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Caregivers' awareness on early childhood developmental delays among preschool children in Nabua, Camarines Sur

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Abstract

Aim: This study evaluated caregivers' awareness of early childhood developmental delays among preschool children in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Specific objectives were to describe caregiver profiles (age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, family monthly income, relationship to child), assess awareness across four developmental domains (language/speech, cognitive, social-emotional, motor), identify caregiving challenges, examine relationships between profile variables and awareness/challenges, and propose an awareness-enhancement plan.

Methodology: A descriptive-correlational design was used. A total of 320 caregivers of enrolled preschool children were selected by simple random sampling (Slovin's formula). Data were collected via a self-developed questionnaire (Part I: profile; Part II: awareness items rated on a 4-point Likert scale; Part III: challenges). Descriptive statistics (percentages, weighted means) summarized profiles, awareness, and challenges. Relationships between profile variables and outcomes were tested (tables report χ^2 statistics; manuscript Methods also mentions Spearman's rho).

Results: Respondents were predominantly female (83.1%) and aged 26–35 years (47.8%). Most had monthly family incomes < PHP 9,520 (67.2%) and were parents (83.4%). Caregiver awareness was high overall: movement/motor skills had the highest Average Weighted Mean (AWM = 3.45, "Very Aware"), followed by language/speech (AWM = 3.35), cognitive (AWM = 3.32), and social-emotional skills (AWM = 3.21). Caregivers "sometimes" experienced challenges overall (AWM = 2.92), with the greatest concerns in physical demands/safety and access to education/healthcare. Statistical tests indicated that educational attainment was significantly associated with multiple awareness domains ($p \leq .003$), occupation was associated with selected domains, and sex was significantly related to caregiving challenges ($\chi^2 = 12.5$, $p = .006$).

Conclusion: Caregivers in Nabua demonstrate generally high awareness of developmental milestones, particularly motor and language skills. Educational attainment (and to a lesser extent occupation) is a key determinant of awareness, while caregiver sex relates to reported caregiving challenges. The findings support targeted, community-based awareness and training programs tailored by education level and gender-responsive support services.

Keywords: Awareness; Caregivers; Developmental delays; Preschool; Nabua

INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly dynamic and changing society, children are increasingly exposed to a variety of developmental challenges and conflicts that can seriously affect their well-being. These difficulties, which adults often overlook amid the complexities of modern life, necessitate reliable support systems. Globally, developmental problems are projected to affect approximately 16% of children, underscoring the universal prevalence of these issues (World Health Organization, 2020).

Early childhood, defined as the period from conception to eight years of age, represents the most crucial stage for a person's life course and developmental trajectory. A child's development is a complex interplay of biological factors and nurturing environmental qualities, including the influence of parents, caregivers, family, and community (Likhar et al., 2022). Early life circumstances, the underlying socioeconomic determinants of health, profoundly impact early child development, making the role of the primary caregiver paramount.

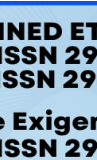


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In the Philippines, the legal framework places a strong emphasis on child welfare and mental health. The Mental Health Act (Republic Act 11036) mandates the provision of suitable care, treatment, and safeguarding of rights for individuals with mental health needs (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 2018). The presence of developmental impairments during early childhood can serve as an indicator of prospective mental health concerns later in life, thereby aligning the early detection of developmental delays with the objectives of RA 11036. This legislation specifically highlights the crucial role of community-based professionals, including caregivers, in the early detection and intervention of mental health issues.

Despite the benefits of early intervention, which allows children experiencing delays to flourish and achieve their maximum capabilities, a critical issue persists in late diagnosis and management. Developmental delays are estimated to affect approximately 10% to 15% of preschool-aged children (Choo et al., 2019). While primary care physicians are essential for screening, parental or caregiver concerns often serve as the initial indicators of a delay. This highlights a significant challenge: the literacy level and awareness of non-professional caregivers regarding developmental milestones and signs of delay remain variable.

Philippine-specific literature suggests a need to strengthen the front lines of early detection. There is a prevalent issue of caregiver misconception, where initial signs of delay are often dismissed or normalized due to societal biases or insufficient awareness, leading to a delay in seeking professional assistance. Furthermore, the social stigma associated with developmental concerns often contributes to the neglect or concealment of these issues.

While global studies have established the prevalence of developmental delays and the necessity of early screening, and national legislation (RA 11036) underscores the need for community involvement, there is a pronounced void in current empirical data concerning the awareness levels and practice challenges of non-professional caregivers in specific local settings. Previous studies have primarily focused on clinical detection; however, they have lacked a localized, in-depth assessment of caregiver-reported knowledge and the subsequent barriers to intervention.

Unlike previous national studies, which provided a generalized overview of developmental health, this research specifically focused on the municipality of Nabua, Camarines Sur. To the knowledge of the researchers, no prior study has ever been conducted in this specific site to quantitatively assess the knowledge of caregivers regarding the early indicators, detection, and management of developmental delays. This gap necessitates an investigation into the local dynamics and challenges faced by primary caregivers, who are often relatives or hired help, to ensure that the goals of early intervention and the Mental Health Act are met at the grassroots level.

This study extended current knowledge by providing the first empirical evidence from Nabua, Camarines Sur, on the caregiver-side factors influencing the developmental outcomes of children. By assessing and subsequently improving caregivers' knowledge of developmental delay detection and management, the research aimed to proactively address potential forthcoming mental health difficulties and challenge the stigmas connected to these delays.

The findings are anticipated to make a substantial contribution to local policy and childcare practice. The data provided a critical basis for advancing the healthcare industry by informing the design of targeted, localized, and culturally sensitive intervention programs for caregivers. By ensuring that caregivers possess comprehensive, evidence-based knowledge, this study contributes to the overarching objective of Republic Act 11036, fostering mental well-being and ensuring every child has the optimal chances for development and achievement, regardless of the obstacles encountered.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

The success of early intervention programs hinges significantly on the caregiver's awareness and capacity to act, a theme consistently highlighted across the literature that also emphasizes substantial knowledge gaps and the emotional complexities faced by those providing care. This review synthesizes international, national, and local findings related to Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD), focusing on caregiver knowledge, challenges, and the potential for effective intervention.

International studies consistently demonstrate a deficit in parental understanding of key developmental milestones, particularly in the motor, social, and language domains (Kumar et al., 2024; Varghese et al., 2020). This underscores the universal need to equip caregivers with the knowledge necessary for early identification.

Despite low baseline knowledge, parents typically express a positive attitude toward seeking help (Kumar et al., 2024). Furthermore, research suggests that practitioners should not discount caregiver concerns about

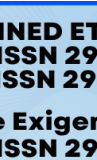


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speech/language and emotional/behavioral development, as these often serve as significant indicators of developmental issues, even if they may sometimes misalign with professional diagnoses (Lin et al., 2022).

However, the experience of caregiving is emotionally and practically complex. Upon receiving a diagnosis, mothers frequently experience intense feelings of despair and guilt, alongside significant practical issues such as managing time, overcoming financial constraints, and encountering difficulties accessing specialized services like occupational therapy (Rosepti, 2022; Narasimman et al., 2023). These emotional and practical stressors deepen the understanding of the complex challenges that the current study sought to identify and address.

In the Philippines, several national factors compound the challenge of providing timely access to early intervention. Obstacles to seeking medical attention, such as co-existing health issues, severe financial constraints, and significant distances to appropriate healthcare facilities, likely block timely access to crucial early intervention services for developmental delays (Capuno et al., 2019). The system also shows systemic gaps, where medical professionals, while aware of related illnesses, do not always routinely screen or record developmental progress during standard check-ups (Gmmash & Faquih, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced an additional layer of complexity, severely impacting the education and care of Filipino children with disabilities and necessitating enhanced caregiver support within the "new normal" of remote learning and limited mobility (Cahapay, 2021; Dianito et al., 2021). Compounding these issues, socioeconomic factors are powerful predictors of outcomes: poverty has demonstrably severe negative effects on the development and achievement of Filipino children with special needs (Lastimosa, 2023). Caregivers in resource-poor settings also frequently experience significant stress and are less likely to have access to necessary support systems (Schlebusch et al., 2022).

On a macro level, national development and policies supporting the education and health of the population (especially caregivers) are deemed stronger predictors of child development outcomes than family demographics alone (Tran et al., 2019; Ayob et al., 2021). This underscores the importance of local policy-guided interventions.

The literature confirms that caregiver capacity can be effectively enhanced. Local Philippine studies provide strong evidence, showing that parent coaching and targeted education can significantly improve children's developmental skills (Dulay et al., 2019). This establishes a clear link between improved caregiver knowledge and improved developmental outcomes, emphasizing the need to target parental beliefs and practices as a core part of intervention strategies (Lakes et al., 2020).

The reviewed literature establishes Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD) as a globally significant public health problem (Rosepti, 2022), where the critical importance of the primary caregiver is the recurring and indispensable theme across diverse international and national contexts (Varghese et al., 2020; Capuno et al., 2019).

The present study is necessary and justified because, while national literature has established the general problems and the caregiver's critical role, there remains a lack of specific, empirical baseline data on the current level of awareness and the precise challenges faced by caregivers within the localized, rural context of Nabua, Camarines Sur.

By comprehensively determining the caregiver profile and establishing the extent of their awareness across specific developmental domains, this research provided the necessary evidence to identify the specific local needs and statistically link profile characteristics to awareness and challenges. This crucial, site-specific evidence guided the design of a focused, culturally relevant intervention and policy recommendations, a necessary step to move beyond general awareness toward effective, community-based early intervention (Dulay et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Casey's Model of Nursing by Anne Casey and Jean Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory, as shown in Figure 1. Each theory was used in the study because it demonstrated how the child, caregiver, and environment worked together. These theories also provided vital information that was used to interpret and guide future activities. Furthermore, they offered a framework for studying preschoolers' cognitive abilities and limitations. By evaluating caregiver awareness of developmental milestones and potential delays within this context, the study revealed knowledge and comprehension gaps that may have impeded early diagnosis and intervention. This supported the development of educational programs for caregivers to help them better support their child's cognitive development.



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Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm

Conceptual Framework

This study presented the conceptual framework, which showed the interplay of three important elements: input, process, and output.

Input. It consisted of the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, family monthly income, and relationship to the child; the extent of awareness of the caregivers on early childhood developmental delays along language or speech, thinking – cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, and movement – motor skills; and the challenges encountered by the caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays.

Process. The process involved the collection of data through a questionnaire, analysis and interpretation of data, testing for significance, and formulation of a plan to enhance the awareness of caregivers on early childhood developmental delay.

Output. The output of the study was a plan to enhance the awareness of caregivers on early childhood developmental delay. The feedback loop provided a mechanism for a continuing supply of information that could explain the process of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood developmental delays pose significant risks to children's long-term cognitive, social, emotional, and motor development, making early detection essential for improving developmental outcomes. Although global and national data emphasize the critical role of caregivers in identifying early signs of developmental delay, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the current level of caregiver awareness in localized, rural contexts such as Nabua, Camarines Sur. Persistent issues such as insufficient knowledge of developmental milestones, misconceptions about child development, and challenges in accessing health and developmental services may hinder timely detection and intervention.

Given these concerns, the present study sought to examine caregivers' awareness of early childhood developmental delays, identify the challenges they encounter in caring for children with such delays, and determine how caregiver characteristics relate to their awareness and experiences. Understanding these dimensions is essential for informing community-based early childhood programs and strengthening local health and education initiatives.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate caregivers' awareness of early childhood developmental delays among preschool children in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. To determine the profile of caregivers in terms of:
 - a. age
 - b. sex
 - c. educational attainment
 - d. occupation



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- e. family monthly income
 - f. relationship to the child
2. To determine the extent of caregiver awareness regarding early childhood developmental delays across the following domains:
 - a. language or speech
 - b. thinking–cognitive skills
 - c. social and emotional skills
 - d. movement–motor skills
3. To identify the challenges encountered by caregivers in caring for preschool children with early childhood developmental delays.
4. To determine whether caregiver profile variables are related to their level of awareness of early childhood developmental delays.
5. To determine whether caregiver profile variables are related to the challenges they encounter in caring for preschool children with early childhood developmental delays.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of caregivers in terms of:
 - a. age?
 - b. sex?
 - c. educational attainment?
 - d. occupation?
 - e. family monthly income?
 - f. relationship to the child?
2. What is the extent of caregiver awareness of early childhood developmental delays in the domains of:
 - a. language or speech?
 - b. thinking–cognitive skills?
 - c. social and emotional skills?
 - d. movement–motor skills?
3. What challenges do caregivers encounter in caring for preschool children with early childhood developmental delays?
4. Is there a relationship between caregiver profile variables and their level of awareness of early childhood developmental delays?
5. Is there a relationship between caregiver profile variables and the challenges they encounter in caring for preschool children with early childhood developmental delays?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested against the observed data:

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of awareness of the caregivers on early childhood developmental delays.

H₀₂. There is no significant relationship between the profile and the challenges encountered by caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to evaluate caregiver awareness of Early Childhood Developmental Delays (ECDD) and the challenges faced in its detection and management among preschool children in Nabua, Camarines Sur. By using the descriptive-correlational method, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' perceptions and knowledge base without establishing a cause-and-effect relationship (Bhat, 2023). This approach was essential for generating baseline data and identifying associations that could justify the need for targeted intervention programs and policy recommendations in the specific rural context of Nabua.



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Population and Sampling

The respondents of this study were the caregivers of preschool children in Nabua, Camarines Sur. The number of respondents was obtained through Slovin's formula. The total number of enrolled preschool children was 1,635, and using Slovin's formula, the respondents' number was narrowed to 320. The study utilized the simple random technique, which was applied to select the caregivers of preschool children who would participate. The respondents were selected from the parents or caregivers of enrolled preschool children in daycare centers and private preschool institutions. These caregivers were those who were directly taking care of the preschool children.

Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study to evaluate caregiver awareness of Early Childhood Developmental Delays (ECDD) and associated challenges was a researcher-made questionnaire specifically developed to address the localized context of Nabua, Camarines Sur. The questionnaire has three parts. The first part is the profile of the respondents, the second part is the extent of awareness of the caregivers on early childhood developmental delays, and the last part is the challenges encountered by the caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays. The validated instrument was then pilot-tested on a group of 30 caregivers who shared similar demographic characteristics with the target population but were not included in the final study sample.

Data Collection

Formal permission to conduct the study was first secured from the relevant academic institution. A letter of endorsement was then presented to the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) of Nabua, Camarines Sur, to gain access and cooperation from the local community and key informants. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the identified caregivers. Before administration, the researchers provided a brief, standardized orientation to all respondents, which included reading the instructions aloud to mitigate literacy barriers and ensure a uniform understanding of the purpose and scaling of the instrument. The researchers remained present to clarify specific, non-leading questions that arose during the process. After answering, the researchers retrieved the accomplished questionnaire on the same day. After retrieval, the data were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted.

Treatment of Data

The collected data was presented in a quantitative format, utilizing the specified statistical tools: (1) The Percentage Technique was used to calculate the percentile results of the data in the profile. (2) Weighted Mean was used to quantify the respondents' appraisal in the part II - extent of caregivers' awareness on early childhood developmental delays and part III - challenges encountered by the caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays of the questionnaire. (3) A 4-point Likert-type scale was used in quantifying and interpreting the weighted mean for each variable. The following sequence scale served as a guide in the interpretation of the rating scale, especially in objectives 2 and 3.

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.50 – 4.00	Extremely Aware / Always
3	2.50 – 3.49	Very Aware / Sometimes
2	1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Aware / Seldom
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Aware / Not at all

(4) The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the respondent's profile and level of awareness on developmental delay and early intervention.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers ensured that all ethical guidelines were followed. Official approval was first obtained from the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) of Nabua, Camarines Sur, to ensure the cooperation of local authorities and gain access to the communities. Then, permission was also secured from the heads and principals of participating private preschools and daycare centers. All caregivers were provided with a detailed consent form written in the local dialect that clearly outlined the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was strictly voluntary. Caregivers were explicitly informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any point during the data collection process without penalty or consequence. The data collected were



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treated with the utmost confidentiality. Questionnaires were coded, and no names or personal identifiers were recorded on the survey instruments to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presented the respondents' profiles, the extent of awareness of the caregivers on early childhood developmental delays, the challenges encountered by the caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays, the relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of awareness of the caregivers on early childhood developmental delays and the relationship between the profile and the challenges encountered by the caregivers in caring for children with early childhood developmental delays.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 below presents the respondents' profiles, including their age, sex, educational attainment, occupation, family monthly income, and relationship to the child.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
a. Age	17 years old and below	3	0.94	6
	18-25 years old	46	14.38	3
	26-35 years old	153	47.81	1
	36-45 years old	86	26.88	2
	46-55 years old	17	5.31	4
	56 years old and above	15	4.69	5
	Total	320	100	
b. Sex	Male	54	16.88	2
	Female	266	83.13	1
	Total	320	100	
c. Educational Attainment	Elementary graduate	16	5.00	4
	High school graduate	141	44.06	1
	Vocational graduate	36	11.25	3
	College graduate	114	35.63	2
	Post-graduate degree	13	4.06	5
	Total	320	100	
d. Occupation	Employed (full-time)	84	26.25	2
	Employed (part-time)	35	10.94	5
	Self-employed	48	15.00	3
	Unemployed	108	33.75	1
	Student	6	1.88	6
	Homemaker	38	11.88	4
	Retired	1	0.31	7
	Total	320	100	
e. Family Monthly Income	Less than Php 9,520	215	67.19	1
	Between Php 9,520 – 19,040	55	17.19	2
	Between Php 19,040 – 38,080	31	9.69	3
	Between Php 38,080 – 66,640	15	4.69	4
	Between Php 66,640- 114,240	1	0.31	6.5
	Between Php 114,240-190,400	1	0.31	6.5
	At least 190,400	2	0.63	5
	Total	320	100	
f. Relationship to the Child	Parents	267	83.44	1
	Guardian	44	13.75	2
	Nanny	9	2.81	3
	Total	320	100	

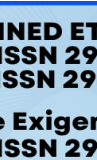


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The profile of the 320 respondents indicates that the majority are within the 26–35-year-old age group (47.81%), predominantly female (83.13%), and mostly high school (44.06%) or college graduates (35.63%). In terms of occupation, many are unemployed (33.75%) or employed full-time (26.25%), with most belonging to low-income households earning less than Php 9,520 monthly (67.19%). Furthermore, the respondents are primarily parents (83.44%), with only a few serving as guardians or nannies. These findings suggest that the respondents are predominantly young to middle-aged mothers with modest educational backgrounds and limited financial resources, factors that may shape their caregiving practices and access to opportunities for child development.

Extent of Awareness of the Caregivers on Early Childhood Developmental Delays

The table below presents the extent of awareness of caregivers on early childhood developmental delays along language or speech, thinking-cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, and movement-motor skills.

Table 2. Extent of Awareness of the Caregivers on Early Childhood Developmental Delays

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
a. Language or Speech	1. Responds to loud sounds	3.39	Very Aware	3
	2. Coos ("ohh" and "ahh") or make sounds	3.33	Very Aware	5
	3. Uses connecting words like "because," "and," "if"	3.14	Very Aware	8
	4. Laughs or squeals	3.30	Very Aware	6
	5. Says single words like "mama" or "dada"	3.56	Extremely Aware	1
	6. Identifies colors, body parts, or colors	3.52	Extremely Aware	2
	7. Forms a simple sentence	3.24	Very Aware	7
	8. Speaks clearly	3.34	Very Aware	4
	Average Weighted Mean	3.35	Very Aware	
b. Thinking – Cognitive Skills	1. Smiles at people or strangers	3.34	Very Aware	3
	2. Responds when called with her/his name	3.59	Extremely Aware	1
	3. Recognizes familiar people	3.51	Extremely Aware	2
	4. Is attentive or has a focus	3.25	Very Aware	6
	5. Remembers things or what was heard easily	3.30	Very Aware	4
	6. Imitates others	3.12	Very Aware	8
	7. Uses things or objects appropriately	3.26	Very Aware	5
	8. Tells simple story	3.21	Very Aware	7
	Average Weighted Mean	3.32	Very Aware	
c. Social and Emotional Skills	1. Shows emotions appropriately	3.33	Very Aware	2
	2. Shows affection for caregivers	3.25	Very Aware	4
	3. Initiates communication with others	3.31	Very Aware	3
	4. Plays along with the same age	3.40	Very Aware	1
	5. Is manageable or has tolerable tantrums	3.02	Very Aware	8
	6. Can cope with change	3.06	Very Aware	7
	7. Shows a wide range of motions	3.16	Very Aware	5
	8. Gets along with other children or strangers	3.15	Very Aware	6
	Average Weighted Mean	3.21	Very Aware	
d. Movement – Motor skills	1. Can hold their head up when on their tummy	3.38	Very Aware	6
	2. Brings hands/things to mouth	3.25	Very Aware	8



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3. Tries to grasp things within reach	3.27	Very Aware	7
4. Can walk properly	3.67	Extremely Aware	1
5. Can jump in place	3.53	Extremely Aware	3
6. Shows interest in interactive games	3.48	Very Aware	4
7. Can play a variety of games and activities	3.44	Very Aware	5
8. Can brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed independently	3.57	Extremely Aware	2
Average Weighted Mean	3.45	Very Aware	

The results show that respondents are generally very aware of children's developmental skills across the four domains assessed. Among these, the highest awareness was observed in movement-motor skills (AWM = 3.45, Very Aware), particularly in walking properly, brushing teeth and doing self-care independently, and jumping in place, which were rated extremely aware. This was followed by language or speech (AWM = 3.35, Very Aware), with the highest awareness on saying single words and identifying colors or body parts. Thinking-cognitive skills (AWM = 3.32, Very Aware) also reflected high awareness, especially in recognizing familiar people and responding when called by name. The lowest, though still rated very aware, was social and emotional skills (AWM = 3.21), with the strongest indicators being the ability to play with peers and show emotions appropriately. Overall, the findings suggest that parents and caregivers demonstrate substantial awareness of children's developmental milestones, with greater recognition of physical and speech-related skills compared to social-emotional behaviors.

Challenges Encountered by the Caregivers in Caring for Children with Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Table 3. Challenges Encountered by the Caregivers in Caring for Children with Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Demands in terms of physical needs and safety considerations	3.30	Sometimes	1
2. Communication barriers and alternative communication methods between the child & caregivers	3.16	Sometimes	3
3. Financial difficulties	2.93	Sometimes	5
4. Access to appropriate healthcare services	3.14	Sometimes	4
5. Access to appropriate education (knowledge, skills, & training opportunities)	3.18	Sometimes	2
6. Coping with societal stigmatization and lack of understanding	2.87	Sometimes	6
7. Lack of support systems	2.66	Sometimes	9
8. Emotional distress	2.68	Sometimes	8
9. Psychological distress	2.63	Sometimes	10
10. Lack of resources in the community	2.69	Sometimes	7
Average Weighted Mean	2.92	Sometimes	

The findings reveal that respondents sometimes experience challenges in meeting the needs of children, with an overall weighted mean of 2.92 (Sometimes). The most common concern reported was demands in terms of physical needs and safety considerations (WM = 3.30), followed by access to appropriate education (WM = 3.18) and communication barriers between the child and caregivers (WM = 3.16). Difficulties related to healthcare access (WM = 3.14) and financial constraints (WM = 2.93) were also noted. Meanwhile, the least frequently encountered issues were psychological distress (WM = 2.63), lack of support systems (WM = 2.66), and emotional distress (WM = 2.68). Overall, the results suggest that while caregivers occasionally face challenges, the most pressing concerns are practical and resource-related—particularly in ensuring physical needs, safety, education, and effective communication—rather than emotional or psychological difficulties.



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Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and the Extent of Awareness of the Caregivers on Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Table 4. Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and the Extent of Awareness of the Caregivers on Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Indicators		Computed X2 Value	P-value <0.05	Decision on H0	Interpretation
Language or Speech	Age	17.3	0.302	Accepted	Not Significant
	Sex	3.82	0.281	Accepted	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	30.8	0.002	Rejected	Significant
	Occupation	31.8	0.023	Rejected	Significant
	Family Monthly Income	15.0	0.661	Accepted	Not Significant
	Relationship to a Child	8.06	0.528	Accepted	Not Significant
Thinking – Cognitive Skills	Age	14.2	0.513	Accepted	Not Significant
	Sex	2.63	0.453	Accepted	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	29.4	0.003	Rejected	Significant
	Occupation	17.3	0.499	Accepted	Not Significant
	Family Monthly Income	20.5	0.306	Accepted	Not Significant
	Relationship to a Child	6.52	0.686	Accepted	Not Significant
Social and Emotional Skills	Age	8.06	0.921	Accepted	Not Significant
	Sex	0.658	0.883	Accepted	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	39.2	0.001	Rejected	Significant
	Occupation	39.4	0.003	Rejected	Significant
	Family Monthly Income	19.5	0.365	Accepted	Not Significant
	Relationship to a Child	8.53	0.482	Accepted	Not Significant
Movement – Motor Skills	Age	28.4	0.019	Rejected	Significant
	Sex	0.356	0.949	Accepted	Not Significant
	Educational Attainment	32.1	0.001	Rejected	Significant
	Occupation	25.5	0.113	Accepted	Not Significant
	Family Monthly Income	19.3	0.371	Accepted	Not Significant
	Relationship to a Child	8.31	0.503	Accepted	Not Significant

The Chi-square test of independence revealed that among the selected profile variables, educational attainment and occupation showed significant relationships with several developmental domains. Specifically, educational attainment was significantly related to language or speech ($p = 0.002$), thinking–cognitive skills ($p = 0.003$), social and emotional skills ($p = 0.001$), and movement–motor skills ($p = 0.001$). Occupation likewise showed significant associations with language or speech ($p = 0.023$) and social and emotional skills ($p = 0.003$), suggesting that both factors play a role in shaping caregiver awareness of children's developmental milestones. In contrast, age, sex, family monthly income, and relationship to the child did not yield significant associations across all domains, as their p -values were above the 0.05 threshold. Overall, these results imply that respondents' educational background and employment status may influence their level of awareness and responsiveness to children's developmental needs, while demographic factors such as age and sex appear less influential.

Relationship Between the Profile and the Challenges Encountered by the Caregivers in Caring for Children with Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Table 5. Relationship between the Profile and the Challenges Encountered by the Caregivers in Caring for Children with Early Childhood Developmental Delays

Indicators	Computed X2 Value	P-value <0.05	Decision on H0	Interpretation
Age	21.6	0.119	Accepted	Not Significant
Sex	12.5	0.006	Rejected	Significant



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Educational Attainment	12.4	0.417	Accepted	Not Significant
Occupation	13.5	0.762	Accepted	Not Significant
Family Monthly Income	19.3	0.371	Accepted	Not Significant
Relationship to a Child	13.4	0.146	Accepted	Not Significant

The Chi-square test of independence indicates that among the respondents' profile variables, only sex was found to have a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 12.5$, $p = 0.006$) with the factor under study. This suggests that male and female respondents differ significantly in their responses, while no significant differences were observed based on age, educational attainment, occupation, family monthly income, or relationship to the child, as their p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance. These findings imply that sex may play a role in shaping respondents' perspectives or experiences, whereas other demographic variables appear to exert little influence.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were females, aged 26–35 years old, with low family income, and were primarily the parents who assumed direct caregiving responsibilities. Most of them were high school graduates and unemployed, which reflects the modest socio-economic profile of the participants. Despite these limitations, caregivers demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding early childhood developmental delays across domains of language, cognitive, social, and motor skills. However, they sometimes encountered challenges, particularly in meeting physical needs and safety requirements, overcoming communication barriers, and ensuring access to education and healthcare services. The results further revealed that caregivers' awareness of developmental delays was significantly influenced by their educational attainment and age, highlighting the importance of both formal learning and caregiving experience in understanding child development. Additionally, sex was found to have a notable correlation with the challenges faced in caregiving, suggesting that male and female caregivers may experience and manage difficulties differently. Overall, the study emphasizes the critical role of education, socio-economic conditions, and caregiver characteristics in shaping awareness and the ability to respond effectively to children with developmental delays.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that community-based support programs be established to enhance caregivers' knowledge and skills in assessing and managing early childhood developmental delays. These may include seminars, workshops, and professional guidance aimed at strengthening their caregiving practices. To further augment their awareness, advanced educational workshops and health education programs should be developed, focusing not only on recognizing developmental milestones but also on practical strategies for intervention and support. Additionally, the creation of comprehensive support centers is advised to address physical strain, limited access to education, and communication barriers by offering respite care services, continuing education opportunities, and access to therapeutic and health resources. Training programs should also be designed to suit caregivers' varying educational levels and age groups, accommodating diverse learning needs to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. Finally, support interventions should be gender-responsive, recognizing that male and female caregivers face distinct challenges; thus, programs such as networking groups, mental health support, and tailored educational materials should be provided to meet their specific needs. Through these initiatives, caregivers will be better equipped to provide effective and holistic care for children with developmental delays.

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