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The Teaching Approaches in Enhancing the Learning Engagement of the Kindergarten Learners in Caramoan South District, Division of Camarines Sur

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood classrooms require teaching practices that do more than deliver content; they must create opportunities for young learners to participate, inquire, collaborate, and construct meaning. Kindergarten learning is especially dependent on the quality of instructional experiences because children at this level learn through interaction, exploration, movement, dialogue, and guided discovery. In this context, teaching approaches become central mechanisms through which teachers activate attention, motivation, persistence, emotional security, and social participation. This study examined how selected learner-centered teaching approaches enhanced the learning engagement of kindergarten learners in Caramoan South District, Division of Camarines Sur. The study focused on five teaching approaches: inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, game-based learning, and experiential learning. These approaches were selected because they represent classroom practices that shift learners from passive reception to active participation. The study also examined five dimensions of learning engagement: behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic engagement. Together, these variables provided a comprehensive frame for understanding how teaching practices contribute to the observable and perceived engagement of kindergarten learners. Specifically, the study determined the extent to which the five teaching approaches were employed by kindergarten teachers. It also tested the degree of agreement in the rank orders of the teaching approaches using Kendall's coefficient of concordance. In addition, it assessed the extent to which the teaching approaches influenced the improvement of learners' engagement across the five dimensions. Finally, it generated policy recommendations anchored on the empirical findings of the study. The study utilized a descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design. The respondents were thirty kindergarten teachers in Caramoan South District, Division of Camarines Sur, for School Year 2024-2025. A researcher-made questionnaire served as the main data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire captured teacher perceptions regarding the extent of implementation of teaching approaches and the extent of their influence on learner engagement. The statistical tools used in the study were frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, rank, Kendall coefficient of concordance, and the corresponding chi-square test. The level of significance was set at 0.05. The weighted mean was used to determine the extent of employment of teaching approaches and the extent of influence on engagement. Kendall's W was used to determine whether teacher-respondents significantly agreed in their rank ordering of indicators within each dimension. Findings revealed that all teaching approaches were rated Very Much Employed. Experiential learning obtained the highest overall mean of 4.84, followed by differentiated instruction with 4.83, inquiry-based learning with 4.65, project-based learning with 4.64, and game-based learning with 4.61. These results indicate that kindergarten teachers frequently used active, flexible, and experience-based strategies in classroom instruction. The high ratings further suggest that learner-centered pedagogy was already embedded in the instructional practices of the respondents. The test of significant agreement showed significant concordance in most teaching approach dimensions. Inquiry-based learning obtained Kendall's W of 0.93, project-based learning obtained 0.82, game-based learning obtained 0.78, and experiential learning obtained 0.88, all with significant chi-square results. Differentiated instruction obtained W of 0.58 with p greater than 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis was not rejected for this dimension. This result suggests that while differentiated instruction was rated highly, teachers varied more in how they ranked its specific indicators. The influence of teaching approaches on learner engagement was also rated Very Much Evident across all engagement dimensions. Emotional engagement obtained the highest mean of 4.69,

followed by behavioral engagement and social engagement, both with 4.68. Agentic engagement followed with 4.63, while cognitive engagement obtained 4.53. These findings show that the teaching approaches were perceived to support not only participation and social interaction but also belongingness, initiative, and thinking processes among kindergarten learners. Kendall's W results for engagement dimensions showed significant agreement across all five areas. Cognitive engagement obtained the highest concordance value of 0.94, followed by behavioral engagement with 0.88, social engagement with 0.87, agentic engagement with 0.69, and emotional engagement with 0.63. The significant results indicate that respondents shared a common ranking pattern regarding how teaching approaches influenced learner engagement. These findings strengthened the basis for developing recommendations that address instruction, school leadership, resource provision, learner voice, and policy support. The study concludes that teaching approaches used by kindergarten teachers in Caramoan South District were strongly learner-centered and substantially associated with the improvement of learner engagement. The findings support the need to sustain experiential learning and differentiated instruction while strengthening consistency in differentiated practice and cognitive engagement strategies. Policy implications include regular professional learning communities, instructional coaching, contextualized resource development, integration of learner voice in school improvement planning, and stronger support for socio-emotional learning. The manuscript contributes a localized evidence base for improving kindergarten pedagogy, school planning, and district-level instructional support.

1. Introduction

Education in the early years carries a formative role in the development of learners' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social foundations. Kindergarten classrooms introduce children to structured learning while still honoring the developmental need for play, movement, imagination, dialogue, and concrete experience. At this stage, the quality of teaching practice can either invite learners into active participation or reduce learning into passive compliance. For this reason, the study of teaching approaches in kindergarten is central to both instructional quality and learner development.

Contemporary early childhood education increasingly recognizes that young learners are not empty recipients of information. They are active meaning-makers who construct understanding through interaction with teachers, peers, learning materials, and real-life situations. This orientation is consistent with constructivist views of learning, particularly the idea that knowledge develops through social mediation and guided participation (Vygotsky, 1978). In kindergarten, the teacher's role is therefore not merely to explain concepts but to design conditions where children can explore, ask, try, communicate, and reflect.

The shift from teacher-dominated instruction to learner-centered pedagogy has made teaching approaches a major concern in school improvement. Teaching approaches refer to organized ways of designing learning experiences, managing classroom processes, and supporting learner participation. In early childhood settings, these approaches must be responsive to learners' readiness, interests, social development, language ability, and emotional security. Effective approaches are therefore judged not only by the teacher's delivery but also by the extent to which learners become engaged in learning.

Learning engagement is a multidimensional construct that reflects learners' active involvement in schooling. It is commonly understood through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions, which include participation, persistence, mental effort, interest, and belongingness (Fredricks et al., 2004). Later engagement scholarship also emphasizes agentic engagement, or the learner's constructive contribution to the flow and direction of instruction (Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Reeve, 2013). This broader understanding is particularly relevant in kindergarten because children's engagement is visible in their questions, choices, peer interactions, emotional responses, and willingness to participate.

Behavioral engagement is often the most observable dimension in the classroom. It includes attendance, punctuality, participation, attention, task completion, and compliance with routines. In kindergarten, behavioral engagement may appear when learners follow classroom procedures, join activities, collaborate with peers, and remain focused during teacher-guided tasks. However, behavioral participation alone is insufficient when learners are not also thinking, feeling secure, relating positively, and exercising initiative.

Cognitive engagement refers to learners' mental investment in understanding and problem solving. It is expressed when learners ask questions, apply prior knowledge, explain their ideas, persist through difficulty, and use strategies to improve learning. In the kindergarten classroom, cognitive engagement must be supported through concrete experiences, scaffolding, modeling, and opportunities to connect concepts with familiar situations. This dimension is especially important because early cognitive habits can shape later attitudes toward inquiry, reflection, and academic persistence.

Emotional engagement concerns learners' affective connection to learning, teachers, classmates, and the classroom environment. Young children engage more meaningfully when they feel safe, respected, valued, and capable of success. Positive emotional experiences can strengthen motivation and reduce avoidance behaviors, especially in learners who may still be adjusting to school routines. For kindergarten learners, enjoyment, belongingness, pride, curiosity, and confidence are not peripheral outcomes but essential conditions for sustained engagement.

Social engagement reflects the learner's involvement in cooperative relationships and shared learning tasks. In kindergarten, much learning occurs through peer interaction, role play, collaborative tasks, dialogue, and guided group work. Socially engaged learners listen, take turns, help classmates, respect differences, and participate in group activities. Because early classrooms are also socialization spaces, teaching approaches that promote collaboration can contribute to both academic and interpersonal development.

Agentic engagement adds another important layer because it recognizes learners as contributors to their own learning environments. It becomes visible when learners express preferences, ask for help, propose ideas, seek clarification, or participate in shaping classroom norms and project criteria. Reeve (2013) argued that agentic engagement occurs when students constructively influence instruction rather than merely respond to it. In kindergarten, agency must be carefully scaffolded through age-appropriate choices, structured voice, and supportive teacher responses.

Inquiry-based learning is one teaching approach that directly supports curiosity and knowledge construction. It encourages learners to ask questions, examine information, investigate problems, and build explanations through guided exploration. Bruner (1961) emphasized discovery as a process through which learners develop deeper understanding, while inquiry-oriented classrooms use scaffolding to balance learner autonomy and teacher guidance. In kindergarten, inquiry-based learning may involve questioning, observing, comparing, predicting, and explaining using concrete and familiar experiences.

Project-based learning extends inquiry by organizing learning around meaningful tasks, products, or problems. In this approach, learners investigate a question or theme over time and demonstrate learning through outputs, presentations, or collaborative products. Project-based learning is associated with authentic learning, sustained inquiry, collaboration, and communication (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006; Bell, 2010). For kindergarten learners, project work can be simplified into developmentally appropriate activities that involve making, telling, drawing, building, dramatizing, and sharing.

Differentiated instruction responds to learner diversity by adjusting content, process, product, and learning environment. In kindergarten, learners differ in language development, prior experiences, motor skills, readiness, interests, and learning preferences. Tomlinson (2014) emphasized that differentiation is not a single technique but a systematic response to learner variance. Its importance in early childhood education lies in ensuring that all children can access learning tasks while still being appropriately challenged.

Game-based learning uses play structures, rules, challenges, feedback, and sometimes digital or non-digital game elements to support learning goals. Children naturally learn through play, but game-based learning becomes instructional when games are aligned with target concepts and skills. Gamified and game-based environments can increase motivation, practice, immediate feedback, and persistence when designed appropriately (Deterding et al., 2011; Hamari et al., 2016). In kindergarten, games can support numeracy, literacy, cooperation, problem solving, memory, and classroom participation.

Experiential learning emphasizes direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Dewey (1938) argued that meaningful education is grounded in experience, while Kolb (1984) conceptualized learning as a cycle involving experience, reflection, thinking, and action. In early childhood classrooms, experiential learning aligns naturally with hands-on exploration, simulations, field-based activities, manipulative use, and real-life problem solving. It is particularly important because young learners understand abstract ideas better when these are connected to concrete and meaningful activities.

Although these approaches are conceptually distinct, they are not mutually exclusive in actual classroom practice. A teacher may begin with an inquiry question, develop it through a project, differentiate tasks according to learner readiness, use games for practice, and culminate in an experiential activity. What matters is the coherence of instructional design and the teacher's ability to align approach, objective, learner need, and engagement outcome. This integration is especially necessary in kindergarten, where learners require structure and flexibility at the same time.

The local context of Caramoan South District provides an important site for examining these issues. District-level studies can reveal how broad pedagogical ideas are translated into classroom practice in specific public school settings. They can also identify the kinds of instructional support, resources, and policy mechanisms needed by teachers and school leaders. Local evidence is valuable because engagement is shaped not only by pedagogy but also by school culture, available resources, teacher collaboration, and community context.

Despite extensive literature on learner-centered approaches, there remains a need for empirical studies that connect specific teaching approaches with multiple dimensions of learning engagement in kindergarten. Many studies treat engagement as general participation, yet kindergarten engagement includes emotional security, social participation, cognitive effort, and emerging learner agency. Similarly, many school-level recommendations focus on instruction broadly without identifying which classroom practices should be sustained, refined, or supported through policy. This study responds to that gap by examining teaching approaches and engagement dimensions together.

Thus, the present study determined the extent to which inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, game-based learning, and experiential learning were employed by kindergarten teachers in Caramoan South District. It also assessed the extent to which these approaches influenced behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic engagement among learners. Further, it tested significant agreement in the rank ordering of both teaching approaches and engagement dimensions. The study ultimately aimed to produce policy recommendations that are evidence-based, context-sensitive, and useful for teachers, school heads, district leaders, curriculum writers, and education policymakers.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to determine the extent to which selected teaching approaches were employed by kindergarten teachers. The evaluative component was used to assess the perceived influence of these approaches on the learning engagement of kindergarten learners. The correlational element was operationalized through the use of Kendall's coefficient of concordance to test the degree of agreement in respondents' rank ordering of indicators.

The study was conducted in Caramoan South District, Division of Camarines Sur, during School Year 2024-2025. The locale was appropriate because the study sought to generate district-specific evidence on early childhood instructional practice and learner engagement. The setting also allowed the researcher to examine how kindergarten teaching approaches were enacted in a public

school district context. The scope of the inquiry was therefore contextualized within the professional experiences and instructional observations of kindergarten teachers in the district.

The respondents of the study were thirty kindergarten teachers in Caramoan South District. Their inclusion was appropriate because they were directly involved in implementing teaching approaches and observing learner engagement in kindergarten classrooms. The use of teacher-respondents allowed the study to gather informed professional judgments regarding classroom practice. The data should therefore be interpreted as teacher-reported evidence rather than as direct observational measurement of learner behavior.

The study examined two major variable clusters. The first cluster was teaching approaches, which included inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, game-based learning, and experiential learning. The second cluster was learning engagement, which included behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic engagement. These dimensions provided the structure for data gathering, tabulation, ranking, and interpretation.

The main data-gathering instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. The instrument was organized according to the dimensions of teaching approaches and learning engagement identified in the statement of the problem. It required respondents to rate indicators reflecting classroom practices and engagement outcomes. Through this structure, the questionnaire generated quantitative data suitable for weighted mean computation, ranking, and concordance testing.

The teaching approach indicators described specific teacher practices such as use of open-ended questioning, scaffolding, collaboration, differentiated tasks, educational games, reflection, and real-life learning experiences. The engagement indicators described observable or perceived learner behaviors such as asking questions, focusing attention, thinking critically, feeling a sense of belonging, collaborating with peers, expressing learning preferences, and seeking support. The questionnaire therefore linked instructional actions with engagement manifestations. This alignment helped ensure that the results could be interpreted in relation to classroom practice.

The data-gathering procedure centered on the administration of the questionnaire to the identified kindergarten teacher-respondents. Responses were retrieved, organized, encoded, and tabulated according to the research questions. The researcher treated the responses as the basis for determining the extent of teaching approach employment and the extent of influence on learner engagement. The resulting data set supported both descriptive interpretation and inferential testing of rank agreement.

Weighted mean was used to determine the extent to which each teaching approach was employed and the extent to which teaching approaches influenced learner engagement. Frequency count and percentage were included among the statistical tools to summarize respondent information and response distribution when applicable. Rank was used to arrange indicators and dimensions according to their computed means. These descriptive tools allowed the researcher to identify the strongest and comparatively lower-rated areas within the study variables.

Kendall's coefficient of concordance, with the corresponding chi-square test, was used to determine the significance of agreement in rank orders. The level of significance was set at 0.05. A significant result indicated that respondents demonstrated agreement in the ranking of indicators within a dimension. A non-significant result indicated that the observed agreement was insufficient to reject the null hypothesis for that dimension.

The methodological interpretation of the study was bounded by its design and data source. Because responses were gathered from teachers, the findings reflected professional perceptions of instructional practice and learner engagement rather than independent classroom observation or learner self-report. Nevertheless, the design was appropriate for generating a district-level diagnostic profile and policy-oriented recommendations. The results provide empirical guidance for sustaining effective practices and identifying areas where instructional consistency, support, and further inquiry are needed.

3. Results and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the study in relation to the employment of teaching approaches, the influence of these approaches on learning engagement, the tests of significant agreement, and the resulting policy directions. The results were organized into tables to show the magnitude, rank, interpretation, and statistical significance of the findings. The discussion after each table interprets the numerical data in relation to early childhood pedagogy, classroom practice, and policy development. Emphasis is placed on what the findings suggest for sustaining and improving kindergarten instruction in Caramoan South District.

The interpretation of results recognizes that the data were derived from teacher responses using a researcher-made questionnaire. Therefore, the findings are best understood as perceived extent and perceived influence rather than direct experimental effects. The term influence is retained because it follows the language of the original study, but the discussion avoids causal claims beyond what the design can support. In this way, the article maintains fidelity to the thesis data while presenting the results in a journal-ready analytical form.

Table 1. Extent of Teaching Approaches Employed by Kindergarten Teachers

Teaching Approach	Mean	Rank	Interpretation	Highest-Rated Evidence from Indicators
Experiential Learning	4.84	1	Very Much Employed	Structured experiences aligned with curricular objectives (4.91); transfer of learning to unfamiliar or evolving contexts (4.88).
Differentiated Instruction	4.83	2	Very Much Employed	Varied instructional strategies for different learning preferences (4.86); multiple product options for demonstrating understanding (4.85).
Inquiry-Based Learning	4.65	3	Very Much Employed	Use of multiple information sources (4.71); open-ended questioning to deepen thinking and discussion (4.71).
Project-Based Learning	4.64	4	Very Much Employed	Scaffolding and formative feedback throughout project development (4.71); extended investigation (4.67).

Game-Based Learning	4.61	5	Very Much Employed	Educational games aligned with learning objectives and essential skills (4.67); formative assessment through interactive tasks (4.61).
Composite	4.71	-	Very Much Employed	Overall pattern indicates strong use of learner-centered teaching approaches across the district.

Table 1 shows that all five teaching approaches were rated Very Much Employed by the kindergarten teacher-respondents. Experiential learning ranked first with a mean of 4.84, followed closely by differentiated instruction with a mean of 4.83. Inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and game-based learning also received high mean ratings of 4.65, 4.64, and 4.61, respectively. The composite mean of 4.71 indicates a consistently high level of implementation across the teaching approach dimensions.

The dominance of experiential learning suggests that kindergarten teachers strongly value concrete, hands-on, and real-life learning experiences. This finding is developmentally appropriate because young learners often understand ideas more effectively when lessons are linked to direct activity and meaningful context. Differentiated instruction's high ranking also indicates that teachers recognized learner diversity and adjusted strategies, tasks, products, or supports accordingly. The relatively close distribution of means further suggests that teachers did not rely on a single approach but used a range of active pedagogical practices.

The slightly lower ranking of game-based learning should not be read as weakness because it remained within the Very Much Employed level. Rather, it may imply that teachers use games selectively, possibly depending on lesson objectives, available materials, class size, or access to digital and non-digital game resources. Inquiry-based and project-based learning were also highly implemented, indicating that teachers incorporated questioning, collaboration, feedback, and authentic tasks into instruction. This pattern reflects a classroom ecology where engagement is supported through multiple entry points rather than through one uniform teaching model.

The findings align with the broader theoretical claim that early childhood learning is strengthened by experience, scaffolding, differentiation, and active participation. Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984) emphasized the educational value of experience, while Tomlinson (2014) argued that instruction must respond to learner differences. Inquiry and project-based practices are likewise consistent with constructivist learning because they promote investigation, dialogue, and meaning-making (Bruner, 1961; Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006). Thus, the results support the view that learner-centered teaching approaches are not supplementary practices but core mechanisms for engaging kindergarten learners.

Table 2. Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of Teaching Approaches

Teaching Approach	Kendall's W	Chi-Square	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Inquiry-Based Learning	0.93	19.53	$p < 0.01$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Project-Based Learning	0.82	19.68	$p < 0.025$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Differentiated Instruction	0.58	15.66	$p > 0.05$	Not significant	Do not reject null hypothesis
Game-Based Learning	0.78	16.38	$p < 0.05$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Experiential Learning	0.88	21.12	$p < 0.01$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis

Table 2 presents the Kendall coefficient of concordance results for the rank orders of the extent of teaching approaches employed by teachers. Four of the five dimensions showed significant agreement: inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, game-based learning, and experiential learning. Inquiry-based learning obtained the highest concordance value of 0.93, while experiential learning followed with 0.88. These values indicate strong agreement among teacher-respondents in ranking the indicators within these dimensions.

The significant agreement in inquiry-based learning suggests that teachers shared a common perception of which inquiry practices were most evident in kindergarten classrooms. The same can be said for project-based learning, game-based learning, and experiential learning, where the significant chi-square results indicated convergent ranking patterns. This is important because high mean ratings alone do not show whether teachers agree on the relative strength of indicators. Kendall's W adds another layer of evidence by showing the extent to which respondents ranked indicators consistently.

Differentiated instruction was the only dimension where the null hypothesis was not rejected. Its mean rating was very high, but the non-significant agreement result shows more variation in how teachers ranked the differentiated instruction indicators. This may mean that while teachers generally employ differentiated instruction, they differ in emphasis, confidence, resources, or interpretation of specific practices such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, formative assessment, varied products, or readiness-based modification. The result points to a need for greater instructional calibration and shared understanding of differentiation in the district.

The findings have direct implications for teacher development. Significant agreement in most dimensions suggests that existing practices may be documented, refined, and scaled through professional learning communities and peer-sharing mechanisms. The non-significant agreement in differentiated instruction identifies a priority area for capacity building, coaching, and classroom-based exemplars. This is consistent with Tomlinson's (2014) view that differentiation requires systematic planning and professional judgment, not merely the occasional use of varied activities.

Table 3. Extent of Influence of Teaching Approaches on Learning Engagement

Engagement Dimension	Mean	Rank	Interpretation	Highest-Rated Evidence from Indicators
Emotional Engagement	4.69	1	Very Much Evident	Care for classmates' success (4.73); sense of belonging in the learning environment (4.73).

Behavioral Engagement	4.68	2	Very Much Evident	Asking questions and seeking clarification (4.71); respectful collaboration with peers (4.70).
Social Engagement	4.68	2	Very Much Evident	Valuing diverse perspectives (4.71); empathy, constructive conflict resolution, and community participation (4.70).
Agentic Engagement	4.63	4	Very Much Evident	Expressing learning preferences and needs (4.66); asking questions and offering suggestions (4.65).
Cognitive Engagement	4.53	5	Very Much Evident	Critical thinking, applying prior knowledge, and asking thought-provoking questions (all 4.57).
Composite	4.64	-	Very Much Evident	Overall strong perceived influence across all engagement dimensions.

Table 3 shows that the influence of teaching approaches on the learning engagement of kindergarten learners was rated Very Much Evident across all five dimensions. Emotional engagement ranked highest with a mean of 4.69, followed by behavioral and social engagement, both with means of 4.68. Agentic engagement obtained a mean of 4.63, while cognitive engagement obtained a mean of 4.53. The composite mean of 4.64 indicates that the teaching approaches were perceived to contribute strongly to learner engagement as a whole.

The highest ranking of emotional engagement is noteworthy because young learners often participate more fully when they feel safe, valued, and connected. The top indicators show that learners cared for classmates' success and felt a sense of belonging in the learning environment. These findings suggest that learner-centered teaching approaches were not only instructional strategies but also relational practices. When teachers used meaningful tasks, flexible activities, games, inquiry, and hands-on experiences, learners appeared to experience stronger emotional connection with school learning.

Behavioral and social engagement ranked closely after emotional engagement, suggesting that the teaching approaches supported both classroom participation and peer interaction. Learners were perceived to ask questions, seek clarification, collaborate respectfully, value diverse perspectives, and resolve conflicts constructively. These behaviors are important in kindergarten because engagement is visible through social participation and routine-based classroom conduct. The findings imply that active teaching approaches help learners internalize classroom expectations while also developing cooperative learning dispositions.

Cognitive engagement received the lowest mean among the five dimensions but remained Very Much Evident. This suggests that learners demonstrated thinking processes such as analyzing, applying prior knowledge, and asking thoughtful questions, but these may require more deliberate instructional scaffolding compared with emotional or behavioral responses. The result is consistent with Fredricks et al. (2004), who treated cognitive engagement as a deeper form of investment involving strategy use and effort. It also supports the importance of inquiry, project work, and feedback cycles in helping young learners move from participation toward deeper understanding.

Table 4. Test of Significant Agreement on Rank Orders of Influence on Learning Engagement

Engagement Dimension	Kendall's W	Chi-Square	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Behavioral Engagement	0.88	18.48	$p < 0.025$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Cognitive Engagement	0.94	22.56	$p < 0.005$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Emotional Engagement	0.63	17.01	$p < 0.05$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Social Engagement	0.87	18.27	$p < 0.025$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis
Agentic Engagement	0.69	16.56	$p < 0.05$	Significant	Reject null hypothesis

Table 4 presents the test of significant agreement on the rank orders of the influence of teaching approaches on learning engagement. All five dimensions showed significant agreement among respondents. Cognitive engagement recorded the highest concordance value of 0.94, followed by behavioral engagement at 0.88 and social engagement at 0.87. Emotional engagement and agentic engagement also showed significant agreement, with Kendall's W values of 0.63 and 0.69, respectively.

The very high agreement in cognitive engagement indicates that teachers shared similar judgments regarding which cognitive behaviors were most influenced by the teaching approaches. This is important because cognitive engagement often involves less visible processes compared with behavioral participation. The significant result suggests that teachers consistently recognized indicators such as critical thinking, application of prior knowledge, reasoning, persistence, reflection, and feedback use. Such consistency strengthens the credibility of the finding even though cognitive engagement had the lowest weighted mean among engagement dimensions.

The significant agreement in behavioral and social engagement indicates that teachers also shared a common perception of how learner-centered approaches influenced participation, routines, collaboration, communication, and peer support. These are foundational outcomes in kindergarten because young learners develop school readiness through classroom behavior and social participation. Emotional engagement's lower but still significant concordance value may reflect the complexity of interpreting children's affective responses. Agentic engagement's significant result is also meaningful because learner agency is emerging in kindergarten and requires teacher sensitivity to children's choices, questions, and preferences.

These findings suggest that the teaching approaches had a broad engagement footprint. They were not limited to increasing activity participation but were perceived to influence thinking, feeling, relating, behaving, and initiating. This supports the multidimensional understanding of engagement advanced by Fredricks et al. (2004) and expanded by Reeve and Tseng (2011). For policy and practice, the results justify professional development that treats engagement as an integrated construct rather than as simple attentiveness or compliance.

Table 5. Policy Recommendation Matrix Derived from the Findings

Responsible Actor	Policy/Program Direction	Implementation Focus
Teachers	Sustain learner-centered practices; document and share effective strategies; allow learner voice and choice; use flexible tasks, scaffolds, feedback routines, differentiated instruction, games, and real-life contexts.	Classroom implementation and instructional refinement
School Heads	Facilitate professional learning communities; allocate collaboration time; establish resource corners or learning hubs; implement peer tutoring; monitor effective practices; promote active learning culture.	School-level instructional support and supervision
DepEd Key Officials and Supervisors	Provide grants and recognition for instructional innovation; support scalable professional development; integrate cognitive engagement benchmarks; strengthen socio-emotional learning and mental health initiatives.	System-level capacity building and enabling policy
Curriculum Writers and LRMDS	Develop exemplars, contextualized guides, resource lists, differentiated tasks, and game-based lesson templates aligned with 21st-century skills.	Instructional resource development and curriculum support
Policy Makers and Planning Units	Embed learner voice and agentic engagement in SIPs and AIPs; enforce attendance policies; support equitable services and cross-sector collaboration.	Policy institutionalization and sustainability

Table 5 synthesizes the policy recommendations generated from the findings of the study. The recommendations are distributed across major actors, including teachers, school heads, DepEd officials, curriculum writers, resource management units, policy makers, and planning units. This distribution is important because sustaining learner engagement cannot be assigned to teachers alone. It requires coordinated action across classroom, school, district, curriculum, and policy levels.

For teachers, the recommendations emphasize the continuation of learner-centered teaching practices and the intentional use of voice, choice, feedback, differentiation, games, and real-life learning contexts. These recommendations directly respond to the high ratings of teaching approach employment and engagement influence. They also recognize that effective kindergarten instruction depends on a teacher's capacity to combine structure with flexibility. Teachers are therefore positioned as designers of engagement-rich experiences rather than mere implementers of prescribed activities.

For school heads and district leaders, the recommendations focus on professional learning communities, instructional coaching, resource support, collaborative planning, and monitoring. These supports are especially relevant to the differentiated instruction finding, where high implementation was accompanied by non-significant agreement in rank orders. School leadership can help address this gap by creating shared language, common exemplars, and peer-based calibration of differentiated practice. This makes instructional improvement collective rather than isolated.

At the system level, the recommendations call for policies that support innovation, socio-emotional learning, mental health, resource access, learner voice, attendance, and cross-sector collaboration. These recommendations are coherent with the results because learner engagement emerged as behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic. Therefore, policy responses must address the whole learning environment and not merely classroom lesson delivery. A journal-level interpretation of these findings is that engagement is a systemic outcome produced by the interaction of pedagogy, leadership, resources, and policy alignment.

4. Conclusions and Implications

4.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that kindergarten teachers in Caramoan South District employed the five identified teaching approaches to a very high extent. Experiential learning and differentiated instruction emerged as the most strongly employed approaches, indicating the centrality of hands-on, responsive, and learner-sensitive instruction in kindergarten classrooms. Inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and game-based learning were also very much employed, demonstrating that teachers used varied active learning strategies. This pattern affirms that learner-centered pedagogy was a prominent feature of classroom practice in the district.

The high employment of experiential learning shows that teachers recognized the value of direct, meaningful, and context-based experiences in early childhood instruction. Kindergarten learners benefit from learning situations that allow them to manipulate materials, solve simple problems, interact with peers, and connect lessons with real life. This conclusion supports the developmental logic of early childhood education, where abstraction is strengthened through concrete activity. It also suggests that experience-based learning should remain a priority in teacher training and lesson design.

Differentiated instruction was also very much employed, but the test of agreement showed that teachers did not significantly agree on the rank order of its indicators. This means that teachers valued differentiation but may have implemented or interpreted its components differently. The result points to a distinction between frequency of use and consistency of understanding. Thus, differentiated instruction requires clearer operational guidance, shared exemplars, and continuing professional development.

The study further concludes that teaching approaches were perceived to influence learning engagement very strongly. Emotional engagement ranked highest, followed closely by behavioral and social engagement. This indicates that learner-centered approaches contributed to children's sense of belonging, care for others, positive attitude, participation, and peer interaction. Engagement in kindergarten is therefore deeply relational and affective, not simply behavioral.

Cognitive engagement ranked lowest among the engagement dimensions, although it remained very much evident. This suggests that learners displayed thinking behaviors, but these behaviors may need more deliberate development through inquiry, feedback, reflection, questioning, and problem-solving tasks. Kindergarten teachers may already be establishing the foundation for cognitive engagement, yet the findings indicate room for strengthening depth of thought. This conclusion is important because early cognitive engagement can influence later academic persistence and strategic learning.

Agentic engagement was very much evident, showing that learners were perceived to express preferences, ask questions, offer suggestions, and take ownership of learning in age-appropriate ways. This conclusion is significant because agency is often less emphasized in early childhood classrooms. The findings show that kindergarten learners can contribute to the learning process when teachers provide safe and structured opportunities for voice and choice. Therefore, learner agency should be treated as an emerging developmental capacity that can be scaffolded rather than postponed to higher grade levels.

The significant agreement results for most teaching approach dimensions and all engagement dimensions strengthen the internal coherence of the findings. Teachers generally shared common perceptions regarding the ranking of indicators within inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, game-based learning, experiential learning, and all engagement dimensions. This shared perception provides a strong basis for district-level instructional planning. However, the non-significant agreement in differentiated instruction marks a clear area for refinement.

Overall, the study concludes that the teaching approaches employed by kindergarten teachers served as meaningful mechanisms for enhancing learner engagement. The evidence supports the formulation of policy recommendations focused on sustaining active instruction, strengthening differentiation, promoting cognitive engagement, and institutionalizing professional collaboration. The findings also show that engagement must be understood as behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and agentic. Therefore, effective kindergarten instruction should be comprehensive, responsive, relational, and systematically supported.

4.2 Implications

The first implication concerns classroom practice. Teachers should continue employing experiential, differentiated, inquiry-based, project-based, and game-based strategies because these approaches were perceived to enhance multiple dimensions of engagement. However, implementation should be intentional rather than incidental. Lesson planning should explicitly identify which engagement dimension is being targeted and how activities will support that dimension.

The second implication concerns differentiated instruction. Although it ranked highly in extent of use, the lack of significant agreement suggests that teachers may need a more common framework for applying it. School-based professional development should therefore include model lessons, differentiated task banks, classroom demonstrations, and peer review of lesson plans. Such support can help teachers move from general variation of activities toward systematic differentiation based on readiness, interest, learning profile, and evidence from assessment.

The third implication concerns cognitive engagement. Since cognitive engagement had the lowest mean among the engagement dimensions, instructional leaders should help teachers design activities that deepen thinking. Strategies may include open-ended questioning, guided reasoning, reflective talk, problem-solving centers, concept mapping, simple investigations, and feedback-based revision. These practices can help kindergarten learners develop early habits of inquiry and metacognition.

The fourth implication concerns emotional and social learning. Because emotional and social engagement were among the highest-rated dimensions, schools should protect and strengthen practices that make learners feel safe, valued, and connected. Socio-emotional learning should not be treated as an add-on but as an integrated element of classroom instruction. Activities that promote empathy, belongingness, cooperation, and constructive conflict resolution can improve both classroom climate and academic participation.

The fifth implication concerns learner agency. The finding that agentic engagement was very much evident suggests that even young learners can participate in shaping their learning experiences. Teachers should provide age-appropriate opportunities for children to express choices, ask for help, recommend activities, and reflect on what helps them learn. School policies may also recognize learner voice as part of classroom quality indicators.

The sixth implication concerns instructional leadership. School heads should create structures that allow teachers to share successful practices, co-plan lessons, observe peers, and reflect on classroom evidence. Professional learning communities and learning action cells can be used to document effective engagement strategies and address implementation gaps. These collaborative structures are particularly useful in standardizing differentiated instruction and enriching cognitive engagement practices.

The seventh implication concerns resource development and policy support. Curriculum writers, LRMDS personnel, and district supervisors should provide contextualized resources that help teachers implement active and differentiated approaches in kindergarten classrooms. These may include printed and digital learning materials, game-based templates, project guides, inquiry prompts, assessment rubrics, and examples of learner voice integration. Resource support is necessary to make high-quality engagement practices sustainable across schools with different conditions.

The eighth implication concerns future research and evidence building. Since the present findings were based on teacher perceptions, future studies may include classroom observations, learner-level evidence, parent perspectives, and comparative analysis across grade levels or districts. Researchers may also examine the distinct effects of specific approaches, such as inquiry-based learning or differentiated instruction, on particular engagement dimensions. Such work can deepen understanding of how learner-centered teaching produces engagement in varied early childhood contexts.

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