

# Transition of Kindergarten to Grade One Learners: Teachers' Standpoint

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**Abstract.** This study explored the perspectives of Grade One teachers on the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One. Ten (10) Grade One teachers from Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental, participated in the research. Employing a phenomenological approach, the study gathered in-depth insights through individual interviews and focus group discussions to uncover their experiences, coping mechanisms, and reflections. Thematic analysis revealed key themes related to their experiences, including academic transition, social-emotional readiness, and teacher professional development. In addressing challenges, the teachers employed strategies categorized under three themes: emotional regulation and stress management, collaborative planning, and strategic organization. Insights generated from the study included the integration of social-emotional learning into curriculum and instruction, implementation of play-based learning, continuity between Kindergarten and Grade One, and data-driven decision-making alongside sustained professional development. The findings underscore the critical influence of effective transition practices on learners' early academic success, particularly in literacy, emotional well-being, and adjustment to structured learning environments.

**KEY WORDS** 1. Transition 2. kindergarten 3. grade one 4. teacher's standpoint  
connections

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## 1. Introduction

As a teacher deeply invested in the early years of a child's academic journey, I have come to recognize that the transition from kindergarten to Grade 1 is more than just a shift in grade level; it is a profound change that significantly shapes a child's foundation for future learning. This phase is often marked by a range of challenges, including adjusting to more formal routines, heightened academic expectations, and the need for increased independence, particularly in literacy and numeracy tasks. I chose

to explore this topic because I have witnessed firsthand how this critical transition can either support or hinder a child's development. Some children thrive, while others struggle with the sudden demands of a more structured classroom environment. These early struggles, if left unaddressed, can have lasting impacts on their confidence, social-emotional well-being, and overall academic success. This study aims to shed light on the real experiences surrounding this pivotal transition, including both the strug-

gles and the practical strategies. By listening to the voices of teachers and examining classroom practices, I hope to generate meaningful insights that may benefit early childhood educators, curriculum developers, school administrators, and policymakers. The goal is to help create a more seamless and supportive bridge between Kindergarten and Grade 1, one that nurtures young learners as they take their first significant steps into formal schooling. In Australia, teachers report challenges related to varying levels of school readiness among children. Many children enter Grade One without the necessary foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, which can lead to difficulties in adapting to formal learning (Peters et al., 2021). Hence, there is often a misalignment between early childhood education frameworks and primary school expectations, resulting in gaps in curriculum continuity. To address these issues, there is a need for stronger communication and collaboration between early childhood educators and Grade One teachers to ensure a smoother transition. In New Zealand, the focus is on culturally responsive practices during the transition. Māori children, in particular, face unique challenges as they transition from kindergarten to primary school. The gap lies in the lack of culturally aligned teaching practices that honor Māori traditions and values. The authors suggest that integrating culturally responsive pedagogies into both kindergarten and Grade One can bridge these gaps and support a more inclusive transition for indigenous students (Berryman and Lawrence, 2023). In South Africa, teachers face the challenge of language barriers during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One, especially for children whose home language differs from the language of instruction. This linguistic gap leads to difficulties in both academic achievement and social integration. Teachers emphasize the need for bilingual support programs and additional professional development opportunities to equip them with

practical strategies for supporting linguistically diverse students during this transition (Naude et al., 2023). In the Philippines, the transition from kindergarten to Grade One presents a Challenge for Teachers, who often express concerns about the readiness of students in terms of cognitive, social, and emotional development. The K to 12 curriculum has aimed to bridge these gaps, but teachers have reported that the disparity in students' foundational skills remains significant (Buendicho, 2021). Many teachers argue that the focus on academic readiness in Grade One overlooks the importance of socio-emotional development that is nurtured in Kindergarten (Mercado Delos Santos, 2023). Hence, insufficient training and resources for Kindergarten teachers to align their teaching methods with the expectations of Grade One have been cited as a significant issue (Manalo and Tamayo, 2022). The lack of coordination between Kindergarten and Grade One curricula has also been a source of concern, leading to mismatches in learning goals and instructional strategies (Santos and Reyes, 2024). In Davao Oriental, the transition from Kindergarten to Grade One poses significant challenges and issues, particularly regarding students' preparedness and the alignment of curriculum expectations. Many students entering Grade One in rural areas, such as Davao Oriental, demonstrate a lack of foundational skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, which are crucial for early grade success. Teachers have reported that these challenges are compounded by the socio-economic conditions in the region, which contribute to the lack of support for early childhood education at home (Lumaban, 2022). This issue is highlighted by those who have found that many parents in rural Davao Oriental are unable to provide the necessary home-based learning support, resulting in learning gaps even before children enter formal schooling. Hence, considering all the existing issues, the research highlighted the need for better communication between kindergarten and primary school teach-

ers, the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive practices, and the necessity of parental involvement.

*1.1. Purpose of the Study*—The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of teachers regarding the transition of students from kindergarten to Grade One, with a focus on the challenges and solutions they encounter. The phenomenological approach is particularly well-suited to this research because it seeks to capture the subjective perspectives and deep insights of teachers who were directly involved in the transition process. By exploring these experiences, the study aimed to reveal the complexities of how children adapt to the structural and pedagogical shift from play-based learning in kindergarten to more formal academic expectations in Grade One. This study aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the difficulties that teachers face during this transition period, including issues related to student readiness, curriculum alignment, teaching strategies, and parental involvement. This allowed teachers to express their thoughts and feelings about the barriers they experience, such as varying student preparedness, socio-economic factors, and gaps in professional development. The research also

focused on the emotional and cognitive adjustments students must make and how teachers perceive their roles in facilitating a smoother transition. Furthermore, the study sought to identify solutions and strategies that teachers believe could mitigate these challenges. By listening to teachers' voices, the study aimed to highlight practical approaches for improving student readiness, curriculum coherence, and teacher training. The phenomenological inquiry may provide a platform for teachers to share their insights on what has worked in their classrooms and what support they may need from educational systems to ensure a successful transition for their students. Moreover, the findings of this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the critical early education transition phase and offer recommendations to policymakers, school administrators, and other educators for enhancing student success in the transition from kindergarten to Grade One.

*1.2. Research Questions*—In line to explore the experiences of teachers on the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One, including the coping mechanisms with the challenges that they encountered, this study specifically sought answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of teachers on the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One?
- (2) How do teachers cope with the challenges encountered on the transition from kindergarten to Grade One?
- (3) What insights can be drawn from the study?

Experiences of teachers on the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One may include aligning curricula, providing professional development for teachers, implementing targeted intervention programs to support children with varying readiness levels, and providing insights for educators and policymakers on practical instructional approaches. This study may find significance in the following:

Learners

They may adapt to the changing learning environment, which shifts from a play-based, exploratory approach in kindergarten to a more structured, formal learning approach in Grade One. Learners are expected to develop self-regulation gradually, focus on tasks, and participate actively in classroom activities that require increased attention and discipline. Their ability

to transition smoothly depends on their readiness to handle more advanced cognitive tasks, follow instructions, and engage with the curriculum at a higher level of complexity. They may also adjust to the new social and behavioral expectations of Grade One, such as working independently, collaborating with peers in a more structured way, and adhering to school routines. Teachers

They may adapt instructional strategies to bridge the gap between the play-based, exploratory learning in kindergarten and the more structured curriculum of Grade One. They may also assess students' readiness and provide differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. They may facilitate the development of foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional growth, ensuring that children feel supported during this significant transition. To fully understand the terms used in this study, the following were defined operationally:

**Transition from Kindergarten to Grade One** Defined as the process in which young learners shift from a play-based, child-centered learning environment in kindergarten to a more structured, formal education system in Grade One. This transition involves adjusting to increased academic expectations, developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills, following more rigid schedules, and adapting to changes in social dynamics and classroom routines.

#### Teachers' Standpoint

These refer to their perceptions, attitudes, and observed experiences of Grade One teachers regarding the readiness, challenges, and support needed for young learners as they move from early childhood education to formal schooling.

**1.3. Review of Significant Literature—** This section synthesizes current research regarding the transition of learners from Kindergarten to Grade One, focusing on (1) teacher experiences, (2) coping mechanisms for challenges,

and (3) insights gained from these experiences.

#### **1.3.1. Experiences of Teachers on the Transition from Kindergarten to Grade One—**

The transition to Grade One is a pivotal developmental phase. Teachers often observe significant variability in children's readiness—particularly in literacy, numeracy, attention span, and self-regulation (Karabay Tezci, 2022). Structured early childhood programs that strengthen executive functions and academic content improve both cognitive outcomes and social integration in Grade One (Farrington et al., 2022).

To accommodate these readiness gaps, teachers employ differentiated instruction and formative assessment strategies (Miller Almon, 2023). However, beyond academics, social-emotional skills such as emotional regulation, empathy, and communication are essential for classroom adjustment (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Teachers note challenges, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in supporting emotional development (Watson Lee, 2022). Positive teacher-student relationships and the use of social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies are effective in easing these transitions (Nguyen et al., 2023; Martinez Garcia, 2023).

Clear behavioral expectations and consistent reinforcement are vital for children transitioning from play-based to formal learning settings (Green et al., 2021; Perez Garcia, 2022). Without strong social-emotional foundations, some learners struggle with self-regulation and classroom norms, potentially hindering academic performance (Smith et al., 2020; Levy Kim, 2021). Home-school collaboration further supports behavioral development (Martinez et al., 2023).

#### **1.3.2. Coping Mechanisms for Transition Challenges—**

Both teachers and students face challenges in navigating the academic and social demands of Grade One. Teachers incorporate play-based learning and scaffolding to

ease students into structured routines (Pyle et al., 2021; Parker Thomsen, 2023). Unrealistic parental expectations often place additional pressure on students and teachers, especially regarding early academic performance (Jenkins Taylor, 2021; Lee et al., 2022).

Parental involvement—through reinforcement at home, setting routines, and open communication with teachers—has been shown to positively influence children’s adjustment (Martinez Garcia, 2023; Robinson Harris, 2020). Programs that orient parents to Grade One expectations are also helpful (Simpson et al., 2021; Epstein, 2023).

Teachers foster emotional security by creating supportive classroom environments and using storytelling, peer collaboration, and visual cues to build confidence (Dabkowski Patton, 2020; Margetts, 2022). Ongoing professional development and teacher collaboration further support the successful implementation of transition strategies (Jones et al., 2024).

*1.3.3. Insights from Teachers’ Experiences*—Effective transitions require continuity between preschool and Grade One curricula. Familiar schedules and learning methods ease children’s adjustment (Stafford, 2020). Incorporating children’s voices into curriculum design can further improve responsiveness and relevance, promoting smoother transitions (Loizou, 2020).

Parental teaching strategies also play a key role. When parents adapt their approaches based on their child’s current literacy level, it results in better literacy development and more successful transitions (Guo et al., 2020). This bidirectional relationship between children’s progress and parental involvement reinforces the value of flexible, individualized support at home.

*1.4. Synthesis*—The transition from kindergarten to Grade 1 is a pivotal stage in a child’s educational journey, with lasting impacts on academic and socio-emotional development.

Research has explored various dimensions of this transition, emphasizing the significance of curriculum alignment, instructional strategies, and parental involvement. Scholars such as Jones et al. (2024) and Margetts (2022) stress that mismatches between kindergarten and Grade 1 curricula can hinder student adjustment, while Epstein (2023) highlights how active parental support eases this process. Teachers play a key role in guiding this transition but face challenges when moving from play-based to more structured learning environments. Studies by Karabay and Tezci (2022) and Bennett et al. (2021) highlight the need for gradual instructional adjustments to meet the needs of young learners. Meanwhile, researchers such as Miller and Almon (2023) stress that developing socio-emotional skills is crucial, as emotional struggles in Grade 1 often relate to academic difficulties. The literature also highlights the importance of teacher preparedness and collaboration. Martinez and Garcia (2023) argue that targeted professional development provides teachers with strategies to manage transitions effectively, while Perez and Garcia (2022) demonstrate that collaborative planning between kindergarten and Grade 1 educators enhances continuity of learning. Building on these findings, this study aimed to explore teachers’ lived experiences in supporting learners during this critical phase, with the goal of informing practices that promote smoother transitions and better educational outcomes.

*1.5. Theoretical Lens*—In exploring teachers’ experiences with the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One, a strong theoretical framework that helps understand this process is Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (1978), which highlights the importance of social interaction, language, and culture in cognitive development. This theory suggests that transitioning to Grade One involves more than just academic skills; it also encompasses the child’s social and emotional readiness, which is signifi-



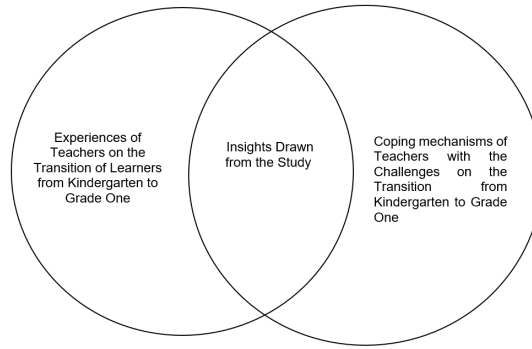


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

cantly influenced by the teacher's guidance and interactions within the classroom community. Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) can explain how teachers provide scaffolding to support students as they shift from the informal environment of kindergarten to the more structured learning in Grade One. Furthermore, this is supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which offers a broader perspective for understanding the transition from kindergarten to Grade One. The theory suggests that a child's development is influenced by multiple environmental layers, ranging from immediate settings such as the family and school to broader societal impacts. According to this framework, the transition is affected not only by teachers but also by parents, peers, and the wider community, making it a complex experience. Regarding transition, the microsystem (home, classroom) and mesosystem (interaction between home and school) play key roles in how well children adapt to the new expectations of Grade One. Recent research has

applied these theories to studying the transition from kindergarten to Grade One, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach. Studies by Santos et al. (2023) found that teachers' perceptions of students' readiness for Grade One are strongly influenced by their understanding of the child's social and emotional development, which aligns with Vygotsky's theory. Additionally, Nguyen and Garcia (2022) examined how the broader educational system (macrosystem) influences this transition, particularly through policies that shape early childhood education frameworks and teacher preparation. Teachers' perspectives, as examined by Tan and Lim (2021), also highlight the importance of collaborative relationships between Kindergarten and Grade One teachers, demonstrating how consistency in teaching practices (such as routines, structure, and emotional support) can improve students' adjustment to school life. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's focus on interconnectedness across developmental settings.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, participants, data collection methods, the role of the researcher, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. The study focuses on the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers in Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental, as they support learners transitioning from Kindergarten to Grade One. The chosen methodology aims to capture authentic insights into how teachers manage the academic and socio-emotional challenges of this critical stage.

*2.1. Philosophical Assumptions of the Study*—This study was guided by a qualitative philosophical framework that shaped the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. These assumptions provided the lens through which the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers in the Governor Generoso-North District were explored. As described by Khalifa and Khalifa (2024), qualitative research is rooted in four major philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. Throughout the research process, I remained aware of these assumptions and their impact on both my engagement with the participants and the interpretations drawn from their narratives.

#### Ontology

Ontology refers to the study of beliefs about the nature of reality. In this study, reality was viewed as multiple and subjective, shaped by the personal and professional experiences of the Grade One teachers who manage the transition of learners from kindergarten. Grounded in a constructivist worldview, the study recognized that each participant's reality was formed through their individual interactions, challenges, and coping strategies. The participants described their perspectives on classroom readiness, learner behavior, and instructional shifts, revealing diverse and meaningful understandings of the transition process within their school contexts.

#### Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the acquisition of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In this research, knowledge emerged through close engagement with the Grade One teachers. I immersed myself in their working environment and fostered a respectful and open atmosphere during interviews and conversations. The insights gathered were deeply rooted in the teachers' voices, allowing for an authentic portrayal of how they managed the transition from kindergarten to Grade

One. Their stories became the foundation for understanding what works, what challenges persist, and how they respond with practical coping mechanisms. Axiology

Axiology focuses on the role of values and ethics in the research process. I acknowledged from the outset that my own beliefs and values, as well as those of the participants, would shape the inquiry. I approached the study with transparency and sensitivity, ensuring that each participant's voice was honored and represented with integrity. I valued the emotional weight behind their narratives, mainly when they discussed their struggles and triumphs in supporting young learners. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' lived experiences, were consistently upheld throughout the research process.

#### Rhetoric

The rhetorical assumption in qualitative research relates to the language and narrative style used to convey findings. In line with this, the study employed a personal and reflective tone using the first-person voice, consistent with the phenomenological approach. The narratives were presented in a literary and descriptive style, capturing the emotional depth and contextual richness of the teachers' experiences. Through this approach, the findings highlighted not only the strategies used by teachers but also the meanings they attached to their everyday efforts to ease the transition for young learners.

*2.2. Qualitative Assumptions*—Assumptions serve as the foundation for understanding the phenomenon under investigation. These must be clearly articulated to ensure the integrity and depth of the inquiry. In this study, qualitative assumptions guided both the design and the interpretation of findings, particularly in examining how Grade One teachers experienced and responded to the challenges of transitioning learners from Kindergarten. Barrick (2020) emphasizes that in-depth interviews, a common

qualitative technique, are critical for exploring participants' insights, perceptions, and lived experiences. Similarly, Hinton and Ryan (2020) emphasize the importance of qualitative interviews in eliciting rich, detailed accounts across various contexts. In this research, a phenomenological approach was employed, with in-depth interviews serving as the primary method of data collection. By being open and transparent about the assumptions underpinning the study, its credibility and trustworthiness were strengthened. They further assert that FGDs are essential in gathering rich, contextual data across disciplines, especially when the aim is to understand the complexity of participants' lived experiences. Within a phenomenological framework, FGDs complement individual interviews by revealing common patterns and shared meanings among participants. To ensure credibility and confirmability, researchers must clearly articulate their assumptions, positionality, and the rationale for using FGDs, thereby strengthening the study's validity and transparency. Neubauer et al. (2023) described phenomenology as uniquely suited to inquiries centered on lived experiences. It requires the researcher to engage with the philosophies that shape our understanding of human meaning. This study adopted phenomenology to uncover and interpret the real-world experiences of Grade One teachers as they navigated the complexities of learner transition from kindergarten. Lester, as cited by Bhandari (2020), explains that phenomenological research focuses on understanding experiences from the participant's viewpoint, emphasizing personal meaning and interpretation. This approach was appropriate given that the study aimed to explore how teachers managed the instructional, behavioral, and emotional shifts learners face during this crucial educational transition. Bhandari also asserts that qualitative research is grounded in language, experience, and meaning-making, rather than numbers, making it well-suited for exploring human stories.

The phenomenological design allowed for the collection of detailed narratives from teachers who directly experienced the phenomenon being studied. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, analyzed using horizontalization, and organized into themes that reflected psychological and experiential aspects. These themes were then combined into comprehensive textual (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced) descriptions, ultimately capturing the core of the teachers' lived realities.

However, the process was not without challenges. Conducting phenomenological research requires a deep understanding of its philosophical foundations. As the researcher, I had to bracket my assumptions to avoid bias and focus entirely on the participants' perspectives. I also had to carefully manage how and when to incorporate my interpretations without overshadowing the participants' voices. As Qutoshi (2021) notes, phenomenology offers a deeper perspective into the complexity of everyday human experience, enabling researchers to reflect critically and better understand social practices. This aligns with the study's goal: to explore the strategies and coping mechanisms Grade One teachers use to support learners transitioning from kindergarten. By emphasizing their voices and insights, the study provides a nuanced view of the practical and emotional challenges they encounter.

*2.3. Design and Procedure*—This study employed a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences and coping strategies of Grade One teachers during the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One. As Lester and Lester (2021) explain, phenomenological research aims to understand experiences from the individual's perspective, requiring the researcher to "bracket" or set aside preconceived notions and assumptions. This method emphasizes personal knowledge and subjectivity, al-



lowing a deep understanding of participants' motivations, actions, and perceptions beyond conventional wisdom. Following Qutoshi's (2021) perspective, data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently to illuminate the specific experiences of the teachers and identify the phenomena as perceived by those who live them. Phenomenology allowed the study to provide insightful descriptions that broaden understanding, refine perspectives, and reveal the essence of the teachers' realities in managing learners' transition challenges. To gather rich and meaningful data, in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions served as the primary method, offering access to the teachers' detailed accounts and personal viewpoints. Additionally, structured questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions were utilized to complement the interviews. These questionnaires were particularly useful for reaching teachers who were challenging to access due to their busy schedules or larger sample sizes, allowing for the efficient collection of substantial data. The open-ended questions encouraged respondents to elaborate on their experiences and provide deeper insights (Delve Limpaecher, 2022). The qualitative approach focused on obtaining a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, emphasizing depth rather than breadth. By working with a carefully selected sample, the study aimed to answer the "why" and "how" questions related to the transition experience, including participants' behaviors, tone, and nonverbal cues, which often add layers of meaning to their responses.

As the researcher, I engaged deeply in qualitative inquiry, which is inherently subjective and produces descriptive, narrative findings rather than numerical data. While statistical analysis is not applicable, the study employed a systematic coding process during data analysis to identify recurring themes and categories. This facilitated a structured interpretation of the data, allowing the findings to reflect commonalities and dif-

ferences in teachers' experiences and coping strategies.

**2.4. Ethical Considerations**—This study carefully addressed essential ethical principles to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of the Grade One teacher-respondents who participated in the study. Key considerations included confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and conducting the research with integrity and respect for all involved.

#### Social Value

This study highlighted the challenges of transitioning from Kindergarten to Grade One and the coping strategies used by teachers in the Governor Generoso-North District, Davao Oriental. Exploring teachers' experiences offers insights to improve teaching methods and policies to support learners during this crucial phase. The findings extended beyond teachers, offering practical recommendations for schools and local stakeholders to address transitional challenges better, particularly in resource-diverse areas where learners encounter obstacles. The outcomes aim to improve academic performance and smooth transitions for young learners, benefiting the community's educational growth and equity.

#### Informed Consent

In compliance with ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from all participating Grade 1 teachers prior to the collection of data. Respondents were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits in clear and accessible language. They assured that their participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Consent documentation was securely maintained, and any questions or concerns raised by participants were promptly and respectfully addressed, upholding respect for their autonomy. While the study posed minimal physical risk, it acknowledged the potential for emotional discomfort when discussing personal and professional challenges as-

sociated with the transition process. To mitigate this, questions were thoughtfully phrased with cultural sensitivity and respect. Confidentiality was rigorously protected by anonymizing data and safeguarding identities. The study's benefits are substantial, offering reflective opportunities for teachers and informing stakeholders about effective coping mechanisms and support strategies. This knowledge can enhance educational access and quality, benefiting both teachers and learners. Safety protocols were observed in all interactions, whether face-to-face or virtual. An academic ethics committee oversaw the research to ensure compliance with the highest ethical standards.

Strict adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 was observed to safeguard participants' personal information. All data collected was securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel. Personal identifiers were removed or encoded in reports and publications to maintain anonymity. Participants were fully informed about how their data would be handled, fostering transparency and trust.

**2.5. Research Participants**—The participants of this study consisted of ten (10) Grade One teachers from the Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental. To ensure the relevance and authenticity of the data, the participants were selected based on specific inclusion criteria. They were required to hold plantilla positions ranging from T1 to T3 and to have at least three years of teaching experience, which provided them with sufficient exposure to the curriculum and the challenges involved in the transition from Kindergarten to Grade One. All participants needed to have received a "Very Satisfactory" performance rating for three consecutive years, indicating consistent professional competence. Both male and female teachers were included to capture diverse perspectives. Importantly, participants were selected based on their direct experience in managing learners transitioning from Kinder-

garten to Grade One, ensuring their ability to provide relevant insights into challenges and coping mechanisms during this critical period. Willingness to participate voluntarily and availability during the data collection period were also essential criteria for participation. Furthermore, participants had to be accessible within the district to facilitate smooth communication and data gathering. Using purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, I intentionally selected six teachers for in-depth interviews (IDIs) and four additional teachers for focus group discussions (FGDs), focusing on those who were best suited to provide rich, authentic information aligned with the study's objectives.

**2.6. Research Instrument**—The study employed qualitative methods to establish credibility, transferability, and dependability in capturing the lived experiences of Grade One teachers during the transition of learners from Kindergarten to Grade One. Data collection involved audiotaped, one-on-one, unstructured interviews and discussions complemented by peer debriefing and field notes to enrich understanding and validate findings. Each participant engaged in a single interview session lasting approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, with all data collection completed within four days. It is essential to develop and test the instrument carefully to ensure it aligns with the research questions. Interview Guide

I developed five open-ended questions for the unstructured interviews, designed to elicit detailed narratives and deeper insights into teachers' experiences and coping strategies. These questions were carefully aligned with key themes found in the questionnaire to ensure consistency and triangulation of data. According to Fuster-Guillén (2023), in-depth interviews are valuable for exploring the subjective interpretations participants hold about their own experiences, capturing the meaning embedded in their biographies. The conversational style of the

interviews emphasized understanding the lived meaning of the teachers' experiences, while I remained attentive to avoiding imposing preconceived frameworks. In this study, six teachers participated in in-depth interviews (IDIs), providing individual perspectives on the challenges of transition and coping mechanisms. On the other hand, four teachers participated in focus group discussions (FGDs), which allowed for interactive and dynamic exchanges. FGDs facilitated richer data through group interaction, fostering the emergence of diverse viewpoints, debates, and shared reflections that individual interviews might not capture. As highlighted by Stewart and Shamdasani (2023), the group setting encourages participants to build on each other's responses, revealing collective experiences and insights. Krueger and Casey (2020) also emphasize that FGDs are effective for understanding both shared and divergent perspectives within a group, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of the phenomena under study. Together, these qualitative instruments provided a comprehensive approach to capturing the complexity of teachers' experiences and the strategies they employ to support learners' smooth transition from Kindergarten to Grade One in the local educational context.

**2.7. Role of the Researcher**—In this study, I played a central role in uncovering the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers in the Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental, as they navigated the transition of learners from Kindergarten to Grade One. The primary responsibility was to gain an understanding of the participants' thoughts, feelings, and perspectives, particularly on matters that may be personal or emotionally charged. I was committed to the ethical principles of educational research, aiming to generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge that can inform practice and policy. In this study, I played a central role in uncovering the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade

One teachers in the Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental, as they navigated the transition of learners from Kindergarten to Grade One. The primary responsibility was to gain an understanding of the participants' thoughts, feelings, and perspectives, particularly on matters that may be personal or emotionally charged. I was committed to the ethical principles of educational research, aiming to generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge that can inform practice and policy.

**Facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research** I served as the primary facilitator during the data-gathering process, conducting interviews and guiding participants through reflective discussions. To minimize personal biases, all responses and narratives were interpreted within the framework of existing literature and related studies, rather than the researcher's own beliefs or assumptions. This ensured that participants' voices were honored and authentically represented.

**Expert in Qualitative Methods** The study adhered to the principles and best practices of qualitative research. The researcher, in collaboration with a research adviser and knowledgeable professionals, ensured methodological rigor throughout the research process. This included conducting interviews according to the study design, performing field observations ethically and accurately, selecting meaningful artifacts and journal excerpts, and applying Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis with precision. Regular consultation and self-assessment further reinforced the researcher's competence and credibility.

#### **Data Collector and Keeper**

As a data collector, I utilized multiple recording methods, including handwritten notes, audio recordings, and, where applicable, video documentation, to ensure the richness and accuracy of the data. Once collected, the data must be carefully organized, documented, and stored in secure systems to prevent loss and unautho-

alized access. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of the participants' responses. Data were securely stored to maintain confidentiality and uphold ethical standards, given the sensitivity and relevance of the information collected. This work is essential to the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

#### Data Analyst

In analyzing the data, I sought to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. This involved systematic transcription, data checking, interpretative reading, coding, and the identification of recurring themes. Every effort was made to ensure that the participants' voices were faithfully represented and that findings accurately reflected their lived realities. Furthermore, I organized the presentation of findings in alignment with the research questions, supported by relevant literature. Themes were used to illustrate how the questions were addressed, while the implications of the findings were discussed in terms of educational policies and practices. Recommendations were also provided to guide future research and enhance transitional support for early-grade learners.

**2.8. Data Collection**—The data collection process for this study, which explored the experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers in the Governor Generoso-North District, Division of Davao Oriental, regarding the transition from kindergarten to Grade One, was systematically carried out in several phases. Proper planning and adherence to ethical standards are essential to ensure that the data is valid and unbiased. Following approval, I sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent in early April 2025. I submitted a letter requesting approval, along with Chapters 1 and 2 of the research and the interview guide, outlining the study's objectives and participant criteria. After receiving approval, I contacted school principals in the third week of April, sending letters to explain the study and secure

support for smooth implementation. In the same week, I met with selected participants to explain the study, obtain informed consent, and address ethical considerations, ensuring transparency and reducing anxiety. The data collection began then, including in-depth interviews and FGD using a semi-structured guide. Participants' demographics were recorded, and field notes and audio recordings were taken to ensure accurate transcription. Throughout, I remained attentive, responsive, and respectful. Transcription of Responses During the fourth week of April 2025, I transcribed the interviews verbatim. This involved reviewing and replaying the audio recordings to ensure accuracy and completeness in capturing the participants' narratives. **Data Coding and Thematization** In the fourth week of April 2025, the transcribed data were systematically analyzed. Responses were coded and categorized based on emerging patterns. Themes were then extracted through comparative analysis of individual accounts. This process enabled me to identify commonalities, differences, and significant insights related to the transition challenges and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers.

**Data Analysis** This study employed thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Grade One teachers. The analytical process followed Creswell's model of theme identification, a widely accepted method in qualitative research. Creswell (2012, as cited by Chali et al., 2022) emphasized that themes are aggregates of related codes that convey a significant idea emerging from the data. The analysis involved the following steps: Familiarization with the Data I began by immersing myself in the collected data, engaging in repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes to gain an in-depth understanding of the content. Initial observations and insights were noted to guide the subsequent coding process. This stage was essential in building fa-



miliarity with the context, tone, and meanings conveyed by the participants. Becoming thoroughly acquainted with the data helps identify potential issues such as inconsistencies, gaps, or outliers. Coding Coding involved identifying and labeling key features of the data that aligned with the research questions. These codes captured both the explicit (semantic) meanings and the underlying (conceptual) interpretations of the participants' responses. Each data item was carefully examined, and relevant extracts were collated under corresponding codes. This systematic approach helps to reduce large volumes of data into manageable and analyzable units. This step was not just about organizing the data but also about interpreting and making sense of it. Theme Development Following the coding phase, I grouped related codes to form preliminary themes. According to Fuchs (2023), thematic analysis offers a robust and flexible framework for exploring qualitative data, emphasizing the importance of iterative coding and careful refinement of themes. This step involved identifying recurring patterns and meaningful clusters within the data that addressed the central research question. Reviewing Themes Each theme was reviewed to ensure internal coherence and consistency. I examined whether the emerging themes accurately reflected the participants' narratives and whether they formed a compelling, data-driven story. Revisions were made to refine or merge themes where necessary, ensuring that the themes collectively represented the data as a whole. Defining and Naming Themes After finalizing the themes, I developed detailed descriptions for each one. These definitions effectively captured the essence of the themes and clarified their relationship to the study's objectives. Concise and descriptive labels were assigned to each theme to convey their meaning effectively. This step strengthens the clarity, depth, and trustworthiness of the research analysis. Writing and Interpretation The final stage involved crafting an analytic

narrative that integrated the identified themes with relevant data excerpts. This narrative was contextualized within the broader body of literature on early-grade education and transition-related challenges. The goal was to provide a clear, compelling, and evidence-based interpretation of the participants' experiences and coping mechanisms. Through this rigorous process, I was able to uncover rich insights into the lived experiences of Grade One teachers, offering meaningful contributions to educational policy and practice, particularly in supporting learners' smooth transition from Kindergarten to Grade One. This study utilized framework analysis to interpret the qualitative data collected from Grade One teacher-participants. Initially developed for applied policy research, framework analysis is particularly suited for studies that seek to inform practical outcomes. Given the applied nature of this research, focused on the transition from Kindergarten to Grade One, this analytical approach provided a structured yet flexible method for making sense of the complex and nuanced data. The process followed the systematic stages proposed by Fuchs (2023) and Goldsmith (2021) for qualitative data analysis. Each step was rigorously observed to ensure a comprehensive and credible interpretation of the data:

#### Organizing the Data

I began by systematically organizing the interview transcripts and field notes. This step ensured that all data were accessible and manageable, allowing for a smooth and focused examination of the responses. The information was arranged according to participant type (IDI and FGD) and topic to facilitate thematic identification. A well-organized dataset lays the foundation for accurate interpretation and meaningful conclusions in the study.

#### Identifying and Categorizing Key Ideas and Concepts

Recurring words, phrases, and ideas across the data were carefully noted. These recurring



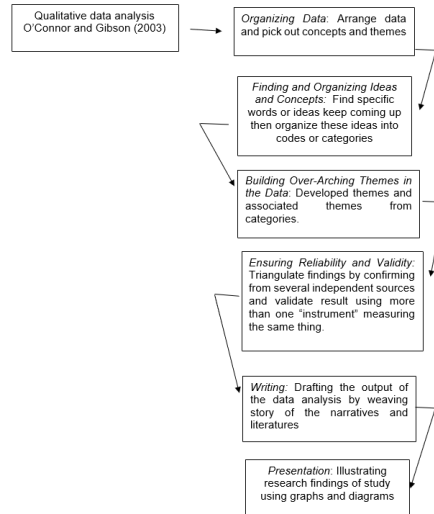


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

elements were then clustered into codes or categories. Coding enabled me to break down large sets of qualitative data into manageable units that could be analyzed more easily and effectively.

#### Developing Overarching Themes

From the initial codes and categories, I constructed overarching themes that encapsulated broader patterns in the data. These themes provided deeper insight into the teachers' shared experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during the transition phase of their education. Often, multiple categories were integrated under a central theme to illustrate their interconnections.

#### Ensuring Reliability and Validity

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, I employed multiple validation strategies. Triangulation was achieved by comparing data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field notes. Additionally, peer debriefing and reflective memoing were used to minimize researcher bias. The findings were considered reliable and valid as they were consistently supported by various data sources and interpreted using sound methodological rigor. In addition to data categorization and thematic analysis, this study also completed the final

stages of the framework analysis process, including writing and presentation of the results. During the writing phase, I carefully drafted the output of the data analysis by weaving the participants' narratives with relevant literature, presenting a rich and coherent interpretation of the Grade One teachers' experiences and coping mechanisms during the transition from Kindergarten. The presentation phase involved a thematic and comprehensive visualization of the findings through artistic graphs and illustrations, offering a clear and impactful representation of the emergent themes. These visual outputs complemented the narrative discussion, enhancing the accessibility and clarity of the findings. It is important to emphasize that while framework analysis can be a structured and straightforward approach under optimal conditions, it is by no means simplistic or effortless. As Ritchie and Spencer (1994, as cited by Goldsmith, 2021) note, researchers must approach framework analysis with systematic discipline and adaptability, given its iterative and interpretive nature. In this study, I upheld these standards, engaging rigorously and dynamically throughout the analytic process to ensure that the findings were both credible and meaningful.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the study's findings, addressing the research questions through detailed accounts of the participants. It focuses on the lived experiences of Grade One teachers regarding the transition of learners from Kindergarten to Grade One. The chapter examines how teachers perceive and navigate this critical phase, highlighting their insights, challenges, and strategies for supporting young learners during this educational transition.

*3.1. Experiences of Teachers on the Transition of Learners from Kindergarten to Grade One*—The transition from kindergarten to Grade One marks a pivotal stage in early childhood education, presenting both opportunities and challenges for learners and educators alike. Teachers, as key facilitators of this transition, play a crucial role in navigating these complexities, shaping learners' initial experiences in formal education. Understanding their perspectives, challenges, and strategies is essential for optimizing this critical phase and ensuring a smooth, supportive, and developmentally appropriate progression for young learners. This was supported by the indicator, informed by research highlighting the integration of mindfulness into early childhood education, which seeks to understand the extent to which teachers observe and address these critical aspects (Bridgett et al., 2021). Furthermore, the impact of pandemic-related isolation on children's social-emotional development necessitates an examination of how teachers adapt their strategies. Complementing this, teachers' reported use of strategies to promote social skills and peer interaction, as supported by the best-practice theories in emotionally intelligent schools, provides insights into the practical application of social-emotional learning in the classroom. (Lee and Kim, 2023).

*3.1.1. Academic Transition*—The academic transition from kindergarten to Grade One presents a significant shift in instructional focus, moving from exploratory, play-based learning to more structured, formal academic instruction. Teachers are tasked with bridging

this gap, ensuring that learners are equipped with the foundational literacy and numeracy skills necessary for success in the elementary curriculum. This phase requires educators to navigate diverse levels of academic preparedness, implement effective teaching strategies, and maintain a supportive learning environment that fosters both academic growth and a positive attitude toward learning. The findings of the study agree with the findings that the academic transition from kindergarten to Grade One presents teachers with the complex task of building upon foundational skills while introducing more structured academic content. Teachers' experiences are significantly shaped by the need to accurately assess and develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills, as highlighted by studies emphasizing the critical role of early literacy interventions and mathematics learning (Piasta and Justice, 2020; Raman, Siegler, 2021). Similarly, navigating the diverse academic preparedness of learners necessitates the implementation of differentiated instruction strategies, allowing teachers to tailor their approaches to individual needs (Tomlinson, 2021; Subban, 2022). Some of the participants' responses regarding academic transition during the interview are provided below in the following statements. With the narration, I analyzed how P1 observes students struggling with academic readiness, particularly in reading and basic math, and notes a preference for play over formal learning. This forces P1 to dedicate more time to remedial activities, using differentiated instruction and interactive games, which can lead to frustration due to slow progress. In

contrast, P4 focuses on the transition from a play-based to a more structured learning environment, where students struggle to sit still, engage in lengthy discussions, and follow sequential instructions. P4 addresses this by gradually introducing routines, using short activities, and incorporating "brain breaks," which demand greater patience and flexibility and can be exhausting due to the constant need for discipline. Research indicates that to ensure that teachers are effectively addressing students' academic needs, teachers report on the use of formative assessment, which allows them to monitor student progress and adjust teaching strategies when necessary (Heritage, 2023). Furthermore, the integration of play-based learning, even within the Grade One curriculum, emerges as a crucial factor in maintaining engagement and facilitating a smoother transition, aligning with research that demonstrates the efficacy of play in promoting learning and development (Weisberg et al., 2021; Zosh et al., 2022). As teachers observe their own growth and improvement, both P7 and P9 highlight the significant impact of students' transition from Kindergarten to Grade One, though they focus on different challenges and personal tolls. P7 observes students struggling with social-emotional adjustments due to changes in classmates and teachers, and more complex social interactions. P7 addresses this by fostering a supportive classroom through "circle time" and group activities, which demand increased sensitivity, empathy, and time for emotional check-ins. In contrast, P9 identifies the challenge of wide variations in students' learning paces. P9 copes by implementing differentiated instruction with varied methods and materials, providing both enrichment and remedial support, which requires enhanced planning and time management skills and often leads to feelings of being short on time and energy. Recent research emphasizes the importance of play-based learning in bridging this transition, highlighting its effectiveness in enhancing aca-

demic engagement and skill development (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2021; Zosh et al., 2022). Moreover, studies underscore the necessity of early literacy interventions, particularly for at-risk learners, and the use of formative assessments to tailor instruction (Piasta Justice, 2020; Heritage, 2023).

*3.1.2. Social-Emotional Readiness*—This support system emerges as a critical factor in the successful transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One, as perceived by teachers. The foregoing results of the study, consistent with recent literature findings, underscore the significance of emotional regulation and self-confidence, highlighting their foundational role in academic engagement and social interaction (Denham et al., 2020). Likewise, the study's findings also support the notion that teachers frequently report a need to employ strategies that foster these skills, particularly in light of the pandemic's potential to exacerbate social-emotional challenges due to prolonged isolation (Lee Kim, 2023). The same theme was reiterated as it was further affirmed during the focus group discussion. As I analyzed the narratives from the lived experiences of teachers, while P3 focuses on students' internal self-regulation challenges during the K-1 transition and teaching emotional coping mechanisms, P8 addresses the shift in external social dynamics, facilitating new friendships and mediating conflicts through structured group activities. Furthermore, it can be inferred from the participants' responses that the challenge of separation anxiety in students transitioning from Kindergarten to Grade One, particularly those struggling to be away from their parents or former teachers, is evident. To cope, P10 focuses on creating a warm and welcoming classroom environment, providing personal attention, collaborating with parents, and using picture books to facilitate discussions on adjustment. This requires P10 to be highly supportive and dedicate considerable time to students' emotional comfort, which can be emo-

tionally draining. This corroborates that integrating mindfulness practices, as suggested by Bridgett et al. (2021), is increasingly seen as a valuable tool to support learners' emotional stability. Hence, teachers emphasize the importance of facilitating peer interaction and social skill development through structured activities and play-based learning, aligning with the principles of emotionally intelligent schools (Elias, et al., 2022).

*3.1.3. Teacher Professional Development*—Teacher Professional Development (TPD) plays a critical role in equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively navigate the complexities of their profession. Particularly during significant transitional periods, such as the shift from kindergarten to Grade One, TPD becomes essential for fostering pedagogical adaptations and ensuring positive learning outcomes. By providing teachers with targeted training, access to current research, and opportunities for collaborative learning, TPD empowers them to address the unique challenges of this transition, moreover enhancing their ability to create supportive and effective learning environments for young learners. The said findings were also supported, where Teacher Professional Development (TPD) emerges as a crucial component in supporting educators as they guide learners through the transition from kindergarten to Grade One. Recent literature emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with targeted training that focuses on early childhood development, transition strategies, and differentiated instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Certainly, the findings of the study were affirmed by the study of fostering collaborative learning communities among teachers is vital for sharing best practices and addressing common challenges. Studies have shown that collaborative learning significantly enhances teacher efficacy and instructional quality (Vangrieken, et al., 2021). Generally, I analyzed the narration

of teachers exemplifying P2, the systemic lack of collaboration between grade levels, forcing individual teachers to bridge curriculum gaps, whereas P5 underscores the need for more comprehensive professional development to equip teachers with essential social-emotional competencies for supporting transitioning students. In addressing the experiences of teachers navigating the kindergarten to Grade One transition, effective Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is paramount. Recent studies highlight the necessity of TPD programs that are context-specific and responsive to the unique challenges of early childhood transitions. For instance, research by Avalos (2020) emphasizes the importance of TPD that fosters teachers' reflective practices, enabling them to adapt their pedagogical approaches based on the observed needs of their learners. Similarly, Wei, et al. (2021) demonstrate that sustained, collaborative TPD models, which include peer observation and coaching, significantly improve teachers' abilities to manage diverse learning needs and create inclusive classroom environments. As mentioned, teachers emphasize the significant benefit of continuous adaptation of curriculum and teaching strategies, moving beyond rigid textbook adherence to flexible approaches. This teacher's experience involves actively seeking out professional development in differentiated instruction and learner-centered methods, and finding new online materials, underscoring the vital role of ongoing teacher professional development as a lifelong learning process to effectively support students during this critical stage. According to research, the integration of digital literacy into TPD is increasingly crucial, given the growing reliance on technology in education. Studies by Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2020) suggest that TPD should equip teachers with the skills to effectively use digital tools for differentiated instruction and student engagement, particularly in early grades. A study on effective TPD also addresses the

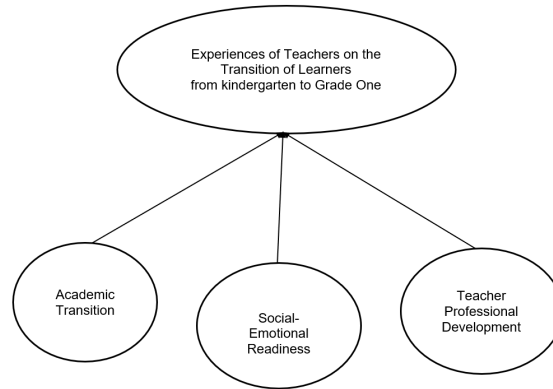


Fig. 3. Emerging Themes on the Experiences of Teachers on the Transition of Learners from Kindergarten to Grade One

social-emotional dimensions of teaching, acknowledging the stress teachers experience during transitional periods. Studies by Jennings and Greenberg (2020) advocate for TPD that includes mindfulness and stress-reduction techniques, enhancing teachers' well-being and their capacity to support learners' emotional needs.

Therefore, a comprehensive TPD approach, encompassing reflective practices, collaboration, digital integration, and emotional well-being, is essential for empowering teachers to facilitate a smooth and successful transition for young learners.

Based on the figure below, three themes emerged from the responses of the participants, which were academic transition, social-emotional readiness, and teacher professional development based on the context of teachers' experiences in the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One. One of the most pressing challenges during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One is the academic transition. Teachers frequently observe that many children are not fully prepared for the academic demands of primary education, especially in foundational areas such as reading, writing, and numeracy. According to Karabay and Tezci (2022), a significant disparity exists in the cognitive development of children entering Grade One. While some students possess well-developed pre-academic skills, others arrive lacking in these basic competencies. This variation can result in uneven academic progress, particularly during the first few months of Grade One. Children's abilities in problem-solving,

attention span, and memory are crucial in ensuring their readiness for formal education. Therefore, the early identification of gaps through readiness assessments and the provision of targeted support are essential to address these academic differences effectively. Equally important is the theme of social-emotional readiness, which plays a vital role in the success of learners transitioning into Grade One. Research by Farrington et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of early childhood education programs that incorporate both cognitive skill-building and socio-emotional development. Executive functioning skills such as attention, memory, and self-regulation are just as critical as academic competencies in preparing children for the structured environment of formal schooling. When children enter Grade One with well-developed social-emotional skills, they are more likely to adapt to the demands of the classroom, build positive peer relationships, and participate confidently in academic activities. Structured



early learning environments that foster both academic and emotional competencies result in better overall outcomes, including higher achievement and smoother social integration. The third theme focuses on teacher professional development, highlighting its importance in supporting learners through this crucial educational transition. Teachers play a central role in bridging the readiness gap among students by employing differentiated instruction strategies tailored to individual developmental levels. Miller and Almon (2023) assert that effective educators create inclusive learning environments by designing individualized learning plans that meet each child's unique needs. Formative assessments are commonly used by teachers to monitor student progress in both cognitive and academic domains, allowing for timely adjustments in teaching strategies. This professional responsiveness is vital in ensuring that no child is left behind during the transition phase. Continuous professional development equips teachers with the tools, knowledge, and strategies necessary to navigate the complexities of early primary education effectively.

*3.2. Coping Mechanisms of Teachers with the Challenges Encountered On the Transition from Kindergarten to Grade One*—The transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One presents a unique set of challenges for teachers, requiring them to navigate diverse academic and social-emotional needs while fostering a positive learning environment. Effective coping mechanisms are essential for educators to manage the stressors associated with this transition and ensure a smooth developmental progression for their students.

*3.2.1. Emotional Regulation and Stress Management*—These are fundamental components of effective teaching, particularly during challenging transition periods like the shift from kindergarten to Grade One. Educators facing the diverse needs and heightened demands of this phase must possess the capacity to man-

age their own emotional responses and mitigate stress to maintain a positive and supportive learning environment. This involves utilizing a range of strategies, from mindfulness and self-care practices to seeking emotional support from colleagues and supervisors. Developing robust emotional regulation skills not only enhances teachers' well-being but also directly impacts their ability to create an optimal learning experience for their students. Teachers often report experiencing heightened stress due to the diverse needs of their students and the demands of adapting their teaching strategies (Jennings Greenberg, 2020). Effective coping in this area involves utilizing strategies such as mindfulness, self-care practices, and seeking emotional support from colleagues or supervisors. Research indicates that teachers who develop strong emotional regulation skills are better equipped to handle classroom challenges and maintain a positive learning environment (Elias et al., 2022).

Regulating learners' emotions and managing stress were emphasized by the teachers during the interview. P1 addresses students' emotional responses to the K-1 transition, such as crying and irritability, by employing personal emotional regulation strategies to remain a calm anchor for the children. In contrast, P5 copes with the frustration arising from wide variations in academic readiness by adjusting expectations and engaging in self-care activities to prevent burnout, viewing varied readiness as a starting point rather than a deficit. Recent research emphasizes the importance of mindfulness-based interventions in enhancing teachers' emotional regulation, leading to improved classroom management and reduced burnout (Jennings Greenberg, 2020). Studies highlight that teachers who practice self-care and engage in stress-reduction techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation, report lower levels of anxiety and increased resilience (Brackett et al., 2021). The responses above revealed that both P9 and P10 highlight the impact of the K-1 transition on teachers'

well-being, though they focus on different external pressures. P9 addresses the challenges of changing classroom dynamics, specifically increased noise and difficulty in controlling attention, by applying personal emotional regulation strategies, such as "mindful pauses" and "brain breaks." P9 also seeks support from colleagues to normalize feelings and manage stress. In contrast, P10 grapples with the external pressure from parents and school administration for a rapid and smooth transition. Studies also highlight the benefits of social support, indicating that teachers who maintain strong professional networks and engage in collaborative problem-solving experience lower levels of stress and burnout (Bakker Demerouti, 2020). Furthermore, the concept of psychological capital, encompassing self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, is increasingly recognized as a vital resource for teachers navigating challenging educational environments (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, and Avolio, 2021).

**3.2.2. Collaborative Problem-Solving and Peer Support**—They are essential pillars in navigating the complexities of the transition from kindergarten to Grade One. This phase demands that teachers not only address diverse academic and social-emotional needs but also adapt their instructional strategies to create a nurturing and effective learning environment. By fostering a culture of collaboration, teachers can leverage collective expertise, share best practices, and develop innovative solutions to the challenges inherent in this critical educational juncture. Moreover, enhancing their ability to support young learners' successful transition. The study's findings agree that collaborative problem-solving and peer support are pivotal in addressing the challenges teachers face during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One. This period demands a multifaceted approach to address diverse learning needs and foster a supportive environment. Recent research underscores the efficacy of collaborative learning

communities in enhancing teacher efficacy and instructional quality (Vangrieken et al., 2021). On the other hand, the findings of the study were affirmed by teachers who engage in peer observations, team teaching, and shared lesson planning, benefit from collective expertise, and develop innovative strategies to support their students. Studies highlight the importance of structured professional learning communities where teachers can discuss challenges, share best practices, and engage in joint problem-solving (Stoll, 2020). The participants expressed how collaboration and support worked during the transition of learners from kindergarten to Grade One. Comparing their approaches to challenges in the K-1 transition, P3 addresses varied classroom management expectations by seeking collaborative problem-solving and discipline strategies from veteran teachers, while P4 tackles diverse academic gaps by engaging in collaborative discussions with fellow K-1 teachers for differentiated instruction strategies and shared resources. Expanding on the importance of collaborative problem-solving and peer support during the kindergarten to Grade One transition, it's essential to consider the nuanced ways in which these practices enhance teacher efficacy and student outcomes. Research from the past few years emphasizes the role of professional learning networks (PLNs) in fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility among teachers (Moolenaar et al., 2020). Furthermore, the concept of collective teacher efficacy (CTE), which refers to teachers' shared belief in their capacity to impact student learning positively, is significantly enhanced through collaborative practices. Studies by Goddard et al. (2021) demonstrate that schools with strong CTE exhibit higher levels of teacher collaboration and student achievement. Another participant also shared the need for collaborative problem-solving and peer support from colleagues to address the social-emotional needs of learners during the transition stage. The

participant also believes that social-emotional adjustments students face in Grade One lead to increased crying and conflicts due to the larger class size. To cope, P6 actively seeks peer support through informal "check-ins" with colleagues, sharing experiences and providing emotional support, which helps normalize challenges and facilitates the discovery of collaborative solutions. This deals with the idea of collaborative problem-solving sessions, where teachers analyze student data and develop joint intervention strategies, contribute to a shared understanding of student needs, and promote consistent instructional approaches. Hence, the use of peer observations and feedback sessions, grounded in principles of instructional coaching, provides teachers with opportunities to refine their pedagogical practices and address specific challenges related to the kindergarten to Grade One transition (Kraft et al., 2020). Building on the importance of collaborative problem-solving and peer support in the kindergarten to Grade One transition, recent research further emphasizes the role of distributed leadership and shared decision-making in fostering effective collaboration. Studies by Harris and Jones (2020) highlight how distributed leadership models, where teachers are empowered to take on leadership roles and contribute to school-wide initiatives, can significantly enhance collaborative problem-solving. This approach encourages teachers to collectively address transition-related challenges, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

*3.2.3. Strategic Planning and Organization*—Indispensable tools for teachers navigating the complexities of the kindergarten to Grade One transition. This phase demands meticulous preparation and structured approaches to effectively address the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of young learners. By implementing well-defined lesson plans, establishing consistent routines, and utilizing efficient time management strategies,

educators can create a stable and predictable learning environment. This structured approach not only enhances instructional effectiveness but also reduces teacher stress, allowing for a more focused and supportive classroom experience. The foregoing study results emphasize the importance of well-structured lesson planning and consistent classroom routines in enhancing instructional effectiveness and reducing teacher stress (Tomlinson, 2021). Teachers who develop detailed lesson plans, aligned with learning objectives and differentiated to meet individual student needs, report higher levels of confidence and job satisfaction. Hence, time management strategies, such as setting clear priorities and utilizing scheduling tools, are essential for teachers to balance instructional responsibilities with administrative tasks and student support (Claessens et al., 2020). During the interview, the participant shared how she managed a sudden change in routine and environment by planning transitional activities strategically. Such a theme was further supported by another participant during the discussion.

Both P2 and P7 highlight the importance of strategic planning and organization in managing the K-1 transition, though they focus on different aspects. P2 addresses the sudden change in routine and environment by implementing strategic planning for transitional activities during the first month, gradually introducing new rules, and fostering adjustment through "getting-to-know-you" activities. In contrast, P7 addresses the wide variation in students' academic readiness by strategically planning and organizing instructional materials, pre-categorizing resources by skill level to provide individualized support efficiently without causing classroom chaos. Recent research highlights the integration of data-driven decision-making and flexible instructional frameworks. Effective strategic planning now involves the use of formative assessment data to inform instructional decisions and tailor learning experiences to individual stu-

dent needs (Heritage, 2023). Teachers who systematically collect and analyze student data are better equipped to identify learning gaps and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Furthermore, implementation of flexible instructional frameworks, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), is crucial for creating accessible and engaging learning environments. Studies by Rao and Meo (2020) demonstrate that UDL principles, which emphasize multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression, can enhance student participation and reduce barriers to learning. Teachers who strategically incorporate UDL principles into their lesson planning are better able to accommodate the diverse learning styles and abilities of their students. Hence, participants' insight highlights the challenge of the K-1 transition's shift to higher academic demands, often overlooking social-emotional development, leading to students struggling with social interactions and emotional expression. P8 addresses this by strategically allocating dedicated time in the daily schedule for social-emotional learning activities, such as "morning meetings" and "sharing time," which helps students become more emotionally resilient and better prepared for academic learning. This finding is consistent with the notion that a comprehensive study highlights the role of organizational leadership in fostering effective planning and organization, which cannot be overlooked. Research by Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of distributed leadership, where teachers are empowered to participate in school-wide planning and decision-making. This collaborative approach enhances teacher owner-

ship and promotes the development of shared goals and strategies. Hence, the strategic use of technology for planning and organization is increasingly relevant. Studies by Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2020) highlight the importance of teachers developing technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) to effectively integrate digital tools into their instructional practices. This includes using technology for lesson planning, resource management, and student progress tracking. Furthermore, establishing consistent routines and procedures within the classroom and school-wide helps the children feel safe and secure, which allows them to fully engage in the learning process. Based on the themes identified from the figure, the coping mechanisms of teachers with the challenges encountered during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One can be summarized as follows: emotional regulation and stress management, collaborative planning and organization, and strategic planning and organization. One of the major coping mechanisms employed by teachers during the transition phase from kindergarten to Grade One is emotional regulation and stress management. This period is not only a turning point for learners but also a challenging adjustment for teachers who must address developmental variations among students. According to Pianta et al. (2020), the shift involves adapting to more structured classroom settings, increased curriculum expectations, and shifting social interactions, all of which contribute to elevated stress levels among educators. Teachers often engage in self-care routines, mindfulness practices, and

Peer support systems can help individuals manage their emotional well-being, enabling them to maintain patience, empathy, and effective classroom management during this transitional period. Another key coping strategy is

collaborative planning and organization, which involves teamwork among educators to design age-appropriate instruction that supports learners' smooth adjustment to Grade One. As highlighted by Pyle et al. (2021), integrating play

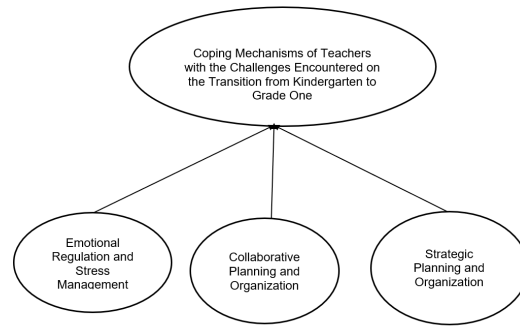


Fig. 4. Emerging Themes on the Coping Mechanisms of Teachers with The Challenges Encountered on the Transition from Kindergarten to Grade One

into Grade One instruction significantly helps ease the transition by offering a familiar and engaging learning experience. Through collaborative planning sessions, teachers align their instructional approaches and share resources that blend play-based strategies with formal academic objectives, thereby enhancing the learning experience. This approach fosters continuity in learning, promotes cognitive and social development, and ensures that children do not experience an abrupt shift from kindergarten to a rigid Grade One setting. Lastly, teachers rely heavily on strategic planning and organization to bridge academic and developmental gaps. Drawing from Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding and supported by recent findings by Parker and Thomsen (2023), teachers implement differentiated instruction to address the wide range of learner readiness in Grade One classrooms. Strategic scaffolding allows educators to provide tailored support that builds upon each child's prior knowledge and experiences from kindergarten. Through careful lesson planning, ongoing formative assessment, and adaptive teaching strategies, teachers ensure that students progressively acquire the skills necessary for academic success in Grade One, while minimizing unnecessary stress and frustration.

**3.3. Educational Management Insights Drawn From the Findings of the Study**—The participants shared their educational management insights, and it was narrowed down into

one theme. These themes were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from the informants' accounts and reflections. The subthemes are shown below:

#### *3.3.1. Integration of Social-Emotional Learning into the Curriculum and Instruction*

—Involves the deliberate and systematic incorporation of skills related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making into educational curricula and classroom practices. It goes beyond traditional academic instruction by focusing on the development of students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal abilities, and ethical understanding. This integration not only improves student behavior and well-being but also supports long-term personal and academic development. Recent research emphasizes the importance of embedding SEL skills within early childhood education, highlighting its role in promoting emotional regulation, empathy, and positive peer relationships (Denham et al., 2020). Educators must strategically incorporate SEL activities into both Kindergarten and Grade One curricula to ensure continuity and build upon previously learned skills. This includes fostering self-awareness through activities that encourage children to recognize and express their emotions, as well as developing self-management skills to help them regulate their behavior and focus on learning (Brackett et al., 2021). Integrating social-emotional learn-



ing into the curriculum and instruction was a key focus for the participants during the interview. P1 advocates for the formal integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into the curriculum to address students' emotional well-being and its impact on academics during the K-1 transition, whereas P5 emphasizes strengthening teachers' professional development in SEL to proactively identify and respond to student stress and difficulties, including trauma-informed care that seeks to create safe, supportive environments. Moreover, promoting social awareness and relationship skills is essential during this transition period. Teachers can implement cooperative learning activities and role-playing scenarios to enhance children's ability to understand others' perspectives and build positive relationships (Elias et al., 2022). Integrating responsible decision-making into classroom routines and discussions can also help children develop the ability to make thoughtful choices and consider the consequences of their actions (Jones Kahn, 2020).

The participant above highlights the need for a school-wide approach to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to better support students' transitions. P8 emphasizes that fostering a secure and expressive classroom environment is foundational to learning. To ensure continuous social-emotional development, P8 advocates for a consistent SEL framework across all elementary grades, including Kindergarten, utilizing uniform language and strategies to manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. Furthermore, the use of children's literature and the arts to address SEL concepts has also been shown to be effective (Schonert-Reichl, 2020). This is also supported by a study that suggests schools should prioritize teacher training and professional development to ensure effective SEL integration, equipping educators with the necessary skills and resources to implement SEL strategies in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

*3.4. Implementation of Play-Based Learning and Continuity Between Kindergarten and Grade One* —The successful transition from kindergarten to Grade One hinges significantly on the strategic implementation of play-based learning and the establishment of curriculum continuity. Recognizing that young learners thrive in environments that integrate play with structured learning, educators must ensure that play-based methodologies are not abruptly abandoned when students enter Grade One. Maintaining elements of play-based learning helps to ease the transition, fostering engagement and reinforcing foundational skills acquired in kindergarten. Furthermore, curriculum continuity between these two grade levels is crucial for building upon existing knowledge and ensuring a seamless progression in learning experiences. To achieve curriculum continuity, schools should prioritize collaborative planning among Kindergarten and Grade One educators, ensuring that learning objectives and instructional strategies are aligned (Sylva et al., 2020). Moreover, utilizing developmentally appropriate assessment methods that capture the holistic progress of children, including their social and emotional competencies, is crucial (Siraj-Blatchford, 2021). Some participants shared insights regarding the implementation of play-based learning and continuity between kindergarten and Grade One. Both P2 and P6 highlight the importance of continuity and thoughtful curriculum design when transitioning students from kindergarten to Grade One, though they propose different strategies. P2 advocates for a gradual change in teaching by expanding play-based learning into Grade One, especially at the beginning of the year. This teacher believes using play as a medium for academic concepts will ease the shock and create smoother continuity between the two levels. In contrast, P6 emphasizes the need for stronger communication and joint planning between Kindergarten and Grade One teachers to build a cohesive curriculum. P6

emphasizes that joint workshops and planning sessions are essential for sharing best practices and setting continuous learning goals, ensuring that the Grade One curriculum builds seamlessly upon the kindergarten foundation. The strategic implementation of play-based learning and the establishment of curriculum continuity between Kindergarten and Grade One are critical for fostering a smooth and effective transition for young learners. Recent research underscores the importance of maintaining play-based pedagogies in early elementary education, as they support cognitive, social, and emotional development (Weisberg et al., 2021). Studies highlight that play-based activities enhance engagement, promote problem-solving skills, and facilitate the application of foundational concepts learned in kindergarten. To ensure continuity, educational management should prioritize collaborative planning between Kindergarten and Grade One teachers, aligning curriculum content and instructional approaches. Dockett and Perry (2020) emphasize the necessity of creating seamless learning experiences that build upon prior knowledge and skills, preventing abrupt shifts that can disrupt children's learning trajectories. During the FGD, some participants also expressed how significant the implementation of play-based learning and continuity between Kindergarten and Grade One during the transition is. While the first passage emphasizes the need for active and experiential learning in Grade One to maintain continuity from Kindergarten's hands-on approach, the second highlights the importance of fostering social skills through collaborative activities to ease the transition into a more formal academic setting. Research consistently validates the cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of play, particularly for young learners (Zosh et al., 2022). This is also supported by a study, implementing play-based pedagogies in Grade One not only sustains engagement but also reinforces foundational skills developed in kindergarten,

facilitating a smoother adjustment to formal education (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2021).

*3.5. Data Driven, Decision-Making and Professional Development* —Optimizing the transition between Kindergarten and Grade One, utilizing formative and summative assessment data, allows educators to identify learning gaps, tailor instruction, and adjust pedagogical strategies to meet the diverse needs of young learners. This data-driven approach ensures that interventions are timely and effective, promoting Optimizing the transition between Kindergarten and Grade One, utilizing formative and summative assessment data, allows educators to identify learning gaps, tailor instruction, and adjust pedagogical strategies to meet the diverse needs of young learners. This data-driven approach ensures that interventions are timely and effective, promoting academic success and minimizing potential setbacks. The transition from kindergarten to Grade One is a critical phase in a learner's educational journey, requiring well-informed instructional strategies and administrative decisions. Insights drawn from teachers' perspectives emphasize the need for educational management to prioritize data-driven decision-making (DDDM) and continuous professional development (PD) to ensure a smooth and developmentally appropriate transition. Data-driven practices enable school leaders and educators to identify readiness gaps, monitor learners' progress, and tailor interventions that support both academic and socio-emotional development during this foundational shift (Fullan Quinn, 2020). Incorporating DDDM into early grade transitions ensures that instructional practices are responsive rather than reactive. As observed by Datnow and Park (2021), school systems that embed data culture empower teachers to make informed pedagogical choices, refine curriculum pacing, and differentiate instruction based on learners' actual developmental profiles. For transitioning learners, especially those from diverse backgrounds, such data becomes a

powerful tool to design support systems that are equitable and targeted. Moreover, administrators who champion DDDM foster collaborative reflection among teachers, thereby reinforcing a culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement (Bernhardt, 2023). The need for educational management to prioritize data-driven decision-making (DDDM) and continuous professional development (CPD) to ensure a smooth and developmentally appropriate transition was acknowledged during the interview. The participant in P3 highlights the necessity of standardized assessment tools in Kindergarten and Grade One to gather accurate data for individualized remedial programs and emphasizes the importance of professional development in data analysis for targeted interventions. In contrast, the participant in P4 underscores the importance of regular collaborative faculty meetings between Kindergarten and Grade One teachers to analyze student progress data, identify struggling learners, and develop solutions, advocating for the use of technology-based assessment tools. Data-driven decision-making and targeted professional development are essential components for ensuring a successful transition from kindergarten to Grade One. Utilizing assessment data to inform instructional practices allows educators to identify learning gaps and tailor interventions to meet the diverse needs of young learners (Heritage, 2023). Furthermore, research emphasizes the importance of formative assessment in providing real-time feedback, enabling teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and promote student learning (Wil-

iam, 2020). The same theme emerged during the FGD, as participants also stressed the importance of data-driven, differentiated instruction as a daily practice for teachers, advocating for more resources and professional development to help educators adjust their teaching based on student data and create targeted interventions. The transition from kindergarten to Grade One presents unique developmental and academic challenges for young learners. From the perspective of teachers, this phase demands that educational management practices be grounded in data-driven decision-making and strengthened through consistent professional development. One critical insight is that school leaders must utilize reliable assessment data, including early literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional benchmarks, to inform instructional and curricular adjustments (Heffernan et al., 2021). These data points not only help identify readiness gaps but also assist in crafting targeted interventions to ease the transition (Reid Walker, 2022). Professional development initiatives should focus on equipping teachers with the skills to effectively implement play-based learning, integrate social-emotional learning, and utilize technology to enhance instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Based on the figure above, three themes emerged from the participants' responses, which emphasized integration of social-emotional learning into the curriculum and instruction, implementation of play-based learning, continuity between kindergarten and grade one, and data-driven decision-making and professional development.

One significant theme that emerged is the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum and instruction, which is increasingly recognized as a key factor in facilitating a smooth transition from kindergarten to Grade One. Recent literature emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that in-

tegrates children's emotional and social development with their academic skills. Santos et al. (2023) found that teachers' perceptions of student readiness are strongly shaped by their understanding of the child's emotional regulation, peer interactions, and classroom behavior elements, which are closely tied to Vygotsky's

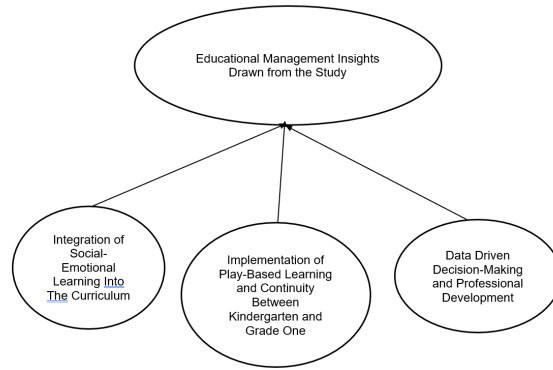


Fig. 5. Emerging Themes in Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Study

sociocultural theory. These insights point to the necessity of embedding SEL into everyday classroom practices to support children as they navigate the emotional demands of entering formal schooling. Another emerging theme is the implementation of play-based learning and ensuring continuity between kindergarten and Grade One. Transition becomes less disruptive when instructional methods are consistent and developmentally appropriate across grade levels. Tan and Lim (2021) emphasized the value of collaborative relationships between kindergarten and Grade One educators in establishing routine, structure, and emotional consistency. This alignment facilitates smoother adjustments among learners and supports Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the interconnectedness across various developmental environments. Furthermore, Nguyen and Garcia (2022) emphasized that macrosystem-level decisions, such as curriculum policies and insti-

tutional support for early childhood education, significantly influence the success of play-based and continuity-focused interventions during this transitional period. Furthermore, the theme of data-driven decision-making and professional development emerged as crucial in enhancing teachers’ capacity to support students during the transition. Teachers benefit from ongoing training and access to relevant data that inform their instructional decisions, particularly when addressing the diverse needs of learners. Tan and Lim (2021) also noted that professional learning communities and collaborative planning sessions enable educators to reflect on student data and adjust their teaching practices accordingly. These collaborative systems help ensure that teaching strategies are not only developmentally aligned but also evidence-based, enabling a more responsive and supportive transition process for both students and teachers.

## 4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter serves as a critical component of the study, providing insights into the practical, policy, and research implications of the findings. It provides guidance on how the study’s results can be applied to enhance educational practices and identifies areas for future research.

**4.1. Implications**—This study sheds light on the complex realities faced by Grade One teachers during the transition of learners from Kindergarten, generating three key thematic areas: academic transition, social-emotional readiness, and teacher professional development which reflect their lived experiences; emotional regulation and stress management, col-

laborative planning and organization, and strategic planning and organization which represent their coping mechanisms; and integration of social-emotional learning, implementation of play-based continuity, and data-driven professional development which emerged as their educational insights. The theme of academic transition emphasizes the need for scaffolded learning environments where foundational skills are supported by responsive instruction, echoing Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory that stresses the role of knowledgeable others in guiding learning within the Zone of Proximal Development. Teachers observed that learners' readiness in literacy and numeracy was deeply influenced by the quality of support provided during this shift. Social-emotional readiness, another recurring theme, points to the critical role of classroom relationships, emotional support, and behavioral adjustment during early formal education. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this theme emphasizes that a child's transition is influenced by multiple, interconnected systems, ranging from family and school to policy and societal norms. Teacher professional development emerged as a foundational pillar in equipping educators to handle these transitions. The need for continued training, collaboration, and reflective practice underscores the systemic nature of educational effectiveness, aligning with both Vygotsky's and Bronfenbrenner's frameworks, which advocate for responsive and socially grounded approaches to teaching. In terms of coping mechanisms, teachers revealed the emotional and professional tolls of the transition process. Emotional regulation and stress management reflect internal resilience, while collaborative planning and strategic organization demonstrate adaptive, collective approaches that foster alignment and continuity across grade levels. These coping strategies highlight the importance of well-being programs, administrative support, and structured collaboration in sustaining teacher ef-

fectiveness. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes that learning, even for teachers, is socially mediated; thus, peer collaboration and institutional support become essential scaffolds for professional resilience. At the same time, Bronfenbrenner's framework situates these coping strategies within broader systems: for example, school leadership (mesosystem) and policy mandates (exosystem) influence how teachers plan, collaborate, and manage their emotional well-being. Finally, the insights drawn, namely, the integration of SEL, implementation of play-based learning, and data-informed professional development, offer forward-looking strategies that schools and policymakers can adopt. These insights advocate for child-centered, developmentally appropriate, and evidence-based practices that ensure a smoother, more holistic transition from Kindergarten to Grade One. Integrating SEL and play-based approaches aligns with Vygotsky's belief in authentic, developmentally appropriate contexts for learning that foster emotional and cognitive growth. Meanwhile, Bronfenbrenner's model supports the need for systemic alignment, where policies, training, and classroom practices are responsive to learners' ecological contexts. The study's themes emphasize that successful transitions are not the product of academic preparation alone, but of a cohesive system that values emotional development, professional capacity, and institutional collaboration. Addressing these dimensions through informed policy, targeted training, and a supportive school culture is vital for enhancing early educational outcomes.

*4.2. Future Directions*—Building upon the findings of this study on the experiences and coping mechanisms of Grade One teachers in Governor Generoso-North District during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One, several pathways for future research and action have emerged. While this study has provided rich insights into the challenges faced by early grade educators and their adaptive strategies, the



dynamic nature of curriculum implementation, teacher support systems, and learner readiness calls for continued exploration. Identifying areas for further investigation can help deepen understanding, inform targeted interventions, and guide policy reforms that enhance transitions between early childhood and primary education in similar contexts. Learners Should be prioritized, creating developmentally appropriate learning environments that support the holistic needs of learners during the transition from kindergarten to Grade One. Emphasis must be placed on both cognitive and social-emotional readiness. Learners benefit from structured, consistent routines and play-based activities that gradually introduce them to the formal learning structure. Ensuring smooth transitions will require that students are engaged in meaningful, hands-on experiences that connect their early learning with new academic expectations. Teachers should be equipped with comprehensive training on transition-focused instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction, scaffolding, and the integration of social-emotional learning. Ongoing professional development must also emphasize the importance of formative assessment and data-driven decision-making to cater to students with varying levels of readiness. Encouraging collaboration between kindergarten and Grade One teachers can strengthen instructional continuity and ease the challenges of transition. Parents Play a critical role in supporting children's readiness and adjustment. Schools should initiate orientation programs and parent engagement sessions to educate caregivers about the academic and emotional expectations in Grade One. Providing strategies for reinforcing school readiness at home, such as establishing routines, encouraging self-regulation,

and practicing literacy and numeracy skills, can help ensure that children enter Grade One more prepared and confident. School Administrators Must support systemic strategies that ensure smoother transitions between kindergarten and Grade One. This includes aligning instructional goals across grade levels, supporting collaborative planning between teachers, and allocating resources for transition programs. Administrators can also facilitate cross-grade professional learning communities and monitor the effectiveness of transition initiatives to improve school readiness practices continuously. Through effective planning and leadership, school administrators help create a nurturing environment that facilitates a smooth transition.

The Department of Education Should institutionalize policies that promote continuity across early learning and primary education. These policies might include national guidelines for transition planning, integration of play-based and SEL approaches into the Grade One curriculum, and mandatory transition training for early childhood educators. Moreover, monitoring tools and evaluation frameworks can help track progress and identify areas for improvement in transition practices across schools. Future Researchers Should explore longitudinal outcomes of students who experienced structured transition programs versus those who did not, to understand long-term academic and social impacts further. Researchers could also investigate the role of culture, language, and socioeconomic status in the transition process. Mixed-methods studies involving learners, teachers, and families will provide a richer understanding of how to support all stakeholders during this critical phase of education.

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