds, local traditions, and everyday realities, thereby making instruction more meaningful and relatable. Teachers act as more knowledgeable others, guiding learners through scaffolded activities that incorporate familiar contexts and real-life situations. This approach not only fosters deeper engagement but also aligns with Vygotsky's view that learning is most effective when mediated through social interaction and grounded in cultural context. By embedding learning within the learners' sociocultural environment, the study utilizes Vygotsky's framework to explore how such

contextualization influences academic performance, ultimately supporting the development of culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of the utilization of contextualized learning and Kindergarten learners performance in Southwest Districts, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, during the School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' level of the utilization on contextualized learning in terms of knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application?
2. What is the respondents level of performance based on socio-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, and cognitive development when exposed contextualized learning?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' utilization of contextualized learning and the Kindergarten learners performance?

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on examining the utilization of contextualized learning and Kindergarten performance in Southwest District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, during the School Year 2024–2025. The study encompasses four (4) contextualized learning strategies: knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application. It also considers the seven (7) domains: socio-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, and cognitive development.

The participants of this study include teachers implementing the Early Childhood Care and Development program and young learners enrolled in ECCD classes within the Southwest Districts. The study is limited to the performance assessments conducted during the First and Second Quarters of School Year 2024-2025. It does not cover other factors that may influence the learning outcomes, such as family environment, socioeconomic status, or health conditions.

Furthermore, the study's findings are limited to the specific geographical and cultural context of Southwest Districts and may not be generalizable to other districts or regions with different demographics. The study is also constrained by its reliance on self-reported data from teachers and quantitative assessments, which may be subject to subjectivity or other biases in evaluating both the contextualized learning and Kindergarten performance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between contextualized learning and Kindergarten performance in the Southwest Districts. The descriptive component aimed to assess the extent to which teachers implemented contextualized learning and to describe children's performance across various Early Childhood Care and Development domains. The correlational aspect focused on identifying the statistical relationship between the utilization of contextualized learning and children's developmental outcomes, determining whether contextualized teaching practices influence Early Childhood Care and Development performance.

This design was selected because it effectively captures and describes existing phenomena without manipulating variables, allowing for a clear understanding of the natural dynamics within the teaching and learning process. It aligns with the study's objective to explore how contextually adapted teaching strategies impact multiple domains of child development. According to QuestionPro, (2025), descriptive-correlational research design is an established and widely utilized methodological approach in educational research, particularly useful when variables cannot be manipulated and the goal is to observe their natural associations.

Furthermore, the descriptive-correlational approach facilitates systematic data analysis, producing quantifiable and relational insights that can inform evidence-based recommendations to improve early childhood education practices.

Study Setting

The study was conducted in the Southwest Districts of Cagayan de Oro City. This district consists of diverse schools catering to early childhood learners, characterized by varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. These schools implement the Early Childhood Care and Development curriculum, which focuses on fostering children's development across multiple domains.

The district was chosen as the setting due to its ongoing initiatives to improve early childhood education and its emphasis on applying contextualized learning. It is also noted for its active implementation of the Department of Education's policies on inclusive and culturally relevant education, making it an ideal location to study the interplay between contextualized learning and outcomes.

Further, the research was conducted at Southwest Districts, a public elementary school located in one of the barangays of Cagayan de Oro City. This school is situated in Barangay Lumbia. The aforesaid Division has public

elementary and secondary schools. It has nine (9) districts: Central District, East District I, East District II, North District I, North District II, South District, Southwest District, West District I, and West District II. Among Southwest Districts were the schools of Lumbia Central School, Bayanga Elementary School, Mambuaya Elementary School, Baluarte Elementary School, Pagalungan Elementary School, Taglimao Elementary School, Tuburan Elementary School, Pigsag-an Elementary School and Tumpagon Elementary School.

Southwest Districts of the Division of Cagayan de Oro City, which caters to a diverse student population from various socio-economic backgrounds. Known for its commitment to providing quality education, Southwest 1 and Southwest 2 Districts, offers a conducive learning environment for students of diverse abilities.

Schools in this districts range from urban to rural settings, providing a varied backdrop to examine the effectiveness of contextualized learning strategies in different environments. These schools are equipped with facilities and resources, which vary in quality and availability, making the findings relevant to schools with similar profiles nationwide.

The study was conducted during the First and Second Quarters of the School Year 2024–2025, coinciding with the implementation of new teaching strategies and assessments aligned with the Early Childhood Care and Development framework. This timeline provided an opportunity to gather real-time data on the effectiveness of contextualized learning approaches.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Lumbia>

Research Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The respondents of this study included Kindergarten teachers actively utilizing the Early Childhood Care and Development curriculum in Southwest Districts. A total of one hundred (150) teachers were purposively selected, as they directly influence the contextualization of learning and Kindergarten performance in early childhood education.

Additionally, the data on Kindergarten performance in ECCD domains were collected through teacher assessments. The study also included two hundred (200) Kindergarten learners selected from the districts, ensuring representation of diverse socio-economic, cultural, and geographical contexts. This learners served as subject of the study.

The researcher utilized purposive sampling to select participants who were deemed most suitable for the study. This strategic approach involved the researcher leveraging their expertise to identify individuals who possessed the specific characteristics and experiences necessary to provide valuable insights. By carefully selecting participants, the researcher aimed to maximize the depth and quality of the data collected. This ensured that the findings were not only relevant but also informative, contributing significantly to the understanding of the research topic. Through this targeted selection process, the researcher was able to gather detailed perspectives that contributed significantly to understand the research problem, ultimately strengthening the validity and depth of the study's findings.

Research Instruments

The instrument used in gathering the data is a questionnaire compose of two parts: Variable 1, inquired on the utilization on contextualized learning in terms of Knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application. This is pattern and modified from the study of Bayanga ES on performance of Kindergarten Performance of Kindergarten Learners in Southwest Districts. Bayanga ES is based on performance of Kindergarten Performance based on socio-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, and cognitive development. This is base on the DepEd Order No. 015, s. 2025, which amends previous policies on Kindergarten education. It introduces significant updates regarding both age eligibility and developmental assessment using the ECCD Checklist. The variables are researcher-made. The study utilized a structured survey questionnaire for teachers assessing their application of contextualized learning across four (4) dimensions: knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application. The data gathered from these instruments were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the contextualized learning in enhancing children's learning outcomes, identifying areas for improvement, and informing future educational policies and practices in the Southwest District.

In addition, an Early Childhood Care and Development Mambuaya ES measured student performance across the seven (7) domains: socio-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, and cognitive development.

Statistical Treatment of Data

To analyze the data of contextualized learning the study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between the contextualized learning and kindergarten performance in Southwest Districts, with one hundred (150) teachers were purposively selected, as they directly influence the contextualized learning and kindergarten performance of children in early childhood education.

Statistical analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were calculated to describe the levels of contextualized learning and kindergarten performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient is especially useful in determining the relationship between contextualized learning and kindergarten performance. Additionally,

the T-Test was conducted to identify significant differences in the variables across demographic groups.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the quality and reliability of the research findings, the researcher first sought approval from the adviser after careful assessment and thorough review of the thesis manuscript. The Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies approved the schedule for the proposal defense upon evaluating the final manuscript. Once approved, the researcher submitted a letter of request to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Cagayan de Oro City to seek permission to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval, the researcher coordinated with the respective School Heads and obtained informed consent from the respondents, ensuring that participation was voluntary and all responses would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

After the data collection through the survey, the researcher submitted a copy of the updated manuscript to the adviser for further assessment and evaluation regarding the quality and relevance of the research paper. Upon the adviser's recommendation, the manuscript was forwarded to the research coordinator to verify its completeness and compliance with institutional guidelines. The researcher then presented the study to the research panel, and all recommendations and corrections provided during the defense were thoroughly incorporated into the final manuscript.

After implementing the panel's suggestions, the researcher submitted the revised manuscript for plagiarism detection and grammar checking to ensure academic integrity. The final version of the paper was then submitted to the adviser and the research panel for their signatures and official approval. Upon completion of the study, all research instruments, including questionnaires, were securely stored and subsequently disposed of in accordance with institutional standards through shredding or other secure methods to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the respondents' level of utilization on contextualized learning in terms of knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application?

Table 1
Summary of the Respondents' Level of the Utilization on Contextualized Learning

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge Transfer	3.14	0.46	Utilized
Collaboration among Learners	3.16	0.54	Utilized
Experience Opportunity	3.04	0.63	Utilized
Application	3.01	0.52	Utilized
Overall	3.09	0.54	Utilized
Legend: 3.26-4.00- At All Times / Highly Utilized 2.51-3.25 – Most of the Time / Utilized 1.76-2.50 – Sometimes / Slightly Utilized 1.00-1.75 - Never / not Utilized			

Table 1 presents the summary of respondents' level of utilization on contextualized learning across four key domains: knowledge transfer, collaboration among learners, experience opportunity, and application. The mean score of **3.09 (SD=0.54)** interpreted as **Utilized**. This means that educators are committed to making learning relevant, collaborative, and applied, there is still room for growth particularly in strengthening real-life applications and experience-rich activities. Many educators are confident and proactive in using these strategies, others may benefit from additional support, resources, or training to fully integrate experiential and context-driven practices into their instruction. Strengthening these areas can lead to more holistic, student-centered learning experiences that better prepare learners for real-world challenges.

Among the four variables **collaboration among learners** scores the highest with the mean of **3.16 (SD=0.54)** interpreted as **Utilized**. This means that educators most frequently utilized collaborative strategies such as group work, peer interaction, and shared problem-solving approaches, which emphasize learning as a socially mediated process. This implies that educators recognize the value of social interaction in the learning process, leveraging group work, peer discussions, and shared problem-solving to facilitate deeper understanding and knowledge construction. Such collaboration not only fosters communication and interpersonal skills but also encourages diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and collective responsibility among students. For practice, this underscores the need for teachers to continue designing learning activities that promote meaningful interaction and cooperative learning. Moreover, it suggests that schools should support collaborative learning environments through flexible classroom layouts and access to resources that facilitate group engagement. Policymakers and curriculum developers can further encourage collaboration by integrating it as a core competency within educational standards, reinforcing the idea that learning is fundamentally a

socially mediated process. Ultimately, emphasizing collaboration aligns with Vygotskian theories of learning and prepares students for the increasingly interconnected demands of the 21st century.

However, the variable **application** got the the lowest mean of **3.01 (SD=0.52)** interpreted as **Utilized**. This means that practices align with constructivist theories that emphasize learning as an active, socially mediated experience. However lower scores in other implies that utilizing more experiential, authentic learning opportunities.

According to Gestiada et al. (2023) demonstrated that contextualized virtual-reality tours in ecology boosted students' understanding by situating learning within meaningful, local contexts, thereby enriching experiential opportunities and application. Cardona (2023) reported that embedding contextualized instruction in senior high research classes significantly improved both knowledge and research skills, illustrating how authentic tasks enable learning to transfer directly into practice

These findings suggest a positive foundation on which to build. Educators are encouraged by the high levels of collaboration and knowledge transfer but also recognize the need to focus more deliberately on providing students with meaningful experiential learning and consistent opportunities to apply their learning in practical settings. This could involve more project-based learning, partnerships with the community, or more creative use of classroom resources.

Problem 2. What is the respondents' level of performance, based on socio-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, and cognitive development when exposed contextualized learning?

Table 2
Summary Distribution of Respondents' Performance

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Socio- Emotional	8.50	2.25	High
Gross Motor	9.01	2.00	Very High
Fine Motor	9.36	1.57	Very High
Self-Help	6.83	3.16	Average
Receptive Language	9.32	1.49	Very High
Expressive Language	6.12	1.59	Average
Cognitive	8.59	2.37	High
Overall	8.25	2.06	High
Legend: 9.00-10 - Highly Advanced / Very High 7.00-8.99- Slightly Advanced / High 5.00-6.99- Average Development / Average 3.00-4.99- Monitoring after 6 months / Low 1.00-2.99 -Monitoring after 3 months/ Very Low			

Table 2 presents the summary distribution of respondents performance got the overall mean score of **8.25 (SD = 2.06)** described as **Slightly Advanced** and interpreted as **High**. This means that the collective developmental attainment of the learners falls within the expected normative range for their age group. This implies that the Kindergarten program supports typical development, and the respondents demonstrate foundational competencies across the measured areas. This average performance suggests that the instructional methodologies employed are largely effective in facilitating broad developmental milestones, although individual variations within this cohort warrant further disaggregation to identify specific areas of exceptionality or developmental delay (Castagna et al., 2024).

The highest mean score is **Fine Motor Skills**, got the mean of **9.36 (SD=1.57)** interpreted as **Very High**. This means that the majority of Kindergarten learners have well-developed fine motor abilities, which include tasks that require hand-eye coordination, precision, and control such as drawing, cutting with scissors, manipulating small objects, and beginning to write. This indicates that learners are generally ready for more advanced classroom tasks that rely on fine motor skills, which are essential for academic readiness and independence in classroom routines. This result is encouraging, as it reflects that learners are physically prepared to engage in writing, art, and other hands-on activities. It also reassures that classroom tasks requiring tool use (pencils, crayons, scissors) are accessible to most of my students. However, it is important to provide varied and developmentally appropriate fine motor activities to maintain and further enhance these skills. Additionally, teacher need to remain attentive to those who may fall below the average, ensuring they receive the necessary support to strengthen their coordination and confidence in using their hands effectively in daily tasks.

The variable with the lowest mean performance is **Expressive Language** got the mean score of **6.12 (SD = 1.59)** interpreted as **Low**. This means that the learners demonstrate significantly less proficiency in this specific area compared to all other domains, struggling more with verbally expressing their thoughts, needs, ideas, and feelings clearly. This implies that targeted intervention and increased instructional focus are likely needed to improve expressive language skills. When students are unable to clearly articulate themselves, it limits their ability to engage in classroom discussions, ask questions, explain their reasoning, and demonstrate understanding across subjects.

Furthermore, poor expressive language can hinder the development of writing skills and higher-order thinking. This low proficiency suggests a critical area for curriculum enhancement, as strong expressive language is a foundational skill for academic success and social competence (Ansari et al., 2025).

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' utilization in contextualized learning and the Kindergarten learners performance?

Table 3
Result of the Test on Relationship between the Respondents' Utilization of Contextualized Learning and Kindergarten Learners Performance

Utilization of Contextuali zed Learning	Learners Performance								
	Socio -Emotional	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Self- Help	Receptiv e Languag e	Expressiv e Language	Cogni tive	OVE RAL L	
Knowledge Transfer									
	r=value	0.17	0.06	0.12	0.13	0.09	0.1	0.23	0.23
		0.03	0.43		0.10			0.005	
	p=value	6	7	0.129	8	0.252	0.209	*	0.004
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Collaborati on Among Learners									
	r=value	0.16	0.01		0.19				
		0.05	0.91	0.1	0.01	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.15
	p=value	6	7	0.243	7	0.39	0.408	0.404	0.062
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Experience Opportunit y									
	r=value	0.12		0.15	0.18				
		0.13	0.01	0.06	0.02	0	0.05	0.04	0.13
	p=value	4	0.94	8	5	0.978	0.524	0.651	0.117
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Applicatio n			0.02						
	r=value	0.15	0.83		0.21	0	0.09	0.1	
		0.07	9	0.11	0.01	0.952	0.301	0.228	0.18
	p=value	4	S	0.2	1	S	S	S	0.025
		S		S	S				S

Table 3 shows the relationships between the respondents' utilization of contextualized learning and kindergarten Early Childhood Care and Development performance. Notably, the application of contextualized learning showed a significant negative correlation with self-help skills ($r = -0.21, p = 0.011$) and overall ECCD performance ($r = -0.18, p = 0.025$). This indicates that higher application of contextual learning in the classroom may be associated with lower developmental outcomes in these areas. A possible explanation is that when contextualization is heavily focused on real-life scenarios or practical knowledge, it might inadvertently reduce the opportunities for learners to engage in independent tasks essential for building self-help skills. More precisely, an over-reliance on meticulously structured, teacher-directed contextualized activities may unintentionally curtail the duration and richness of opportunities for children to actively engage in self-directed exploration, hands-on experimentation with materials, and the repetitive practice of fundamental self-care routines, all of which are indispensable for cultivating the crucial developmental domains of autonomy, personal agency, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulatory capacities (Vasseleu et al., 2024).

Similarly, collaboration among learners was also negatively correlated with self-help development ($r = -0.19, p = 0.017$). While collaboration fosters interpersonal skills, excessive reliance on group work may restrict individual engagement in tasks that promote self-care and independence. Children are still developing foundational routines in a

kindergarten setting, and group activities might overshadow personal responsibilities when not well-scaffolded. Educators must thus ensure that collaborative learning is developmentally appropriate and complemented by individualized tasks. Interpersonal skills are crucial for success in both academic and professional environments; however, a predominant emphasis on collaborative activities within the kindergarten classroom has the potential to inadvertently constrain the extent to which each child is afforded the opportunity to cultivate fundamental self-help proficiencies and independently tackle tasks that foster self-reliance (Ober et al., 2023).

The experience opportunity dimension designed to provide learners with enriched, real-world learning situations also showed a significant negative relationship with self-help performance ($r = 0.18, p = 0.025$). This means that experiential activities, though theoretically beneficial, may be misaligned with the practical skill-building necessary at the Kindergarten level if not directly linked to daily functional behaviors. Early childhood is a pivotal developmental period during which children's academic achievements exert a profound influence on their prospects for sustained learning, academic advancement, and overall well-being (Bakar et al., 2023).

A significant finding also emerged between knowledge-based contextualization and knowledge utilization was negatively associated with socio-emotional skills ($r = 0.17, p = 0.036$), cognitive performance ($r = 0.23, p = 0.005$). These results raise concern that instruction heavily focused on academic knowledge even when contextualized may not support and may even hinder young children's holistic development. These seemingly paradoxical outcomes call for a deeper investigation into the optimal balance between knowledge acquisition and the cultivation of essential socio-emotional competencies in early childhood education, with emphasis on the importance of equipping students with social skills (Nilfyr & Ewe, 2025).

In particular, the negative relationship with socio-emotional performance suggests that teacher-driven, knowledge-centric approaches may crowd out opportunities for emotional expression, relationship building, and play all critical for socio-emotional growth. Likewise, the negative association with cognitive performance may reflect that such strategies prioritize content delivery over exploratory, child-centred learning, foundational to early cognitive development. Educators should also focus on encouraging positive development through individual cognitive and social skills (Beets et al., 2022).

Moreover, the data clearly indicate that contextualized learning positively influences Kindergarten learners' performance, especially when focused on knowledge-building and practical application. Therefore, educators are encouraged to continue integrating localized, relevant, and active learning experiences into their instruction to support comprehensive growth among young learners. These methods not only align with developmental theories but are also backed by empirical evidence that demonstrates their impact on holistic child growth, particularly in fostering communication, independence, and cognitive flexibility.

As such, investing in teacher training and curriculum development that supports contextualized and applied learning can substantially improve educational quality and equity in the foundational years. Connecting learning content to children's cultural and everyday experiences fosters greater engagement and enhances cognitive and language development. This approach supports expressive language and self-help skills, which are critical for school readiness and overall academic success (Lopez & Martinez, 2024).

Conclusion

The study concludes that collaborative learning strategies utilized by the teachers and reflect a strong commitment fostering students interaction and teamwork in the classroom. However, the observed variability in application suggests that not all collaborative techniques are used consistently or to their full potential. This highlights the need for more deliberate and uniform integration of diverse collaborative approaches to maximize their benefits for student learning. Strengthening the consistency of implementation can further enhance student engagement, communication skills, and overall academic development.

Meanwhile, the fine motor performance of Kindergarten learners displayed and average score when exposed to contextualized learning. This means that the program's hands-on, experiential activities, such as drawing, cutting, threading, and manipulating small objects, effectively enhance children's precision, hand-eye coordination, and dexterity. This indicates that contextualized learning approaches are well-aligned with developmental milestones and play a vital role in supporting children's growth through meaningful, skill-building experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are given:

1. School heads must provide an adequate training and professional development of teachers in using contextualized teaching methods to enhance the application of theoretical knowledge by incorporating more materials-based, hands-on activities that strengthen real-world connections and bridge the gap between theory and practice.
2. Teachers may incorporate more focused language development to support learners with average expressive language performance by providing targeted opportunities to practice and expand their use of advanced vocabulary and complex sentence structures through interactive and meaningful communication activities.

3. The curriculum planners of the department, should integrate an interactive teaching strategies to further promote the utilization of contextualized learning strategies in early childhood classrooms, as their effectiveness is shown to significantly enhance learners' Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) performance.

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