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The Effectiveness of the Professional Development of the Kindergarten Teachers in Improving the Learners' Engagement in the Public Elementary Schools in the Division of Camarines Sur

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of kindergarten teachers' professional development in improving learners' engagement in public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur during School Year 2025–2026. It used a descriptive-evaluative-correlational survey design. From a population of 1,011 kindergarten teachers across the five congressional districts, 287 teachers served as respondents. Data were gathered through a researcher-made 125-item questionnaire that underwent expert validation and obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha of .94. Frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, rank orders, Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W), and corresponding chi-square tests were used at the .05 significance level. Professional development was rated Much Evident overall (M = 4.38), with classroom management highest (M = 4.52). The effectiveness of professional development in improving learner engagement was rated Much Effective overall (M = 4.39), with physical engagement highest (M = 4.54), followed by behavioral and emotional engagement (both M = 4.51). Challenges to professional development were Very Much Serious (M = 4.56), led by insufficient financial support (M = 4.60), while the proposed solutions were Much Necessary (M = 4.44). Significant agreement was observed across all professional-development dimensions and most engagement dimensions, but not for cognitive and cultural engagement. The findings support sustained, needs-based professional learning, financial and administrative assistance, workload management, and the implementation of the proposed action plan to strengthen kindergarten teaching and learner engagement.

Keywords: *professional development, kindergarten teachers, learner engagement, early childhood education, teacher support, Camarines Sur*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education establishes foundational conditions for children's cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical development. In kindergarten, the quality of classroom experiences depends heavily on teachers' capacity to translate curriculum expectations into developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and engaging learning opportunities. The dissertation from which this article was derived positioned continuous professional development as essential to strengthening pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment techniques—competencies that shape how young learners participate in and respond to instruction.

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The Philippine policy environment reinforces this emphasis on teacher quality and kindergarten provision. The Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education specifies standards for curriculum, instruction, assessment, learning resources, learning environments, and program monitoring, while the Learning Action Cell (LAC) institutionalizes school-based continuing professional development as a collaborative mechanism for improving teaching and learning (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016a, 2016b). The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers further frame professional growth as a continuing responsibility across teachers' career stages and connect learning and development programs to expected teaching quality (DepEd, 2017). Within this context, professional development is not an isolated activity but a recurring process of updating knowledge, improving practice, and responding to learner diversity.

Research on teacher learning similarly indicates that professional development is most useful when it is connected to classroom practice, sustained over time, responsive to teachers' needs, and supported by opportunities for collaboration and reflection (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Kennedy, 2016; Korthagen, 2017; Sancar et al., 2021). For kindergarten teachers specifically, studies have documented continuing needs in content and pedagogy, assessment, classroom management, and other dimensions of professional competence (Bautista et al., 2016; Gallego & Caingcoy, 2020; Pupíková et al., 2021). Participation in professional learning has also been associated with stronger self-efficacy and work-related outcomes among early childhood educators (Leung & Lam, 2025; Múñez et al., 2017).

Learner engagement is likewise multidimensional. Young children's classroom engagement includes visible participation and task persistence, emotional connection and belonging, cognitive investment, social interaction, personal initiative, movement and hands-on participation, and responsiveness to culturally relevant experiences. Teacher practices are central to these processes: clear routines, positive relationships, participatory learning, suitable tasks, and supportive interactions can create conditions in which learners are more willing and able to participate (Banks & Smyth, 2021; Kangas et al., 2016; Pedler et al., 2020). Consequently, examining professional development alongside learner engagement provides a practical way of assessing whether teacher learning is reflected in conditions that support children's active involvement in classroom experiences.

Despite substantial international and national attention to teacher professional development, the thesis identified a localized evidence gap in the Division of Camarines Sur. Existing studies often focused on professional-development needs or teacher competencies in other settings, while fewer studies examined professional development together with multiple dimensions of learner engagement and the institutional constraints that may limit teachers' access to continuous learning. The present study therefore examined the extent of kindergarten teachers' professional development; assessed its perceived effectiveness in improving behavioral, emotional, cognitive, social, personal, physical, and cultural engagement; tested agreement in rank ordering these dimensions; identified challenges and necessary solutions; and used the findings to formulate an action plan for the Division of Camarines Sur.

Literature Review

Professional Development of Kindergarten Teachers

Professional development is a continuing process through which teachers expand knowledge, strengthen instructional judgment, refine teaching routines, and respond to changes in curriculum and learner needs. Kennedy (2016) emphasized that the value of professional development depends not merely on duration or format but on the ideas, teachers learn and the mechanisms that help them enact those ideas in practice. Bates and Morgan (2018) similarly identified coherent, job-embedded and collaborative elements as important to effective professional learning, while Sancar et al. (2021) described teacher professional development as an interconnected process shaped by context, curriculum, collaboration, teacher characteristics, and the broader reform environment. These perspectives support an approach to teacher learning that is continuous rather than episodic.

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In early childhood settings, professional development must account for the specialized demands of teaching young children. Bautista et al. (2016) found that kindergarten teachers reported professional-development needs across both academic and nonacademic learning areas, underscoring the breadth of competencies required for holistic education. Gallego and Caingcoy (2020) likewise reported substantial professional-development needs among Philippine kindergarten teachers, particularly in content knowledge and pedagogy and in the learning environment and diversity of learners. Pupíková et al. (2021) further showed that kindergarten teachers' self-assessments can reveal differentiated needs across knowledge and competence domains, providing a basis for targeted learning programs. Nurunnisa (2018) likewise described education and training as a route to strengthening kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional competence.

The literature also supports multiple delivery modes for professional learning. Múñez et al. (2017) showed that preschool teachers differed in how frequently they engaged in professional development and how useful they perceived different activities to be, with participation linked to self-efficacy beliefs. Online learning can extend access where time and travel constrain attendance, although quality and relevance remain essential (Bates et al., 2016; Elliott, 2017). Professional development therefore needs both substantive relevance and feasible access, especially in geographically dispersed school systems.

Learner Engagement in Early Childhood Education

Learner engagement has commonly been understood through behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, but early childhood classrooms also make social interaction, personal initiative, physical participation, and cultural responsiveness especially salient. Pedler et al. (2020) described engagement as a malleable, multidimensional construct that teachers can influence through pedagogy, expectations, classroom routines, and relationships. For young learners, this implies that engagement is expressed not only through task completion but also through curiosity, enjoyment, belonging, cooperation, movement, and the willingness to communicate ideas.

Relationships and participatory classroom conditions are particularly important. Banks and Smyth (2021) highlighted the value of respectful teacher-student relationships in enhancing engagement, while Kangas et al. (2016) identified supportive environments, educators' professional skills, and participatory practices as important conditions for children's involvement in early childhood education. These findings align with the present study's inclusion of behavioral, emotional, social, and personal indicators alongside cognitive dimensions, because young children's participation is embedded in their interactions with teachers, peers, tasks, and the classroom environment.

The connection between teacher development and learner engagement is therefore plausible at the level of teaching practice: professional learning may enhance teachers' capacity to design play-based and differentiated activities, manage routines, assess learning responsively, and establish positive learning environments. The present study did not test a causal mechanism; rather, it assessed kindergarten teachers' professional-development levels and the perceived effectiveness of that development in improving several forms of learner engagement. This distinction is important because the study's statistical tests focused on weighted ratings and agreement in rank orders rather than causal effects.

Professional Development Support and Implementation Constraints

Professional learning opportunities can be undermined when teachers lack time, funding, access, or organizational support. Matherson and Windle (2017) noted that teachers often seek professional development that is relevant, collaborative, teacher-driven, and responsive to actual classroom needs. Korthagen (2017) argued that teacher learning is difficult to sustain when professional development is detached from the realities of practice. In early childhood education, Allehyani (2023) similarly documented administrative, personal, and digital obstacles that can hinder kindergarten teachers' participation in professional-development programs.

These constraints are directly relevant to the Philippine public-school context examined in this study. The Learning Action Cell policy provides a school-based mechanism intended to make professional learning ongoing

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and collaborative, and it explicitly recognizes school heads' responsibility to support continuing professional development (DepEd, 2016a). Yet school-based structures do not eliminate resource limitations. Financial assistance, workload allocation, timely information about training, administrator encouragement, and access to specialized early-childhood programs remain practical conditions that can determine whether teachers participate consistently and apply what they learn.

The study therefore treated professional-development challenges as an integral analytic component rather than a secondary concern. By assessing limited training opportunities, insufficient financial support, excessive workload demands, and inadequate administrative support—and then rating proposed solutions—the research linked teacher learning to the organizational conditions needed to sustain it. This orientation is consistent with the view that professional development is not simply an individual responsibility; it is also a system-level function requiring institutional structures, resources, and leadership support (Leung & Lam, 2025; Sancar et al., 2021).

Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed in the dissertation provided strong evidence that kindergarten teachers require sustained professional learning and that teachers play an important role in shaping learner engagement. However, the thesis identified limited localized research integrating these two areas within public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur. Studies in other settings could not fully represent the division's training access, resource conditions, workload, and administrative arrangements. The present research addressed this gap by examining professional-development dimensions, learner-engagement dimensions, professional-development challenges, proposed solutions, and agreement in their rank ordering within one local framework.

The conceptual paradigm used an input-process-output model with feedback. Inputs consisted of Philippine legal and policy bases, relevant theories and literature, the respondents, the researcher-made instrument, and statistical tools. The process involved assessing professional-development dimensions, evaluating learner-engagement dimensions, testing agreement in rank orders, identifying challenges and solutions, and translating the results into an intervention. The intended output was an action plan for strengthening kindergarten teachers' professional development and learner engagement in the Division of Camarines Sur.

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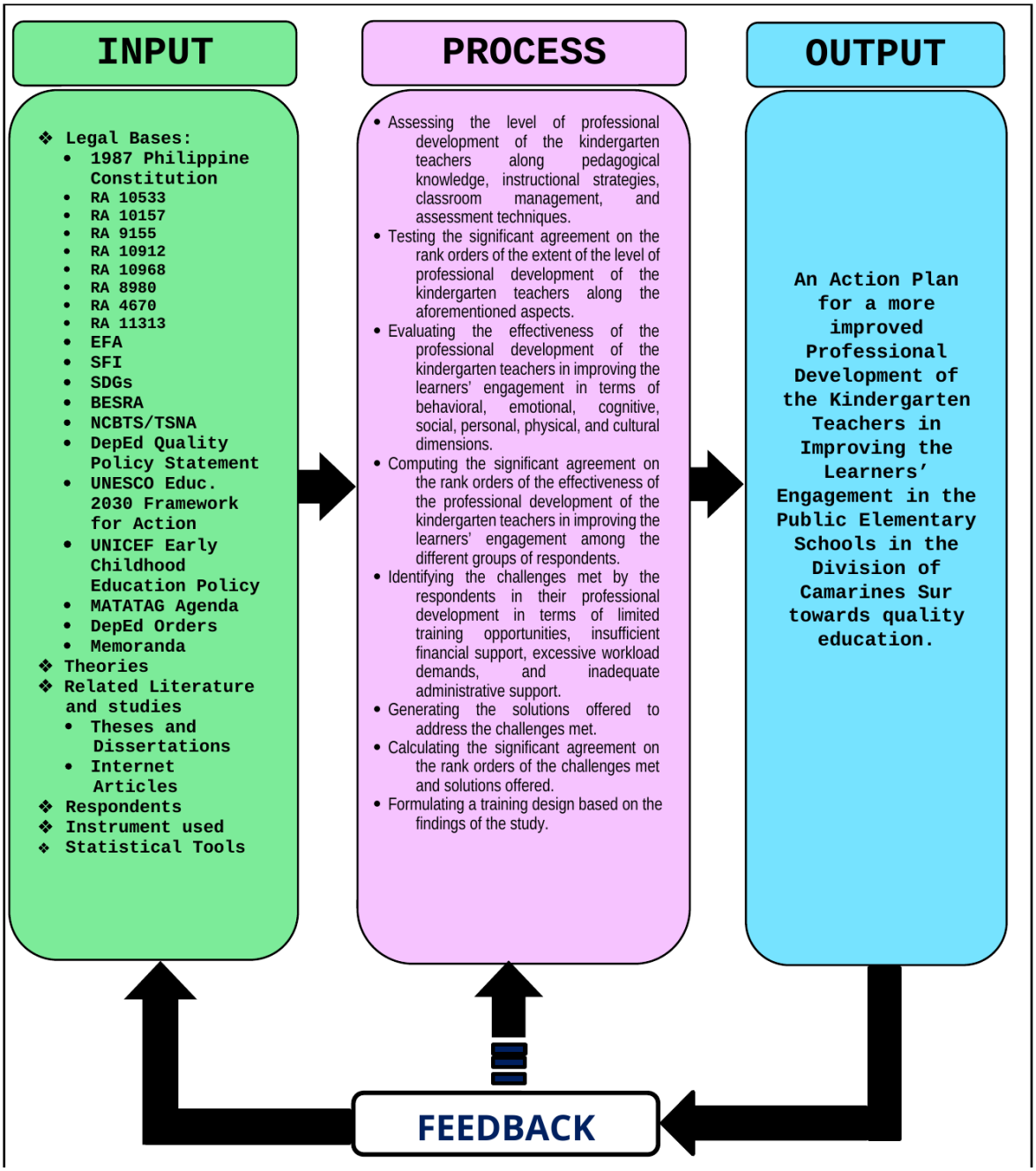


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study (retained from the dissertation's conceptual paradigm).*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-evaluative-correlational survey design, as specified in the dissertation. The descriptive component summarized respondents' ratings of professional development, learner engagement, challenges, and proposed solutions; the evaluative component interpreted the extent or seriousness of these ratings

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using predefined scale ranges; and the agreement analyses examined the consistency of rank orders across the groups represented in the study. Consistent with survey research, the study gathered information without manipulating classroom conditions (Creswell, 2014).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in the DepEd Division of Camarines Sur, Region V (Bicol Region), during School Year 2025–2026. The division was described in the dissertation as comprising five congressional districts and 34 districts. Twenty-five public elementary schools distributed across the five congressional districts participated, allowing the study to represent kindergarten teachers from geographically distinct parts of the division.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The population frame contained 1,011 kindergarten teachers. The final sample consisted of 287 kindergarten teachers who answered the survey and served as respondents. The dissertation described the selection process as involving purposive and convenient identification of participating schools and stratified random sampling of kindergarten-teacher respondents across the five congressional districts. This combination was retained in the present article rather than recasting the sampling procedure, because it reflects the procedures reported in the original methodology and respondent table.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire aligned with the study's research questions. The instrument contained 125 items in four parts. Part I measured professional development through pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment techniques (35 items). Part II assessed the perceived effectiveness of professional development in improving behavioral, emotional, cognitive, social, personal, physical, and cultural learner engagement (38 items). Part III measured challenges in limited training opportunities, insufficient financial support, excessive workload demands, and inadequate administrative support (41 items). Part IV assessed proposed solutions to the identified challenges (11 items). Responses were rated on five-point scales with verbal interpretations appropriate to each part.

The questionnaire was reviewed by knowledgeable colleagues, the research adviser, the OIC Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, and five research experts. The dissertation reported an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94, interpreted as Very High Reliability. This indicated strong internal consistency for the instrument used to gather data on professional development, learner engagement, challenges, and solutions.

Data Gathering Procedure

Formal approval to conduct the study was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent. The researcher then administered and retrieved the questionnaires; the methodology also reported that 287 respondents completed the survey through Google Forms. Completed responses were organized and tabulated before statistical analysis. The procedure was designed to ensure consistent distribution, retrieval, and processing of the data across the participating schools and congressional districts.

Data Analysis

Frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and rank orders were used to summarize the data. Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) and its corresponding chi-square statistic were used to determine whether the groups showed significant agreement in their rank ordering of the study variables, with the significance level set at .05 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988). Professional-development ratings were interpreted from Not at All (1.00–1.49) to Very Much Evident (4.50–5.00); learner-engagement effectiveness from Not at All to Very Much Effective; challenges from Not at All to Very Much Serious; and solutions from Not at All to Very Much Necessary.

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Ethical Consideration

The study followed the ethical safeguards explicitly documented in the dissertation and survey materials. Permission was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent before data collection. Respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire truthfully, their names were optional, and the survey form stated that the information they provided would be treated as strictly confidential. No additional ethics-board approval or consent procedure was stated in the source manuscript; therefore, none is claimed in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Professional Development of Kindergarten Teachers

The overall extent of kindergarten teachers' professional development was rated Much Evident (M = 4.38). Classroom management received the highest dimension mean (M = 4.52, Very Much Evident), followed by assessment techniques (M = 4.39), instructional strategies (M = 4.36), and pedagogical knowledge (M = 4.23), all interpreted as Much Evident. These results indicate that respondents perceived professional learning as strongly reflected in daily practice, particularly in routines, communication, learning-environment management, and assessment.

Table 1. *Summary of the Extent of Kindergarten Teachers' Professional Development*

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Classroom management	4.52	Very Much Evident	1
Assessment techniques	4.39	Much Evident	2
Instructional strategies	4.36	Much Evident	3
Pedagogical knowledge	4.23	Much Evident	4
Overall	4.38	Much Evident	—

At the indicator level, classroom management was reinforced by very high ratings for establishing routines and discipline strategies and for effective communication with learners and parents (both M = 4.70). In pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of curriculum frameworks and guidelines ranked highest (M = 4.44), whereas understanding inclusive-education principles had the lowest mean in that dimension (M = 4.05). In instructional strategies, play-based and activity-based learning and the integration of social-emotional learning strategies both reached M = 4.52, while the use of innovative teaching methods was comparatively lower (M = 4.21). For assessment, portfolio assessment and learners' work samples ranked highest (M = 4.52), while formative and summative assessment was lowest (M = 4.22).

The pattern is consistent with literature showing that kindergarten teachers' professional competence spans pedagogy, learning environments, curriculum, and assessment rather than a single skill set (Bautista et al., 2016; Gallego & Caingcoy, 2020; Pupíková et al., 2021). The strong classroom-management rating also supports professional-development models that remain close to everyday teaching practice (Kennedy, 2016). At the same time, the relatively lower means for inclusive education and innovative teaching methods point to areas where targeted, needs-based development may still be useful. Such differentiation is important because effective professional learning should be responsive to specific competence gaps rather than based solely on generic seminar participation (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Sancar et al., 2021).

Agreement on Professional-Development Rank Orders

Kendall's W results showed significant agreement in the rank orders of all four professional-development dimensions. Agreement was strongest for classroom management ($W = .91$, $\chi^2 = 31.85$, $p < .001$) and pedagogical knowledge ($W = .85$, $\chi^2 = 29.75$, $p < .001$). Instructional strategies ($W = .73$, $\chi^2 = 25.55$, $p < .001$) and assessment techniques ($W = .64$, $\chi^2 = 19.20$, $p < .005$) also showed significant concordance. The null hypothesis of no significant agreement was therefore rejected for all professional-development dimensions.

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Table 2. Agreement on the Rank Orders of Professional-Development Dimensions

Dimension	Kendall W	χ^2	p-value	Decision
Pedagogical knowledge	.85	29.75	< .001	Significant
Instructional strategies	.73	25.55	< .001	Significant
Classroom management	.91	31.85	< .001	Significant
Assessment techniques	.64	19.20	< .005	Significant

The concordance indicates that the groups represented in the study ranked the relative strengths of professional-development indicators in broadly similar ways. It does not establish a causal relationship between professional development and learner outcomes. Rather, it strengthens the descriptive conclusion that the perceived pattern of teacher development was shared across the study's groups. This shared pattern provides a reasonable basis for division-wide priorities while still allowing schools to identify context-specific needs.

Effectiveness of Professional Development in Improving Learner Engagement

The perceived effectiveness of professional development in improving learner engagement was Much Effective overall (M = 4.39). Physical engagement obtained the highest mean (M = 4.54, Very Much Effective), followed by behavioral and emotional engagement (both M = 4.51, Very Much Effective). Cognitive engagement (M = 4.46), social engagement (M = 4.32), cultural engagement (M = 4.32), and personal engagement (M = 4.08) were rated Much Effective. These results suggest that respondents most clearly observed the effects of strengthened practice in visible participation, movement, routines, persistence, enthusiasm, and belonging.

Table 3. Effectiveness of Professional Development in Improving Learner Engagement

Engagement dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Physical	4.54	Very Much Effective	1
Behavioral	4.51	Very Much Effective	2.5
Emotional	4.51	Very Much Effective	2.5
Cognitive	4.46	Much Effective	4
Social	4.32	Much Effective	5.5
Cultural	4.32	Much Effective	5.5
Personal	4.08	Much Effective	7
Overall	4.39	Much Effective	—

Several individual indicators illustrate the pattern. Hands-on participation was the highest physical indicator (M = 4.64). Behavioral engagement was strongest for self-regulation and discipline (M = 4.64), while emotional engagement was strongest for a sense of belonging in class (M = 4.64). Cognitive engagement was led by curiosity and interest and by asking questions and joining discussions (both M = 4.49). In contrast, personal engagement was comparatively lower, with perseverance despite learning difficulties receiving M = 3.93. The results imply that professional-development activities may be most visibly connected with teacher-managed classroom structures and participatory activities, while more autonomous forms of learner agency warrant additional instructional attention.

The findings align with evidence that teachers shape engagement through relationships, classroom organization, expectations, opportunities for participation, and task design (Banks & Smyth, 2021; Kangas et al., 2016; Pedler et al., 2020). The high ratings for play-based, social-emotional, and classroom-management practices in the professional-development results also correspond with the strong physical, behavioral, and emotional engagement ratings. This descriptive convergence should not be interpreted as proof of causation, but it supports the practical logic of professional learning that helps teachers design active, safe, relational, and developmentally appropriate classrooms.

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Agreement on Learner-Engagement Rank Orders

Significant agreement in rank orders was found for behavioral ($W = .48$, $\chi^2 = 9.60$, $p < .05$), emotional ($W = .80$, $\chi^2 = 16.00$, $p < .005$), social ($W = .83$, $\chi^2 = 16.60$, $p < .005$), personal ($W = .50$, $\chi^2 = 10.00$, $p < .05$), and physical engagement ($W = .75$, $\chi^2 = 7.50$, $p < .05$). No significant agreement was found for cognitive ($W = .12$, $\chi^2 = 2.40$, $p > .05$) or cultural engagement ($W = .48$, $\chi^2 = 4.80$, $p > .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected for five dimensions and retained for cognitive and cultural engagement.

Table 4. *Agreement on the Rank Orders of Learner-Engagement Dimensions*

Dimension	Kendall W	χ^2	p-value	Decision
Behavioral	.48	9.60	< .05	Significant
Emotional	.80	16.00	< .005	Significant
Cognitive	.12	2.40	> .05	Not significant
Social	.83	16.60	< .005	Significant
Personal	.50	10.00	< .05	Significant
Physical	.75	7.50	< .05	Significant
Cultural	.48	4.80	> .05	Not significant

The absence of significant agreement in cognitive and cultural engagement suggests greater variability in how the respondent groups ranked indicators within these dimensions. Cognitive engagement may be expressed less uniformly in kindergarten because questioning, problem solving, connection-making, and higher-order thinking depend on differences in classroom tasks and instructional opportunities. Cultural engagement may likewise vary according to local traditions, community contexts, and the extent to which culturally responsive experiences are embedded in classroom activities. These two dimensions therefore deserve more context-sensitive professional learning and monitoring than a single uniform intervention.

Challenges to Professional Development and Proposed Solutions

The challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers were rated Very Much Serious overall (M = 4.56). Insufficient financial support ranked first (M = 4.60), followed by limited training opportunities (M = 4.59), excessive workload demands (M = 4.57), and inadequate administrative support (M = 4.49, Much Serious). The strongest individual challenge was the view that reducing workload would enable teachers to participate more actively in professional-development activities (M = 4.77). Teachers also strongly indicated the need for more training opportunities (M = 4.73), insufficient financial support for participation (M = 4.68), and difficulties related to approval and access to administrative resources (up to M = 4.61).

Table 5. *Summary of Professional-Development Challenges and Proposed Solutions*

Area	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Insufficient financial support	4.60	Very Much Serious	1
Limited training opportunities	4.59	Very Much Serious	2
Excessive workload demands	4.57	Very Much Serious	3
Inadequate administrative support	4.49	Much Serious	4
Challenges overall	4.56	Very Much Serious	—
Proposed solutions overall	4.44	Much Necessary	—

The proposed solutions were rated Much Necessary overall (M = 4.44). The highest-rated response was adequate financial assistance for participation in seminars, trainings, and conferences (M = 4.62), followed by continuous encouragement and support from school administrators (M = 4.58) and specialized training programs designed for kindergarten teachers by the Schools Division Office (M = 4.54). Other highly rated solutions included professional development matched to instructional needs (M = 4.51), sufficient school funds (M = 4.48), and school- and district-based professional learning opportunities (M = 4.46). These priorities indicate that access and support conditions are central to sustaining teacher learning, not merely the availability of content.

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The challenges are consistent with literature showing that professional development can be constrained by administrative conditions, access, time, motivation, and financial or logistical limitations (Allehyani, 2023; Elliott, 2017; Matherson & Windle, 2017). School-based models such as LACs can reduce some access barriers, but they still require leadership, scheduling, resources, and alignment with teachers' actual needs (DepEd, 2016a). The findings therefore support a blended system of school-based and division-level opportunities, with financial assistance and workload protection treated as implementation requirements rather than optional add-ons.

Agreement on Challenges and Solutions

The Kendall W analyses did not show significant agreement in the rank orders of limited training opportunities ($W = .39$, $\chi^2 = 17.55$, $p > .05$), insufficient financial support ($W = .30$, $\chi^2 = 12.00$, $p > .05$), excessive workload demands ($W = .31$, $\chi^2 = 13.95$, $p > .05$), or inadequate administrative support ($W = .25$, $\chi^2 = 11.25$, $p > .05$). In contrast, the proposed solutions showed significant agreement ($W = .45$, $\chi^2 = 20.15$, $p < .025$). The null hypothesis was therefore retained for all four challenge categories but rejected for the proposed solutions.

Table 6. *Agreement on the Rank Orders of Challenges and Proposed Solutions*

Area	Kendall W	χ^2	p-value	Decision
Limited training opportunities	.39	17.55	> .05	Not significant
Insufficient financial support	.30	12.00	> .05	Not significant
Excessive workload demands	.31	13.95	> .05	Not significant
Inadequate administrative support	.25	11.25	> .05	Not significant
Proposed solutions	.45	20.15	< .025	Significant

This pattern is practically important. The lack of agreement on challenge rank orders indicates that schools and groups may experience barriers differently; a single explanation for professional-development constraints would therefore be inappropriate. At the same time, the significant agreement on solutions shows greater convergence around what support should be provided. Division-wide action can consequently focus on common supports—funding, specialized training, administrative encouragement, workload management, and timely guidance—while schools retain flexibility to prioritize whichever barriers are most acute locally.

Action Plan Implications

Based on the findings, the dissertation developed an action plan as an intervention program for School Year 2026–2027. Its major directions included strengthening pedagogical knowledge; improving differentiated, play-based and innovative instructional strategies; reinforcing inclusive and positive classroom management; improving assessment literacy and feedback; supporting the seven learner-engagement dimensions; addressing training, financial, workload, and administrative constraints; and institutionalizing continuous professional support through LACs, mentoring, coaching, demonstration teaching, lesson study, peer observation, professional learning communities, partnerships, resource provision, monitoring, and recognition.

Table 7. *Condensed Priority Areas of the Proposed Action Plan*

Priority area	Key actions retained from the dissertation
Pedagogical knowledge	Needs-based capability building on child development, curriculum, inclusion, literacy/numeracy, coaching, LAC sessions, and demonstration teaching.
Instructional strategies	Play- and activity-based learning, differentiation, social-emotional learning, innovative methods, peer observation, and coaching.
Classroom management	Positive discipline, routines, communication with families, inclusive practices, conflict resolution, and peer collaboration.
Assessment techniques	Assessment-literacy sessions, observation and portfolio assessment, alternative assessment, feedback, and adaptation for diverse learners.
Access and support	Specialized training, financial assistance, workload management, administrative guidance, timely information, and recognition.

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Sustainability	Annual training-needs assessment, school/division PD plans, LACs, professional learning communities, partnerships, ICT/resources, monitoring, and sustainability planning.

The action plan is aligned with evidence that professional learning should be sustained, situated in practice, collaborative, and responsive to teachers' needs (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Kennedy, 2016; Sancar et al., 2021). It also reflects the DepEd policy direction that professional standards and school-based professional learning should guide teacher development (DepEd, 2016a, 2017). Its contribution is therefore not a new empirical finding but an implementation framework derived from the study's measured strengths, barriers, and commonly supported solutions.

CONCLUSION

The study established that kindergarten teachers in the Division of Camarines Sur demonstrated a Much Evident level of professional development, with classroom management as the strongest dimension. Their professional development was perceived as Much Effective in improving learner engagement, particularly physical, behavioral, and emotional engagement. Significant agreement in rank orders was found across all professional-development dimensions and across most learner-engagement dimensions; cognitive and cultural engagement were the exceptions, indicating less consistent rankings among the respondent groups.

At the same time, professional-development participation was constrained by Very Much Serious challenges. Insufficient financial support, limited training opportunities, excessive workload demands, and inadequate administrative support were the principal barriers. Although the groups differed in how they ranked these challenges, they showed significant agreement on the proposed solutions. This combination suggests that professional development should be sustained not only through relevant learning content but also through concrete institutional support that makes participation feasible.

The study's contribution lies in integrating teacher professional development, multidimensional learner engagement, implementation barriers, and an action-oriented response within the local context of public elementary schools in Camarines Sur. The resulting action plan provides a structured basis for strengthening professional learning while addressing access, resources, workload, administrative support, and sustainability. The conclusions remain descriptive and evaluative in accordance with the study's measures and should not be interpreted as causal evidence that professional development alone produced the observed engagement ratings.

Recommendation

Kindergarten teachers should continue strengthening pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment techniques through relevant learning and development activities. The Schools Division Office and school leaders should sustain and intensify capability-building programs, seminars, workshops, LAC sessions, mentoring, coaching, peer observation, and technical assistance, with particular attention to inclusive education, innovative teaching practices, personal learner engagement, and the cognitive and cultural dimensions where agreement was weaker.

Institutional support should directly address the barriers documented in the study. Schools and the division should provide appropriate financial assistance, allocate adequate instructional and technological resources, distribute school-related assignments equitably, protect time for professional learning, provide timely information and approval for training, and recognize teachers' participation and professional growth. Specialized kindergarten professional-development programs should be aligned with assessed needs rather than delivered as one-size-fits-all activities.

The proposed action plan should be considered for adoption, implementation, monitoring, and periodic evaluation in the Division of Camarines Sur. Future research may examine professional-development practices and learner engagement using broader samples, direct classroom observations, learner-level outcomes, qualitative

accounts of implementation, technology-integration competencies, school-leadership and organizational support, and evaluation of the action plan. Such studies can extend the present findings while preserving the distinction between teachers' perceptions of effectiveness and direct evidence of learner outcomes.

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