

# From Classroom to Campfires: Exploring Kindergarten Teacher's Experiences as Kid Scout Coordinators

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*Abstract* — The goal of the study was to explore the experiences of kid scout's coordinators in converting classrooms to campfires. This study was beneficial for administrators, as data gathered served as research-based information that was used in motivating and giving technical assistance to the kindergarten teachers who encounter difficulty in navigating the kid scout program in a kindergarten classroom.

It aims to create a nurturing and supportive environment where children can learn and grow, developing important life skills and values. While facing challenges such as time management, coordinating logistics, and ensuring the effective integration of scouting activities with the curriculum, kindergarten teachers in the Philippines often find fulfillment in their dual role as they witness the positive impact of the Kid Scout program on their students' personal growth and character development.

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## I. Introduction

The integration of extracurricular activities into the early childhood education landscape has gained significant attention in recent years. One such program that has garnered interest and participation is the Kid Scout program, which offers young children's unique opportunities for character development, outdoor learning experiences, and community engagement. While the program provides a wealth of benefits, the role of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators remains an underexplored area of research. Understanding their experiences and perspectives in this role is crucial for enhancing program implementation and maximizing its impact on young learners.

Kindergarten teachers serve as key facilitators, educators, and coordinators within the early childhood education system. Their role in coordinating the Kid Scout program is multifaceted, requiring them to navigate the responsibilities of both classroom instruction and extracurricular coordination. However, the literature on this specific role is limited, making it imperative to delve into the unique experiences and challenges encountered by these educators in their Kid Scout coordinatorship.

In the United States, kindergarten teachers play a crucial role as Kid Scout coordinators, overseeing the integration of the scouting program into early childhood education. These teachers are responsible for organizing and facilitating various Kid Scout activities, such as outdoor

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adventures, community service projects, and character-building exercises (Scouts BSA, n.d.). Their experiences as Kid Scout coordinators provide them with opportunities to foster students' social skills, leadership abilities, and environmental consciousness. Kindergarten teachers in the United States often report positive experiences in their dual role, as the Kid Scout program aligns with the country's emphasis on experiential and hands-on learning.

The educators appreciate the program's focus on holistic development and its ability to complement their classroom instruction (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2010). However, they also face challenges, including the need to balance curriculum requirements, classroom management, and the logistical aspects of coordinating Kid Scout activities. Overall, the experiences of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators in the United States contribute to the enrichment of their teaching practice and the cultivation of well-rounded young learners.

In the United Kingdom, kindergarten teachers take on the role of Kid Scout coordinators, overseeing scouting activities for young children. These teachers play an instrumental role in providing enriching experiences through outdoor adventures, team-building exercises, and skill development opportunities (The Scout Association, n.d.).

The experiences of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators in the UK contribute to the holistic development of children, fostering resilience, teamwork, and independence. These educators appreciate the emphasis on practical learning and the opportunity for children to explore nature and engage in problem-solving activities. However, they also face challenges in terms of balancing curriculum demands, meeting educational standards, and coordinating the logistics of Kid Scout events. Nonetheless, the experiences of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators in the United Kingdom contribute to creating a well-rounded educational experience for young children, incorporating both academic and personal development aspects.

In Japan, kindergarten teachers play a crucial role as Kid Scout coordinators, actively engaging young children in scouting activities that promote character development, outdoor exploration, and community involvement (Scouts Japan, n.d.). These dedicated educators take pride in their responsibility to provide well-rounded experiences for their students, recognizing the value of integrating the Kid Scout program into the early childhood education curriculum. Japanese kindergarten teachers who assume the role of Kid Scout coordinators emphasize the importance of fostering children's sense of responsibility, self-reliance, and appreciation for nature (Fujita, 2013). Through a range of activities such as nature walks, team-building exercises, and cultural exchanges, these teachers create opportunities for children to develop leadership skills, promote teamwork, and instill values of community service and environmental conservation.

The experiences of Japanese kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators highlight their commitment to creating a harmonious balance between the academic curriculum and scouting activities. They recognize the significance of hands-on learning and experiential education in

nurturing well-rounded individuals. These educators strive to integrate the Kid Scout program seamlessly into their classroom instruction, aligning scouting activities with the broader educational goals and standards of early childhood education in Japan (Fujita, 2013). While they face challenges in managing logistics, coordinating activities, and meeting curriculum requirements, the dedication and passion of Japanese kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators contribute to the overall enrichment of their students' educational experiences, helping them develop important life skills and values that extend beyond the classroom.

In the Philippines, kindergarten teachers who assume the role of Kid Scout coordinators play a vital role in organizing and facilitating scouting activities for young children. These teachers are responsible for integrating the principles and values of the scouting program into their classroom instruction and extracurricular activities (Alvarde, 2016). The experiences of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators in the Philippines focus on fostering holistic development, promoting teamwork, and instilling values of service, leadership, and community engagement.

In the local scenario of Tugbok A District, kindergarten teachers acting as kid scout coordinators face diverse encounters as they navigate the implementation of kid scouts program. It is within this local scenario that the present study was developed with the aim of exploring the teachers' experiences, strategies employed, and the valuable insights they have acquired while navigating the challenges of converting classroom to campfires as kid scout coordinators.

## II. Methodology

In this study the experiences of kindergarten teachers as kid scout coordinators in converting classroom to campfire in Tugbok A District were gathered through an In-Depth Interview (IDI) as well as their coping mechanisms were extracted from the participants.

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The researcher's drive in knowing the deeper meaning of the experiences of the kindergarten teachers as kid scout coordinators in converting classroom to campfire became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means of which Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited from Gerodias, (2013) considered helpful in looking for "meanings and motivations that underlie cultural symbols, personal experiences and phenomena". By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the experiences of kindergarten teachers as kid scout coordinators in converting classroom to campfire in a manner that, as David (2005) wrote, the

themes, symbols and meaning of the experiences presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience was a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (1992), as cited in Morrissey & Higgs, (2006), that experience was a source of knowledge and shapes one's behavior.

From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research lies in the view that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge, and that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our daily lives (Morrissey & Higgs, 2006).

By doing phenomenology which concerns that “what” and the “how” (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher projected that the experiences, mechanisms used by kindergarten teachers were explored and insights drawn the basis for the possible future research and policy analysis in relation to this research.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### *Experiences of kindergarten teachers as kid scout coordinators in converting classroom to campfire*

The role of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators extends beyond the confines of the classroom, as they venture into the realm of outdoor education. Converting activities from the classroom to the outdoors is a significant aspect of their experiences, enabling children to engage with the natural environment and fostering a holistic approach to learning. This discussion explores the experiences of kindergarten teachers as Kid Scout coordinators in converting their activities from the classroom to the outdoors, examining the benefits, challenges, and outcomes of this transition.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of nature-based education for young children. Research has shown that exposure to natural environments can enhance children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Chawla & Cushing, 2007). Kindergarten teachers, as Kid Scout coordinators, have embraced the transformative power of the outdoors, harnessing its potential to create meaningful learning experiences for their students. By venturing into nature, these teachers open up a world of exploration, discovery, and hands-on learning that complements traditional classroom instruction.

#### *Analysis*

As Kid Scout coordinators, kindergarten teachers may organize nature walks or outdoor scavenger hunts where children can observe and interact with plants, animals, and various elements of the natural world. This firsthand experience allows children to develop a sense of wonder and

curiosity about their surroundings. According to Ernst (2017), engaging with nature in early childhood promotes children's cognitive development by fostering observation skills, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of ecological systems.

Moreover, nature exploration offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Kindergarten teachers can integrate science, language arts, and even mathematics into outdoor activities. For example, teachers may guide children to explore different types of plants and their characteristics, encouraging children to ask questions, make observations, and record their findings. This interdisciplinary approach to nature exploration helps children make connections across various subject areas and enhances their overall learning experience (Ernst, 2017).

Additionally, nature-based experiences contribute to the development of children's environmental consciousness and stewardship. By engaging in outdoor activities, children become more aware of the importance of environmental preservation and conservation. They learn about the interdependence of living organisms and the impact of human actions on the natural world. Research conducted by Sobel (2008) suggests that meaningful experiences in nature during early childhood can foster a sense of responsibility and motivate children to care for the environment throughout their lives.

### *Discussion*

Based on the findings of the study, it is important that some important moves must be taken into consideration and be made available for the kindergarten teachers considering bulk of their work on their assigned function as teachers and in being kid scout coordinators.

This study may provide an avenue for school heads to recognize the value and impact of integrating extracurricular activities like Kid Scouts into the school curriculum. This may involve creating official roles or positions for teachers to take on such responsibilities. Secondly, providing professional development opportunities and training for teachers in areas such as outdoor education, risk management, and collaboration can enhance their skills and confidence as Kid Scout coordinators. Lastly, fostering a culture of collaboration and resource sharing among teachers, parents, and volunteers can further enrich the Kid Scout program, allowing for diverse perspectives and experiences to be integrated into the curriculum.

As for the kindergarten teachers themselves, they could work on professional development opportunities focused on outdoor education, risk management, and collaboration can further enhance their skills and expertise in coordinating Kid Scout activities. Secondly, building strong partnerships with parents, volunteers, and community members can expand the resources and support available for the program. Additionally, exploring innovative approaches to integrate Kid Scout activities into the curriculum.

The learners, along with their parents, should investigate their possible contributions they could work on to further make their experience with converting classrooms to campfires better for them as learners, parents, and teachers.

For future researchers, similar studies may be conducted in other regions or divisions. The researchers may consider other aspects of the experiences of kid scouts coordinators in converting classrooms to campfires.

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Gerlie P. Plaza, the author, is 37 years old, married and a mother of two boys, born on March 04, 1987, at Leling, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, Philippines. She lives at Park Villas, Elenita Heights, Catalunan Grande, Davao City. She finished her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education at The University of Southeastern Philippines, Obrero Campus, Davao City.

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Her book, entitled, "From Classrooms to Campfires: Exploring Kindergarten Teachers Experiences as KID Scouts Coordinators" aims to create a nurturing and a supportive environment where children can learn and grow, developing important life skills and values.