
Pedagogical Strategies in Literacy Among Early Childhood Education Teachers

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Abstract — This study aimed to determine the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy among kindergarten teachers, specifically focusing on storytelling, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. It also examined the significant differences and relationships between the extent of utilization and the profile variables of the teachers. A descriptive method under an ex post facto one-shot case study research design was employed, as it was the most appropriate for evaluating the strategies' extent of use and their association with teacher profiles. The participants of the study were 37 kindergarten teachers from Rosales District I and Rosales District II in the Pangasinan II Division. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire and focus group discussions.

The findings revealed that most respondents were millennials with bachelor's degrees and had limited access to literacy-related training at international, national, and regional levels. Shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading were often utilized and considered “very extensive.” No significant difference or relationship was found between the teachers' profile variables and their extent of strategy utilization, thereby supporting the null hypothesis. The study concludes that while kindergarten teachers employed different literacy strategies, these methods collectively support and enrich literacy development among pupils.

Keywords: *pedagogical strategies, literacy, kindergarten teachers, storytelling, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading difficulties remain a persistent challenge across various government administrations. As highlighted by the Department of Education, these issues continue to exist. A 2022 World Bank report, cited by Philstar in 2024, indicated that almost nine out of ten Filipino children aged ten struggle with reading and comprehension of simple texts (Malasig, 2024). This alarming situation stems from the lack of robust and effective literacy instruction at the basic education level.

Children begin to develop literacy foundations in infancy, with significant growth during early childhood—a period marked by heightened brain plasticity (Hutton et al., 2020). Literacy, which encompasses reading, writing, speaking, and listening, is reinforced through phonemic awareness. Stimulating oral language skills during preschool and kindergarten years greatly enhances literacy development. According to Piasta (2021), understanding the alphabetic principle marks the transition from emergent to conventional literacy and is a foundational step in learning to read and write. Additionally, literacy-rich home environments positively influence a child's literacy skills and performance.

The Matatag Curriculum underscores the importance of language instruction in kindergarten by promoting reading and numeracy skills from K to Grade 3. It seeks to equip learners with phonemic awareness, decoding skills, and sight word recognition in their first language. Furthermore, the curriculum incorporates cultural responsiveness, allowing educators to tailor lessons to the cultural context of learners to boost participation and comprehension (Lagbao, 2024). Aquino (2024) emphasized the curriculum's framework for inter-educator collaboration, ensuring all learners receive adequate literacy instruction regardless of learning differences. Education policies have evolved to meet the needs of 21st-century learners, also referred to as "digital natives" (Muacevic & Adler, 2023).

Efforts to resolve literacy challenges are long-standing. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, involving 690,000 students across 81 countries, showed the Philippines improving in reading, mathematics, and science compared to 2018. In the 2018 PISA, the Philippines ranked last in reading and second to last in mathematics. Weak literacy

foundations contribute to poor academic performance across subjects, as strong reading skills are vital for comprehension across disciplines.

To address these challenges, the Department of Education launched the "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs) Initiative," aiming to ensure every child reads at grade level. Without a solid literacy foundation, children are more likely to experience academic difficulties, increased dropout rates, and unfavorable life outcomes. Early and consistent exposure to books improves school readiness and literacy skills. By age three, children who are regularly read to can identify letters and form complex sentences (Galea, 2024).

Children who struggle with early reading skills risk falling further behind due to the "Matthew Effect"—a phenomenon where limited reading exposure hinders literacy development (Stanovich et al., 1986). Moreover, a child's home environment and access to early education services significantly influence literacy outcomes. Teachers and the Department of Education recognize the importance of building strong early literacy foundations.

While many strategies are available, identifying the most effective ones for 21st-century learners is essential. The National Reading Panel (2000) emphasized that reading success begins even before formal schooling. Identifying effective literacy strategies enables educators to plan lessons more efficiently, minimize preparation time, and enhance classroom management. Much of the existing research, however, focuses on Western contexts, leaving a gap in culturally adaptive strategies for low-resource settings like the Philippines.

Teaching strategies play a critical role in enhancing literacy. For example, read-aloud sessions improve comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency (Silva, 2023), while storytelling has been shown to significantly enhance literacy outcomes (Ligmon, 2024). Understanding how often these strategies are employed reveals gaps and helps determine whether additional support is needed. For instance, a study by Dinoro et al. (2023) found that students who excelled in letter recognition struggled with comprehension, prompting teachers to adopt guided reading to improve understanding.

This study aimed to examine the extent to which kindergarten teachers in Rosales, Pangasinan, utilized various literacy strategies during the 2024-2025 academic year. It also aimed to recommend effective literacy strategies for fostering long-term academic success.

Literature Review

This research is anchored on Marie M. Clay's Literacy Processing Theory (1975). Derived from her observational studies of young children, Clay's theory highlights the developmental progression in children's literacy processing. She emphasized the importance of involving children in constructing meaning from texts and creating their own written messages. Her theory underscores the significance of integrating reading and writing into meaningful activities, thereby promoting cognitive and linguistic development.

Clay advocated for increased teacher involvement during reading sessions to foster oral language development. Such involvement enables children to respond to questions, learn letter sounds and pronunciations, broaden vocabulary, and engage in higher-order thinking by answering open-ended questions or imagining story endings. The theory forms the foundation of programs like Reading Recovery, emphasizing tailored instruction that meets each child's unique literacy needs (Doyle, 2020).

According to Clay, literacy acquisition involves multiple cognitive processes, including phonological, syntactic, visual, and conceptual understanding. By closely monitoring a child's literacy development, teachers can select appropriate instructional strategies aligned with the child's stage of development. For instance, recognizing the alphabetic principle and understanding the link between spoken and written language are foundational to early literacy.

In support of this framework, the Department of Education implemented the Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program. This program equips kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with the foundational knowledge and teaching strategies necessary for effective literacy instruction. Once children master letter sounds, they can begin reading independently, with the teacher providing scaffolding.

Furthermore, Clay's theory also emphasizes multisensory learning, where children use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic cues to enhance phonemic and phonological awareness (Faunillan, 2023). Guided reading experiences help children develop strategic reading behaviors and make use of various information sources, including contextual clues and text structure, fostering robust literacy skills (Glynn, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies used to promote literacy among early childhood education teachers, specifically kindergarten teachers in Rosales District I and Rosales District II of the Pangasinan II Division, during the 2024–2025 academic year. Furthermore, the study sought to offer recommendations for early childhood educators regarding the adoption of effective literacy teaching methods that support long-term academic success.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile variables of the Kindergarten teachers in terms of:
 - a. age;
 - b. sex;
 - c. civil status;
 - d. highest educational attainment;
 - e. teaching position;
 - f. number of years teaching kindergarten; and
 - g. number of relevant training in the district, division, regional, national, and international?

2. What is the extent of utilization of the pedagogical strategies in literacy among kindergarten teachers along:

- a. storytelling;
- b. reading aloud;
- c. shared reading;
- d. guided reading; and
- e. independent reading?

3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy by kindergarten teachers and their profile variables?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy by kindergarten teachers and their profile variables?

II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures used in the conduct of the study, including the research design, population and locale of the study, data collection instruments and procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Method

For this research, a descriptive method was applied. The descriptive method focuses on detailing data and characteristics of the population. The objective was to obtain factual, accurate, and systematic data to facilitate averages, frequencies, and similar statistical calculations to address the issues presented in this study. This research aims to identify the differences in the extent to which kindergarten teachers in Rosales District I and Rosales District II utilized

pedagogical strategies for literacy. The researcher used this method to acquire realistic and valid information on the extent of these pedagogical strategies.

Descriptive research methods include gathering and analyzing data to provide a comprehensive account of a population, condition, or phenomenon as it currently exists. This strategy employs various tools, such as surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observational techniques, to collect qualitative or quantitative data. This method is especially effective for gaining insights into newly explored research areas or understanding specific contexts (Deckert, 2023).

The term survey refers to the collection of data from different locations and groups. It seeks information about current conditions, communities, agencies, and institutions. It also relates to the characteristics, status, or practices of individuals or specific groups. A descriptive research design is valuable for researchers who aim to gather information about a particular group or phenomenon. Such research provides a detailed and accurate portrayal of the characteristics and behaviors of a specific population or subject. Observing and collecting data on a specific topic, descriptive research aids researchers in better understanding particular issues and generates valuable insights that can contribute to future studies (Sercillia, 2023).

This method prioritizes the analysis and interpretation of descriptive data, allowing researchers to present findings through narrative rather than solely through statistical measures. It is particularly advantageous for exploring intricate social phenomena, as it captures the depth of human experiences and perspectives, offering more profound insights into the investigated subject (Gundrum, 2022). Descriptive research is particularly suitable when the study aims to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories.

Research Design and Strategy

An ex post facto one-shot case study design was utilized. Represented as $X \rightarrow O$, this design observes the effects of an existing condition (X) and measures the outcomes (O) in a single setting without manipulating variables. The term "ex post facto" translates to "after the fact,"

meaning the researcher examines events or behaviors after they have occurred. This design was suitable for observing the actual classroom practices of kindergarten teachers and their literacy instruction strategies.

Population and Locale of the Study

The participants of the study were the kindergarten teachers from Rosales District I and Rosales District II under the Division of Pangasinan II for the school year 2024–2025.

TABLE 1
RESPONDENTS

District	Kindergarten Teachers
Rosales District I	18
Rosales District II	19
Total	37

Data Gathering Tool

To collect relevant data, the researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire with significant input from experienced kindergarten teachers. The instrument was tailored to assess the utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy. The questionnaire consisted of various types of questions focused on the frequency and manner of use of each strategy.

The instrument was validated by subject matter experts, including master teachers, district coordinators, principals, and supervisors. The result had an overall weighted mean of 4.96, with a transmuted rating of "highly valid". Their feedback was incorporated to ensure clarity, relevance,

and accuracy. Upon approval by the examination committee, the final version of the questionnaire was administered.

In addition to the questionnaire, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with five selected kindergarten teachers, each representing different levels of teaching experience (ranging from 0 to 15+ years). The FGD provided richer insights into classroom practices, challenges, and perceptions regarding literacy strategies.

Number of Teachers	Number of Years Teaching Kindergarten
1	0-3 years
1	3-6 years
1	7-10 years
1	11-14 years
1	15 years above

Data Gathering Procedure

Before administering the research instrument, permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and the School Heads.

The researcher personally distributed and administered the questionnaire to all Kindergarten teachers in Rosales District I and Rosales District II, Pangasinan Division II.

Likewise, the researcher personally retrieved the same questionnaires. The researcher keeps the responses and data obtained confidential to ensure the highest degree of objectivity in responses.

After retrieving the questionnaires, the researcher selected the five teachers who participated in the 60-minute focus group discussion about the utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy.

The respective Kindergarten teachers and school heads of the institutions were informed and oriented by the researchers regarding the purpose of the study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the survey questionnaire and focus group discussions. The findings are presented in the order of the research problems.

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the kindergarten teachers includes age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, teaching position, years of teaching experience in kindergarten, and the number of relevant training attended.

Age. Table 1 indicates that most respondents fall within the 26–30, 31–35, and 41-and-above age brackets, with only one teacher in the 21–25 range. This suggests that the majority of the participants are millennials.

According to Zelazko (2025), millennials—those born between 1981 and 1996—are often seen as innovative and tech-savvy, bringing digital literacy and transformational leadership into their classrooms. Their familiarity with technology allows them to effectively integrate media into instruction, catering to learners who are digital natives.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' PROFILE VARIABLES
N=37

Profile Variables		Variable Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age		21-25	1	2.7
		26-30	10	27.0
		31-35	6	16.2
		36-40	10	27.0
		41 and above	10	27.0
Sex		Male	3	8.1
		Female	34	91.9
Civil Status		Single	9	24.3
		Married	28	75.7
Highest Educational Attainment		Bachelor's Degree	16	43.2
		Master's Degree	15	40.5
		Doctorate Degree	1	2.7
		Others	5	13.5
Teaching Position		TI	8	21.6
		TII	5	13.5
		TIII	24	64.9
Number of Years Teaching Experience		1-5 years	17	45.9
		6-10 years	6	16.2
		11-15 years	11	29.7
		16-20 years	3	8.1
Trainings Attended	District	0	3	8.1
		1-5	21	56.8
		6-10	8	21.6
		11-above	5	13.5
	Division	0	6	16.2

	1-5	25	67.6
	6-10	3	8.1
	11-15	3	8.1
Regional	0	22	59.5
	1-5	13	35.1
	6-10	2	5.4
National	0	22	59.5
	1-5	15	40.5
International	0	28	75.7
	1-5	9	24.3

Sex. Out of 37 participants, 34 were female (91.9%), and 3 were male (8.1%). According to UNESCO (2023), teaching in early childhood settings is often perceived as a female-dominated profession, influenced by cultural norms and expectations related to nurturing roles. This aligns with Guantia's (2023) findings that female teachers often embody a maternal presence, which comforts young learners and helps ease separation anxiety.

Civil Status. The majority of the kindergarten teachers were married as they were between 26 years old and above, with a frequency of 10 or 27 percent. Being married and having children will help the teachers be more patient and understanding, as they also have children. It will help them create a positive environment by applying their experiences as a married woman and a mother. Teachers can also use effective techniques to teach their children in the classroom. Marital status may influence perceptions of teaching strategies, but it does not significantly impact the competencies of kindergarten teachers. Effective teaching strategies and personalized professionals are key to improving kindergarten reading literacy (Diaz, 2024). Postgraduate studies provide educators with advanced knowledge of pedagogy, enabling them to design and implement effective reading programs tailored to kindergarten students' needs.

TABLE 2
EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN LITERACY
AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS ALONG STORYTELLING
N=37

Indicators	WM	TR
As an ECE teacher, I ...		
use expressive voices and gestures to make the story alive.	4.78	VE
incorporate props that relate to the story.	4.43	E
gather learners in a circle and take turns in sharing parts of a story or creating a collaborative tale.	4.32	E
create a simple story map with the learners by identifying characters, settings, and events.	4.30	E
instruct learners to act out the story after reading it.	4.05	E
create a story walk by displaying key scenes or pages of a story inside and outside the classroom.	3.92	E
incorporate senses like sounds, scents, and textures related to the story.	4.51	VE
utilize storytelling apps or digital platforms	4.49	E
integrate songs or chants related to the story.	4.49	E
guide learners to contribute to a class storybook where each learner can illustrate or write a part of the story.	4.03	VE
AWM	4.33	E

TABLE 9
T-TEST RESULTS ON THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE ON THE EXTENT OF
UTILIZATION OF PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN LITERACY AMONG EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACROSS THEIR PROFILE VARIABLE SEX AND CIVIL
STATUS

		Levene's		Test for		Equality of		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence	
		Variances						Sig.		Interval of the	
		F	Sig.	t	df	(2-	Mean	Std. Error		Lower	Upper
Sex	Equal	.200	.658	-.386	35	.702	-.09824	.25480		-.61551	.41904
	variances assumed										
	Equal			-.329	2.251	.770	-.09824	.29878		-	1.05924
	variances not assumed									1.25571	
Civil Status	Equal	.127	.723	-1.464	35	.152	-.23087	.15769		-.55101	.08926
	variances assumed										
	Equal			-1.216	10.621	.250	-.23087	.18983		-.65053	.18878
	variances not assumed										

As seen in the table, the overall significant value indicators of .658 and .723 on the profile variables sex and civil status, respectively, are higher than the significant value of .05 level of significance. This significant difference warrants the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which

states that there is no significant difference in the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy among kindergarten teachers across the profile variables of sex and civil status. In other words, these variables are not comparable. This means that regardless of sex and civil status, they can utilize different pedagogical strategies in literacy.

Relationship Between the Extent of Utilization of Pedagogical Strategies in Literacy Among Early Childhood Education and Their Profile Variables

This study further determined the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy in early childhood education. This was done by using the Pearson-r Product of Correlation or Pearson-r. In doing so, the profile variables of ECE teachers were correlated to their extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

The diverse profiles of ECE teachers suggest that tailored professional development is essential for the field. The female-dominated nature of the profession also points to the need for further exploration of gender dynamics in early childhood education. Shared reading is always used in literacy, considering its effectiveness in enhancing early literacy skills, which involves interactive reading sessions where teachers and students read together, fostering engagement and comprehension. The varying use of pedagogical strategies in literacy among ECE teachers, based on their profile variables, highlights the need for more personalized training. This suggests that teachers' backgrounds may influence their approach to literacy, warranting targeted support to optimize teaching practices. Higher educational attainment and the number of relevant training experiences are key factors influencing the use of pedagogical strategies in literacy. This suggests that enhancing these areas could improve literacy instruction among ECE teachers. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are formulated: Kindergarten teachers are highly encouraged to pursue graduate school and complete the whole course to equip themselves with advanced education, specialized knowledge, research

opportunities, and professional growth. The kindergarten teachers in the study are encouraged to attend national and international training, as it is an avenue to learn and adapt instructional strategies that will help enhance young learners' literacy skills. Since storytelling obtained the lowest mean among the five domains, kindergarten teachers are encouraged to look for interesting and meaningful stories suitable for the grade level to further enhance the literacy skills of young learners. School administration is encouraged to provide educational materials, such as printers, coupons, and inks, to address the problem of the inadequacy of printed reading materials, which are essential in literacy instruction. Further research shall be conducted using more appropriate and relevant variables to determine further the extent of utilization of pedagogical strategies in literacy.

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