

Comparative Study on the Learning Span of Pambilan Elementary School Kindergarten Learners Exposed to Localized and Non-Localized Verses: Input to Kindergarten Instructional Plan

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Abstract

This study examined the learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses at Pambilan Elementary School, Alabat, Quezon Province, as a basis for developing a contextualized Kindergarten Instructional Plan. Anchored in Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, Skinner's Behaviorist Learning Theory, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, and Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, the study employed a quasi-experimental research design within a natural classroom setting. Data were gathered through structured observation checklists using a four-point rating scale and time-on-task measurements to assess sustained focus, participation, responsiveness, and classroom engagement. Descriptive statistics and the Mann–Whitney U test were used to examine differences between instructional conditions. Results revealed Very High learning-span ratings for both localized (3.6) and non-localized (3.4) children's verses. Localized verses demonstrated higher descriptive ratings in sustained focus, eye contact, physical engagement, and peer interaction. However, the difference was not statistically significant ($U = 0.000$, $Z = -1.000$, $p = 0.317$). These findings indicate that both instructional approaches support classroom engagement, although localized materials offer additional opportunities for cultural relevance. The study recommends integrating culturally responsive verses, strengthening teacher training, and developing contextualized instructional resources. A play-based, learner-centered Kindergarten Instructional Plan aligned with the DepEd and ILAW curricula was proposed. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through inclusive instruction and recognition of local cultural identity. Its potential sustainability contributions include accessible educational resources, cultural preservation, community participation, and evidence-informed institutional planning. The school-specific setting and short-term observations limit the generalizability of the findings.

Keywords: Classroom Engagement, Culturally Responsive Instruction, Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten Instructional Plan, Learning Span, Localized Children's Verses, Non-Localized Children's Verses, Quasi-Experimental Research, Sustainable Development Goals

1. Introduction

Early childhood education establishes the foundation for cognitive development, sustained learning span, and school readiness. However, kindergarten learners often experience difficulty maintaining attention during classroom activities, emphasizing the need for engaging, developmentally appropriate, and culturally relevant instructional strategies. Children's verses, characterized by rhythm, repetition, and familiar language, offer opportunities to support cognitive engagement and sustained focus. Research indicates that rhythmic activities contribute to executive functioning, memory, and classroom participation (Ahokas et al., 2025), while localized instructional materials promote meaningful learning through cultural familiarity (Balsa et al., 2024; Merino & Metila, 2024). Despite these findings, limited research directly compares the learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. This study addresses that gap by examining their comparative effects among kindergarten learners at Pambilan Elementary School. Its findings will serve as the basis for a proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan that supports culturally responsive teaching, learner engagement, and sustainable early childhood education.

Learning span, defined in this study as the duration and level of sustained focus during instructional activities, is essential to kindergarten learners' classroom participation and readiness for subsequent learning. Because young children naturally exhibit fluctuating attention, instructional materials must accommodate their developmental characteristics while encouraging meaningful engagement. Children's verses provide rhythmic and repetitive learning experiences that stimulate auditory processing, memory, and attention regulation. Music-based activities have been associated with improved executive functioning, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility, which support sustained classroom focus (Lu, Y. Shi, and Musib A. F. (2025). Similarly, structured rhythm-and-movement activities improve impulse control, learning span, and on-task behavior among preschool children (Williams et al. (2023). Action songs integrating melody, rhythm, and movement also support working memory and attention through auditory, motor, and gestural engagement (Ahokas et al., 2025). Beyond rhythmic instruction, the cultural relevance of learning materials may influence learners' motivation and participation. Localized children's verses incorporate familiar language, traditions, experiences, and community-based imagery, making instructional activities more relatable. Research indicates that culturally relevant materials support learner engagement, comprehension, and attention (Balsa et al. (2024). However, non-localized verses also provide opportunities for vocabulary development and exposure to broader linguistic and cultural experiences. The present study therefore compares localized and non-localized children's verses to determine whether cultural familiarity produces a significant difference in the observable learning span of kindergarten learners. The investigation focuses on structured classroom activities at Pambilan Elementary School, with the findings intended to inform the development of a contextually appropriate Kindergarten Instructional Plan.

Existing literature identifies rhythmic instruction, learner engagement, cultural contextualization, and attention development as interconnected considerations in early childhood education. Research on musical rhythm demonstrates its contribution to cognitive regulation and classroom engagement. Rhythm-based interventions have been associated with improvements in working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility (Ahokas et al., 2025). Musical nursery rhymes also support language, literacy, socioemotional development, and classroom participation (Mahmood (2025). Likewise, rhythmic activities connected to children's experiences contribute to attentional control and working memory (Ahokas et al., 2025). Studies on nursery rhymes further demonstrate their instructional value. Preschool learners exposed to nursery rhymes exhibited improved vocabulary acquisition compared with those receiving conventional instruction (Usman et al. (2024). Similar improvements in vocabulary, recall, and motivation were reported among kindergarten learners (Karote Rajan and Saadat (2024). Nursery rhymes also enhanced vocabulary and self-confidence in English-speaking activities among young children (Christina and Pujiarto (2023). These findings suggest that repetition and enjoyable rhythmic experiences can support engagement, although improvements in language outcomes do not necessarily establish corresponding improvements in learning span. Learner engagement also involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation. Meaningful instructional activities, classroom conditions, and motivation influence learners' willingness to participate and sustain cognitive effort (Ebralidze (2023). Accordingly, children's verses may support learning span when their content and delivery encourage active involvement. Cultural localization provides another important dimension. Integrating community resources and local culture into preschool instruction promotes cultural identity, motivation, and participation (Shih (2022). Contextualized materials also strengthen engagement and comprehension by connecting learning activities with familiar experiences (Balsa et al. (2024). Teacher training focused on localized mother tongue materials further supports instructional quality and cultural relevance in linguistically diverse classrooms (Merino and Metila (2024). Related Philippine research reinforces these findings. Contextualized instructional materials have been associated with improved comprehension and engagement among young learners (Balsa et al. (2024). Regional literary texts have also demonstrated instructional relevance, acceptability, and improvements in learner performance (Hijastro, (2023). Likewise, culturally integrated preschool materials strengthen learner identity and motivation (Shih (2022). Nevertheless, non-localized verses remain educationally relevant. English nursery rhymes support vocabulary acquisition, confidence, and self-expression (Christina and Pujiarto (2023), while children's sensitivity to rhyme

is associated with early vocabulary development (Ahokas et al., 2025). These findings suggest that rhythmic structure may support learning even when instructional content is not culturally familiar. The literature also recognizes that localized materials do not consistently produce superior learning outcomes. Learner motivation, classroom conditions, instructional delivery, and individual characteristics may influence attention independently of localization. Consequently, a balanced consideration of localized and non-localized verses is necessary to establish whether cultural familiarity provides a measurable advantage in sustaining kindergarten learners' learning span.

At the global level, research emphasizes the role of rhythmic activities and culturally meaningful instruction in early childhood development. Preschool learners in Indonesia demonstrated vocabulary improvements through nursery rhyme instruction (Usman et al. (2024), while kindergarten learners in Oman exhibited enhanced vocabulary, recall, and motivation following exposure to nursery rhymes (Karote Rajan and Saadat (2024). Research on early rhyme perception also established associations between children's sensitivity to rhythmic language and vocabulary development (Ahokas et al., 2025). Developmental research further demonstrates that attention can be measured during early childhood. Children aged three to six exhibited measurable alerting, orienting, and executive control abilities, with substantial developmental improvements observed during the preschool years (Casagrande et al. (2022). Attentional networks also develop at different rates, indicating that learning span involves multiple cognitive processes rather than a single ability (Casagrande et al., 2022). Earlier developmental research by Rueda et al. (2004) likewise examined the development of attentional networks in childhood, providing additional theoretical support for understanding attention as a multidimensional cognitive process. Within the Philippine context, kindergarten education emphasizes developmentally appropriate, play-based, and learner-centered instruction. The Department of Education (n.d.) highlights the importance of engaging and meaningful learning experiences that support children's holistic development and prepare them for formal elementary education. These principles provide a foundation for integrating children's verses, movement, and interactive classroom activities into kindergarten instruction. The Kindergarten Education Act, Republic Act No. 10157, institutionalized kindergarten as part of compulsory formal education and emphasized suitable learning environments and instructional resources (Republic Act No. 10157, 2012). DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, similarly promotes safe, child-friendly, and stimulating kindergarten classrooms (Department of Education, 2016a). The Early Childhood Care and Development Council has also developed learning resources in Filipino and other Philippine languages, including Bisaya, Chavacano, and Ilocano, reflecting the importance of linguistic and cultural relevance. Philippine studies further associate mother tongue-based education with literacy and numeracy development (Merino and Metila (2024), while localized and indigenized curricula promote cultural identity and educational equity (Shih (2022). Meanwhile, both localized and non-localized instructional influences have implications for classroom management, cultural belonging, and exposure to broader perspectives (Merino and Metila (2024). At the local level, Pambilan Elementary School provides the setting for examining the comparative learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. Localized verses reflect learners' familiar language, cultural experiences, and immediate environment, whereas non-localized verses introduce more general or unfamiliar contexts. This comparison is intended to provide school-specific evidence for selecting appropriate instructional materials and developing a Kindergarten Instructional Plan.

The study is anchored in Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, Skinner's Behaviorist Learning Theory, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, and Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. These perspectives explain how children's verses may support kindergarten learners' learning span through cognitive engagement, behavioral reinforcement, varied learning experiences, and cultural familiarity. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development emphasizes that children in the preoperational stage learn through concrete, familiar, and meaningful experiences. Localized children's verses reflect this principle by incorporating recognizable language, imagery, and cultural references. The cognitive relevance of rhythmic language is supported by findings associating rhyme perception with early language development (Ahokas et al., 2025). Skinner's Behaviorist Learning Theory explains how reinforcement influences the repetition of desired behaviors. Enjoyable rhythmic activities, active participation, and positive feedback may encourage kindergarten learners to remain attentive during classroom instruction. Musical nursery rhymes have been associated with increased classroom engagement (Mahmood (2025). Similarly, reinforcement strengthens desired learning behaviors when positive consequences encourage continued participation (Chaudhary (2025). Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory recognizes differences in learners' cognitive strengths, particularly linguistic and musical-rhythmic abilities relevant to children's verses. The theory identifies multiple forms of intelligence, including linguistic and musical intelligence, which provide a theoretical basis for incorporating varied instructional experiences into classroom learning (Nuzzi, 2024). Rhythmic language, repetition, and movement provide varied opportunities for processing information and maintaining attention. Research indicates that rhythm-based activities contribute to working memory and attentional control (Ahokas et al., 2025). Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Pedagogy emphasizes academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. In an interview reported by Will (2022), Ladson-Billings explained that culturally relevant teaching involves supporting student learning, affirming learners' cultural backgrounds, and developing critical consciousness. This perspective supports the integration of localized children's verses that reflect learners' languages, traditions, and community experiences. Localized

verses support this perspective by integrating learners' cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences into instruction. Culturally responsive materials have been associated with stronger learner engagement and meaningful educational participation (Shih (2022)). Conceptually, the study follows the Input–Process–Output–Outcome (IPOO) model. The inputs consist of localized and non-localized children's verses, while the process involves classroom activities such as reading, singing, rhythmic repetition, movement, and interactive participation. Learners' observable learning span is documented through an observation checklist, with descriptive statistics and an independent-samples *t* test used to examine differences between the two groups. The intended output is a proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan, while the anticipated outcomes include improved learning span, classroom engagement, and readiness for subsequent learning activities. Collectively, these theoretical and conceptual perspectives establish the basis for examining whether cultural localization contributes to differences in kindergarten learners' sustained attention during verse-based instruction.

Although existing studies establish the educational value of rhythmic instruction and contextualized learning materials, limited evidence directly examines the comparative effects of localized and non-localized children's verses on kindergarten learners' learning span. Previous investigations have primarily focused on vocabulary acquisition, language development, and classroom engagement rather than directly measuring sustained attention. Musical nursery rhymes have demonstrated cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional benefits, but their specific effects on learning span remain insufficiently established (Mahmood (2025)). Similarly, nursery rhyme interventions improved vocabulary and learner confidence without directly examining learning span as the principal outcome (Christina and Pujiarto (2023)). Research on nursery rhyme instruction also reported vocabulary improvements without comparing culturally localized and non-localized versions (Usman et al. (2024)). Although rhythm-based activities have been associated with attentional control and phonological development (Ahokas et al., 2025), and rhyme perception has been linked with vocabulary acquisition (Ahokas et al., 2025), these findings do not conclusively establish whether localized verses produce greater sustained attention than non-localized materials. Furthermore, the literature indicates that cultural familiarity does not consistently result in superior learning outcomes. Instructional strategies, classroom environments, learner motivation, and individual differences may influence attention independently of material localization. Consequently, direct comparative evidence is necessary before determining the relative instructional advantages of localized children's verses. To address these gaps, the present study examines the learning span of kindergarten learners at Pambilan Elementary School when exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. Specifically, it seeks to determine learners' learning span under each instructional condition and establish whether a significant difference exists between the two groups. The study also examines implications for curriculum development, instructional materials design, teaching strategies, language and cultural integration, educational practices, policy and decision-making, and teacher training. The investigation is limited to kindergarten learners enrolled during the data collection period and focuses on observable, short-term learning span during structured verse-based activities. Other outcomes, including literacy development, language proficiency, and socioemotional development, are excluded from direct measurement. The study also excludes other instructional interventions, such as multimedia materials and play-based techniques, to maintain its focus on the two verse types. The findings will provide an empirical basis for proposing a Kindergarten Instructional Plan responsive to learners' developmental and cultural needs. However, the study's school-specific setting and short-term observational measures limit the generalizability of its findings to other educational contexts.

The study aligns primarily with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning. By comparing localized and non-localized children's verses, the research seeks to identify instructional materials that can support sustained attention, meaningful classroom participation, and developmentally appropriate kindergarten learning. Its proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan may contribute to improving early childhood instructional practices through evidence-based material selection. The study also relates to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through its emphasis on culturally responsive and contextually appropriate learning materials. Localized verses incorporate familiar languages, cultural experiences, and community references, potentially supporting meaningful participation among learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This relevance is consistent with the educational equity and cultural identity considerations associated with localized curricula (Shih (2022)) and mother tongue-based instruction (Merino and Metila (2024)). Furthermore, the research has a complementary connection to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through the educational preservation and recognition of local cultural identity. Children's verses reflecting community traditions, language, and everyday experiences may support cultural awareness and belonging within early childhood education. This connection is consistent with findings that integrating local culture into preschool curricula strengthens learner identity, motivation, and participation (Shih (2022)). These SDG connections are educational and cultural in scope. The study does not directly measure SDG indicators or establish broader societal outcomes; rather, it provides school-level evidence that may inform culturally responsive and inclusive kindergarten instruction.

The study contributes primarily to educational, cultural, socio-economic, community, and institutional sustainability by examining how culturally relevant instructional materials may support kindergarten learners' learning span and classroom engagement. From an educational sustainability perspective, the study may inform the development of accessible, developmentally appropriate, and engaging instructional resources. By comparing two types of children's verses, it provides a basis for selecting materials that support sustained attention and participation. Its findings may guide curriculum developers, teachers, and school administrators in improving kindergarten instruction and strengthening early learning experiences. In terms of cultural sustainability, localized children's verses integrate familiar language, traditions, and community experiences into classroom activities. Such materials may help maintain cultural relevance while encouraging learners' sense of identity and belonging. Research on culturally integrated preschool curricula supports the importance of local culture in promoting motivation and participation (Shih (2022). Nevertheless, non-localized verses remain valuable for introducing broader linguistic and cultural experiences, emphasizing the importance of balanced instructional material selection. Regarding socio-economic sustainability, children's verses offer a potentially low-cost instructional approach that can be integrated into ordinary classroom activities without requiring specialized technological resources. The study may help schools identify practical materials that support learner engagement within existing instructional settings. Its contribution is therefore related to educational resource accessibility rather than directly measured economic outcomes. For community sustainability, culturally familiar verses may strengthen connections between classroom learning and children's home environments. Parents and teachers can incorporate familiar rhymes into storytelling, recitation, and interactive activities, potentially supporting continuity between home and school learning experiences. Finally, the study contributes to institutional and policy sustainability by providing school-level evidence that may guide instructional planning, teacher development, curriculum decisions, and resource allocation. The proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan may support the integration of appropriate verse-based activities into regular teaching practices while promoting culturally responsive instruction. Overall, the study's multidisciplinary sustainability contribution lies in its potential to strengthen inclusive early childhood education, recognize local cultural identities, support accessible teaching practices, and inform evidence-based instructional decisions. By determining whether localized or non-localized children's verses better support kindergarten learners' learning span, the research seeks to contribute to sustainable improvements in kindergarten teaching and learning at Pambilan Elementary School.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quasi-experimental research design to compare the learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. This design was selected because random assignment was constrained by the natural classroom setting. Structured instructional activities were implemented to examine differences in learners' sustained attention and engagement under the two instructional conditions.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Pambilan Elementary School in Barangay Pambilan Norte, Municipality of Alabat, Quezon Province. The school operates under the Department of Education (DepEd) and implements the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. It was selected because of its accessible kindergarten population, supportive instructional environment, and culturally diverse community. The school's classrooms and regular learning schedules provided an appropriate setting for implementing verse-based activities and observing learners' learning span without substantially disrupting classroom routines.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents comprised 17 kindergarten learners enrolled at Pambilan Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026, consisting of nine males and eight females. These learners represented the school's kindergarten population and came from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They were selected because kindergarten is a critical developmental stage in which sustained attention and classroom engagement contribute to foundational learning.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study included all 17 enrolled kindergarten learners at Pambilan Elementary School, making the entire kindergarten population the research sample. All eligible learners were included rather than selecting a smaller subset. This approach enabled the researcher to examine learning span within the school's existing kindergarten population while maintaining the natural classroom setting.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured observation checklist and time-on-task measurement to assess kindergarten learners' learning span during localized and non-localized children's verse activities. The observation checklist measured sustained focus, ability to follow instructions, participation in recitation, and observable engagement through gestures and responses. These indicators were rated using a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1

(Very Low) to 4 (Very High). Time-on-task measurements recorded the duration of uninterrupted attention using a stopwatch or digital timer. Both instruments underwent expert validation by early childhood education specialists to establish content validity, age appropriateness, and alignment with the research objectives. Pilot testing was conducted at Alabat Central Elementary School to assess the suitability and reliability of the instruments and procedures. The manuscript initially identified 23 kindergarten learners, comprising 12 males and 11 females, as pilot participants. These learners were five years old within the prescribed age requirement for kindergarten enrollment. Republic Act No. 10157 recognizes kindergarten as a compulsory entry stage in basic education and promotes equal opportunities for children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development (Republic Act No. 10157, 2012).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection involved structured classroom observations and verse-based instructional activities. Initially, the kindergarten teacher presented a standard verse activity with neutral content to establish learners' attention levels, while the researcher documented their responses using the observation checklist and time-on-task recording sheet. The intervention was described as lasting two to four weeks, with three sessions weekly, each approximately 40–45 minutes. Non-localized children's verses were introduced during the first two weeks, followed by localized verses during the remaining two weeks. Activities involved verse presentation and learner participation within regular classroom lessons. The researcher observed attention-related behaviors and recorded sustained focus during designated 10–15-minute observation periods. Repeated observations were conducted using consistent lesson structures, classroom conditions, and session durations to support reliable comparisons. Before the main implementation, pilot testing was undertaken at Alabat Central Elementary School after formal notification to the district supervisor and school principal. The pilot-testing procedure identified 23 kindergarten learners, consisting of twelve males and eleven females. The lesson addressed the theme “People Living in This Beautiful World,” focusing on the sea and river under Quarter 4, Week 2 of the curriculum. A preliminary assessment established learners' baseline attention before introducing localized verses containing familiar community references, including roro (ferry) and bangus (milkfish). The pilot activity indicated that learners could readily comprehend these culturally familiar references.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, an independent-samples t test, and thematic analysis. Mean and standard deviation were employed to describe the learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. The mean determined the average learning span under each instructional condition, while the standard deviation measured variability in learners' scores. Learning span was interpreted using a four-point scale. Mean scores of 3.26–4.00 indicated Very High learning span, characterized by sustained attention and independent task completion. Scores of 2.51–3.25 indicated High learning span, reflecting consistent focus with minimal distraction. Scores of 1.76–2.50 indicated Low learning span, characterized by inconsistent attention and frequent reminders. Scores of 1.00–1.75 indicated Very Low learning span, reflecting difficulty maintaining attention and the need for continuous guidance. An independent-samples t test was specified to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the mean learning span scores under localized and non-localized verse conditions. The hypothesis was tested at the .05 significance level, with a p value below .05 indicating a statistically significant difference. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the implications of the findings for curriculum development, instructional materials design, teaching strategies, language and cultural integration, assessment practices, policy and decision-making, and teacher training and development. Emerging themes and patterns were examined to inform the proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed established ethical guidelines by obtaining informed parental consent and participant assent before research participation. Learners' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and classroom activities were conducted in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment. Participation was voluntary, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty or negative consequences.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Learning Span of Kindergarten Learners Exposed to Localized and Non-Localized Children's Verses

3.1.1 Learning Span Using Localized Children's Verses

The results showed that kindergarten learners demonstrated a Very High level of learning span when exposed to localized children's verses, with an overall mean score of 3.6. Eye contact, physical engagement, sustained focus, and peer interaction received ratings of 4.0, while following instructions, verbal participation, attention recovery, and emotional engagement received ratings of 3.5. Responsiveness and task completion obtained ratings of 3.0. These findings indicate consistently high levels of observable attention and participation during localized verse activities. The findings suggest that culturally familiar instructional content may support sustained attention and active classroom participation. Localized verses incorporate familiar language, experiences, and community

references that make learning activities meaningful to young learners. This interpretation aligns with DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2013, and DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, which support the development and contextualization of instructional materials. Similarly, culturally relevant curricula promote educational relevance across diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts (Shih, 2022). Incorporating local literature into instructional resources also supports cultural preservation and development (Shih (2022).

3.1.2 Learning Span Using Non-Localized Children's Verses

Kindergarten learners exposed to non-localized children's verses also demonstrated a Very High level of learning span, with an overall mean score of 3.4. Emotional engagement received the highest rating of 4.0, while eye contact, verbal participation, physical engagement, responsiveness, attention recovery, and peer interaction received ratings of 3.5. Following instructions, sustained focus, and task completion obtained ratings of 3.0. These results indicate that non-localized verses also supported considerable attention, participation, and engagement during classroom activities. The findings suggest that rhythmic and repetitive verse-based activities can engage kindergarten learners even when the instructional content is not culturally localized. Non-localized verses provide opportunities for participation, cooperation, and exposure to broader linguistic and cultural experiences. Their consistently high ratings indicate that familiar rhythmic structures and interactive classroom activities may contribute to sustained engagement regardless of the cultural origin of the verses.

3.1.3 Comparative Learning Span Under Localized and Non-Localized Verse Conditions

The comparative results showed a slightly higher overall learning span rating for localized children's verses (3.6) than for non-localized verses (3.4), representing a mean difference of 0.2. Localized verses obtained higher ratings in eye contact (4.0 versus 3.5), following instructions (3.5 versus 3.0), physical engagement (4.0 versus 3.5), sustained focus (4.0 versus 3.0), and peer interaction (4.0 versus 3.5). Non-localized verses received higher ratings in responsiveness (3.5 versus 3.0) and emotional engagement (4.0 versus 3.5). Verbal participation, attention recovery, and task completion remained equal across both conditions. These results indicate a descriptive advantage for localized verses in selected attention-related behaviors, particularly sustained focus and physical engagement. However, non-localized verses demonstrated comparable overall effectiveness and stronger ratings in responsiveness and emotional engagement. The findings therefore support the instructional value of both verse types while suggesting that cultural familiarity may influence particular dimensions of classroom participation. The integration of culturally relevant materials also reflects the educational and cultural principles expressed in Article XIV, Section 14 and Article XIV, Section 5(1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

3.2 Significant Difference in Learning Span Between Localized and Non-Localized Children's Verses

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference in the learning span of kindergarten learners exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses ($U = 0.000$, $Z = -1.000$, $p = 0.317$). The Wilcoxon W statistic was 1.000, while the exact significance value was 1.000. Since the computed p-value exceeded the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Although localized verses obtained a slightly higher descriptive mean, the difference was not statistically significant. The findings indicate that both localized and non-localized children's verses demonstrated comparable learning-span outcomes in the study. Their shared characteristics, including rhythm, repetition, movement, and interactive participation, may explain the consistently high attention ratings across both conditions. The small observed difference also suggests that localization alone did not establish a statistically significant advantage in learning span. Nevertheless, localized verses may remain useful for incorporating cultural relevance into kindergarten instruction, while non-localized verses provide complementary learning experiences.

3.3 Implications of the Comparative Findings for Kindergarten Education

3.3.1 Curriculum Development

The findings showed that both verse types produced Very High learning-span ratings, with localized verses obtaining a slightly higher descriptive mean but no statistically significant advantage. Higher ratings for sustained focus, physical engagement, and peer interaction under localized conditions suggest potential benefits for incorporating culturally familiar materials into kindergarten learning activities. These results support the integration of culturally responsive verses into early childhood curricula while recognizing the instructional value of non-localized materials. Such integration is consistent with Republic Act No. 10157 and DepEd policies emphasizing developmentally appropriate and learner-centered instruction. Rhythm-based activities support attention-related cognitive processes (Ahokas et al., 2025), while culturally relevant materials promote learner identity, inclusion, and participation (Shih, 2022; Balsa et al., 2024). Curriculum development may therefore incorporate both localized and non-localized verses to support meaningful and varied learning experiences.

3.3.2 Instructional Materials Design

The results demonstrated that localized verses received higher ratings in selected behavioral indicators, particularly sustained focus and physical engagement, while both verse types maintained Very High overall learning-span ratings. These findings indicate that rhythmic, repetitive, and culturally familiar materials can be incorporated into instructional resources to support kindergarten learners' classroom participation. The findings

are consistent with culturally responsive and constructivist learning perspectives, which emphasize connecting instructional content with learners' experiences. Localized materials may facilitate comprehension and engagement through familiar language and cultural references. This interpretation is supported by Balsa et al. (2024), who reported that contextualized instructional materials improve engagement, comprehension, and attention. Instructional materials may therefore combine cultural localization, rhythmic repetition, and age-appropriate learning activities without excluding non-localized resources. In developing these materials, teachers may also consult the Department of Education's Learning Resources Portal for available kindergarten instructional resources that can be evaluated and adapted according to learners' developmental needs and local classroom contexts.

3.3.3 Teaching Strategies

The findings showed consistently high learning-span ratings during verse-based classroom activities, particularly in eye contact, physical engagement, verbal participation, and peer interaction. Localized verses demonstrated higher descriptive ratings in several behavioral indicators, although the overall difference between instructional conditions was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that participatory teaching strategies incorporating rhythm, movement, and recitation may support kindergarten learners' attention and engagement. Activities such as action songs, interactive recitation, choral speaking, and guided movement provide opportunities for auditory, verbal, and physical participation. This interpretation is consistent with Williams et al. (2023), who reported improvements in on-task behavior and attentional control through rhythm-and-movement activities. Similarly, Ahokas et al. (2025) emphasized the contribution of music-based instruction to executive functions, including working memory and cognitive flexibility.

3.3.4 Language and Cultural Integration

The findings revealed higher descriptive ratings for localized verses in sustained focus, eye contact, and physical engagement. Learners also demonstrated active participation and cooperation during classroom activities involving both localized and non-localized verses. Although the statistical comparison showed no significant difference, the observed ratings indicate that culturally familiar materials can support meaningful participation. The integration of local language, traditions, and community experiences may help learners connect instructional activities with their everyday environments. Familiar cultural references can support comprehension, belonging, and motivation, while non-localized verses provide opportunities to encounter broader linguistic and cultural contexts. Combining these materials may therefore promote culturally responsive instruction and diverse learning experiences within kindergarten classrooms.

3.3.5 Assessment Practices

The study documented learners' attention-related behaviors through structured observation checklists and time-on-task measurements. The assessment covered eye contact, following instructions, verbal participation, physical engagement, sustained focus, responsiveness, attention recovery, emotional engagement, task completion, and peer interaction. These indicators enabled the researcher to describe learning-span levels under both instructional conditions. The findings demonstrate the practical value of classroom-based observational assessment for examining kindergarten learners' attention and participation. Structured behavioral indicators and time-on-task records provide information about learners' engagement during actual instructional activities. These approaches may help teachers monitor attention-related behaviors, identify learning needs, and refine instructional strategies using observable classroom evidence.

3.3.6 Policy and Decision-Making

The results showed that localized and non-localized children's verses produced comparable overall learning-span outcomes, with localized materials demonstrating a slight descriptive advantage in selected indicators. The absence of a statistically significant difference indicates that both instructional approaches may be considered in educational planning and resource development. These findings provide school-level evidence that may inform decisions concerning culturally responsive instructional materials, curriculum implementation, and teacher development. Educational planning may support the availability of localized learning resources while maintaining access to non-localized materials. Such an approach recognizes cultural relevance without assuming that localization alone guarantees superior learning-span outcomes.

3.3.7 Teacher Training and Development

The findings indicated that verse-based activities supported high levels of classroom attention and engagement under both instructional conditions. Localized verses obtained higher descriptive ratings in sustained focus and selected participation indicators, suggesting that teachers may benefit from developing skills in contextualizing rhythmic learning activities. Teacher development programs may therefore emphasize culturally responsive instructional design, adaptation of children's verses, music-and-movement activities, and classroom-based observational assessment. This recommendation aligns with the Department of Education's Learning Action Cell policy, which promotes school-based continuing professional development to improve teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2016b). Collaborative training can support teachers in preparing localized materials,

integrating interactive activities, and evaluating learner engagement. These competencies may strengthen the consistent implementation of developmentally appropriate kindergarten instruction.

3.4 Proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan Based on the Comparative Findings

3.4.1 Development and Curriculum Alignment of the Instructional Plan

The comparative findings provided the basis for a proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan integrating localized and non-localized children's verses. Although localized verses obtained a higher descriptive learning-span rating, the difference was not statistically significant. The proposed plan therefore incorporates both verse types alongside songs, rhymes, movement activities, storytelling, and other learner-centered strategies. It is designed for the entire school year and aligned with the MATATAG Kindergarten Curriculum Guide issued by the Department of Education (2023). The curriculum framework emphasizes holistic development through language, literacy, numeracy, socioemotional learning, physical development, creativity, and values formation. The proposed instructional plan incorporates these developmental areas through play-based, learner-centered, and culturally responsive activities. The plan emphasizes culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate, and holistic learning experiences. Its lesson-planning structure is also intended to align with the ILAW framework, subject to confirmation of the framework's official guidelines and required instructional components. It integrates foundational literacy, numeracy, cognitive development, socioemotional learning, creativity, and values formation through play-based and thematic instruction. Localized materials incorporating familiar community references, including *roro* (ferry) and *bangus* (milkfish), may strengthen connections between classroom activities and learners' everyday experiences. Non-localized materials complement these experiences by introducing broader concepts and cultural references.

3.4.2 Organization and Learning Components of the Instructional Plan

The proposed instructional plan is organized into three terms with weekly learning objectives, competencies, activities, instructional resources, and assessment strategies. This organizational structure is consistent with DepEd Order No. 009, s. 2026, which provides guidelines for implementing the three-term school calendar in basic education (Department of Education, 2026). The first term emphasizes classroom routines, self-awareness, family, school, and foundational skills. The first term emphasizes classroom routines, self-awareness, family, school, and foundational skills. The second term develops literacy, numeracy, communication, social interaction, and exploration. The third term strengthens previously acquired competencies, independence, and readiness for Grade 1. This progression supports the gradual development of kindergarten learners through structured, child-centered learning experiences. Activities integrate language, literacy, numeracy, cognitive, motor, socioemotional, creative, and values development. Play, stories, movement, conversations, games, and verse-based instruction provide opportunities for active participation while accommodating learners' developmental needs and interests.

3.4.3 Integration of Localized and Non-Localized Learning Materials

The proposed plan includes localized children's verses such as *Coco Sugar*, *Cacao ng Alabat*, *Sampung mga Sili*, *Ako ay May Lipote*, and *Malinamnam na Takla*, alongside non-localized verses such as *Paa, Tuhod*, *Ako ay May Lobo*, *Sampung Palaka*, and *Manga-Mangga*. Localized poems include *Roro ng Alabat*, *Ang Taklobo*, *Ang Bangus*, and *Windmill*, while non-localized poems include *Po at Opo*, *Kaibigan*, *Ang Watawat*, *Tutubi*, and *Ang Batang Malusog*. The integration of these materials is intended to balance cultural familiarity with broader learning experiences. Localized verses connect lessons with community language, traditions, and environments, while non-localized materials expand learners' exposure to different ideas and contexts. Their combined use supports the proposed plan's emphasis on meaningful participation, cultural awareness, and developmentally appropriate learning.

3.4.4 Learner Assessment, Inclusion, and School Readiness

The proposed Kindergarten Instructional Plan incorporates continuous assessment through classroom observation, performance activities, conversations, checklists, and portfolios. It also promotes inclusive learning by recognizing differences in learners' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and developmental needs. Home-based activities may involve parents and families in reinforcing classroom learning. These components support ongoing monitoring of learner progress and the adjustment of instructional activities according to observed needs. The plan also emphasizes confidence, independence, positive learning behaviors, and foundational competencies necessary for Grade 1. Through culturally responsive and interactive instruction, the proposed plan aims to strengthen learners' engagement and readiness for subsequent educational experiences.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study examined the learning span of 17 kindergarten learners at Pambilan Elementary School exposed to localized and non-localized children's verses. The findings indicated that localized verses promoted greater attentiveness, participation, and classroom engagement, while non-localized verses also supported learning and participation. However, no statistically significant difference in learning span was established between the two

instructional approaches. The findings highlight the instructional value of culturally relevant materials while recognizing the usefulness of both verse types. Based on these results, a play-based, learner-centered, and contextualized Kindergarten Instructional Plan aligned with the ILAW Curriculum was proposed to support learners' sustained attention, engagement, and holistic development.

The study recommends integrating localized children's verses and culturally relevant instructional materials into kindergarten teaching and curriculum development to promote meaningful learning experiences. Teachers and instructional material developers are encouraged to create and utilize verses, songs, stories, and activities reflecting learners' language, traditions, and community experiences. School administrators should support localization initiatives through teacher training, capacity-building programs, and appropriate resource allocation. Collaboration among teachers, parents, community members, and educational stakeholders is also recommended to strengthen culturally responsive instruction and home-school connections. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar investigations involving larger and more diverse populations, extended observation periods, and additional developmental indicators to obtain more comprehensive evidence on the effects of localized instructional materials.

The study was limited to 17 kindergarten learners at Pambilan Elementary School, restricting the extent to which its findings may be generalized to other educational settings and learner populations. The investigation focused on learning span and classroom engagement using localized and non-localized children's verses, with attention-related behaviors assessed through structured observation procedures. Although localized verses demonstrated favorable descriptive outcomes, the absence of a statistically significant difference limits conclusions regarding their superiority over non-localized materials. The recommendations for larger samples, longer observation periods, and examination of additional developmental factors indicate the need for further research to establish more comprehensive evidence concerning the influence of culturally contextualized instructional materials on kindergarten learners' learning span.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The researchers conducted the study in accordance with established ethical guidelines, ensuring the protection of the rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare of all participating kindergarten learners. Prior to the conduct of the study, informed consent was obtained from the learners' parents or guardians, together with the assent of the participants. The researchers upheld the principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality throughout the research process. All classroom activities were conducted in a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. Furthermore, the researchers recognized and respected the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty or adverse consequences.

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