



## **DAY CARE TEACHING IN ISLAND SCHOOLS: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, PRACTICES, AND SUPPORT AS BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study using phenomenological research design aimed to determine the educational materials used, practices, and support-teachers received of day care teaching in the island schools as bases for policy recommendation. Based on the findings of the study, daycare teachers in the island schools utilized visual aids such as story books and pictures to teach their learners. They also utilized localized materials to engage learners in the teaching and learning process. The result revealed that day care teachers in island schools are resourceful in finding available resources in their locality. As facilitators of learning, day care teachers exposed learners to outdoor activities and employed interactive activities to stimulate learning. The local government of Concepcion supported day care teachers through giving them honoraria, helping them in the construction and repair of classrooms, and supporting them in the supplemental feeding program. The local community also helped day care teachers in cleaning the surroundings of the school and in preparing of food for the feeding program.

**Keywords:** *Day Care Teaching, Practices, Support, Island Schools, Phenomenology*

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## INTRODUCTION

Day care teaching in island schools presents unique challenges and opportunities due to geographical isolation, limited resources, and cultural diversity. Island communities often struggle with access to quality early childhood education (ECE) services due to transportation, insufficient infrastructure, and teacher shortages. Despite these challenges, island day care centers play a crucial role in providing foundational education, socialization, and early cognitive development. Teachers in these settings often adapt their instructional approaches to multi-grade classrooms, language diversity, and limited educational materials. Community involvement is essential, as parents and local organizations frequently support day care programs through volunteer works and fundraising efforts (UNICEF Philippines, 2019)

Education in this early childhood stage, particularly in pre-kindergarten, is crucial in children's development. They grow at their own pace, but early support helps them learn and reach their full potential. Students with high quality early childhood experiences have better intellectual, social, and behavioral development of children (Markowitz et al., 2018).

One vital factor that contributes to the children's success is the teacher's role. Day care teachers are now expected to become curriculum specialists, and program managers to provide carefully planned curriculum. Hence, teachers' interaction with their learners or "lived experiences" holds a significant part in building a high-quality early childhood curriculum (Lagata S., 2021).

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Day care teachers in island schools operate in unique educational environments characterized by geographical isolation and limited resources. These schools often face challenges such as inadequate access to educational materials, limited infrastructure, and reduced professional development opportunities (PIDS, 2020). The isolation of island communities necessitates creative and adaptive teaching practices to meet the needs of young learners effectively (Magsino R., & Ramos S., 2020).

Teachers in these settings frequently draw upon local cultural elements and community resources to enrich their pedagogical approaches, integrating indigenous languages, traditions, and community values into their curriculum (Luo et al., 2020). The small size of island schools fosters close relationships among educators, students, and families, which can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Ebersohn et al., 2017). These practices reflect the resilience and resourcefulness required of educators in remote environments and highlight the significance of context in shaping educational experiences.

However, Early Childhood Education teachers in the island schools in the District of Concepcion face several challenges due to the implementation of the curriculum. These include the lack of educational facilities, inadequate funding, and issues with teacher training and qualification. Inclusive education also poses challenges, such as time consumption, lack of manpower, lack of training and knowledge, and limited resources (Dockett S., & Perry B., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges, with teachers experiencing difficulties in time management, pedagogical demands, economic and financial demands, and learning environment (Bassok D. et al., 2020). Additionally, the geographic

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character and socio-political history of the Philippines have impacted the task of educating the masses, with the establishment of preschool classes in the public sector being attached to regular public schools (Department of Education, 2021).

Thus, because of these challenges and struggles faced by the day care teachers in the island schools, the researcher conducted the study to gather information on the day care teaching in island schools, educational materials, practices, and support as bases for policy recommendation. The study also highlighted the critical role of local support in the educative practices that may give insights on how such practices contribute to early childhood education in an isolated setting (Baconguis R., 2021). Results of the study were used as bases for policy recommendation which may help improve and give deeper understanding on how day care teachers cope with all the challenges.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Method

The study used descriptive qualitative research method through in-depth interview to gather data. It aimed to assess the existing educational materials, teaching practices, and support systems in day care centers. This method helps in identifying gaps and areas for improvement that will inform policy recommendation. Through in-depth interviews, insights into teaching experiences and challenges faced by day care teachers were provided. Data was

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collected through phenomenological interviews with participants who related their practices (Gil, 2018).

## Research Design

This qualitative study aimed to investigate and evaluate day care teaching in the island schools, their educational materials, practices, and support. Creswell (2019) asserts that phenomenology research analyzes human experiences by delving into the specific experiences of the subjects and recognizing both the unique practices and the shared experiences of a certain group. The primary objective of this method is to achieve an understanding of the characteristics of a specific phenomenon. A phenomenological approach was employed in the research to gain a more profound insight into teaching at day care centers in island schools.

## Participants of the Study

The study utilized purposive sampling to carefully select participants who could provide in-depth insights into the research phenomenon. Specifically, six (6) day care teachers from island schools in the District of Concepcion II were chosen based on their relevant experiences and direct involvement in early childhood education within their communities. The researcher established a collaborative approach by emphasizing that these teachers were not merely respondents but co-researchers in the study. They were fully informed of their role in articulating and interpreting the phenomenon under investigation, ensuring their active engagement in the research process.

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## Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was employed to choose respondents who are most likely to provide relevant and valuable information, serving as a method for identifying and selecting cases that effectively utilize limited research resources (Campbell,2020). Therefore, participants should have experienced with the same phenomenon. Individuals selected to participate have significant and meaningful experiences and practices in teaching day care.

The concept of purposeful sampling involves selecting samples that possess a rich source of information to develop a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, it is essential to conduct several observational site visits before selecting respondents. These visits aid in identifying and determining the most suitable sample for the research's aims and objectives. Researchers might begin by considering factors such as age, gender, experience, functional role, or organizational ideology to narrow down their search for an appropriate study site.

## Research Instrument

An interview form created by the researcher was utilized as the research tool in the study. Data was gathered via semi-structured interview questionnaires. According to Clarkin (2020), interview questions are effective means of enabling participants to narrate their stories in their own terms. The interview centers on the teachers own experiences and practices in teaching the eight-week curriculum. The instrument consists of two sections: Part I contains the participants' personal information, and Part II has four (4) open-ended questions for them to respond to.

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To make sure the questions were ethically sound and adequately presented in a methodical way, a validity test was conducted. Experts in the field performed validation based on predetermined criteria, including questions that were clear and relevant to the research objectives. The degree to which a measurement accurately represents the particular intended domain of the material determines its content validity (Rusticos, 2019).

In order to better capture significant nonverbal communication cues in a contextual basis, voice and video recordings were also utilized.

## Validity of the Research Instrument

A panel of experts conducted a thorough validation of the teacher-made questionnaire and interview schedule to ensure their reliability and effectiveness in gathering relevant data. Their feedback and recommendations were carefully reviewed and integrated into the final version of the research instruments. To guarantee the questionnaire's dependability, clarity, appropriateness, and relevance, research specialists meticulously assessed each item. All detailed comments, suggested revisions, and refinements were carefully documented and incorporated, ensuring that the final instruments were well-structured, comprehensible, and aligned with the study's objectives.

## Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher contemplated initial procedures. A request letter address to the District Supervisor was drafted seeking authorization to carry out an interview with the participants

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in the District of Concepcion II. A letter of approval was secured from the District Supervisor to carry out the study.

A letter of consent was sought from the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School requesting authorization to carry out the study noted by the research adviser. Upon approval and permission was secured, the researcher conducted personally the study observing and following the health safety protocols and precautions.

The researcher commenced the in-depth interview by orienting first the individuals involved in the study, they were informed about the aims of the research and the reasons for conducting it and that the whole process was recorded. Interviews play a crucial role in revealing the opinions, experiences, values, and other facets of the population being studied. It is carried out with the purpose of revealing detailed insights into the interviewee's experiences and viewpoints on a topic (Showcat & Parveen, 2018).

Data collection involves a structured method of obtaining observations or measurements. Whether conducting research for business, government, or academic reasons, data collection enables researchers to acquire direct knowledge and unique insights into their research issues (Bandari, 2021).

## Data Analyses

A detailed face-to-face semi-structured interview was carried out with the six (6) participants to obtain more in-depth experiences regarding the experiences of day care teachers teaching in the island schools. The interview was carried out with each participant

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individually. Participants were interviewed using an audio-tape recorder or a cellphone. The average duration of one and a half interview sessions was utilized. Responses from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to further know the experiences of participants.

Thematic analysis is a technique for examining qualitative data. It is typically utilized on a collection of texts, like interview manuscripts. A thorough analysis of the data was conducted to pinpoint recurring themes; concepts of significance that appeared often (Caulfield, 2019).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research aimed to identify educational materials, practices, and support available to day care teachers in island schools.

A descriptive method was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews. The investigation adopted a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design.

Six (6) day care teachers from the island schools in the District of Concepcion were purposefully selected as participants for the School Year 2023-2024.

The data collection tool for the study was a specially crafted interview schedule created by the researcher. Depending on the consent of the participants, audio and video recorders were also utilized for gathering data and documentation.

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Feedback, modifications, and recommendations from the panel of validators concerning the elements of the interview schedule were considered and incorporated to come up with the final interview schedule.

The study's findings are as follows:

The most common educational materials used in teaching day care in the island schools are story books, visual materials, and localized materials that were carefully made and chosen according to the developmental needs of the children.

On the other hand, the teaching practices that are significant to the learning outcomes of day care are utilizing of available resources, exposing children to outdoor activities, and providing children with the interactive activities to stimulate their learning.

Due to the limited resources of materials and opportunities for day care teachers in the island schools, it is expected to ask for the support of the government and the community in helping day care children to obtain quality education.

Thus, the construction and repair of classroom, honorarium of day care teachers, supplemental feeding, preparation of food for feeding program, and cleaning of the center's surroundings are the support given by the government and the community to ease the burden of day care teachers in the island schools at improving early childhood education.

Given the findings of the study based on its phenomenological stand from the main themes, the following insights were drawn:

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Day care teachers use storybooks to help learners develop vocabulary, listening skills, and imagination. Visual resources are particularly beneficial in early childhood education because young learners are more engaged when presented with pictures, colors, and visual stimuli. On the other hand, using localized resources foster a sense of identification and belonging among young learners. The use of localized resources may also reflect day care teachers' ingenuity in the island schools especially in the kind of location where commercial teaching aids are limited or expensive.

Day care teachers in the island schools utilizing available resources demonstrate adaptability and ingenuity, particularly in circumstances where educational materials may be restricted. The emphasis on outdoor activities, however, reflects the importance of experiential and play-based learning in early childhood education and significantly helpful to day care teachers teaching in the island schools. Also, the utilization of interactive activities stimulates the senses of the children which helps them adapt to the different learning styles, allowing them to retain more knowledge and build critical thinking skills. Additionally, government's commitment to building and maintaining classrooms, making sure it's in good condition, shows a dedication of the government to providing equal access to education and enhancing young children's entire learning experience. Inclusion of an honorarium is also important for day care teachers which indicates the government's dedication to promoting and encouraging early childhood education most importantly for the teachers in island schools. The government's support for supplemental feeding program is another assistance that demonstrates a fundamental awareness of the relationship between nutrition and learning

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results. The active participation of community members in preparing meals for the feeding program and cleaning the center in the island schools demonstrates a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for early education.

Lastly, provided with all these insights on the teaching resources or materials, day care teachers teaching practices, government-supports initiative and community involvement often work best when combined with all the efforts needed.

## CONCLUSION

Given the results and outcomes of the study, the following points are recommended for future considerations:

It is recommended that provision of sufficient teaching resources should be guaranteed to day care teachers for effective and quality delivery of education for the benefits of the students and for best teaching and learning outcomes.

Active support for localized materials development from the community itself may allow teachers create lessons that are more engaging and meaningful for students, fostering better comprehension, and makes learning accessible and relatable, increasing student motivation and participation.

Strengthening training and professional growth for day care teachers to guarantee the provision of exceptional early childhood education and care, and equip them with the new pedagogical techniques and teaching strategies.

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Increased budget allocation for day care by ensuring that young children have access to safe, nurturing environments that promote their physical, cognitive, and social development.

The government and the community should push through infrastructure development to provide day care children a safe, engaging, and healthy environment which will promote children's holistic development, provide modern educational resources, accommodate more children, support day care teachers, engage community, and foster long-term sustainability for the future of early childhood education.

Increase subsidies for day care teachers by providing them financial stability essential in promoting and improving their well-being and ensuring the sustainability of their professional development which will enhance the overall learning outcomes.

Promote community involvement by creating a nurturing, supportive, and enriching environment for young children through active participation in day care educational system. This will enhance the quality of care, strengthens relationship between families and caregivers, and contribute to children's holistic development.

Lastly, a similar research study should be conducted and may consider other variables not used in this study.

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