

Exploring Preschool Teachers' Perception of Individualized Teaching Practices to Support Children's School Readiness

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A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University
August 2026

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Exploring Preschool Teachers' Perception of Individualized Teaching Practices to Support Children's School Readiness

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1. Source of population: English medium preschool teachers and Government preschool teachers
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
 - a) Physical risk to the subjects (no)
 - b) Social risk (no)
 - c) Psychological risk to subjects (no)
 - d) discomfort to subjects (no)
 - e) Invasion of privacy (no)
3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)
 - a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
 - b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
 - c) Physical risk (n/a)
 - d) Sensitive questions (No)
 - e) Benefits to be derived (yes)
 - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
 - g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
 - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (n/a)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants (yes)
 - b) from parents or guardian (n/a)
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal (yes)
 - b) Consent Form (yes)
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the preschool teachers' perceptions of individualized teaching practices and their role in supporting children's school readiness in English-medium and government preschool settings in Bangladesh. It examines teachers' understanding of individualized teaching, the adjustments and strategies they use to address children's learning needs, and the challenges they face in implementing these practices. The study also highlights the differences between preschool settings in terms of teacher availability and support, classroom conditions, and availability of resources. Through analysis of the classroom observations and interviews, this research highlights factors needed for the effective implementation of individualized teaching practices. The findings emphasize the importance of ensuring responsive teaching, as well as providing a supportive classroom environment to promote children's holistic development and children's school readiness. These findings can be useful for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers to strengthen in early childhood education practice in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Individualized teaching; teachers' perception; school readiness; holistic development; early childhood education.

Dedication

To BRAC IED (Institute of Educational Development), for its perseverance in making a better change in early childhood education through constant innovation and quality teaching. I dedicate this study with utmost gratitude for the guidance, knowledge, and inspiration that have deeply shaped my academic growth.

Acknowledgement

I am eternally grateful to Almighty Allah for blessing me with patience and perseverance to be able to complete this research. His blessings, constant mercy, and guidance have enabled me to face every challenge and overcome them throughout the academic journey.

Would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to BRAC IED (Institute of Educational Development), BRAC University, and Dr. Erum Mariam, Executive Director of BRAC IED, for allowing me to pursue my Master of Science in Early Childhood Development.

I am profoundly thankful to my respected supervisor, Syeda Fareha Shaheeda Islam, Senior Lecturer and Academic Administration Lead at BRAC IED, for her valuable guidance, continuous encouragement, patience, and immense kindness throughout the process of this research. Her advice and support extended beyond academics, which helped me improve myself and inspired me to work harder to have meaningful growth personally and academically. Her support helped me improve my academic writing and enhance research skills.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the faculty members of BRAC IED for their support, knowledge, and encouragement throughout the journey of the MSc in Early Childhood Development Program. Thank you for your unwavering support and guidance, which enriched my academic experiences.

I would also extend my thanks to all the preschool teachers who participated generously in this study. Their willingness to open up to me, share their experiences and perceptions, and show me their classroom practices made this research possible. I am thankful to the school authority for allowing me to conduct interviews and classroom observations.

I would like to thank my course mates and friends from the 22nd batch of the MSc in Childhood Development program for their support and beautiful learning experiences that we shared together in this journey.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my beloved family, especially my parents, for their unconditional love and continuous support, and their faith in me. Their constant love and support have been the source of my strength and motivation throughout the journey of academics and in life. I am also thankful to everyone who directly or indirectly has helped me complete this research.

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List of Acronyms

IDI: In-depth interview

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

UN: United Nations

Chapter I: Introduction and Background

Introduction

A very crucial part of every child's life is early childhood. The sort of experiences and exposures children get during this period significantly shape their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Children aged between 3 and 5 years develop many skills that later on work as a foundation to be ready for formal schooling, which is known as school readiness. Oftentimes, school readiness is seen as learning only how to read and write, but in reality, school readiness also includes competence in different areas, for example, emotional regulation, communication skills, problem-solving skills, learning, and how to be social and independent (UNICEF, 2018). So, a good preschool education plays the most important role in building these foundational skills for the kids.

In recent years in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka, preschool education has expanded rapidly. There are many private, English-medium, and also NGO based preschools that are operating in Dhaka. However, in a classroom, in almost every case, children come from diverse backgrounds, having their own learning abilities, their own developmental skills, and different home experiences. And these factors vary from one child to another. For instance, there might be some children who may be able to understand a concept faster than other kids, and there might be some children who might need extra attention and support to be able to be on the same level. This particular difference makes it important for a specific teaching approach that considers individual differences. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) puts emphasis on teaching strategies that would take into account a child's age, developmental level, and individual

differences (NAEYC,2020). That is why a preschool classroom needs an approach that caters to these differences.

Individualized teaching is referred to as an instructional approach where a teacher tailors teaching methods, activities, and materials based on a child's own unique pace, interest, and learning needs. Many research studies point out that individualized learning models ensure responsive teaching practices (Wijayanti et al., 2025). When a teacher makes changes or creates their activities while taking into account factors like a child's individual needs, that child is more likely to develop the required skills, which will result in having a smooth transition to primary school.

However, in the Bangladeshi preschool context, classrooms are often influenced by parental expectations for academic excellence and the structured curricula that are followed. As a result of this, teachers feel pressurized from parents, and the school authorities tend to put emphasis on academic outcomes rather than offering a child-centered teaching approach. Because there are studies that show that the perceptions of a teacher significantly impact how teaching practices are conducted in classrooms (Scott-Little et al., 2008).

There is a very small amount of research that is done when it comes to exploring the aspects of preschool teachers' knowledge in Bangladesh and their views on individualized teaching, and also how they apply this in their classroom settings. This study aims to find out the perceptions of individualized teaching practices, and also how these practices ensure children's school readiness in Bangladesh. Because it is the teachers' approach and knowledge that impacts a child's individualized learning experiences. So, it is very important to understand the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding individualized teaching practices.

Statement of the problem

The preschool classrooms in Bangladesh are very diverse. Children come from different family environments, different exposures, different cultural routines, and different developmental backgrounds. Some children are seen to have great language skills and very early exposure to academics, while there are other children who may struggle with social interactions or communication, or simply with learning itself. Research also highlights that due to having different home environments and different exposures in early childhood, children often come to preschool with various levels of preparedness (Zigler & Styfco, 2000).

Even though there are apparent differences, many preschool classrooms still apply a uniform teaching method for all children. So, the same level of expectations, same lessons, and the very same materials are provided in the classroom regardless of a child's individual learning needs. Developmentally appropriate practice strongly says that a "one size fits all" approach cannot be effective to ensure a child's development (NAEYC,2020). Needless to say, some children will definitely fall behind when it comes to achieving school readiness skills if individualized attention is not given to them.

In the Bangladeshi context, the idea of school readiness is often misunderstood as early reading skills, writing skills, or mathematical skills. Parents especially expect preschools to prepare their children academically for an entrance exam in primary school. This Pressure alone can stop a teacher from implementing individualized teaching practices (UNICEF, 2018).

Even though there are many discussions in international literature regarding individualized teaching, there is very limited qualitative research that is done in the Bangladeshi context that looks into how preschool teachers perceive and implement these practices. And it is the teacher's perception that greatly plays a role in classroom interactions, classroom decisions, and instructional strategies (Scott-Little et al., 2008). So, it is important to identify the challenges they face practically and the sort of support they need to carry on with individualized teaching methods. Because studies show that in the Bangladeshi context, academic success is prioritized more by parents, and alongside this, teacher training is not provided properly, these two reasons make it tough to conduct a child-centered approach within a classroom (Alam, 2022; UNICEF, 2018).

Basically, the biggest problem in the current scenario of preschools in Bangladesh is that despite children having different needs and different abilities, the same teaching method is being implemented for all of them. At the same time, the misconception of school readiness exists, based on the belief that it only comprises academic skills. This in itself creates a huge gap between a child-centered approach and actual teaching practices. For this reason, many children feel underconfident and fall behind while others struggle less. Teachers, on the other hand, are also being pressured by the school authorities and parents to focus on academic excellence, and for this, they cannot exercise individualized teaching methods even if they wanted. Overall, the current system would cause unequal school readiness, and a lot of children would not have a smooth transition to their formal school education.

Therefore, it is necessary to explore preschool teachers' perceptions regarding individualized teaching practices and how these practices ensure a child's school readiness.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to find out the perceptions of preschool teachers and also their level of understanding when it comes to individualized teaching practices. This study aims to look into how individualized teaching is defined by teachers and also how they apply these practices to ensure children's school readiness.

In addition to this, the study also aims to find out the challenges that these teachers face while implementing individualized practices in their own classrooms. By exploring and finding out teachers' experiences and perspectives, this research wants to contribute to a better understanding of individualized teaching that will make holistic School readiness possible for children aged 3 to 5 years.

Significance and justification of the study

There are many reasons why this particular study is significant. First and foremost, one of the most significant goals of early childhood education is school readiness, both globally and in Bangladesh. Although enough significance is given when it comes to academic preparation, hardly any attention is given when it comes to individual differences among children in preschool classrooms. Having a better understanding of the current scenario of individualized teaching practices in Bangladesh can bring about a positive change by ensuring an inclusive and child-centered approach in classrooms. School readiness includes multiple domains: cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development (UNICEF,2018). So, initiatives must be taken to ensure holistic development. This study will make a contribution to the bigger picture by highlighting the setbacks due to which teachers fail to conduct individualized teaching practices.

When it comes to early childhood education, curricula and policies, teachers play the most significant role in implementing them. Their understanding, approach, and view directly influence the sort of practices and the sort of learning that takes place within a classroom (Scott Little et al., 2018). So, understanding their perspective can give a realistic idea about classroom practices in Bangladesh. The findings of the study will surely help develop training programs for teachers to be better equipped.

More studies need to be done to explore the teaching practices in preschool settings. Most available studies focus on either play-based learning, parental perceptions or parental involvement. Therefore, this study will make a contribution to a different sector of early childhood development than the existing ones.

Furthermore, the findings that would come out of this study would surely help teacher training institutions, curriculum developers, and administrators to better understand and provide the needed support to teachers to apply individualized teaching successfully. Research also highlights that children's engagement and their developmental outcomes improve significantly when individualized teaching is provided to them. That's why having an understanding of a teacher's requirements and challenges can help deal to ensure the improvement of professional development programs and classroom approaches.

Research Questions:

1. What do preschool teachers understand by individualized teaching
2. How do the preschool teachers implement individualized teaching strategies to support children's school readiness?

3. What are the challenges that these teachers face when implementing individualized teaching?

Operational Definition

Teachers' Perception: Teachers' perceptions refer to the understanding, beliefs, and attitudes about different aspects of teaching, approaches, and learning. In this study, it refers to what preschools understand by individualized teaching practices and how much importance they give to it, and how they see these practices supporting children's learning experience and school readiness. These perceptions are shaped by the teacher's knowledge, experiences they have in a classroom, and professional practices when it comes to addressing children's individual learning needs (Borg, 2006).

Individualized Teaching: Individualized teaching refers to the teaching approach where instruction, activities, and support are provided based on each child's learning needs, abilities, and their interest, and pace of development. In this study, individualized teaching is seen as the practices preschool teachers apply to provide a learning opportunity that responds to children's individual developmental needs, enhances their overall learning experience, and increases their participation in classroom activities (Tomlinson, 2017)

School Readiness: School readiness refers to the skills and developmental competencies that enable a child for a smoother transition to formal schooling. In this particular study, school readiness includes children's language, cognitive, physical, emotional, and self-regulation skills that enable them to participate fully in the classroom, learn, and adapt easily in primary education (UNICEF, 2019)

Chapter II: Literature Review

Literature Review

For this study, the literature review was drawn from national and international research closely linked to school readiness and individualized teaching practices in early childhood education. Many reports, policy documents, and articles were reviewed to better understand how preschool teachers view school readiness and implement individualized teaching practices in the classroom. These reviews also gave a clear picture of the existing gaps in research, specifically in the Bangladeshi context. Four themes were organized based on the topic and the research questions. The themes are: teachers' perception of school readiness, teachers' perception of individualized teaching practices, the relationship between individualized teaching and school readiness, and the challenges of individualized teaching in preschool classrooms. In this way, the need for this study is highlighted while showing the existing knowledge related to this topic.

Teachers' Perception of School Readiness

Classroom priorities are highly influenced or shaped based on the understanding of teachers regarding school readiness. Because if a teacher believes readiness only means academic success, they will focus mainly on structured lessons. However, if they view readiness as emotional development and social development, then they will be more flexible and use more interactive and individualized methods (Scott-Little et al.,2009).

In the Bangladeshi context, the perception of teachers about school readiness is highly influenced by the parental expectations and the pressure that comes from the institution itself. As a result, teachers solely focus on preparing children for the admission process for primary school. And

due to this very reason, school readiness is often only seen as early reading and writing skills, rather than holistic development.

However, in reality, school readiness is a broad concept. And it is not just limited to children's ability to write, read, or speak; rather, it also includes language development, social-emotional development, physical development, cognitive skills, and also learning positive attitudes (UNICEF,2018). Children cannot acquire these skills without having proper guidance.

Researchers say that readiness should not fall solely under the responsibility of the child; schools and teachers play a significant role in getting children ready for a smooth transition into primary education. (Snow, 2006)

Teachers in a lot of scenarios are unaware of the benefits of ensuring school readiness, which means holistic development. Scott-Little, Kagan, and Frelow (2006) argue that children who exhibit self-controlling ability and confidence are more likely to succeed in school. On the other hand, Dockett and Perry (2014) say that the level of readiness highly depends on the sort of classroom environment that is offered and also the kind of relationship the child and teacher hold. So, the perception of teachers makes a lot of difference in the lives of these children.

According to Lin, Lawrence, and Gorrell (2003), the idea of school readiness is defined by the teachers based on the kind of training they received and the kind of experiences they have had in a classroom setting. It was observed that while some teachers put emphasis on academic excellence, there are others who give great importance to social and emotional skills too.

Botsko and Mathew (202) stated that the sort of expectations teachers have regarding readiness impact the way they come up with classroom activities and behave with children. Because when

a teacher is aware that redness also means behavioral and emotional skills, they would be more open to offering a more supportive and relaxed classroom environment.

On the brighter side, the Bangladeshi government has expanded pre-primary education to ensure school readiness, and they also want to meet the Global Education Goals (UNICEF, 2018).

Unfortunately, some studies strongly suggest that in Bangladesh, school readiness is often misunderstood as academic preparation, especially learning numbers and letters (Alam, 2022).

This limits the teachers. In many schools, much pressure is put on students to ensure good academic performance by their parents. For this very reason, less attention is given when it comes to social, emotional, and individual development. And needless to say, culture also shapes the way teachers perceive school readiness as well, which means the understanding of school readiness does not only come from policy, but it is also influenced by social factors.

So, a lot of factors shape the perception of teachers about school readiness, and in a lot of cases, even if the teachers are aware of holistic development, they still cannot perform accordingly due to peer pressure.

Teachers' Perception of Individualized Teaching Practices

Individualized teaching is defined as a method that caters to different developmental levels of children, as well as different needs and interests. So, instead of offering the same lesson to all the children, teachers offer lessons by assessing a child's abilities and learning pace first. But it is the perception of teachers about individualized teaching practices that dictates how classroom practices would take place, and it also plays a crucial role in creating the lesson plans too.

Research highlights that the sort of classroom experiences and professional training the teachers receive shapes their perceptions of individualized teaching.

Sadly, in the Bangladeshi context, the teachers are bound to follow and apply a uniform lesson plan due to the expectations of parents and school administrators. This can also lead to them not having a thorough understanding of individualized teaching. In addition to this, due to the large class sizes, teachers often find it difficult to offer individualized teaching to the students, and so even if they are aware of the importance of individualized teaching practices, they struggle to apply it in daily practice. The means of creating content, offering teaching methods, and connecting classroom activities in accordance with a child's readiness level is what differentiated instruction is all about, according to Tomlinson (2014). Some teachers also view differentiated instruction as time-consuming.

Practically, in a preschool, individualized teaching comprises offering children the freedom to explore based on their interests, and also observing children very closely while offering group activities with flexibility. This whole process can at times overwhelm the teachers because it requires time, patience, and proper training.

At the end of the day, whatever they offer, it all stems from their own understanding and practices. Lack of proper training can also lead to teachers not being able to conduct individualized teaching. So, even when policies advocate child-centered education, teachers would often end up conducting classroom activities from their own experiences and understanding. Ultimately, it is the teachers' perceptions that directly impact how they teach within a classroom setting. The training and professional knowledge the teachers gain directly shape their perception of individualized teaching. Studies strongly suggest that the teachers who went through training and were enlightened about differentiated teaching strategies know how to tailor lessons in accordance with children's individual needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

This indicates that teachers' educational background and learning opportunities play a huge role in their daily practices in classrooms.

According to Pajares (1992), instructional decisions are shaped based on the beliefs of teachers regarding learning and child development. Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014) stated that teachers who believe they are capable of implementing differentiated instruction are more likely to succeed at applying it in a classroom. This proves the point that teachers' perceptions can greatly improve classroom practices.

In Bangladesh, very limited research has been done exploring preschool teachers' perceptions regarding individualized teaching. Even though national policies support child-friendly education, there is hardly any knowledge about how these teachers apply these concepts in urban preschool classrooms. That is why it is necessary to explore and understand teachers' perceptions more in depth.

Relationship Between Individualized Teaching and School Readiness

Education during early childhood plays a vital role in getting children ready for their formal schooling up ahead, who are aged between 3 and 5 years old. They tend to learn very fast, and development takes place rapidly when it comes to their thinking skills, social behavior, emotional impulse control, etc. Due to this very aspect, preschool education is seen as a very crucial part in supporting children's school readiness. Many researchers have put importance on the fact that lessons must be tailored according to children's individual needs rather than subjecting all children to the same lesson and teaching practices.

Research strongly suggests that individualized teaching helps a great deal when it comes to children's early literacy skills and language development. Although this approach is highly emphasized to be used, in real classroom settings, it can be quite challenging to implement.

The international agreements urge schools to follow individualized teaching methods to ensure school readiness. Snow (2006) argues that children are more likely to benefit when instruction is matched with their current level of skills. When teachers tailor activities in accordance with children's weaknesses and strengths, they would automatically feel more confident engaging.

Due to the fact that children come from different backgrounds, conducting individualized teaching becomes more important in preschool classrooms. In the Bangladeshi context, children often come with their own level of skills and have different cultures at home and different exposures, which is why a responsive teaching method needs to take place, or else some children would surely fall behind. So individualized teaching enables teachers to make contents and come up with teaching strategies based on children's current level of school readiness. This approach has a very positive influence when it comes to language development and early literacy (Tomlinson, 2014). Additionally, according to Copple and Bredekamp (2009), practices that consider individual differences make learning experiences meaningful while supporting a child's school readiness.

Challenges to Individualized Teaching

Although this approach is highly emphasized to be used, in real classroom settings, it can be quite challenging to implement. Because a lot of training and a continuous process of observation in planning is required. In a developing country like Bangladesh, classrooms usually

follow a structured lesson plan, which makes it less flexible in teaching approaches (Alam, 2022).

Even though individualized teaching is highly recommended worldwide, teachers still face many challenges when applying it. According to Tomlinson (2014), differentiated instruction needs a lot of time, professional help, and also appropriate resources. It would be very difficult for teachers to meticulously observe each child if there are a lot of children within a single classroom.

Connor et al (2009) say that continuous assessment and flexible planning need to be there for coming up with an individualized teaching structure, which cannot always be possible in a structured school system.

Especially in Bangladesh, preschools in the majority of cases have higher academic pressure from both parents and School authorities. Parents prefer academic progress, such as writing or reading at an early age (Alam, 2022). This very aspect makes it difficult to have flexible and child-centered teaching practices.

Added to this, teachers might not always have the proper training or knowledge to be able to implement individualized teaching methods practically in a daily classroom setting. As a result, they might struggle to apply them effectively even if they have a bare minimum understanding of the importance of individualized teaching.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design. It is particularly appropriate for exploring preschool teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding individualized teaching practices and for examining in depth how these practices contribute to ensuring children's school readiness

Research Participants

The participants of this study were preschool teachers who teach children aged 3 to 5 years. In-depth interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method. Approximately 4 teachers were selected to participate in the study. To ensure relevant experience, participants must have at least one year of teaching experience in a preschool setting. Two teachers from English-medium and two teachers from Bangla-medium preschools were selected.

Research Site

The participants were selected from both English-medium and Bangla-medium preschools, located in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Selection Procedure

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method. Through this sampling method, it is possible to select participants who have the relevant experience and knowledge required for this particular study. Teachers who are currently teaching in preschool settings and are conducting classroom lessons were included as participants.

Data Collection Method

In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with preschool teachers, along with classroom observations, to gain a comprehensive understanding of their practices. Participants were selected from a mix of English-medium and Bangla-medium preschools. A total of four teachers took part in the IDI, with two teachers from Bangla-medium and two teachers from English-medium preschools.

The interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the participants. To conduct the in-depth interviews, an IDI guideline was developed, consisting of open-ended questions designed to explore teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices in detail.

Before conducting the interviews, participants were provided with an overview of the interview process, and informed consent was obtained. Through the IDIs, demographic information such as age, educational background, and work-related experience was collected. The primary objective of the interviews was to understand the teachers' perceptions and perspectives regarding individualized teaching practices and their role in ensuring children's school readiness. During the interviews, important and relevant information was documented for later analysis.

Participants were assured that all information shared would remain confidential and would be used solely for this research. Each interview lasted approximately 45 - 60 minutes. The entire research procedure was carefully documented to ensure transparency and rigor.

In addition to this, classroom observations were also conducted to examine how the implementation process of individualized teaching takes place in a real-life classroom setting. In total, four classroom observations were conducted, two from an English-medium preschool and two from a Bangla-medium preschool. To ensure the accuracy of the collected information as

well as to have a better understanding through detailed observation, each class was observed twice. The observations took place during the regular class time, and they took 30-35 minutes. The researcher observed the sort of instructions that are given to the students and also their interactions with one another, and took note of the activities that were offered to ensure individualized teaching. During this entire time, the researcher did not participate to make sure the class time was not interrupted. Notes were taken during class observation.

Data Analysis

After the completion of the data collection process, the in-depth interviews (IDIs) and classroom observations were transcribed using the recorded audio and handwritten notes. The extracted information was organized and labeled with each participant's pseudonym or ID number, along with the corresponding dates, to maintain proper documentation and confidentiality. Each transcript was then reviewed and analyzed individually and thoroughly. The data was coded and categorized into emerging themes. After careful review, the findings were summarized according to these themes. The identified themes were aligned with the research objectives to ensure consistency and relevance in the analysis process.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools

The guidelines for the in-depth interviews (IDI) and classroom observations were reviewed by the research supervisor to ensure their content validity and relevance to the research objectives. To ensure the credibility and authenticity of the study, all recorded data, including audio recordings and field notes, were securely preserved for reference and verification purposes.

Ethical Issues:

- Ethical concerns entail getting the consent of participants after providing them with appropriate information so that they could decide whether they wanted to participate in the research study or not
- Participants provided informed consent before the in-depth interviews, and their participation in the study was entirely voluntary.
- There was no compromise in maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Their identity will not be revealed, and their information will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants and ensure confidentiality.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings & Discussion

Results/Findings & Discussion

Result

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section contains the responses and findings from three in-depth interviews and also class observations that took place in two preschool settings. One is a non-government preschool and English medium, and the second one is a government preschool and Bangla medium. The goal of this chapter is to give an overview of preschool teachers' perceptions about individualized teaching and their practices, and also their impact on ensuring children's school readiness.

In the following section, the collected data will be analyzed thoroughly; participants' responses and insights gathered from class observations will be considered. The findings will be presented under different themes. This chapter will provide an overview of the findings.

Demographic Information

The study was conducted among preschool teachers from a government Bangla-medium pre-primary school and a non-government English-medium preschool. A total of three participants were selected for in-depth interviews through the method of purposive sampling. Two participants were from an English-medium preschool, and one participant was from a Bangla-medium pre-primary school. All the participants were female, and their ages were between 30 and 45 years old, and their experiences varied from one to another in teaching preschool children.

Added to this, class observations were also conducted to gain an in-depth and accurate understanding of individualized teaching practices in preschool classroom settings. Two classroom observations took place in an English-medium preschool, and two class observations in a Bangla-medium pre-primary school. Including preschool teachers from two different preschools gave the opportunity to explore perceptions and practices of individualized teaching in different educational contexts.

Findings

This part dives into the key findings of the study through the means of IDIs and class observations. Both of them are thoroughly analyzed, focusing specifically on the main research questions. The findings are presented in a categorical manner and under many themes and sub-themes.

Theme 1

1. Perception

This particular theme explores the perception of preschool teachers from various backgrounds regarding individualized teaching and also their implementation within their classrooms.

1.1 Perception of Individualized Teaching

The participants had their own different perceptions about individualized teaching practices. The majority of the participants perceived uniform progress. Two of the participants were familiar with the concept, but one participant from the government pre-primary school was not very familiar with the term.

One participant described the idea of individualized teaching as providing individual attention to a child who needs extra support. She stated:

“Individualized teaching to me is to give attention individually to a particular child who needs extra attention.” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant perceived individualized teaching differently. In her opinion, it’s the approach rather than solely offering additional help to a child. She stated that

“Individualized teaching means having a curriculum that ensures everyone is on the same level in a classroom. Because different children have different levels of understanding. The approach of ensuring every child gets to the same level is needed”
(IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

The preschool teachers in the English-medium described individualized teaching in detail, while the scenario was different when it came to the government pre-primary school teachers. Initially, she was unable to define what individualized teaching meant within a classroom. This participant was the only available pre-primary school teacher, and she was solely responsible for all 30 students in her classroom. Individualized teaching practices were not observed (Observation #1, 20-05-2026)

On the other hand, during the class observation conducted in an English-medium preschool, there were many instances where individualized teaching practices were implied. Within one classroom, there were only eight students, and for this reason, it was easier for the teacher to observe each child and carefully provide the needed support according to their individual needs. For example, a teacher was seen moving closer to a child and providing instructions individually when the child faced difficulty in finding a picture on a board that started with the letter “x”.

Overall, most of the participants saw individualized teaching as a way of providing support to a child’s individual needs and also according to the level they are at. And even though a participant from the government pre-primary school was unable to define it initially, she still understood the importance of providing individualized teaching to ensure a smooth transition to formal schooling.

The findings highlight that all the participants saw individualized teaching as an important part of teaching despite having different perceptions, and they understand the importance of paying attention to children’s individual learning needs. The following themes give many examples that prove these perceptions

1.1.1 Examples of Individualized Teaching

The participants had various examples of individualized teaching on the basis of the unique needs and different abilities of children in their classrooms. Most of the examples showed signs of teachers giving effort to modify their teaching approaches or provide the needed support to the children who needed assistance when it came to learning. One participant highlighted this.

“A particular student could not scribble well like all the other kids in regular space within their notebook, so I gave him a page where he could write in whatever size he wanted to. And eventually it became easy for him to scribble too.” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant shared an experience where she took the help of concrete materials to make a mathematical concept easy for a child. She shared:

“One student from my class could not understand how $2+1$ equals 3, so with the help of pencils, I asked her to first keep two pencils together, and then put another one, and then I asked her to count from the beginning. This way, she was able to understand the concept a lot more easily.” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

Similarly, the participant from the government pre-primary school also shared a similar example where a child found it difficult to write with a pencil. She explained:

“This one boy could not write at all with the help of a pencil or a chalk, so I asked him to use his finger and write that letter on a plain surface of mud. Gradually, there were

visible improvements in his ability to write with a pencil” (IDI#03, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

The classroom observations also highlighted similar practices of individualized teaching. In the English-medium preschool, teachers were seen providing special guidance to children who needed additional support during writing, counting, or remembering words. The children were never discouraged for not being able to be up to the mark. In the government pre-primary school, the teacher was seen helping a child write on the board and giving him additional chances to do it again, give her the confidence. These instances show how teachers modified their approach to ensure children’s individual learning needs are met. (Observation #2, 19-05-26, school 1; Observation #2, 07-06-26, school 2)

The examples shared by the participants show that it is possible to implement individualized teaching by simply modifying and providing additional support for children’s current learning needs. The next theme talks about the positive results from these practices.

1.2 Positive Effects of Individualized Teaching

Participants shared many instances proving the positive impact of individualized teaching on children’s learning and development. According to the participants, providing support based on a child's individual needs significantly improved their academic skills, and the kids were able to ultimately participate more confidently during different classroom activities.

One participant talked about how giving one-to-one guidance to a particular child who struggled with writing resulted in noticeable improvements. She stated:

“Yes, I have had a situation like that where a student found it difficult to do dot-to-dot letter tracing. So, I would sometimes sit alone with him and ask him to do it as slowly as

he could and practice with me. By the end of the term, he was doing well just like anyone else.” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant shared an experience with a child who found it tough to draw within the borders of a picture. She explained:

“One of my students struggled to draw within the border of any given picture. So, I asked her to slowly draw very close to the borders, and then fill up the middle. This way, she had much more control of the edges. Gradually, improvements were visible.” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

Similarly, a participant from the government Bangla median Preschool described the positive impact observed after providing emotional support to a child who was not open to interacting with anyone in the class. She explained:

“In the beginning, the boy would not respond to anyone on his mother's side, and would only respond to his mother. So, I decided to always sit next to him and engage with him, and eventually I noticed that he started interacting with me too. Through this, I was able to guide him to open up and interact with his peers as well.” (IDI#03, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

During the classroom observations, the outcomes seemed very similar to what the participants said in the English medium school; the preschool teachers provided positive reinforcement and used scaffolding as a way of ensuring understanding and development so that it stays embedded. (Observation #1, 19-05-26, school 1)

On the other hand, the scenario was slightly different in the Bangla-medium pre-primary school during the class observation. In one classroom, 25 children sat, and due to the constraints of time, one teacher could not afford to pay attention to all the children individually. And so, she had to carry on with her lesson plan. (Observation #1, 20-05-26, school 2)

To sum it up, the findings show that individualized teaching resulted in increased confidence and participation, despite having different classroom contexts. The following section highlights perceptions of preschool teachers about school readiness.

1.3 Perception of School Readiness

All the participants had different perceptions of school readiness. While one participant saw school readiness as a combination of having social-emotional as well as academic skills, another participant perceived school readiness as children's ability to follow classroom expectations and be disciplined. On the other hand, the participant from the government Preschool viewed children's appropriate age and their preparedness to enter formal schooling as school readiness.

One participant stated that school readiness is much more than a child's academic abilities. She explained:

“In my opinion, school readiness is not only about learning numbers and alphabet, but also social and emotional skills, along with other skills to be prepared for school.”

(IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant saw school readiness as children's ability to be disciplined within the classroom environment. She stated:

“When a child is disciplined is when it can be said that school readiness is followed. For instance, if the child can follow routine and is capable of following instructions define their school readiness” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

The participant from the government Preschool focused on a child’s age as an indicator of school readiness. She shared:

“We usually have children who are aged 3 to 5 years old. So almost all of them are prepared for school by the time they enroll in preschool.” (IDI#01, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

The classroom observations from a non-government preschool reflected that school readiness was promoted through a variety of classroom activities. They were sometimes taken outdoors to engage in physical activities, and after returning to their classrooms, children participated in many activities that ensured development in early literacy and numeracy alongside developing their social skills. For examples they were times when they all sang together, did storytelling group work, and also did physical activities. In the government preschool, children were seen engaged in activities that focused on moral values, classroom behavior, and also social interaction, but the majority of the kids were not paid attention to individually. (Observation #1, 18-05-26, school 1); (Observation #1, 20-05-26, school 2)

These findings show that despite having different perspectives about school readiness, they all viewed preschool experiences as important preparation for children moving to formal schooling. The next theme brings out the role of individualized teaching practices in ensuring school readiness

1.4 Role of Individualized Teaching in Children's School Readiness

All the participants acknowledged the importance of individualized teaching to ensure school readiness for children. They believe that giving support according to a child's individual needs can make the transition happen very easily and would ultimately enhance their learning experiences.

One participant explained that individualized teaching makes the transition into formal schooling much smoother by helping them adjust effortlessly. She stated:

“Ensuring school readiness definitely has a significant impact. The children do not feel like they just entered something new. So, the transition becomes much easier for the children, and they feel less nervous” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant shared the same view. She shared that,

“School readiness prepares them for what's coming ahead, and the transition feels effortless” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

The participant from the government preschool acknowledged that individualized teaching and school readiness are very important for every child, but the practical aspect of a government Preschool is very different. Due to a lack of resources and, at times, an insufficient number of trained teachers, it can be very difficult to provide individualized teaching and ensure school readiness.

All the participants agreed that individualized teaching promotes children's school readiness deeply. The next section gives examples of individualized teaching practices supporting children's school readiness.

1.4.1 Instances of Individualized Teaching Supporting Children's School Readiness

The participants shared experiences of the positive impact of individualized teaching and how it resulted in children being more prepared for formal school. Providing support based on a child's current level of understanding and in places where a particular child needed assistance showed visible improvements in a child's ability to be able to complete a task independently and keep up with their peers after they graduated to formal school.

The case of the particular child who struggled with letter tracing mentioned earlier also reflected on school readiness. His writing improved, and along with that, he no longer required additional support after he moved on to standard one. This clearly indicated that individualized teaching helped him academically, as well as giving him confidence to carry out writing tasks independently in formal school. As one participant shared

“He no longer showed any difficulty in writing” (IDI #01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant described how providing individualized support helped ensure that all the children made the same progress while moving to the next level. She stated:

“The child who struggled with addition after receiving individualized teaching came to the same level as the other kids. So, when he entered formal schooling, he no longer

struggled and was able to connect to the lessons just like all the other kids” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

Although the participant from the government Preschool did not share any examples related to a child’s readiness for school, during class observations, it was observed that due to the practical aspect of the classroom settings, a single teacher can't offer individualized lessons to a child and ensure a child’s readiness. (Observation #1, 20-05-26, school 2; Observation #2, 07-06-26, school 2)

Overall, the findings from theme one clearly prove that even though preschool teachers have different ideas about individualized teaching and the strategies they follow, they still think it is important to have individualized teaching practices to support children’s learning journey and to better prepare them for formal schooling. Differences were apparent between English-medium non-government preschool and government Preschool settings due to various contexts, but they all recognized the importance of responding to children’s individual needs.

Theme 2: Practice

The second theme explores the practical aspects of implementing individualized teaching within preschool classroom settings. It looks closely at adjustments and strategies taken by preschool teachers according to children’s individual needs, as well as the challenges that surface during their implementation, while exposing what kind of support is needed to strengthen the practice of individualized education for children. All the findings under this theme were collected during in-depth interviews and class observations.

2.1 Strategies to Implement Individualized Teaching in the Classroom

All the participants described various strategies used to implement individualized teaching in their classroom settings. The foundation of these strategies was focused on giving encouragement to children through the action of providing positive reinforcement and providing scaffolding, while at the same time observing a child's progress very closely. While all the participants from non-government, English-medium preschools showed a variety of strategies used to cater to individual learning needs, the participant from the government Preschool acknowledged that, even though individualized teaching is very crucial, due to practicality, they are incapable of applying such strategies. Due to the lack of resources, for example, not having enough trained teachers, it can be very challenging.

One participant gave importance to the positive side effect of encouraging children instead of discouraging them when they face challenges. She further explained:

“Whenever I see a student struggling, and he brings it up to me, or if I observe he's not being able to complete a task, I make sure to never give negative feedback. I make him realize that the level he is at is still very much praiseworthy. This creates self-esteem in them and they start believing in themselves, and then I provide him with the needed guidance” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

The participant described that validating a child's effort before assisting them ensures their confidence and encourages them to continue participating in various classroom activities.

Another participant explained using scaffolding as a strategy within her classroom. Rather than giving the answers to the children directly, she gives them the space to think independently while ensuring she is there during that period of time.

“I never complete a task entirely. I ask them what they think; for instance, I start from the beginning and ask them ‘what could come after 1, 2, 3...?’ Basically, I scaffold rather than fully complete the work for them. This always has a long-lasting impact, and the lesson stays with the children because with a little bit of push, they were able to find the answer themselves” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

Observation notes taken from the English medium preschool also reflected similar strategies implemented during their classroom activities. Teachers often asked questions that were open-ended and encouraged children to respond and participate. Teachers also used hands-on materials such as blocks, puzzles, and big banners of pictures to help children comprehend a new concept more easily. There were also enough opportunities for the children to participate in oral activities, movement-based learning, and group tasks, and these activities allowed the teachers to observe individual progress while ensuring additional support was there when required. (Observation #1, school 1, 19-05-2026)

The participant from the government Preschool explained that implementing individualized teaching strategies was very difficult due to contextual limitations. She explained:

“We have almost 30 children in the classroom, and I am the only preschool teacher available, so it’s not always possible to offer individualized teaching” (IDI#03, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

Class observations also provided evidence of this finding. A uniform lesson plan was implemented for all the children, while there were many children with different learning abilities. The teacher had to pay attention to all the children at the same time, and this left very limited opportunity for her to provide any individual support. Even though she occasionally assisted,

ensuring individualized attention during the entire lesson was very difficult because of having a lot of students and limited staffing. (Observation #1, School-2, 20-05-2026)

Overall, the findings show that the teachers used different strategies to support children's individual needs and ensure better learning experiences with the available resources. The following theme shows how teachers make adjustments in their teaching practices to cater to individual differences and learning needs.

Sub Theme 2.2: Adjustments to Teaching Practices for Students with Individual Needs

The participants talked about various adjustments. They made adjustments to provide children with different learning needs with the needed support. The adjustments included modification of classroom activities, pairing up children based on their abilities, and also explaining a concept as many times as necessary. But the participant from the government Preschool explained that making adjustments to lessons continuously was tough due to the classroom context.

One participant described that modifying activities according to a child's ability helped a lot. She stated:

“The same student who had difficulty connecting dots showed great improvement once I specifically made a bigger tracing letter in size so that he could do it easily. Ultimately, by the end of the term, I noticed that he was able to finish tracing letters along with his peers” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant explained that she adjusted her teaching by pairing two children with different learning abilities. According to her, peer learning also brought a positive change. She explained:

“I do have a student who is a fast learner compared to his age, and he always gets done with his classwork early. So, what I do is I pair him up with someone who requires a little bit more time, and then this way both feel the excitement to complete the task together. One feels great to be able to help, while the other student feels excitement to finish together with his friend” (IDI#02, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

During the class observations in the English medium preschool, the adjustments that were made were very much evident. Children who needed extra practice were given many alternatives to make the learning journey smoother. Teachers were seen using visual posters, and they repeated stories and used concrete learning materials to make sure children’s different learning styles were catered to; in this way, children remained very much engaged in the lesson.

On the other hand, the participant from the government Preschool explained that making adjustments was very tough because of the classroom environment. She explained:

“Actually, it’s not always possible to work with just one child because in that case, all the rest of the kids fall behind, but I do try to give extra attention whenever it’s possible. And I try to explain the concept nicely and as many times as needed” (IDI#03, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

During the class observation at the government Preschool, similar practices were reflected. Although the lessons were delivered to the entire class, the teacher occasionally took the time to repeat an instruction, and we also seeing holding a child’s hand to demonstrate letter formation.

Due to the fact that children of different ages and learning abilities were being given the same lesson by one teacher, these adjustments were very short-lived. (Observation #2, School-2, 07-06-2026)

All these findings indicate that teachers made many modifications in their teaching practices in accordance with children's different abilities whenever it was needed. The next theme brings out many examples where individualized teaching practices were implemented within the classroom setup.

Sub Theme 2.3: Instances of Applied Individualized Teaching

Participants from English medium Preschool shared many examples where individualized teaching was applied according to a child's learning and developmental needs.

One participant stated:

“One of the students gets distracted very easily, so I always ensure that I sit beside him and quietly guide him to pay more attention without interrupting the entire lesson.”

IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

Similarly, the participant from the government Preschool talked about a case where a child did not want to interact and was too shy to communicate. She further explained:

“I have actively worked with this particular boy, who is intelligent, but he was too shy that he would not talk at all. So, I decided to build a bond with him every day, and ultimately the kid was opening up not just to me, but to his peers as well” IDI#01, School

02, Preschool Teacher 1, 07-06-2026)

During the classroom observations, teaching practices included, for example, reminding children individually about the right way to grip a pencil, repeating stories for children who needed to hear it more than once, and giving encouragement to children who were shy to participate without forcing them. Even though these were very brief examples, they highlighted the effort. These teachers put in effort to respond to children's immediate learning needs. The next theme exposes the challenges teachers faced while implementing these practices.

Sub Theme 2.4: Challenges in Implementing Individualized Teaching

All the participants shared many instances of challenges they face when implementing individualized teaching in preschool classrooms. According to the participants, parental expectations, irregular attendance of the children, limitations of competent teachers, large number of students often made it difficult to cater to children's individual learning needs.

One participant explained that parents are more focused on academic achievements and more worried about academic progress, so they sometimes failed to emphasize children's overall development. She stated:

"Sometimes parents are more focused on children acquiring the ability to count or how to write better, and knowing the alphabet more. These things can sometimes stop us from focusing on developing other skills" (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant highlighted the impact of having irregular attendance as a challenge when it comes to implementing individualized teaching.

“Oftentimes parents do not understand the importance of attending preschool every day. We have a child who joins the class after 20 days, and as a result, he is falling behind in a lot of aspects. At times, these hamper their progress.” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

The participant from the government Preschool highlighted the major challenge that impacts them due to the shortage of teachers.

“I wish we had more teachers with me. Because it is not always possible to offer what I know is needed. And it becomes very difficult to pay attention individually to 30 children with different temperaments and learning needs.” (IDI#01, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 20-05-2026)

To sum it up, the participants highlighted how various obstacles affected its implementation. The next section highlights the support teachers need to strengthen the practice of individualized teaching.

Sub theme 2.5: The Support Needed for Better Implementation of Individualized Teaching

All the participants agreed that additional support is very much needed for the effective implementation of individualized teaching practice in preschool classrooms. Findings proved that inadequately trained teachers, less involvement of parents, and insufficient classroom resources are the main reasons why individual learning needs cannot be prioritized effectively.

One participant highlighted that parents also need to carry on the practices we offer within a classroom. She stated:

“I think the main support we need is from parents. What we practice within a classroom should also be practiced in their home so that children can improve with consistency. For that, parents also need to be aware of the importance of it” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 1, 18-05-2026)

Another participant put emphasis on parents sending children to preschool. She explained

“Parents need to understand that Preschool is a great place for children to develop holistically. And they need to send their children to the school consistently” (IDI#01, School 01, Preschool Teacher 2, 18-05-2026)

The participant from the government Preschool talked about the need for additional teaching materials and resources, so that the learning experience can be easier for the children. She stated:

“We don’t have enough materials needed to teach children at a preschool level. We don’t have enough color, pencils, crayons, or toys to help support their growth in every aspect. If we could get more supplies from the government, we would run this program a bit better” (IDI#01, School 02, Preschool Teacher 1, 07-06-2026)

Overall, findings of theme two clearly show that preschool teachers actively try to implement individualized teaching through different strategies or by making adjustments to their classroom activities and provide responsive teaching practices. But whether these practices could be successfully implemented depended largely on the availability of resources, trained teachers, classroom context, and also support from parents. Classroom observations also showed that individualized teaching practices were more frequent in English-medium preschools than in the government Bangla-medium preschool.

Discussion

The qualitative study explored preschool teachers' perceptions of individualized teaching and examined how these practices contribute to children's school readiness in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The findings were generated through in-depth interviews and classroom observations conducted in an English-medium non-government preschool and a Bangla-medium government preschool. This study brings out two themes related to teachers' perceptions and classroom practices regarding individualized teaching and school readiness. This discussion interprets the key findings in relation to the existing literature, highlights areas of agreement and difference, and discusses the implications for improving individualized teaching practices and supporting children's school readiness in early childhood education.

Theme 1: Teachers' Perception of Individualized Teaching

Preschool teachers' perceptions of individualized teaching play a significant role in how they understand and respond to children's individual learning needs within the classroom.

Preschool teachers' perceptions of individualized teaching play a significant role in how they understand and respond to children's individual learning needs within the classroom. The discussion also compares the perceptions of teachers working in English-medium and government preschool settings.

Sub-theme 1.1: Perception of Individualized Teaching

Findings from the in-depth interviews and classroom observations indicate that teachers perceived individualized teaching as an essential approach for addressing each child's unique

learning needs. However, perceptions differed between English-medium preschool teachers and the government preschool teacher. Although the government preschool teacher was initially unfamiliar with the concept of individualized teaching, classroom observations revealed that some individualized practices were implemented unconsciously. This finding supports the findings of Suprayogi et al. (2017), who argued that teachers may be unfamiliar with the formal concept of individualized teaching yet still apply individualized practices intuitively in classroom settings. Similarly, Tomlinson (2017) explained that individualized teaching involves identifying each child's learning needs and adapting instruction accordingly rather than applying a uniform approach for all learners. The differences in teachers' understanding suggest that contextual factors, such as professional training, classroom environment, resource availability, and institutional support, influence teachers' conceptual understanding of individualized teaching. English-medium preschool teachers demonstrated a clearer understanding of individualized teaching, possibly because of greater exposure to child-centered pedagogical approaches and professional development opportunities. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening professional development opportunities to improve teachers' knowledge and implementation of individualized teaching practices.

Sub-theme 1.1.1: Examples of Individualized Teaching

The findings showed that teachers modified classroom activities according to children's individual needs by providing one-to-one guidance, adapting learning materials, and building positive teacher-child relationships. This finding suggests that individualized teaching extends beyond academic support to address children's emotional and developmental needs. Bray and McClaskey (2015) similarly argued that individualized teaching enables teachers to adapt learning experiences according to children's interests, readiness, and learning needs. Connor et

al. (2018) likewise reported that adapting instructional strategies to children's individual learning needs increases engagement and participation during early learning experiences.

Classroom observations also indicated that individualized teaching was integrated into daily classroom routines rather than relying solely on a uniform instructional approach. Although individualized teaching practices were observed more frequently in the English-medium preschool, the government preschool teacher also attempted to respond to children's individual needs whenever possible. These findings suggest that individualized teaching can be integrated into daily preschool routines through flexible instructional adjustments. However, its effectiveness depends on adequate classroom resources, manageable class sizes, and sufficient teacher support.

Sub-theme 1.2: Positive Effects of Individualized Teaching

The findings reinforce that individualized teaching made a significantly positive change in children's classroom participation and in their confidence. Teachers shared that giving additional support in accordance with children's individual needs helped them overcome their learning difficulties and participate more freely during classroom activities. These findings aligned with the studies by Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019) and Tomlinson (2017), and they both emphasized that adapting individualized teaching practices significantly boosts children's confidence and encourages them to participate willingly. This finding clearly suggests that individualized teaching immensely supports not only children's academic and social development but also allows them to learn at their own pace. When teachers modify their lesson plans in accordance with a child's needs and their current ability, children would feel confident in completing a task

without feeling overwhelmed. However, the participants also shared that sustaining these outcomes requires a lot of time and enough support to respond to individual needs consistently.

Sub-theme 1.3: Perception of School Readiness

This finding showed that teachers saw school readiness as more than just recognizing letters and numbers; they emphasized the importance of having social, emotional, and behavioral development alongside basic academic skills. Britto et al. (2017) also describe that school readiness includes children's emotional, cognitive, physical, and social development. Similarly, UNICEF (2019) highlights that children become better prepared for formal schooling when their overall development is supported through early learning experiences, rather than only focusing on academic success. There were major differences observed between the government preschool teacher and English medium preschool teachers. The English medium preschool teachers were able to express a broader understanding when it came to school readiness. This difference exists due to the context of where they teach. Teachers from English medium schools put great emphasis on a child's overall development, and they intentionally make adjustments in their approaches through communication, structured play, and helping them learn about socio-emotional aspects. Teachers also get the opportunity to enhance their professional development. In contrast, government preschool teachers get very limited resources, and at the same time they have to manage a large class of students. These findings proved that it is crucial to strengthen teachers' perception of holistic growth to ensure children's readiness for their lifelong journey of education.

Sub-theme 1.4: Role of Individualized Teaching in Children's School Readiness

The findings of this study showed that teachers perceived individualized teaching practices as an important tool to prepare children and ensure school readiness. Participants believed strongly that catering to children's individual learning needs can turn them into more confident individuals, as well as grow independence making a positive outcome in their overall growth. By ensuring support that matches their unique developmental level, children become competent in completing tasks, maintain classroom routines, communicate, and learn autonomy. And these are very crucial for a successful transition to a formal school. These findings align with the study by Duncan et al. (2007), "School Readiness and Later Achievement," talk about how significant influence in children's early learning experiences resulted in a smooth transition to formal school. Similarly, Pianta et al. stated that responsive teaching approaches based on children's needs enhance children's social and cognitive development. These two components play a significant role in children's school readiness.

A significant difference was observed in government preschools, and this showcased that successful implementation of individualized teaching practices depends on classroom activity and also teachers' capacity. Teachers from government preschools fail to provide individual attention because they do not have enough supporting teachers, while it is possible to cater to children's needs in English medium schools. So, not having enough trained teachers can be a major factor that hinders this teaching practice too. Basically, the success of implementing individualized teaching depends not solely on the teachers, but it also depends on institutional support that is available to them.

Sub-theme 1.4.1: Instances of Individualized Teaching Supporting Children's School Readiness

The findings of this study showed that children were observed to transition into formal school being better prepared after receiving additional guidance. Children who lagged or struggled in a certain area, after receiving the need support, they were able to adjust well alongside their peers. Children were seen to master foundational skills after receiving appropriate support based on their unique needs, and ultimately it increased their confidence and their willingness to participate in many classroom activities before they transitioned into a formal school. The study by Blair (2003), “School Readiness: Integrating Cognitive and Emotional in a Neurological Conceptualization of Children’s Functioning at School Entry,” also supports this finding by emphasizing that supportive learning experiences can significantly strengthen children's social competence and their ability to self-regulate, and ultimately school readiness becomes a byproduct of these developmental milestones. Similarly, the “Nurturing Care Framework” by Britto et al (2017) highlighted that children adjust much better in school if individualized support is given during early childhood. While these studies highlight the immeasurable importance of providing individualized support, the present study shows that the reality of classroom practices plays a huge role in the success of implementation.

Even though the participant from the government school recognized the benefit of an individualized teaching approach, due to having very limited resources and a large number of children in one class, the scope to provide individualized support was not always possible. This suggests that the improvement in applying individualized teaching does not solely fall on the responsibility of the teacher but also on having enough teachers, having enough classroom support, investment, and teacher training programs. If these areas are strengthened, then a positive change is inevitable, especially in government preschools. These findings expose the

importance of ensuring better classroom conditions so that individualized teaching practices can be effectively implemented.

Theme 2: Individualized Teaching Practices in the Pre-primary Classroom

There is no doubt that individualized teaching practices are crucial in every preschool classroom because it addresses different developmental needs of children. Teachers can create an inclusive learning experience for all the children to support school readiness and overall development by catering to each child's learning pace, strengths, and individual needs. This theme explores how individualized teaching practices are applied by the teachers, how they make adjustments in their lessons, and also the challenges they face while implementing them. They directly address the study's second and third research questions about the implementation of individualized teaching practices and the challenges they face. Alongside this, examples of practices being applied during daily classroom lessons and activities are also brought up, and the challenges teachers encounter and the support they need to implement individualized teaching practices better are discussed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations from English-medium and Bangla-medium government preschools. This theme also highlights how, despite having differences in their classroom environments and resources, teachers still try to manage to create a meaningful learning experience for children.

Sub-theme 2.1: Strategies to Implement Individualized Teaching in the Classroom

Findings of this study showcased different classroom strategies used by teachers to ensure individualized teaching was implemented, all the while maintaining the needs of the entire class.

Participants talked about giving positive reinforcement with encouragement, applying scaffolding, and also allowing children to complete a task independently. During class observation, these instances were also apparent, and teachers were seen to engage children in group activities, create lessons that include learning centers, and conduct physical activities to get children to participate using different learning abilities. These strategies were highly effective because children received guidance according to their own learning needs and, at the same time, they were encouraged to attempt to solve problems on their own and thus learn to be more independent. For instance, scaffolding allowed the teachers to offer support only when it was necessary and reduced assistance gradually as children became more capable. On the other hand, providing positive reinforcement made children recognize their strengths and achievements, and as a result of that, they participated confidently. Tomlinson (2017) also shared the same view, and he stated that teachers should always make adjustments in their teaching strategies based on a child's ability level, their interest, and also their preferred way of learning. Similarly, Connor et al. (2009) stated that classroom engagement and learning outcomes significantly improved when approaches were tailored based on children's own individual needs. Both of these studies clearly suggest if teachers have the scope to adapt their instruction consistently while providing classroom support based on a child's developmental needs, then individualized teaching becomes more effective. Even though it was apparent that participants from both the preschool settings did their best to implement the strategies, the findings highlighted that effectiveness is largely dependent on the context of the classroom and the opportunity to provide support to children. However, the teachers from English medium preschool were much more capable of practicing these strategies due to having smaller class sizes, having access to resources, and having more available teachers. The case of government preschool was exactly the opposite. These findings

proved that it is important to have a flexible instructional strategy along with institutional support and better resources available to provide support to diverse learners.

Sub-theme 2.2: Adjustments to Teaching Practices for Students with Individual Needs

The findings highlighted that teachers often adjusted their teaching practices to cater to children who are at different levels and needed additional support. Participants shared examples like modifying the size of tracing letters, making activities simple, providing explanations as many times as needed, and using different alternative materials to encourage participation. Due to these adjustments, children were able to complete a task starting from their current abilities, and children were not expected to complete a task in the same way as everyone. As a result, students freely completed a task; they experienced a sense of achievement and ultimately gained the confidence to want to participate on their own in future classroom activities. This also made it possible for the teachers to create an environment where learning became easy for every child irrespective of their current learning needs. Because support was provided based on children's needs within a classroom. Classroom observations also demonstrated teachers adjusting their instructions and offering one-to-one sessions while providing additional guidance without making any interruption in the learning process of the whole class. These align with the study of Copple and Bredekamp (2008), who highlighted that teachers need to make adjustments in their instructions based on children's strengths and current learning needs. Similarly, Tomlinson (2014) shared that having flexibility in instruction enables teachers to provide appropriate learning lessons while knowing that all children do not learn in the same way. These studies

prove even further that learning barriers get reduced when individualized adjustments are made, and it allows them to develop at their own pace, which aligns with the findings of the study. And adjustments based on individual requirements inspire children to engage in classroom learning, and the learning barriers also reduce. Although teachers understood the importance of making these adjustments in their teaching practices, government preschool teachers shared that due to having overcrowded classrooms and very limited trained teachers, they could not provide individualized support. Shows that effective individualized teaching practices do not only rely on the teacher's willingness, but also depend on adequate conditions in classrooms and support from the institution.

Subtheme 2.3: Instances of Applied in Individualized Teaching

The findings revealed that teachers, to address children's learning needs they applied individualized teaching through various classroom actions. Participants talked about adapting different classroom tasks and providing practice opportunities. Using different learning materials. They also used materials to strengthen their fine motor skills, and peer assistance was encouraged during lessons. During class observations, similar instances were apparent where teachers guided children during writing activities, and they were also given the scope to learn to do hands-on experiences, for example, counting objects and solving puzzles. These instances further demonstrated that teachers knew that individualized teaching should be a flexible and responsive approach where support is provided based on a child's immediate learning need rather than expecting every child to learn in the same manner. Instead of isolating a child for a separate session, teachers made adjustments in their classroom activities so that all children could participate, receiving appropriate and just support all the while. These practices ensure not only academic development but also autonomy and independence, enhance fine motor skills, and

increase participation in daily classroom activities. Sheridan et al. (2008) also shared that children's active engagement is increased when responsive classroom interactions and timely support are ensured. Hamre and Pianta (2005), on the other hand, shared that having consistent support from teachers during daily classroom activities increases the engagement of children and evokes positive learning behavior in children, enhancing confidence. This finding suggests that if individualized teaching is integrated naturally into daily classroom routines and teachers can respond to the immediate needs of children while also maintaining the natural flow of classroom activities, then positive outcomes will be inevitable. However, many previous studies suggest that individualized teaching is meant to be a planned instructional strategy, but the present study shows these practices can be integrated into daily activities through minor adaptation, immediate response, and consistent guidance without interrupting the overall classroom timing.

Sub theme 2.4: Challenges in Implementing Individualized Teaching

The findings revealed that teachers faced many challenges when they tried implementing individualized teaching practices in their classrooms. Participants shared that having a classroom with many children, a limited number of teachers, not having enough learning materials, and inconsistency in parental support made it tough to carry out an individualized teaching experience for children. These challenges were mostly seen in the government preschool, where there was only one teacher responsible for almost 30 children with very limited classroom resources. Out of all these challenges, having overcrowded classrooms and fewer teachers available have a great impact because these two factors hinder the possibility of providing one-to-one support, observing individual needs, or making required adjustments in the classroom activities. Because individualized teaching can only be provided based on the understanding of

each child's learning needs and when the classroom size is bigger, and support is limited, it is not possible to implement individualized teaching practices consistently.

The study by Malak et al. (2013) also shared a similar fact that having an oversized classroom and very limited resources can hinder the process of implementing child-centered lessons in Bangladeshi preschools. Forlin and Chambers (2011) also stated that, despite teachers understanding the positive impact of individualized and inclusive teaching, the lack of sufficient support and required classroom resources can limit the process of implementing individualized teaching. These two studies support the findings of this research by supporting the statement that teachers' knowledge is not enough; implementation of individualized teaching also largely depends on having institutional support and the right kind of classroom conditions. The study also highlighted that parents' not understanding children's learning priorities may also make it challenging to provide individualized support. This study is relevant to the Bangladeshi preschool context where government schools always have overcrowded classrooms, fewer teachers, and not enough resources for teaching. It further helps understand the importance of improving classroom conditions, having sufficient teachers, and arranging school-parent communication regularly so that parental awareness can be increased. This finding brings out a lot of challenges faced by preschool teachers in the Bangladeshi context, which can make a progressive change in the policy and current conditions of preschools.

Sub-theme 2.5: The Support Needed for Better Implementation of

Individualized Teaching

The findings indicated that teachers need support from the school, parents, and the government to strengthen the implementation of individualized teaching in preschool classrooms. Participants

highlighted that parental involvement is crucial to support children's learning pace consistently at home as well. On the other hand, government preschool teachers highlighted that additional teachers, along with many basic teaching materials and classroom resources, are needed. Having different types of support work in unison makes individualized teaching more impactful. Teachers can extend their knowledge about a child's progress beyond the classroom setting if parental involvement is consistent in every child's learning journey. Similarly, having sufficient teachers and enough classroom materials enables a teacher to be able to pay attention to children's learning needs and provide the needed support without disrupting the entire session. Epstein (2018) shared that children's learning and development can have a positive influence if there is a great relationship between families and schools. Darling- Hammond et al. (2017) put emphasis on providing teachers with consistent support, enough resources, and appropriate professional learning opportunities so that they can effectively cater to children's various learning needs. Both of these studies suggest that a meaningful change is possible to take place if collaboration takes place among parents, schools, and the education system. Together, the opportunity for teachers to practice individualized teaching would be easier, which also aligns with the findings of the study. This finding brings out the immediate need to teach in a manner that would allow teachers to provide individualized attention more easily without making any compromise in lessons for the entire class. The findings also put emphasis on maintaining a shared responsibility by the school and policymakers. For instance, schools need to make sure that learning materials are available and provide learning opportunities for teachers, and enhance regular communication among teachers and parents so that they can reinforce children's learning at home, ensuring consistency. Policymakers, on the other hand, can ensure that classroom conditions are better and recruit more teachers, along with enough resources, particularly in

government preschools. Making these changes will make individualized teaching more sustainable and improve children's learning experiences. That is why it is crucial to collaborate with teachers' parents, school authorities, and policymakers to create a classroom environment where it is possible to implement individualized teaching more consistently.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study gave valuable insights into preschool teachers' perceptions and practices of individualized teaching, and how these practices ensure children's school readiness in both English medium and government preschool settings in Bangladesh. The findings demonstrated that individualized teaching is not only about making lessons for individual children, but it is actually a responsive teaching approach that responds to different abilities, learning needs, and children's individual pace. Overall, individualized teaching is a responsive approach which allows teachers to recognize and cater to children's various needs. But it requires more than just a teacher's commitment; it needs appropriate classroom condition, support from the institution. These findings add more to what we know regarding individualized teaching within the Bangladeshi early childhood education context, and it gives a clear understanding of how individualized teaching is perceived and practiced in English and government preschools in Bangladesh.

The purpose and objectives of this study were to identify and explore preschool teachers' perceptions of individualized teaching, to look closely at how these practices are applied in real-life classroom settings, and to identify the challenges and support that are needed for an effective implementation. After comparing English medium and government preschools, it became evident that classroom context plays a huge role in a teacher's ability to implement individualized

teaching practices. Findings reinforce the crucial need to create an environment where every child can develop holistically, and lessons are provided based on their individual needs and capabilities. These findings can be a tool for policymakers, school leaders, as well as teachers to make the necessary changes to ensure and enable individualized teaching practices.

On a personal note, conducting this research has been very insightful as it gave many learning experiences that helped me understand the realities of preschool classrooms in the Bangladeshi context, both of the English medium and Bangla medium government preschools. It also made me appreciate the important role that teachers play in supporting a child's learning experiences despite having many challenges. This study also helped me understand the importance of having a responsive teaching approach, a good relationship between a child and a teacher, and a classroom environment to ensure children's school readiness. These factors play a significant role in every child's life during the early childhood years. It has also made me reflect on the role of educators in children's lives.

The findings provide Many important and useful insights for school leaders, policy makers, teachers, and also future researchers who want to make progress in early childhood education. The findings bring out many practical aspects that school leaders, teachers, and policymakers need to pay attention to. For instance, they need to invest more in teacher support programs, make classroom resources available, and have a collaborative partnership with parents to better implement the approach. In the future, this study will hopefully make a contribution to improving the teaching practices in preschools and encourage much more research regarding individualized teaching in the Bangladeshi context. Ultimately, this study confirms that individualized teaching practices are important to ensure a holistic development of a child.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, many recommendations can be given to strengthen the implementation of individualized teaching practices and support children's school readiness

- **Ensuring consistent professional development:** Training programs that are focused on teaching strategies on individual needs, classroom management, and practical strategies that teachers can use in Bangladeshi preschool classrooms should be organized regularly. This recommendation comes from the findings that teachers understood the importance of individualized teaching, but they needed more knowledge and awareness to practically use strategies for this approach to be effective.
- **Providing necessary classroom support:** There needs to be teachers' assistance and also additional teachers available, specifically in government preschools. This will enable teachers to use individualized teaching approaches within daily classroom settings and give children more attention and eventually support learning and school readiness.
- **Availability of learning materials:** Classrooms need to be supplied with learning resources, storybooks, and sufficient writing tools so that children's diverse needs can be met. Having age-appropriate learning materials needs to be ensured in every preschool. This recommendation reflects the findings that teachers would often fail to implement individualized teaching due to limited classroom resources.
- **Building a Mesosystem:** Regular communication between teachers and parents and create programs that are awareness-based, should be encouraged to be built. This way, the parents become more aware and understand, on a deeper level, the importance of individualized learning practices and the immeasurable impact it has on children's

holistic development. Encouragement should be given to parents to carry out these practices even at home.

- **Improvements in classroom conditions:** Sufficient learning facilities that will enable teachers to practice child centered teaching methods alongside of ensuring enough classroom space. Because having an overcrowded classroom made it difficult for teachers to pay individualized attention to children, especially in government preschools
- **Future research:** More research needs to be done in the future that would explore individualized teaching practices in different types of preschool settings across Bangladesh. Perspectives of parents, school, teachers' school, leaders, and of children should be considered to develop a better understanding of an effective early childhood teaching practice.

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APPENDICES

Research Tools (English)

i. In-depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

a) Demographic Information

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Educational Background:

Years of teaching experience:

Any training received for professional development:

b) Perception of Individualized Teaching

1. In your own words, what does individualize teaching mean to you?
2. Can you share some examples of individualized teaching that you have practiced in your classroom?
3. In your opinion, what positive effects does individualized teaching have on children's learning and development?
4. What does school readiness mean to you?
5. In your opinion, what role does individualized teaching play in supporting children's school readiness?
6. Can you share any instances where individualized teaching helped prepare a child for formal schooling?

c) Individualized Teaching Practices in the Classroom

7. What strategies do you use to ensure individualized teaching in your classroom?

8. How do you adjust your teaching practices for children with different learning needs?
9. Can you describe any situations where you applied individualized teaching practices in your classroom?

d) Challenges and Support Needed

10. What challenges do you face while implementing individualized teaching practices?
11. What kinds of support do you think teachers need to implement individualized teaching more effectively?

Research Tools (Bengali)

i. গভীর সাক্ষাৎকার (In-depth Interview) নির্দেশিকা

ক) জনসংখ্যা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য

নাম:

বয়স:

লিঙ্গ:

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা:

খ) ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান সম্পর্কে ধারণা

- ১। আপনার নিজের ভাষায় ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান বলতে আপনি কী বোঝেন?
- ২। আপনার শ্রেণিকক্ষে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদানের কোনো উদাহরণ শেয়ার করতে পারবেন?
- ৩। আপনার মতে, ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে কী ধরনের ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলে?
- ৪। আপনার কাছে স্কুল রেডিনেস (School Readiness) বলতে কী বোঝায়?
- ৫। আপনার মতে, শিশুদের স্কুল রেডিনেস নিশ্চিত করতে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদানের কী ভূমিকা রয়েছে?

৬। এমন কোনো অভিজ্ঞতা কি শেয়ার করতে পারবেন যেখানে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান কোনো শিশুকে প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের জন্য প্রস্তুত হতে সাহায্য করেছে?

গ) শ্রেণিকক্ষে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদানের চর্চা

৭। আপনার শ্রেণিকক্ষে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান নিশ্চিত করতে কী কী কৌশল ব্যবহার করেন?

৮। বিভিন্ন ধরনের শেখার প্রয়োজনসম্পন্ন শিশুদের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে আপনার শিক্ষাদানের পদ্ধতিতে পরিবর্তন আনেন?

৯। আপনার শ্রেণিকক্ষে ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান বাস্তবে কীভাবে প্রয়োগ করেছেন—এমন কোনো উদাহরণ দিতে পারবেন?

ঘ) বাস্তবায়নের চ্যালেঞ্জ ও প্রয়োজনীয় সহায়তা

১০। ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান বাস্তবায়নের সময় আপনি কী ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন?

১১। আপনার মতে, ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষাদান আরও কার্যকরভাবে বাস্তবায়নের জন্য শিক্ষকরা কী ধরনের সহায়তা প্রয়োজন?