

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**NATIONAL PRESCHOOL STANDARD CURRICULUM (NPSC) IN
MALAYSIA KINDERGARTEN- TEACHER'S RETROSPECTIVE**Mohd Nazri Bin Abdul Rahman^{1*}, Jothy Letchummi Ganditasan¹*mohdnazri_ar@um.edu.my¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur**ABSTRACT**

How Preschool Teachers feel about the National Preschool Standard Curriculum in Malaysia. This study takes a closer look at how two preschool teachers in the Klang Valley feel about the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC). We interviewed them to understand their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. While they appreciate the NPSC's focus on play and a well-rounded education, they also highlighted some difficulties. These include a lack of resources, large class sizes, and limited training opportunities. They also pointed out a gap between the curriculum's ideals and what's happening in the classroom. By understanding their perspectives, we hope to improve the implementation of the NPSC and enhance the learning experience for young children in Malaysia. They recommended improved training programs, higher resource allocation, and a stronger emphasis on matching assessment methodologies with the NPSC's developmental goals. These findings highlight the importance of increased teacher assistance in maximizing the curriculum's influence on early childhood education in Malaysia. The study provides valuable views on the continuing discourse on NPSC.

Keywords: National Preschool Standard Curriculum, Preschool Teachers, Klang Valley)

INTRODUCTION

The advancements in early childhood education have led to the initiation of a National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC) known as Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan- KSPK in Malaysian version for preschools at National level which is an ongoing effort that aim to uplift and upgrade early childhood education to position it globally. The National Preschool Curriculum (NPSC) has long been published with the main objective of contributing to making preschools in Malaysia holistic, inclusive and child centered learning experiences providing to children's developmental needs. Over four distinct levels that cover five crucial areas language and communication, cognitive development, social-emotional growth, creativity, and moral values this

curriculum prepares young learners for an easy transition into primary school education.

Recently, Malaysian teachers have experienced so transformational and yet the real challenges of implementing NPSC within fast pace changing education world. While the teachers themselves reflect on how well the curriculum works in their classrooms and balance enforcing structured outcomes with allowing space for something different every day based on each child's needs, they are literally responsible for executing and adjusting the ideas in each classroom. Their stories shed light on how the curriculum enables and sometimes constrains what they teach and how they teach it, and how it might change to better serve current educational needs.

The NPSC is deeply influenced by constructivist learning theories, notably those of Piaget and Vygotsky, which emphasize learning through play as a method to stimulate children's cognitive and emotional development. Under the NPSC, preschools are encouraged to use play-based learning as a central teaching approach, which aims to create a "zone of proximal development" for young learners by engaging them actively and holistically (Ng & Yeo, 2014). The curriculum encompasses six learning strands: Communication, Spirituality, Humanities, Personal Competence, Physical Development, and Science and Technology. Each strand supports critical, creative, and moral development, aligning with Malaysia's vision of nurturing children prepared for 21st-century challenges (Ministry of Education, 2017).

In this article, we examined the views of two individuals involved in both teaching and learning, namely Malaysian kindergarten teachers reflecting on their experience journey with the NPSC into their impact on classroom practices to how it has affected students. This study provides insights of teachers and helps to appreciate the strengths and gaps of NPSC, which will inform future education curriculum relevant for early childhood education system in Malaysia.

Research Objectives

To explore preschool teachers' perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC) in Malaysian kindergartens.

Research Questions

What are the experiences and perceptions of preschool teachers regarding the implementation of the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC) in Malaysian kindergartens?

METHODOLOGY

This study conducts a qualitative research design to explore teachers' experience perceptions of the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC)

in Malaysia. By using an interpretative approach, the research aims to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and challenges faced by teachers in implementing the NPSC within government preschools in the Klang Valley

Research Design

A qualitative approach was chosen to facilitate a detailed understanding of the teachers' perspectives and experiences, which are critical in evaluating the practical application of the NPSC. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts while addressing key aspects of the research objectives.

Participants

The study involved two government preschool teachers from the Klang Valley. Both participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring they had firsthand experience in implementing the NPSC. Selection criteria included:

- Being in-service preschool teachers.
- A minimum of two years of teaching experience with the NPSC.
- Willingness to participate and provide reflective insights on curriculum implementation

The purposive sampling approach was adopted to capture the nuanced perspectives of experienced educators who actively engage with the curriculum in diverse classroom contexts.

FINDINGS

The new curriculum shows a lot of promise. It's great to see a focus on skills like thinking critically, communicating clearly, and being creative. Teachers love the idea of including things like empathy and self-awareness, which help kids grow as whole people. Projects and STEM activities are also a fantastic way to prepare kids for the future.

However, there are some hurdles. Parents often want their kids to focus on reading and math, which can clash with the curriculum's broader goals. Plus, schools, especially those in rural areas, sometimes lack the resources and training needed to fully implement the curriculum. Teachers want to help every student, but they need more support to do so.

The curriculum does a good job of helping kids learn and grow socially and emotionally. But we could do better in teaching them how to be safe and smart online. Teachers think this is crucial in today's digital world. Finally, while parents want the best for their kids, they may not fully understand the new curriculum. They often ask for traditional homework, which can take away from other important learning experiences. Building stronger relationships between teachers and parents can help everyone work together to achieve the best outcomes for our children.

DISCUSSION

This study sheds light on the challenges of putting the NPSC into practice. While the curriculum's focus on modern skills is a step in the right direction, there's a disconnect between its ideals and real-world implementation, especially in schools with limited resources.

Teachers emphasize the importance of involving parents. They suggest creating parent groups and regularly sharing updates to help parents understand the curriculum's broader goals. Additionally, teachers need more training to support all students, including those with diverse needs, and to prepare them for the digital age. To fully realize the potential of the NPSC, schools need adequate funding. This includes providing teachers with ongoing professional development, equipping classrooms with digital tools, and creating learning spaces that foster creativity and collaboration.

RESULTS

The interviews revealed several actionable insights regarding the implementation of the NPSC. While teachers recognize the curriculum's strengths in promoting critical and creative thinking, they emphasized the need for improvements in digital literacy and inclusivity training to address diverse learning needs effectively. A recurring theme was the disconnect between parents' expectations and the curriculum's objectives, underscoring the need for greater parental education about the value of holistic early childhood education. Additionally, practical barriers such as resource limitations and gaps in teacher training were identified as significant challenges that hinder the curriculum's successful implementation. Addressing these issues is essential for realizing the NPSC's full potential.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while the NPSC offers a strong and well-designed framework for early childhood education, its effective implementation depends on addressing several key challenges. Parental awareness remains a critical area of concern, as many parents struggle to align their expectations with the curriculum's emphasis on holistic development.

Initiatives to educate parents about the long-term benefits of a well-rounded education could foster stronger support and collaboration. Similarly, enhancing teacher training is essential, particularly in areas such as inclusive practices and digital literacy, to ensure educators are equipped to meet diverse student needs and prepare children for the demands of a rapidly evolving world.

Moreover, the availability of adequate resources, including infrastructure, teaching materials, and technological tools, plays a pivotal role in determining the curriculum's success. Without these foundational elements, even the most innovative curriculum risks falling short of its objectives. Addressing these gaps will not only strengthen the NPSC's implementation but also

ensure that its outcomes align with the competencies and skills required in the 21st century. By fostering a collaborative approach among educators, parents, and policymakers, the NPSC can fully realize its potential to shape well-rounded, future-ready learners.

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