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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Evaluation of Teaching Strategies Used in Teaching and Learning in Public Pre-Primary Schools in Sikonge District, Tabora-Tanzania

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Author's Contributions

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate teaching strategies used in teaching and learning in public pre-primary schools in Sikonge District, Tabora-Tanzania. The study was guided by Constructivist Learning Theory founded by Jean Piaget (1970) and later expanded by Lev Vygotsky (1978). This study employed mixed research approach with an explanatory sequential design. The study used the sample size of 97 respondents including 81 teachers using stratified and simple random sampling, 11 head teachers, 4 WEOs and 1 DEO which were selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The validity of instruments was conducted using face and content validity while the reliability coefficient of 0.769. Research instruments were analysed SPSS version 26 for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative findings. The study found that teachers in public pre-primary schools use various interactive teaching strategies such as play-based learning, storytelling, real objects, group work, outdoor activities, and question-and-answer strategies which enhance children's engagement, communication, critical thinking, and overall learning. Despite limited resources, teachers creatively adapt these strategies to suit learners' needs, although challenges like overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials, and insufficient training persist. The study recommends increased government and stakeholder support through regular teacher training and provision of adequate teaching materials. It also calls for improved infrastructure, reduced class sizes, and safe outdoor spaces to enhance the quality of early childhood education.

Keywords: Teaching strategies; teaching and learning process; pupils in public pre-primary schools

INTRODUCTION

The efficiency of teaching and learning is greatly influenced by the teaching strategies employed, especially in pre-primary education. Effective strategies that align with young learners' developmental stages enhance a teacher's ability to engage students, promote positive attitudes, and improve educational outcomes at this foundational level. The choice and implementation of teaching strategies also play a critical role in transmitting cultural values, technical skills, and

knowledge to future generations, broadening the country's perspective and fostering long-term development (Canuto et al., 2024).

Early childhood education is globally recognized as the foundation for lifelong learning and development. Countries like Finland, Japan, and the United States have adopted innovative teaching strategies in their pre-primary education systems, such as learning through play, inquiry-based learning, and learner-directed approaches. These strategies actively engage

young learners, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and social skills during the early stages of development (Parker et al., 2022; Ukamaka, 2024). These countries implement teaching methods that align with global education frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which advocates for inclusive and quality education at all levels (Wang et al., 2025). Research indicates that such teaching strategies positively influence children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, setting a strong foundation for future learning (Vindigni, 2024).

In Africa, countries including Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana have made notable progress in applying child-centered teaching strategies to enhance the teaching and learning process in pre-primary education (Akkari, 2024; Wolf et al., 2019). For instance, Kenya's curriculum reforms emphasize play-based and activity-based teaching strategies that encourage exploration and interaction among young learners (Okiyo & Muema, 2021). South Africa focuses on inclusive teaching strategies that address diverse learner needs, ensuring equitable access to quality education (Malahlela & Johnson, 2024). Despite these efforts, many African countries face inadequate teacher training, limited instructional resources, and inconsistent application of modern teaching strategies (Akpala et al., 2025).

Tanzania has increasingly prioritized improving teaching strategies within its pre-primary education sector. The government introduced the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) to shift from traditional teacher-centered approaches toward more learner-centered, competency-focused teaching methods (Nkya et al., 2021). The CBC encourages the use of interactive and participatory teaching strategies that promote active learning and critical thinking among young children. However, many public pre-primary schools still rely heavily on conventional strategies like teacher demonstrations and rote learning, largely due to constraints such as limited teaching materials and inadequate ongoing professional development for educators. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of innovative teaching strategies (Ngumbi, 2022).

Similarly, Sikonge District reflects the broader national context but also faces distinct challenges in applying effective teaching strategies in public pre-primary schools. Schools in Sikonge struggle with poor infrastructure, scarcity of teaching aids, and limited opportunities for continuous professional development

for teachers. Although there is growing awareness among educators about the importance of learner-centered and competency-based teaching strategies, their consistent application during the teaching and learning process remains limited. This study sought to evaluate teaching strategies used in teaching and learning process among pupils in public pre-primary schools in Sikonge District, Tabora region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Constructivist Learning Theory founded by Jean Piaget (1970) and later expanded by Lev Vygotsky (1978), is based on the assumption that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment and others. Piaget emphasized that children learn by connecting new ideas to prior knowledge through exploration and reflection, while Vygotsky introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), highlighting the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning (Lasmawan & Budiarta, 2020). The theory stresses active, student-centered learning, which promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and deeper understanding rather than rote memorization (Alahmad, 2020). The theory supports the use of teaching strategies that promote play-based, inquiry-driven, and collaborative learning experiences and teacher's role being guiding learning, engaging and managing the classroom effectively.

Empirical Review

In China, Sun (2022) studied preschool education. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, including document synthesis, qualitative interviews, and a case study design to explore effective teaching strategies that engage pupils. The sample size used was 20 teachers and 20 parents. The findings revealed that pupils have diverse interests. Teachers can enhance learning by integrating varied teaching resources, such as stories, games, riddles, aphorisms, pictures, and videos, to stimulate pupils' interest and foster active learning. The result implies that by diversifying teaching strategies and resources, teachers can improve pupils' motivation, participation, and learning outcomes.

In Bangladesh, a research study by Das and Diba (2024) examined play as a teaching method in pre-primary education. A qualitative method was used in the research. Interviews and a convenience sample approach were employed to collect data from the

participants. Ten individuals in all were questioned. The study found that, except for the sand and water corner, teachers frequently employed "free play" and "guided play" in the classroom and highly believed play as an educational method. Several characteristics, including the quantity and quality of play resources, the teacher-to-student ratio, and the scarcity of pre-primary classrooms, were also shown to impact teachers' use of play as an educational technique in these settings. This suggests that the efficiency of play-based learning in pre-primary schools may be increased by offering sufficient play items, keeping a proper teacher-student ratio, and resolving the space problem.

In Kenya, a research study by Okello et al. (2022) examined how play is used as a teaching approach in public pre-primary schools. A descriptive survey design using a mixed technique was used. The study's target population consisted of 27 public pre-primary schools. Simple random and purposive sampling methods were used. An observation guide and questionnaires were used to gather data. Through test-retest and piloting, the instruments' validity and reliability were examined. According to the study, teachers may significantly increase children's engagement in play by helping with problem-solving, asking probing questions, and directing role-playing. They use various materials, including games, music, and books, to encourage group work, problem-solving, and skill development. Teachers also help select and improvise play materials, ensuring inclusive participation and enhancing the learning experience. Furthermore, the study does not address challenges teachers may face in consistently facilitating inclusive play, such as limited resources or time constraints.

In Tanzania, Libent-Mabagala and Shukia (2019) evaluated the pre-primary teachers' implementation of the recently established Pre-Primary Education Curriculum regarding their knowledge and methods. Nineteen rural pre-primary teachers from the Mwanza and Morogoro areas participated in the descriptive survey design. Classroom observations and a questionnaire with Likert scales were used to gather data. The results demonstrated that teachers understood the value of play and the goals of pre-primary education, despite their limited expertise in early childhood education. Nevertheless, there was no visible relationship between their knowledge and behaviours, and their teaching methods were inadequate. Hence, teachers must receive ongoing in-

service training to advance their expertise and education methods.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a mixed research approach and explanatory sequential design, where quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to deepen understanding. The targeted population included 811 teachers, 109 headteachers, 20 ward education officers (WEOs), and 1 District Education Officer (DEO) total 941 individuals. Using a combination of purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling, a total sample of 97 respondents was selected, including 81 teachers, 11 head teachers, 4 WEOs, 1 DEO. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for teachers, semi-structured interviews for DEO, WEOs, and headteachers, and non-participatory observation. Validity was ensured through face and content validation by supervisors, while reliability was confirmed via a test-retest method yielding a coefficient of 0.769; qualitative trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 with descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. Ethical considerations maintained voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality, and adhering to APA 7th edition standards.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Strategies Used in Teaching and Learning in Public Pre-Primary Schools

The evaluated teaching strategies used in teaching and learning in public pre-primary schools. The result of this objective was collected through a Likert scale added to the questionnaire, interviews, and observations. In collecting data for this objective teacher first was required to indicate SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, and SA=Strongly agree, followed by findings from the interview, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 above describes Teaching Strategies Used in Teaching and Learning in Public Pre-Primary Schools as explained below.

Play-Based Learning

Table 1 presents teachers' responses to different teaching strategies they use in public pre-primary schools. The first item asked whether teachers use play-based learning to help children stay engaged during lessons. Most teachers agreed that 50 (61.7%)

and 21 (25.9%) strongly agreed. Only 1 teacher (1.2%) strongly disagreed, 3 (3.7%) disagreed, and 6 (7.4%) were undecided. This shows that play-based learning is

widely used and accepted as an effective method in pre-primary schools: During the interview, one of interviewee was quoted saying:

Table 1. Teachers' response to teaching strategies used in teaching and learning in public pre-primary schools

Items	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers use play-based learning to enhance children's engagement in lessons.	1	1.2	3	3.7	6	7.4	50	61.7	21	25.9
Teachers include storytelling and songs to develop language and listening skills.	1	1.2	2	2.5	3	3.7	36	44.4	39	48.1
Teachers use real objects to make learning more interactive and practical.	1	1.2	2	2.5	5	6.2	48	59.3	25	30.9
Teachers encourage group work and peer learning to promote social and cognitive development.	1	1.2	4	4.9	5	6.2	27	33.3	44	54.3
Teachers integrate outdoor learning activities to support children's development.	6	7.4	6	7.4	3	3.7	38	46.9	28	34.6
Teachers apply the question-and-answer method to stimulate interest and critical thinking.	-	-	5	6.2	1	1.2	46	56.8	29	35.8

Source: Field Data (2025)

Teachers understand that play is not just for fun, it is part of learning. And always I insist that teachers use play and games in teaching this young child, but. The biggest challenge in my school is lack of enough toys and classroom space. Some teachers bring homemade play materials, which show their commitment, but we need more support. (H2, July 2025)

This implies that play-based learning helps children to build confidence, social skills, and understanding of practical. However, the lack of materials and space limits makes teaching and learning difficult. Schools need more support to play more effectively. This aligns with Donasco and Vertulfo (2024), who demonstrated kindergarten teachers' vital role in encouraging play-based learning, stressing the importance of self-gratification, tolerance, strategic thinking, and attention to pupils' needs in creating an effective learning environment. Likewise, constructivist learning theory shows that children learn best when actively involved in their learning process through exploration, experimentation, and interaction with their environment. It supports the idea that knowledge is not passively

received but built through experiences, making play-based learning an essential and natural pathway for cognitive, social, and emotional development in early childhood education. Therefore, kindergarten teachers should actively reflect on their teaching practices by integrating these four elements identified as key components of the constructive journey in early education.

During the observation, the researcher observed presences of playgrounds that help teachers use play-based learning more easily. A playground gives children space to run and play, making learning more fun and active. Teachers use the playground to teach through different games, group activities, and stories. This helps children learn by doing, not just by listening. The observer sees that when learning happens in the playground, children are more interested, they talk more, help each other, and enjoy the lesson. Also helps them understand things better. So, the playground supports play-based learning by giving a good space for fun and active lessons.

This means that a playground enhances play-based learning by promoting active participation, social interaction, and active experiences. This aligns with

constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that children construct knowledge through meaningful experiences, interaction with peers, and active engagement with their environment. In this way, the playground becomes not just a space for play, but a dynamic learning environment where learners build understanding through doing, exploring, and collaborating.

Storytelling and Songs

Next, teachers were asked if they use storytelling and songs to improve language and listening skills. 36 teachers (44.4%) agreed, and 39 (48.1%) strongly agreed. Very few disagreed, 1 (1.2%) strongly disagreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, and 3 (3.7%) were undecided. This shows that most pre-primary teachers use songs and stories in the teaching and learning process, which helps children enjoy learning and develop communication skills. Also, one of the interviewees said that:

Teachers use storytelling and local songs daily to capture children's attention and make it easier to teach language skills. Even without books or audio tools, teachers use their voices and creativity. This method is powerful, especially when teaching new vocabulary. What is missing is organized training on how to use stories to teach different topics (H1, July 2025)

This shows that storytelling and songs are good strategies in the teaching and learning process. It supports creativity and early language development. Pupils benefit from these methods, but more training is needed for teachers to help them apply different stories and make learning more effective. This aligns with Kaluba et al. (2021), who highlighted storytelling and role-playing as key activities fostering young children's creativity, social skills, and language development. Additionally, this connects with constructivist learning theory, which stresses that children build understanding through meaningful, interactive experiences in their cultural context. The use of storytelling and songs enables learners to engage actively in learning and promote deeper cognitive and social growth.

Use of Real Objects (Teaching Aids)

Teachers were also asked if they use real objects (teaching aids) to make lessons more practical. Again, the response was positive, 48 (59.3%) agreed, and 25 (30.9%) strongly agreed. Only 1 teacher (1.2%) strongly disagreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, and 5 (6.2%) were undecided. This means most teachers understand the

importance of using real-life materials to help children connect learning with the real world. Moreover, the interview indicated that:

Most teachers do their best to make learning real. Example most of the time, they use real teaching aids like cups, fruits, or even stones. This helps children connect school with everyday life. But in many schools here we have a shortage of teaching material that forces many teachers to buy or collect these objects themselves. (W1, July 2025).

This implies that real objects make learning real and understandable for young children. However, teachers should not have to depend on their resources. Government and stakeholders must supply affordable and appropriate teaching aids to all public pre-primary schools. Supporting this, Kaluba et al. (2021) showed that teachers employ various activities to create an environment where children can have fun while developing essential skills. These activities include puzzles and construction blocks that help children learn problem-solving, and role-playing exercises that promote creativity, social skills, and language development. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through active experiences and interactions with their environment. Children build understanding by engaging with real objects and meaningful activities, fostering deeper learning and cognitive development.

Group Work and Peer Learning

Regarding group work and peer learning, 44 teachers (54.3%) strongly agreed and 27 (33.3%) agreed to use this method to support children's social and thinking skills. Only 1 (1.2%) strongly disagreed, 4 (4.9%) disagreed, and 5 (6.2%) were undecided. These results show that most teachers recognize that when children learn together, they develop teamwork and communication skills. Furthermore, one of the interviewees added that:

Group work is very helpful in teaching because it allows children to learn how to share, communicate, and solve problems together. It builds teamwork and social skills, which are very important. However, one of the main challenges we face is the lack of space, some classrooms are too crowded to allow proper group activities. Also, with large class sizes and only one teacher, it becomes difficult for the teacher to manage all the groups effectively simultaneously. To overcome this, we advise schools to organize children into small rotating

groups, so the teacher can focus on one group at a time while others are engaged in simple independent tasks. This makes group work more manageable and still keeps the benefits for the learners. (D, July 2025)

This means that group learning promotes communication, cooperation, and social development. Schools need better classroom space, manageable teacher-to-pupil ratios, and training on organizing and managing group tasks in large classes to make this more effective. This aligns with Bamuhiga and Kimambo (2025), who found that teachers use strategies like showing interest, encouraging learner independence, breaking classroom monotony, raising pupils' expectations of success, acknowledging accomplishments, and assigning engaging tasks such as interactive games and hands-on activities. These strategies significantly boost pupil motivation and active participation.

These findings also concurred with constructivist learning theory, which shows that learners construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration with others. According to this theory, social interaction in group settings enables children to build understanding by sharing ideas, negotiating meanings, and solving problems. Supported by skilled teacher facilitation and an enabling environment, effective group work fosters deeper learning and development, making constructivist principles central to early childhood education.

Outdoor Learning Activities

When asked about outdoor learning, 38 teachers (46.9%) agreed and 28 (34.6%) strongly agreed that they include outdoor activities in their lessons. However, 6 (7.4%) strongly disagreed, another 6 (7.4%) disagreed, and 3 (3.7%) were undecided. While a majority support outdoor learning, the small group who disagreed might be facing challenges like lack of space or teaching materials. Likewise, the interview conducted demonstrated that:

Here in our school sometimes I observe teachers taking learners outside of their class to play, count stones, jump and do other learning activities. But some schools are fenced poorly, and roads are busy so, outdoor learning becomes risky. We want to use it more, but we need safe school environments. Some parents also worry about safety during outdoor time (H 2, July 2025).

This shows that outdoor learning helps physical, social, and emotional development. However, care and poor infrastructure are barriers. Schools need safe, clean, and fenced outdoor areas to use outdoor learning fully and safely. This is supported by Das and Diba (2024), who found that, apart from the sand and water corner, teachers frequently employed free play and guided play in the classroom and highly regarded play as an educational method. Their study also highlighted several factors affecting play-based teaching, including the availability and quality of play resources, the teacher-student ratio, and the shortage of pre-primary classrooms. These elements influence how effectively teachers implement play as a learning strategy, underscoring the need for adequate facilities and resources to enhance outdoor and play-based learning experiences.

During observation, the researcher observes that schools have playgrounds, and children feel more comfortable and enjoy outdoor learning. Being outside in a wide-open space makes pupils relax and enjoy learning more. They can move around, talk with friends, and participate in fun activities without feeling too limited, like in a classroom. This makes them more interested and active. The researcher observes that children listen better, ask more questions, and remember things more easily when learning happens outside the classroom. So, playgrounds are not just for play it also helps to develop psychomotor skills and interaction skills that make learning easier and more fun for pupils. This means that playgrounds bring outdoor learning, makes children feel free and more comfortable to improve their focus, participation, and memory. It supports both their physical development (psychomotor skills) and their ability to communicate and work with others (interaction skills). This makes learning more engaging, effective, and enjoyable. This relates to constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learners build their own understanding through experiences, active involvement, and social interaction. Outside learning encourages learning by doing peer collaboration and makes learning-centered learning.

Question-and-Answer Method

Lastly, teachers were asked if they use the question-and-answer method to promote critical thinking. The results show strong agreement 46 teachers (56.8%) agreed, and 29 (35.8%) strongly agreed. None strongly disagreed, only 5 (6.2%) disagreed, and 1 (1.2%) was undecided. This shows that this method is highly valued as it helps children think, respond and actively learn.

Similarly, the interview conducted with one of the interviewees revealed that:

Asking questions makes children think, even a simple question like 'What color is this?' helps the child observe and respond. It trains them to speak and think critically from a young age. We advise teachers to use this method often, but they should also allow children to ask questions in return to make learning more interactive (H4, July 2025).

This shows that the question-and-answer method builds thinking, confidence, and memory. It is easy to apply and works in any setting. Teachers should be trained further to use open-ended questions and give children time to respond. Encouraging pupils to ask questions can make learning even more engaging. This aligns with Okello et al. (2022), who found that using probing questions significantly increases children's engagement, problem-solving, and participation in play activities. By asking thoughtful questions, teachers help children explore ideas and develop skills. These findings highlight how the question-and-answer method makes a powerful interactive tool in early childhood education. Moreover, this practice is grounded in constructivist learning theory, emphasising that children construct knowledge through interaction, dialogue, and reflection. Questioning fosters critical thinking by encouraging learners to explore, articulate their understanding, and engage in meaningful conversations. Thus, the question-and-answer method promotes cognitive development and supports social interaction and deeper learning, making it essential for effective teaching in pre-primary settings.

Teaching strategies help teachers to teach better and help pupils to learn more effectively. They give the teacher a clear way to explain lessons, manage the classroom and keep pupils interested. When a teacher uses the right strategy, like storytelling, songs, games, or asking questions, pupils understand the topic more easily. For example, using play in pre-primary classes makes learning fun and helps children stay focused. When pupils enjoy the lesson, they pay more attention and remember what they learn. This aligns with Ordu (2021), where teaching and learning activities are reflected not only in students' skills and attitudes but also in their research orientation. However, physical and social conditions can negatively impact the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, creating an enabling environment that supports effective teaching and learning is crucial. Furthermore, teachers must be

adequately trained in different teaching strategies and have a strong understanding of their subject matter to pass on accurate knowledge to students. Visual aids such as pictures, video clips, objects, and internet resources help students form real-life connections to the concepts being taught, enhancing their imagination and comprehension. During interviews, one of the interviewees explained that:

Teaching strategies like songs, group work, and using real objects help a lot of pupils learn better. Even in schools where we do not have many resources, our teachers remain creative, they use local materials and simple games and make lessons active and interesting. These methods keep children engaged, and they enjoy learning more. We see that children learn faster and remember more when they are involved in these activities, compared to just sitting and listening to the teacher talk (H 5, July 2025)

This means teachers use interactive teaching strategies like songs, group activities, and using real objects. Even in schools they face different challenges, teachers still find smart and creative ways to teach. They use things from their surrounding environment to create teaching strategies to make lessons fun and active. That makes children stay interested, enjoy school, and understand better than just sitting silently and listening to the teacher talk all the time so, learning by doing works better than just listening. Similarly, one of the interviewees said that:

We have seen that the classroom becomes more active when teachers use the right teaching strategies, especially play and storytelling. Children are more confident, they talk more, and they understand better. But some schools still lack support in terms of materials and teacher training, which limits the use of these good strategies (W3, July 2025)

This shows that teaching strategies are very helpful in improving children's learning and classroom behavior. They make lessons enjoyable and meaningful. However, the interviews also highlight a need for better support. If schools are given enough resources and training, teachers can use these strategies more effectively, leading to even better learning outcomes in public pre-primary education. Munna and Kalam (2021) support this by suggesting that providing positive and adequate formative and developmental feedback, along with the introduction of role-play, profoundly impacts

students' confidence and self-esteem. Their study also reveals that an active learning environment promotes inclusivity and improves faculty and student academic performance. Therefore, with sufficient support, teachers in public pre-primary schools can more effectively implement these strategies, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Also, teaching strategies support different learning styles. Not all children learn the same way. Some learn best by doing, some by looking at pictures, and others by listening. So, when a teacher uses different strategies, more pupils get a chance to learn in a way that suits them. Group work helps children learn from each other. Real objects help them see and touch what they are learning about. Outdoor learning gives them space to explore and connect with the world around them. In short, teaching strategies help make learning clear, active, and enjoyable for all pupils. Additionally, one of the interviewees added that:

When teachers use different teaching styles, I have seen that every child becomes part of the learning. For example, one child may not talk much, but when you give them objects to count or touch, they become happy and join the activity. Some children don't understand when you talk, but they learn quickly when they see pictures or sing a song. That is why I always encourage my teachers to combine methods, such as play, drawing, talking, and storytelling to reach every child. It makes a big difference (H6, July 2025).

This shows that headteachers recognize the importance of using multiple strategies to reach all learners. When teachers use different approaches, it includes children who might otherwise be left behind. The implication is that pre-primary teachers should be trained and supported to use different methods so that every child has a fair chance to learn, no matter what their learning style. Similarly, Sun (2022) revealed that pupils have various interests. Teachers can enhance learning by integrating varied teaching resources, such as stories, games, riddles, aphorisms, pictures, and videos, to stimulate pupils' interest and foster active learning. This implies that investing in comprehensive teacher training and resource provision is essential to create inclusive and effective learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all pre-primary pupils. Meanwhile, an interview with one of the interviewees revealed that:

We often observe that children are more active and involved when teachers allow different learning methods. A lesson that includes group work, hands-on activities, or storytelling is more effective than one where the teacher only talks. Sadly, some teachers use the same method every day. This is mostly because they lack teaching materials and are not trained in other ways. We must support these teachers more (W4, July 2025).

This highlights that while different strategies work well, some teachers do not use them due to a lack of training and teaching tools. This implies a need for ongoing professional development and a better supply of teaching resources. If teachers are supported with both skills and materials, they can adapt their teaching to suit different learners, leading to better results and fewer children falling behind. This aligns with constructivist learning theory, emphasising that learners build knowledge actively through experience and interaction. By employing learner-centered methods, teachers facilitate deeper understanding for each child, as another interviewee showed that:

Teaching strategies are not just about keeping children busy but also tools for making learning meaningful. These pupils are very young, and need teachers to use different strategies. For example, when we use outdoor activities or songs, these pupils become active learners, which helps the teacher identify pupils' differences. Unfortunately, not all teachers are trained to recognize these learning differences. We are working to build teacher capacity through refresher courses and classroom support (D, July 2025).

The interview clarifies that teaching strategies are essential for addressing different learning needs. Therefore, improving teacher training and classroom support is key to ensuring inclusive and effective learning in pre-primary education. This aligns with Sun (2022), who emphasized integrating varied teaching resources to stimulate interest and foster active learning. Moreover, it reflects the principles of constructivist learning theory, which advocates learner-centered approaches that build knowledge through experience and interaction, ensuring that every child's unique learning needs are met. The findings strongly suggest different and interactive teaching strategies to be used for effective learning in public pre-primary schools. Teaching strategies such as play-based

learning, storytelling, songs, using real objects, group work, outdoor activities, and question-and-answer methods significantly enhance children's engagement, foster critical thinking, and support various learning styles. While teachers demonstrate these strategies with limited resources, there is a need for increased support in terms of materials, adequate classroom space and continuous professional development for better teaching and learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that teachers in public pre-primary schools use a variety of teaching strategies that positively impact pupils' learning and engagement. These strategies include play-based learning, storytelling, the use of real objects, group work, outdoor activities, and the question-and-answer method. The findings showed that these approaches help improve children's communication, participation, confidence, and ability to understand and retain new concepts. Most teachers actively apply these methods despite facing challenges such as large class sizes, limited classroom space, a shortage of teaching materials, and inadequate training. The study also found that teachers often use their creativity to overcome resource constraints, such as by using locally available materials for teaching. Overall, the study concluded that while the use of diverse teaching strategies is common and beneficial in pre-primary education, there is a pressing need for improved support systems to ensure these methods are effectively implemented.

The study recommends that the government, education stakeholders, and school administrators provide increased support to teachers in public pre-primary schools to enhance the implementation of effective teaching strategies. Specifically, the study recommended regular in-service training and professional development programs to equip teachers with skills in using diverse, child-centered teaching approaches. It also recommended that schools be supplied with adequate and age-appropriate teaching and learning materials, such as toys, storybooks, and real-life objects, to support practical and engaging lessons. Additionally, the study recommended improving classroom infrastructure, reducing pupil-teacher ratios, and ensuring that schools have safe and well-maintained outdoor spaces to support active learning. Finally, the study recommended that education policies prioritize early childhood education through better funding, curriculum flexibility, and

community involvement to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all learners in public pre-primary schools.

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