ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 10 (October 2026)

The Alignment of Professional Development Opportunities and Instructional Practices among Public Kindergarten Teachers

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Date Submitted:
August 16, 2026

Date Accepted:
September 11, 2026

Date Published:
October 29, 2026

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.23769748

ABSTRACT

This study examined the alignment between professional development opportunities and instructional practices among public kindergarten teachers at West City Elementary School, Dumaguete City, during school year 2025–2026. Guided by the integrated Gibbs–ERA reflective framework, it employed a descriptive-correlational design and total enumeration of seven kindergarten teachers. Data were collected through an adapted structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation. Respondents rated trainings and seminars (reported composite mean = 3.29), coaching and mentoring (3.48), classroom management (3.88), and teaching strategies (3.89) positively. Teachers particularly endorsed collaborative coaching, effective use of classroom time, supportive student–teacher relationships, differentiation, and adjustment of teaching strategies. Professional development opportunities had a very strong positive association with reported instructional practices (Spearman's $\rho = .860$, $p = .013$, $n = 7$). These self-reported findings suggest that professional learning and instructional practice are closely aligned in the school, although the single-school, small-sample design cannot establish causality or verify changes in pupil outcomes. The study recommends sustained, school-based training, peer coaching, mentoring, instructional observation, and structured reflection to support transfer of professional learning to everyday teaching.

Keywords: *professional development; kindergarten teachers; instructional practices; coaching and mentoring; classroom management; early childhood education*

INTRODUCTION

High-quality kindergarten instruction requires teachers to coordinate developmentally appropriate activities, positive classroom relationships, inclusive routines, and flexible learning strategies. In Philippine public schools, continuing professional learning through seminars, workshops, coaching, and mentoring is intended to strengthen these competencies. However, the provision of professional development does not alone establish that acquired knowledge is consistently reflected in classroom practice. Understanding the connection between learning opportunities and reported instructional behavior is therefore important for school-level improvement (Almasa, 2020; Abayana et al., 2021).

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Research on early childhood teaching describes coaching as a mechanism for improving teacher–child interactions and classroom organization, although changes may be domain-specific and may fade without sustained support (Hanno, 2022). E-mentoring similarly offers opportunities for professional reflection and skill development (Erdoğan et al., 2022), while studies of kindergarten teacher performance link organizationally supported professional development with engagement and commitment (Leung & Lam, 2025). Philippine evidence also connects continuing professional learning with instructional planning, delivery, and classroom-management competencies (Padillo et al., 2021; Rivera et al., 2025).

Despite these contributions, the relationship between particular professional development opportunities and everyday instructional practices is not always documented in small, school-based Philippine kindergarten settings. The present study investigated that relationship at West City Elementary School in Dumaguete City. Specifically, it described teachers' demographic profiles, their assessment of trainings and seminars and of coaching and mentoring, their reported classroom management and teaching strategies, and the association between the two sets of measures. It also used the findings to formulate a locally applicable action plan. The study's correlational approach permitted the examination of relationships but not claims that professional development independently caused improvements in instruction or pupil achievement.

Literature Review

Professional Learning Through Trainings and Seminars

Formal professional development can update teachers' pedagogical knowledge, instructional planning, and assessment approaches when training content corresponds to classroom needs. Almasa (2020) discussed alignment between early childhood teacher education and professional standards, while Padillo et al. (2021) examined links between professional development activities and teacher competencies in instructional planning and classroom management. These perspectives suggest that relevance and opportunities for practical application are important components of professional learning.

In Philippine kindergarten contexts, instructional materials and curriculum interpretation further shape how teachers apply learning from formal activities (Abayana et al., 2021; Cahapay, 2020). School-based seminars may increase awareness of strategies, but their value needs to be judged in relation to teachers' actual lesson planning, assessment decisions, differentiated activities, and day-to-day classroom demands. These considerations informed the present study's assessment of training relevance and reported transfer to instruction.

Coaching, Mentoring, and Reflective Professional Development

Unlike one-time sessions, coaching and mentoring provide repeated opportunities for feedback, modeling, and professional discussion. Hanno (2022) documented immediate changes in selected early childhood teaching practices during coaching, while Erdoğan et al. (2022) reported professional development benefits associated with an e-mentoring program for preschool teachers. These studies indicate that sustained interaction can help educators reflect on and refine practice, although improvement is not necessarily uniform across instructional domains.

Related work has examined coaching-supported playful learning and relationships between development opportunities and work performance among kindergarten teachers (Nesbitt et al., 2025; Leung & Lam, 2025). In the Philippine setting, Galvez and Azarias (2024) described coaching and mentoring from public elementary teachers' perspectives. Together, these sources support examining not only availability of coaching and mentoring but also teacher-perceived relevance, continuity, and collaborative support.

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Instructional Strategies and Learner-Centered Kindergarten Education

Kindergarten instructional strategies include play-based experiences, interactive tasks, differentiated activities, and regular adjustment of instruction to learners' needs. Work on playful-learning interventions underscores the importance of practical teacher support in implementing engaging activities (Nesbitt et al., 2025). Philippine studies have also documented instructional strategies and implementation constraints in kindergarten settings (Muñoz, 2025; Lim & Tepacia, 2025).

Assessment and feedback are part of this instructional adaptation. Braund et al. (2021) described formative assessment and co-regulation in kindergarten, emphasizing teachers' responses to learners' activity and progress. The present study consequently treated teaching strategies as reported behaviors involving differentiation, instructional innovation, application of training, and adaptation based on pupil performance, rather than as direct measurements of learning outcomes.

Classroom Management and Early Learning Environments

Effective kindergarten management combines predictable routines, purposeful use of time, attention to behavior, and supportive relationships. Classroom organization contributes to the conditions in which young children can participate productively in learning; professional development may therefore address both instruction and the social environment (Hanno, 2022). Empirical work on preschool professional learning further emphasizes the value of instructional approaches responsive to children's attention and self-regulation (Muir et al., 2025).

Reflective management also involves recognizing pupils' individual needs and adjusting interactions rather than relying on uniform disciplinary approaches. Braund et al. (2021) highlighted how teacher observation and feedback can inform learning, while Rahadian and Budiningsih (2023) explored classroom-management approaches attentive to student learning characteristics. These ideas align with the present study's measures of routines, time management, positive relationships, diversity, and reported application of professional learning.

Professional Development–Practice Alignment and Research Gap

The alignment of professional development with instructional practice is more than attendance at learning events. It requires relevance, active interpretation, and opportunities to use what teachers have learned. Studies in early childhood settings have examined the institutional support for professional development and the ways it may relate to teachers' experiences (Cadima et al., 2025), and Philippine policy research has emphasized access to in-service training and teacher development (Rivera et al., 2025).

An association between professional development and self-reported classroom practice cannot establish what was implemented, how faithfully it was implemented, or whether learners benefited. The present inquiry addresses a narrower evidence gap by documenting perceptions from the complete group of kindergarten teachers in one public school and testing the rank-order relationship between its measured professional learning opportunities and instructional practices. Its interpretation therefore remains contextual rather than causal or broadly generalizable.

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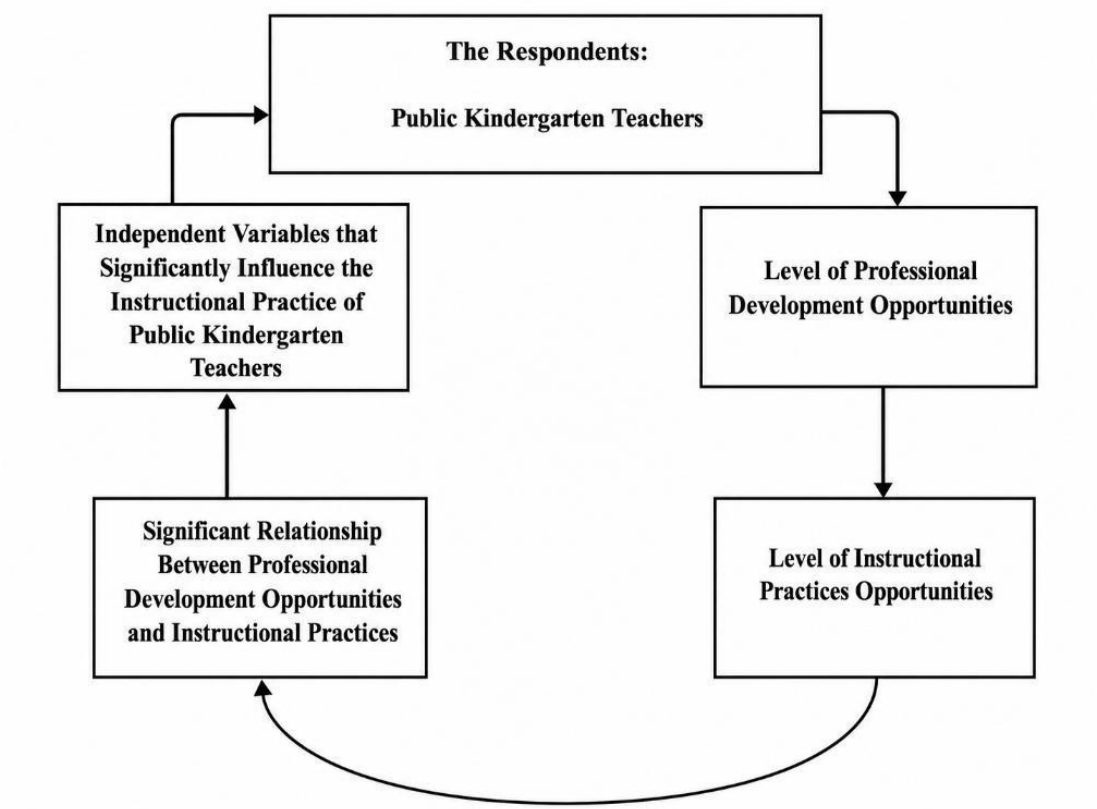


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational design to characterize teachers' professional development opportunities and instructional practices and examine their relationship without manipulating either construct. The integrated Gibbs–ERA reflective model informed the emphasis on experience, reflection, evaluation, and classroom application; it was used as a conceptual guide rather than an experimentally tested intervention.

Research Locale

Research was conducted at West City Elementary School, Schools Division of Dumaguete City, Central Visayas, Philippines, during school year 2025–2026. The investigation was confined to kindergarten teaching in this institution.

Participants and Sampling Technique

All seven public kindergarten teachers in the study school were included through total enumeration. No probability sampling was performed, and the resulting sample represents the participating kindergarten faculty of this school rather than teachers across the city or region.

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Research Instrument

The researchers used a questionnaire adapted from Sacote-Labadan and Tantiado (2025), identified in the thesis as "Teachers' Professional Development and Practices." The instrument collected demographic information and four-point Likert-type assessments of trainings and seminars, coaching and mentoring, classroom management, and teaching strategies. The source reports adviser review of the instrument; it does not present a numerical internal-consistency reliability coefficient or a separate validation statistic.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers obtained permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and the West City Elementary School principal before administering the instrument. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms, and responses were reviewed and organized for analysis. The study reported voluntary participation and confidential handling of respondents' information.

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages summarized demographic characteristics; weighted means and standard deviations described responses to the four instructional and professional development domains. Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ) assessed the association between the professional development and instructional-practice measures, using the thesis's two-tailed .05 significance criterion. All reported scores and the correlation coefficient were retained from the source tables rather than recalculated from unavailable individual responses.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers documented administrative permissions, voluntary participation, respondents' right to withdraw without penalty, confidentiality of responses, and secure academic use of the data. The source includes an informed-consent form in its appendices but does not identify an institutional research ethics committee approval code; none was assumed or inserted here.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Teachers

Table 1. *Respondent Profile (n = 7)*

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Age	35–45 years	6	85.7*
Age	56–65 years	1	14.3
Sex	Female	7	100.0
Teaching experience	11–15 years	3	42.9
Teaching experience	16–20 years	4	57.1
Education	Bachelor's degree	6	85.7
Education	Master's degree	1	14.3

All seven respondents were women and had at least 11 years of teaching experience. Four had served for 16–20 years, three for 11–15 years, and most held a bachelor's degree. This concentrated profile provides a view of established teachers' experiences, but the narrow demographic distribution prevents meaningful assessment of subgroup differences. The seven respondents also limit the extent to which correlation estimates can be generalized beyond the school.

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Professional Development Opportunities

Table 2. *Reported Professional Development Ratings*

Dimension/selected indicator	Mean	SD	Source rating
Trainings and seminars—reported composite	3.29	0.47	Strongly Agree
Relevance to teaching field	3.14	0.38	Agree
Application of seminar strategies	3.43	0.53	Strongly Agree
Coaching and mentoring—reported composite	3.48	0.37	Strongly Agree
Culture of improvement and collaboration	3.71	0.49	Strongly Agree
Coaching improves instructional strategies	3.14	0.38	Agree

Respondents positively assessed trainings and seminars, particularly the reported application of learned strategies in classrooms (mean = 3.43). Relevance to their specific teaching field was comparatively lower (3.14), suggesting a possible opportunity for more focused content. Coaching and mentoring received a higher reported composite rating (3.48), with the strongest item addressing a school culture of collaboration and improvement (3.71). These responses document teachers' perceptions of the opportunities available, not independently verified participation frequency or changes attributable to the programs.

The findings are consistent with literature emphasizing repeated feedback and supportive professional interaction. Hanno (2022) found domain-specific improvements following coaching cycles, while Erdoğan et al. (2022) examined preschool teachers' professional learning through e-mentoring. Locally relevant mentoring structures may support classroom transfer, but the present data cannot establish that one form of professional development is causally superior to another (Galvez & Azarias, 2024; Leung & Lam, 2025).

Reported Classroom Management and Teaching Strategies

Table 3. *Reported Instructional Practice Ratings*

Dimension/selected indicator	Mean	SD	Source rating
Classroom management—reported composite	3.88	0.16	Strongly Agree
Management of time through meaningful activities	4.00	0.00	Strongly Agree
Positive student–teacher relationships	4.00	0.00	Strongly Agree
Managing diverse classroom dynamics	3.71	0.49	Strongly Agree
Teaching strategies—reported composite	3.89	0.23	Strongly Agree
Belief in integrating effective teaching strategies	3.86	0.38	Strongly Agree
Differentiated instruction	3.57	0.53	Strongly Agree
Use of technology and innovative methods	3.14	0.38	Agree
Adjustment of teaching strategies to student performance	3.86	0.38	Strongly Agree

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The highest-rated classroom-management items concerned purposeful time use and positive pupil–teacher relationships (both 4.00). Respondents also rated the management of diverse classroom dynamics highly (3.71). These findings are compatible with research emphasizing organized environments, teacher–child interaction, and responsive support in early childhood education (Braund et al., 2021; Muir et al., 2025). However, the ratings come from teacher self-report rather than systematic classroom observation.

In teaching strategies, respondents especially endorsed attention to effective methods and adjustment of strategies based on student performance (both 3.86). Differentiation was rated 3.57, whereas the use of technology and innovative methods was comparatively lower at 3.14. This pattern suggests a practical focus for future training and resourcing. Research on playful and differentiated kindergarten activities likewise supports opportunities for teachers to translate new approaches into regular lessons, with implementation sensitive to local capacity (Nesbitt et al., 2025; Lim & Tepacia, 2025; Muñoz, 2025).

Association Between Professional Development and Instructional Practices

Table 4. *Spearman Rank-Order Correlation of Study Variables*

Variable pair	Spearman ρ	p (two-tailed)	n
Professional development opportunities and instructional practices	.860	.013	7

The source analysis yielded a very strong positive association between the two self-reported composite constructs (ρ = .860, p = .013). Thus, teachers who rated their professional development opportunities more favorably tended also to report stronger instructional practices. The observed p value fell below the study's prespecified .05 threshold. In a seven-person single-school study, this result should be interpreted cautiously: the estimate is sensitive to individual rankings, and common-method self-reporting may inflate the observed association. Statistical significance does not establish that professional development caused improvement.

The direction of the relationship aligns with studies connecting professional learning, engagement, and instructional competence (Padillo et al., 2021; Leung & Lam, 2025). It also reinforces the value of linking seminars to coaching, practice, and follow-up reflection instead of treating event attendance as sufficient evidence of implementation. Stronger longitudinal or observation-based studies would be needed to assess whether that alignment translates into measured classroom change or pupil outcomes.

Proposed School-Based Action Plan

Table 5. *Priority Activities Retained from the Source Action Plan*

Proposed activity	Frequency/duration	Indicative budget	Source status
Classroom-management workshop	2 days	₱10,000	Not started
Differentiated teaching seminar	1 day	₱8,000	Not started
Peer coaching sessions	Monthly	₱5,000	Not started
Mentoring circles	Monthly	₱5,000	Not started
Demonstration teaching/lesson observations	Quarterly	₱7,000	Not started
Learning Action Cell sessions	Quarterly	₱4,000	Not started

The source action plan calls for sequenced practical development in classroom management, differentiated instruction, peer coaching, mentoring, demonstration teaching, and school-based Learning Action Cell sessions. These proposals respond to the less strongly rated items concerning training relevance, instructional coaching support, and technology use. The activities and indicative budgets were not evaluated for effectiveness in this study; they are offered as a basis for school planning, prioritization, and subsequent monitoring.

CONCLUSION

Among the seven kindergarten teachers at West City Elementary School, reported professional development opportunities and instructional practices were generally rated favorably. Training and coaching were viewed as relevant supports, and the teachers reported strong classroom management and commitment to varied instructional strategies. The study found a very strong positive rank-order association between professional development opportunities and instructional practices ($\rho = .860$, $p = .013$), indicating alignment in the measured self-reports. Its contribution is a focused school-level description that can support professional learning planning, not proof that training independently improved teaching or learning outcomes. The single-school population, self-report measures, small sample, and unresolved composite-score inconsistencies delimit the strength of the conclusions.

Recommendation

West City Elementary School administrators are encouraged to align formal seminars with the instructional needs identified by kindergarten teachers, particularly the relevance of training content, classroom application, differentiated teaching, and technology-supported strategies. Teachers may be supported through recurrent peer coaching, mentoring circles, joint lesson planning, classroom observation, and structured reflection to promote the practical application of new knowledge.

School leaders and the Department of Education may consider implementing the proposed action plan within available policies and resources, monitoring participation and practice changes with clear documentation instead of relying on satisfaction ratings alone. Before publication or further statistical interpretation, the authors should reconcile composite means with item-level data and confirm the validity and reliability evidence for the adapted instrument. Future researchers should include multiple schools, larger and more diverse samples, direct classroom observations, longitudinal assessments, and where appropriate pupil-learning indicators to test the consistency and practical significance of the observed association.

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