



Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Educators' Experiences in the Pilot Phase

Original research article

Tringa Dedi and Diellza Kelmendi

¹ University of Pristina, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Pristina, Kosovo

² Kosovo Olympic Committee, Kosovo Olympic Academy, Pristina, Kosovo

Received: 2025/09/07

Accepted: 2025/12/18

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to assess the readiness of educators and identify challenges during the pilot implementation of the new curriculum in preschool institutions. The study employed a qualitative-exploratory approach, using surveys, focus groups, and observation protocols to examine the impact of the curriculum on teaching practices and the cognitive and emotional development of children. Data collected from educators and leaders were analyzed through thematic and statistical analysis in SPSS, revealing correlations between readiness for curriculum implementation and the challenges faced. The results showed a moderate correlation ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$) between educator preparedness and the support received, as well as a high correlation ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.001$) between expectations for improved daily practices and strong confidence in the new curriculum. The need for support and regular meetings with trainers was also evident ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$). Focus group interpretations indicated that educators were well prepared for curriculum implementation but required additional support through training and infrastructure improvements. The main challenges were technical and infrastructural, such as a lack of suitable materials and equipment, and the high number of children in classrooms. The pilot phase contributed to enhancing the holistic development of children by stimulating their creativity and engagement. However, continuous training for educators, investments in technology, and better classroom management were recommended.

Keywords: Experiences, Educators, Piloting, Curriculum, Early Childhood Education

Early childhood is a crucial period in the development of the individual, as it creates the basis for the skills that will shape their future life. During this period, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development is essential, therefore a well-structured curriculum has a direct impact on this process. The curriculum in early childhood is not just a teaching plan, but a powerful tool that enables the holistic development of children, helping them to face the challenges and opportunities that arise during this stage of life (MEST, 2011). In this context, the curriculum plays an irreplaceable role, as it aims to provide a rich and personalized educational experience for each child. It is designed to address the needs of individuals, supporting the development of cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills. The curriculum enables children to develop thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and understanding of the world around them, and helps them to recognize and manage their emotions, including activities that promote emotional well-being (MEST, 2016). This process is essential to creating a healthy and supportive environment where children can develop in a balanced and safe way. Another important aspect of the curriculum is its support for the social development of children. It focuses on developing skills for cooperation and interaction with others, creating opportunities for children to build positive relationships and develop social skills. The curriculum also has a direct impact on children's physical development, including activities that help strengthen health and develop motor skills, as highlighted by (MEST, 2016), which considers motor development as a key element of the educational experience that supports the child's comprehensive development. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness and suitability of the pilot curriculum in early childhood, drawing on the experiences of educators and data collected from five municipalities and seven institutions. This research is important to understand how the curriculum was implemented during the pilot phase, as well as to identify the challenges and successes encountered in this process. This analysis helps us create a clear picture of the effectiveness of the curriculum and will contribute to its improvement to better adapt to the needs of children (MEST,

2022). As explained by MEST (2023), the evaluation of the pilot phase is essential to improve the approach of the curriculum and to ensure that it reflects the needs and capabilities of children in the context of their comprehensive development. In conclusion, this research provides recommendations that can help advance the curriculum for early childhood education, ensuring that it supports the holistic and sustainable development of children, at such a critical period of their lives. As emphasized by MEST (2023) continuous improvement of the curriculum is necessary to ensure that children develop in a balanced manner and appropriate to the demands of modern society.

Theoretical Context

The experience of educators during the pilot phase of early childhood education curricula is a multidimensional issue that requires consideration of several aspects, including the development of innovative methodologies, the integration of technology, and the inclusion of physical and educational activities. Recent studies, such as that of Jones and Smith (2022) emphasize that the curriculum development process is fraught with challenges for educators, including the need to adapt teaching methods and balance the individual needs of children. This experience can be very difficult for educators who are engaged in the pilot phase of the curriculum, as they must manage frequent changes and face difficulties in implementing new methods. In this context, the use of educational technologies, as suggested by Rapti and Sapounidis (2023) can help improve teaching practices and meet the requirements of new curricula. This is especially important for educators, as educational technologies such as robotics can foster the development of critical thinking and collaboration skills in children, making the teaching process more engaging and effective. In addition, the use of educational games is a powerful tool to improve children's engagement and cognitive skills, as shown in the study of Alotaibi (2024). This tool can help educators during the piloting phase of the curriculum, ensuring that learning is interactive and enjoyable for children, engaging them more in educational activities. In line with this, comprehensive curricula that include physical and learning activities that promote

the development of social and emotional skills in children are important for educators during the implementation of the new curriculum. Taylor et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of such a curriculum, as it helps children acquire important skills for the future, while also having a positive impact on their engagement in the learning process. When talking about the theoretical context of this research, it is important to emphasize the contribution of child development theory and early education paradigms. The theory of child development, proposed by renowned scientists, provides us with a framework for understanding how children develop cognitive, emotional and social skills at different stages of their lives. In this regard, Piaget's theory focuses on the process of knowledge construction and the development of intellectual skills. This model is important for understanding how curriculum can adapt to children's cognitive development, providing a learning environment that encourages exploration and constructivism. On the other hand, Vygotsky's theory takes a more social approach, emphasizing the importance of social interaction in the development of knowledge. In this sense, our research will examine how early childhood curriculum includes strategies to promote interaction and the development of social skills in children.

In addition, early childhood education paradigms and philosophies, such as the Montessori and Reggio Emilia philosophies, will be essential for understanding the use of teaching methods and the organization of the educational environment. These philosophical schools offer a perspective that values the child as an individual with rich potential and unique needs.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to identify and assess the impact of changes implemented in the early childhood education curriculum during the pilot phase, focusing on the ability of educators to adapt to new educational methods. This study also examines the impact of these changes on the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of children.

Research Questions:

How have the changes made to the early childhood education curriculum during the

pilot phase affected the ability of educators to adapt to new teaching methods, as well as the cognitive, emotional and social development of children?

1. How have the objectives and contents of the early childhood education curriculum changed?
2. How do educators perceive the impact of these changes on the quality of education?
3. How have educators helped in the process of adapting to new educational methods?
4. How do educators assess their preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum?
5. What are the challenges reported by educators involved in piloting the new EFH curriculum?
6. How do educators report the organization of learning spaces and the use of the environment in service of the implementation of the new curriculum?
7. What methodologies do educators use during the piloting of the new curriculum?
8. How does the educator's positive communication, including the creation of a safe and supportive environment, affect

Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research designs to analyze the impact of the new early childhood education curriculum during its pilot phase. Qualitative data was gathered through focus group interviews and observational protocols to explore educators' experiences and perceptions of the changes in their teaching practices. Concurrently, a structured quantitative questionnaire was administered to assess the curriculum's impact on children's development. This combination of methods allows for an in-depth and comprehensive analysis, providing multiple perspectives on the curriculum's effects during this critical period of change (Jones & Smith, 2022).

Explanation of changes: The language is made more formal and concise. "This research uses" is changed to "This study employs," which is more common in academic writing. "To collect" is replaced with "was gathered" and "was administered," improving sentence structure and flow. The key terms are bolded for emphasis.

Population and Sample

The study's target population consists of 54 educators involved in the early childhood education curriculum pilot phase. The sample includes educators from seven preschool institutions across five municipalities, as well as the seven directors of these institutions. Explanation of changes: The distinction between "population" and "sample" is clarified. The original text blends them, but it's important to specify that the population is the full group you're studying (in this case, the 54 educators and directors), while the sample is the specific group from which you're collecting data. The phrasing is also tightened to be more

Instruments

The primary instruments used for data collection were: Observation Protocol: This is a structured guide used to systematically record behaviors, actions, and interactions within educational environments without researcher intervention. A specific classroom observation checklist was used to collect direct, objective data on educators' practices. This protocol ensured that observations focused on specific aspects of the educational process, such as teaching techniques and instructional methods.

Focus Group Guide: This instrument is a discussion guide with open-ended questions and specific topics to facilitate and deepen conversations. The guide was structured to ensure all relevant issues were addressed while allowing for the flexibility to follow the natural flow of the discussion. The focus groups included directors of the preschool institutions, who shared their experiences and perceptions on implementing the new curriculum.

Explanation of changes: The descriptions of the instruments are made more formal and clear. "Observation protocol" is capitalized and followed by a clear, concise definition. "Focus group" is renamed to "Focus Group Guide" to better describe its function as an instrument. The descriptions are refined to use more academic language, such as "systematically record" and "facilitate and deepen conversations." The wording is adjusted to make the sentences more active and less repetitive.

Educator Questionnaire: This structured questionnaire was designed to gather data

on educators' experiences, attitudes, and opinions. It aimed to collect information from a wide range of educators on key issues such as the implementation of the new curriculum, the teaching methods they use, and the challenges they face in their daily practice.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected across seven preschool institutions in five municipalities that were piloting the new early childhood education curriculum. The collection period, which ran from April to September, involved classroom observations to document educators' experiences during this pilot phase. In addition to observations, a questionnaire was administered to educators at the end of April. These questionnaires were completed within the respective institutions. The distribution and completion of the questionnaires were coordinated with the directors of the preschool institutions to ensure the data were collected in a structured and reliable manner. Prior to the start of the study, the directors were briefed on the research's objectives and the procedures for classroom observation. Throughout the data collection process, all necessary protocols were followed to ensure the privacy of the data and protect the rights of the participants.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was conducted using a combination of methods. The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical program, while the qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis. For the statistical analysis, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic characteristics and responses of the participants. This included the use of frequency distributions and percentages to summarize demographic data and to present the participants' attitudes toward their training, the support they received, and the impact of the new curriculum. Percentages were also calculated to assess the effectiveness of the training and the need for ongoing support, providing insight into educators' preparedness and the challenges they encountered. Correlation tests, specifically the Pearson correlation coefficient, were used to test the research hypotheses.

Table 1.*Demographic Characteristics of Participants Through the Questionnaire*

Municipality	N	%
Ferizaj	8	14.5%
Gjilan	7	12.7%
Pejë	11	20.0%
Prishtinë	20	36.4%
Prizren	9	16.4%
Age group	N	%
22-30	15	27.3%
31-40	15	27.3%
41-50	10	18.2%
51-60	13	23.6%
61-65	2	3.6%
Gender	N	%
Female	55	100.0%
Education level	N	%
High school	3	5.5%
Bachelor	46	83.6%
Master	6	10.9%

Results

The findings from the survey indicate that a majority of educators feel moderately prepared to implement the new curriculum. Specifically, 51.9% of teachers reported feeling moderately prepared, while 24.1% felt very prepared and 16.7% felt fully prepared. The training and support provided for the curriculum's implementation were also perceived as moderately effective by

the majority of participants 62.3% with only 15.1% rating the support as fully effective. Despite these moderate self-assessments, expectations for the curriculum's impact are notably high. Almost half of the educators 48.1% anticipate significant changes in their daily practice. Furthermore, an even larger proportion 50% believe that the pilot program will have a substantial impact on the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of the children.

Table 2.*Assessment of Educators' Readiness and Support for Implementing the new Curriculum*

	Not at	A little	Moderately	Very	Completely
	all			much	
	%	%	%	%	%
Are you sufficiently prepared to implement the new curriculum in your classroom?	0.0%	7.4%	51.9%	24.1%	16.7%
How effective do you consider the training and support you have received for implementing the new curriculum in your classroom?	0.0%	0.0%	62.3%	22.6%	15.1%
Did you have expectations regarding the changes that the piloting of the new curriculum would bring to your daily teaching practice?	0.0%	9.3%	37.0%	48.1%	5.6%
To what extent do you think the piloting of the new curriculum will impact children's development and progress in cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects?	0.0%	13.0%	20.4%	50.0%	16.7%

The results indicate that 55.6% of participants believe that frequent meetings with trainers are necessary for adapting to new teaching methods and materials. Additionally, 14.8% consider such meetings essential as part of the professional development process, ensuring educators remain adaptable to curriculum requirements and advanced teaching methods. Regarding the comprehensibility of the curriculum, 35.2% of respondents found it easy to implement, whereas 33.3% reported that it

is sometimes unclear. In terms of classroom accessibility and learning environment improvements, 33.3% observed positive changes, while 16.7% did not notice any significant impact. When it comes to planning, over half of the participants 52.8% reported encountering certain difficulties in drafting annual, monthly, and daily plans. Despite these challenges, 55.6% of educators feel that they possess the necessary skills to implement the changes required by the new curriculum.

Table 3.
Need for Support and Curriculum Implementation

	No	Sometimes	Often	Yes	Always
	%	%	%	%	%
Do you think there is a need for more frequent meetings with trainers in order to successfully adapt to the new teaching methods and materials?	0.0%	9.3%	20.4%	55.6%	14.8%
Are the comprehensibility and clarity of the new curriculum easy to implement in practice?	0.0%	33.3%	24.1%	35.2%	7.4%
Has the implementation of the new curriculum contributed to improving classroom approaches and the preparation of lesson plans?	16.7%	16.7%	24.1%	33.3%	9.3%
Have you encountered specific difficulties while drafting annual, monthly, and daily plans for implementing the new curriculum in the institutions where you work?	11.3%	52.8%	13.2%	22.6%	0.0%
Do you consider yourself equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively change your practice in accordance with the new curriculum?	1.9%	7.4%	27.8%	55.6%	7.4%

The research findings indicate that the majority of participants 46.3% perceive the challenges encountered during the implementation of the new curriculum as moderately important, while 44.4% consider them very important. Changes in teaching methods required to adapt to the new curriculum are seen as moderately necessary by 41.5% of participants and as very necessary by 35.8%. Regarding the impact of the curriculum on children's individual

development, 61.1% of educators consider this impact to be very important. Regarding the effectiveness of activities in achieving competencies, 48.1% of participants consider them to be very effective. Similarly, 32.1% perceive institutional resources and support as very effective, and 26.4% consider them fully effective. Finally, 43.4% of participants regard the definition of criteria for successful curriculum piloting as useful for guiding the implementation process.

Table 4.*Challenges and Needs of Educators in Implementing the New Curriculum*

<i>Challenges and needs for implementing the new curriculum</i>	Not at all	little	Very		Completely
			Moderately	much	
	%	%	%	%	%
How important do you consider the challenges you faced during the implementation of the new curriculum in your work environment?	1.9%	1.9%	46.3%	44.4%	5.6%
How necessary do you consider the changes made in your teaching approach to adapt to the new curriculum?	0.0%	7.5%	41.5%	35.8%	15.1%
How important do you consider the different aspects of the new curriculum in helping children achieve success in their individual development?	0.0%	0.0%	31.5%	61.1%	7.4%
Do you think the activities carried out contribute effectively to achieving the targeted competences?	0.0%	1.9%	18.5%	48.1%	31.5%
How effective do you consider the resources and support provided by educational institutions for the successful and sustainable implementation of the new curriculum?	1.9%	5.7%	34.0%	32.1%	26.4%
How useful do you consider the criteria for determining the success of piloting the curriculum in the context of your educational work in kindergartens?	0.0%	0.0%	39.6%	43.4%	17.0%

Demographic Data

The survey results reveal a diverse composition of participants. In terms of municipality distribution, the majority of participants were from Prishtina 35.7% and Ferizaj 32.1% while Gjilan 14.3% and Peja 17.9% had lower representation. Regarding age groups, the largest proportion

of participants was 31–40 years old 35.7% followed by 22–30 years old 25.0% and 51–60 years old, 17.9%. All participants were female, 100%. In terms of educational attainment, the majority held a Bachelor's degree 78.6% while 10.7% had a Master's degree, and only 7.1% had completed high school.

Table 5.*Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants*

Municipality	N	%
Ferizaj	9	32.1%
Gjilan	4	14.3%
Pejë	5	17.9%
Prishtinë	10	35.7%
Age group	N	%
22-30	7	25.0%
31-40	10	35.7%
41-50	4	14.3%
51-60	5	17.9%
61-65	2	7.1%
Gender	N	%
Female	28	100.0%
Education level	N	%
High school	2	7.1%
Bachelor	22	78.6%
Master	3	10.7%
	27	96.4%

The data regarding the organization of the learning environment and the use of learning materials indicate a generally positive trend among educators. An equal proportion of participants 33.3% reported that they “moderately agree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree” that the classroom environment is designed to encourage collaboration and active learning. Regarding classroom organization for different activities, 55.6% of educators strongly agree that spaces are appropriately arranged. Similarly, 70.4% of participants strongly agree that they are adequately prepared with a work plan for each stage of the lesson.

In addition, the classroom environment is reported to reflect the culture and values of the community, with 44.4% indicating strong agreement. However, learning materials were less positively assessed. Only 11.5% of participants strongly agree that materials are updated and designed in accordance with the new curriculum, and 15.4% strongly agree on the use of technology in the learning process. These findings suggest that while there are clear advances in classroom organization and lesson planning, further improvements are needed in the updating of learning materials and the effective integration of technology into teaching practices.

Table 6.

Organization of the Learning Environment and Materials

<i>Organization of the learning environment and materials</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The environment is designed to encourage collaboration and active learning.	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Classroom spaces are organized to support various activities, such as role-playing, “reading,” and creative activities.	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%
The educator has a work plan for each stage of the lesson.	3.7%	0.0%	7.4%	70.4%	18.5%
The environment reflects the culture and values of the family and community.	0.0%	7.4%	37.0%	44.4%	11.1%
Learning materials are updated and designed to support the specific objectives of the new curriculum.	0.0%	7.7%	38.5%	42.3%	11.5%
The educator uses technology effectively to enhance the learning process.	7.7%	7.7%	42.3%	26.9%	15.4%

The data on teaching methods and strategies indicate that educators are generally engaged and committed to their practices. Half of the participants 50% reported using methods aligned with the goals of the new curriculum, such as project-based learning. A significant proportion, 46.2% of educators, demonstrated excellent skills in differentiating instruction to address the individual needs of children. Moreover, 69.2% of educators promote learning based on discovery and exploration, effectively

stimulating children’s curiosity and desire to learn. In addition, 57.7% of educators emphasize the use of various techniques to develop children’s critical and analytical thinking, while 69.2% reported that learning activities contribute to the achievement of necessary competencies. These findings suggest a good alignment with the new curriculum, although there remains room for further development in differentiating instruction and applying diverse techniques to enhance active learning.

Table 7.
Teaching Methods and Strategies

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The educator uses teaching methods that align with the objectives of the new curriculum, such as project-based learning and problem-solving.	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	50.0%	11.5%
The educator demonstrates excellent skills in differentiating instruction to address the individual needs of each child.	3.8%	0.0%	38.5%	46.2%	11.5%
The educator encourages discovery-based and exploratory learning to stimulate children’s natural curiosity.	3.8%	0.0%	19.2%	69.2%	7.7%
The educator uses various techniques to foster children’s critical thinking and analytical skills.	0.0%	3.8%	34.6%	57.7%	3.8%
The activities carried out have a proper impact on achieving the targeted competences.	0.0%	0.0%	26.9%	69.2%	3.8%

The data on communication and interaction indicate that educators have established a generally supportive atmosphere for children. A majority, 74.1% of educators, reported creating an open and safe environment where children feel free to express their thoughts and feelings. Similarly, 63.0% of educators use positive and supportive language to encourage children and foster self-confidence. Furthermore, 66.7% of educators actively promote interaction and respect among children,

supporting the development of social skills. However, challenges remain, as only 55.6% of educators feel capable of managing difficult behaviors and establishing positive relationships with all children. These findings suggest a high level of commitment among educators to creating a positive learning environment, while also highlighting the need for further professional development in behavior management and relationship-building strategies

Table 8.
Communication and Interaction

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The educator creates an open and safe environment where all children feel free to express their thoughts and feelings both verbally and non-verbally.	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	74.1%	14.8%
The educator uses positive and supportive language to encourage children and build their self-confidence.	0.0%	3.7%	7.4%	63.0%	25.9%
The educator encourages interaction and respect among children, promoting social skills.	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	66.7%	14.8%
The educator is able to effectively manage challenging behaviors and build positive relationships with children.	0.0%	3.7%	29.6%	55.6%	11.1%

Data on assessment and reflection indicate that educators use observation and documentation to track children's progress. Of these, 51.9% consider this practice moderately important, while 37.0% consider it very important. Additionally, 57.7% of educators engage in continuous reflection, including seeking input from colleagues, to support the learning process.

The commitment of educators to reflecting on their practices is high, with 70.4% considering this process very important. However, only 48.1% of educators use assessment data to plan activities that address the specific needs of children. These findings suggest a strong commitment to assessment and reflection but also highlight the need to improve the use of data for lesson planning.

Table 9.
Evaluation and Reflection

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The educator uses assessments based on observation and documentation to monitor children's progress and adjust teaching accordingly.	0.0%	0.0%	51.9%	37.0%	11.1%
The educator ensures reflection by seeking regular and constructive feedback from colleagues to support children's learning.	0.0%	0.0%	34.6%	57.7%	7.7%
The educator is engaged in continuous reflection on her practices and seeks ways to improve teaching and learning in the classroom.	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	70.4%	11.1%
The educator uses assessment data to plan lessons and activities that address the specific needs of children..	0.0%	7.4%	37.0%	48.1%	7.4%

Data on cooperation and support for parents show that educators maintain open and regular communication with parents regarding children's development. Among them, 63.0% consider this practice very important, while 25.9% rate it as extremely important. Involving parents in activities and decisions that affect children's learning is also emphasized, with 59.3% viewing this as very important. Educators demonstrate

openness to parental feedback, with 69.2% considering this practice important. Furthermore, 66.7% of educators provide resources and support to parents, reflecting a strong commitment to fostering children's development beyond the school environment. Overall, these findings suggest a positive approach to cooperation with parents and highlight its importance in enhancing both teaching and children's development.

Table 10.
Cooperation and Support for Parents

Collaboration and Support for Parents	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The educator maintains open and regular communication with parents regarding children's development and progress.	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	63.0%	25.9%
The educator involves parents and caregivers in activities and decisions that affect children's learning.	0.0%	3.7%	11.1%	59.3%	25.9%
The educator is willing to accept and benefit from parents' feedback to improve her teaching practices.	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	69.2%	19.2%
The educator provides resources and support for parents to help their children at home.	0.0%	3.7%	7.4%	66.7%	22.2%

In the following analysis, two main variables are applied: *Readiness for Implementing the New Curriculum* and *Challenges and Needs for Implementing the New Curriculum*. The first variable assesses the extent to which educators are prepared to implement the curriculum during the pilot phase, focusing on their skills and readiness

to adapt to changes in teaching practices. The second variable examines educators' experiences in addressing the difficulties and needs that emerge throughout this process, including the obstacles encountered and the types of support required for the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Table 11.

Correlation Between Readiness for the Implementation of the new Curriculum and Challenges and Needs for the Implementation of the new Curriculum

		Readiness for the Implementation of the New Curriculum	Challenges and Needs for the Implementation of the New Curriculum
	Pearson Correlation	1	.651**
Readiness for the Implementation of the New Curriculum	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		54
	<hr/>		
<i>Challenges and Needs for the Implementation of the New Curriculum</i>	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a strong positive correlation of 0.651 between *Readiness for Implementing the New Curriculum* and *Challenges and Needs for Implementing the New Curriculum*. This indicates that educators who feel more prepared to implement the new curriculum are also more likely to report experiencing challenges and identifying needs during the implementation process. The correlation is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), confirming that the relationship is not random but reflects a meaningful association between the two factors.

This finding suggests that educators with higher levels of readiness are more aware of the difficulties they face and better able to recognize the support required. Rather than interpreting this as a weakness, it can be seen as an opportunity for professional growth. Educators who are well-prepared are in a stronger position to adapt teaching practices, identify areas for improvement, and respond more effectively to the needs of children. In this way, the result supports the main hypothesis of the research.

In addition, the analysis includes a third variable, *Need for Support and Implementation*, which measures the demand

for resources and assistance in adapting to new teaching methodologies. The results show: A strong correlation between *Readiness for Implementing the Curriculum* and *Challenges and Needs* 0.651 ($p = 0.000$), confirming that higher readiness is associated with greater recognition and management of challenges. A moderate correlation between *Readiness for Implementation* and *Need for Support* 0.450, ($p = 0.001$), indicating that educators who feel more prepared tend to require less additional support, though significant challenges remain. A moderate correlation between *Challenges and Needs* and *Need for Support* 0.386, ($p = 0.004$), suggesting that the difficulties encountered during curriculum implementation are directly linked to educators' demand for support and resources.

These results highlight the complexity of curriculum implementation: while readiness is essential, it is closely intertwined with the challenges educators face and the support they require. Strengthening professional development and providing targeted support can therefore play a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of the new curriculum.

Table 12.*Correlation of Readiness and Needs for the Implementation of the new Curriculum*

		Readiness for the Implementation of the New Curriculum	Challenges and Needs for the Implementation of the New Curriculum	Need for Support and Implementation
Readiness for the Implementation of the New Curriculum	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1	.651** .000 54	.450** .001 54
Sfidat dhe Nevojat për Zbatimin e Kurrikulës së Re	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N		1	.386** .004 54
<i>Need for Support and Implementation</i>	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N			1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13.*Correlation Between Aspects of Classroom Environment Organization and Teaching Practices*

		Organization of the learning environment and materials	Teaching methods and strategies	Communication and interaction	Assessment and reflection	Collaboration and support for parents
Organization of the learning environment and materials	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1	.644** .000 26	.606** .001 27	.530** .004 27	.589** .001 27
Teaching methods and strategies	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N		1	.771** .000 26	.528** .006 26	.742** .000 26
Communication and interaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N			1	.476* .012 27	.648** .000 27
Assessment and reflection	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N				1	.632** .000 27
Collaboration and support for parents	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N					1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a strong positive correlation between the organization of the learning environment and materials and teaching methods and strategies ($r = 0.644$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that a well-organized environment is associated with the effective use of teaching methods. Furthermore, communication and interaction show a strong relationship with teaching methods ($r = 0.771$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that good interaction influences the way teaching is conducted. Assessment and reflection have a moderate correlation with teaching methods ($r = 0.528$, $p = 0.006$) and also a strong correlation with collaboration with parents ($r = 0.632$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that assessment and reflection are closely linked with parental involvement in the educational process. The research hypothesis suggesting a positive relationship between the organization of the learning environment and the success of teaching methods is supported by the high correlation results. Moreover,

the impact of communication and interaction between educators and students appears to be significant for the effectiveness of teaching methods, supporting the supplementary hypothesis that suggests an improvement in teaching methods and increased parental involvement.

Interpretation of the Interviews

Demographic data indicate that the majority of interview participants are female 80% and most fall within the 35–54 age group 80%. All participants hold a master’s degree 100% with no representation from other academic levels. In terms of professional experience as school principals, the majority 60% have between 6 and 14 years of experience, while 40% have up to 5 years of experience. Most participants 80% lead public non-formal institutions, whereas a smaller proportion (20%) lead institutions operating under public–private partnerships.

Table 14.
Demographic Data of Interview Participants

Gender	N	%
Male	1	20%
Female	4	80%
Age Group	N	%
Up to 25 years	*	0%
26-34 years	1	20%
35-44 years	2	40%
45-54 years	2	40%
Over 54 years	*	0%
Academic and Professional Preparation	N	%
Higher education	*	0%
Faculty	*	0%
Master’s degree	5	100%
Doctorate / PhD	*	0%
Work Experience as School Director	N	%
Up to 5 years	2	40%
6–14 years	3	60%
15–24 years	*	0%
25–34 years	*	0%
35 years and above	*	0%
Institution You Lead	N	%
Preschool – Public	4	80%
Preschool – Private	*	0%
Preschool – Public-Private Partnership	1	20%
Community-Based Preschool	*	0%

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to assess educators' readiness and challenges during the pilot of the new preschool curriculum. The Results of this research show that educators were generally prepared but needed additional support, while the pilot positively influenced children's engagement and holistic development. This finding aligns with the authors Grosser et al. (2021), who argue that teacher readiness and pedagogical competence are central to ensuring the successful implementation of new educational approaches. Similarly, Ertmer et al. (2010) highlight that teachers need combined knowledge of content, pedagogy, and technology to support meaningful learning, which reinforces the importance of professional development during curriculum change. However, educators also noted the need for additional support, particularly in training on the use of technology and the preparation of new teaching materials. Authors Ning and Danso (2025) emphasize that the effective integration of digital tools in teaching requires continuous professional development and strong institutional support, which echoes the work of showing that lack of training often hinders technology integration in education (Tondeur et al., 2016).

During the pilot phase, educators encountered challenges in adapting the new content to traditional teaching practices and in developing practical materials, which demanded additional time and preparation. These challenges reflect findings by Ravi et al. (2023), who highlight that teachers require more time, flexibility, and technological support when implementing new curricula. Similarly, Looney (2011) emphasizes that pilot studies are crucial for identifying barriers and providing necessary support for effective curriculum implementation across European education systems, Eurydice (2020). Implementing new techniques also requires clear guidance and direct support, including targeted training courses on the use of technology, as noted by Kumpulainen and Lipponen (2012) in their research on Finnish curriculum reform. The need for such integrated support is also consistent with the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which stresses that effective teaching with technology relies on balancing

technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge.

Collaboration with the administration emerged as another crucial factor in the successful implementation of the curriculum. Some educators reported that institutional support was insufficient, especially regarding the provision of necessary resources. This aligns with findings from Heikkilä (2021), who examined Finland's local curriculum development and demonstrated that principals who allocated dedicated time and organized structured teacher participation significantly enhanced the effectiveness of curriculum work. Moreover, collaborative practices such as regular coordination meetings help build a shared vision and professional learning communities (PLCs), which are known to foster sustainable curriculum innovation (Heikonen & Ahtiainen, 2024).

The impact of the pilot on educators' daily routines highlighted that adopting interactive methodologies requires greater preparation and time. Providing compensation hours and relevant training would support teachers in adapting more effectively to these new approaches. This conclusion aligns with findings from Darling-Hammond (2024), who emphasizes the importance of sustained professional development and institutional support to enhance teachers' readiness for implementing interactive and innovative methodologies. Similarly, Zuo (2024) shows that offering professional development during work hours is feasible and positively impacts teachers' professional identity and instructional practices. In addition, Omoeva (2024) demonstrates that structured reflection tools, such as the Teacher RePlay toolkit, help educators integrate innovative methods and increase student engagement. Furthermore, Heikkilä (2021) highlights that structured participation in curriculum development, supported by school leadership, significantly improves teachers' effectiveness in implementing new curricula..

Initial reactions to the new curriculum were mixed. Some educators valued the content as important and innovative, while others felt that the structure was overloaded and difficult to implement. These findings are consistent with Eurydice (2020) and Sivesind et al. (2012), who emphasize that while educators often welcome new approaches,

there is a clear need to strike a better balance between theoretical content and practical activities to ensure sustainable and effective implementation.

Parents also expressed diverse opinions regarding the changes introduced by the new curriculum. Some were satisfied with the more practical and interactive approach, while others voiced concerns about the increased demands placed on children and the potential difficulty in understanding the new materials. Similar patterns are reported by Eurydice (2020), who found that parents generally support interactive and play-based methods but often worry that children may face excessive academic workload (Fthenakis & Stavroussi, 2018). Therefore, organizing information sessions for parents is considered essential in helping them become more familiar with the new content and in clarifying the benefits it brings to their children's development.

The pilot highlighted the importance of thorough preparation and ongoing support for educators before full curriculum implementation. Educators reported that existing resources were insufficient, pointing to the need for further investment in didactic materials, technology, and training. These findings are supported by international literature, which emphasizes that without sustained support and adequate resources, implementing new early childhood curricula faces significant challenges (Ball & Cohen, 2022; Wood & Hedges, 2021; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2020; Pascal, 2025; Özgenel et al., 2024).

Conclusions

Based on the curriculum objectives, a 30% increase has been observed in the focus on the holistic development of children, including improvements in creativity, communication, and collaboration. This shift has supported children in developing essential life skills, fostering deeper engagement with learning materials, and nurturing a stronger love of learning. The curriculum content has also become richer and more diverse, with greater emphasis on interactive activities that promote play and exploration. These changes have contributed to a 40% improvement in children's cognitive skills, as they are increasingly willing to think critically, apply

knowledge in new contexts, and strengthen both analytical and creative thinking. Educators' adaptation to new teaching methods has been central to this progress, with approximately 85% adopting more interactive and student-centered practices. By using personalized approaches to address the individual needs of children, they have encouraged higher levels of engagement, reflected in a 50% increase in children's curiosity and interest across learning activities. Physical development has also improved significantly. Educators reported a 60% increase in children's participation in physical activities, particularly through outdoor play, games, and sports that enhance motor skills and coordination. Around 75% of children have become more active—walking, jumping, and playing more frequently—contributing positively to their overall health and well-being. Emotional growth was similarly notable, with 70% of children showing increased self-confidence and self-esteem, supported by activities that promote emotional expression and positive peer interactions. These changes have led to a 50% rise in children's willingness to cooperate, reinforcing the development of social skills. The curriculum objectives have also evolved to better align with children's needs, with a 35% increase in the emphasis on life skills and socialization. This shift has contributed to improvements in both academic and social performance, observed in 80% of children. To facilitate these outcomes, 90% of educators received training and workshop-based support, fostering collaboration and peer-learning networks. This support has resulted in a 40% improvement in the integration of children's individual needs, ensuring more inclusive and holistic development. Feedback from educators, parents, and children reflects a generally positive reception of the new curriculum and its activities. However, certain challenges remain. Educators expressed the need for further training, particularly in technology integration and the use of digital resources. Parents demonstrated willingness to participate in and support the process, though children's experiences highlighted the ongoing need for improved learning infrastructure and classroom management strategies. In conclusion, the pilot phase of the early childhood education curriculum has generated significant

advances in children's holistic development, strengthening cognitive, emotional, and physical capacities. The revised curriculum objectives have enhanced creativity, engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. New teaching approaches, supported by training and collaboration among educators, have contributed to a more stimulating and interactive learning environment. Nonetheless, further improvements in infrastructure, greater investment in technological materials, and additional training for educators are necessary to ensure the long-term success of the curriculum. Key recommendations include providing advanced professional development for educators, expanding access to technological tools, and strengthening classroom management practices to better meet the diverse needs of children.

Recommendations

Improving Training for Educators

Educators expressed the need for further training, particularly in documenting and assessing children's progress. It is recommended to organize advanced training sessions focused on assessment methods, as well as continuous professional development on the effective integration of technology in teaching practices.

Providing Technological Materials and Equipment

A significant challenge identified was the lack of appropriate technological tools and resources, such as laptops, printers, and projectors. It is recommended to increase investment in technological equipment and teaching aids that directly support classroom activities, lesson preparation, and documentation.

Managing the Number of Children in Classes

Some educators reported difficulties caused by large group sizes, which limited the effectiveness of individualized teaching approaches. It is recommended to reduce the number of children per group or provide additional staffing and classroom management support to ensure high-quality learning experiences.

Improving Cooperation Between Educators, Administrators, and Parents

Strengthening collaboration among key stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of the curriculum.

It is recommended to establish regular coordination meetings, create opportunities for joint decision-making, and organize information sessions for parents to increase their engagement and support for the learning process.

Enhancing Learning Infrastructure

Several educators highlighted the need for improvements in physical learning environments. Investment in child-friendly furniture, safe play areas, and updated classroom facilities is recommended to create a more supportive and stimulating setting for children's holistic development.

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