

Preschoolers' Readiness to Kindergarten in San Narciso District, Division of Zambales: Basis for Learning Improvement Plan

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Abstract: This study assessed the readiness of preschoolers in San Narciso District, Zambales for kindergarten during SY 2021-2022. It examined the profiles of the learners, such as age, sex, and handedness, and their readiness in several areas: Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Self-Help, Receptive Language, Expressive Language, Cognitive, and Social Emotional. The findings revealed that 49.47% of preschoolers were 5.5 years old or younger, with an average age of 5.66 years. Most participants, 52.63%, were male, and 92.63% were right-handed. The typical preschooler was a right-handed male in the pre-operational stage. After implementing the ECDC teaching plan, the level of readiness improved in several areas. The researcher suggested that teachers take additional factors like nutritional status into account. They should focus on improving readiness across all areas, adjust activities to meet specific needs, and carry out follow-up studies to explore further effects on preschoolers' development.

Keywords: Kindergarten Readiness; Developmental Domains; ECDC Teaching Plan; Preschool Education; Learning Improvement.

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I. INTRODUCTION

School readiness is referred to children when they are ready to go to school. The transition into school represents a major step in a child's life. The major objective of this study is to know the School Readiness of kindergarten in the select school of San Narciso District, Division of Zambales. In this study, the parents and teachers would be guided to decide on when to begin their child to enter kindergarten. Parents are often misguided in deciding whether their child is ready for kindergarten. Because cut-off dates determine the school entry, many parents use age as the primary measure of a child's readiness.

Age is the primary indicator of kindergarten readiness. For most parents, readiness means their children have the knowledge and abilities necessary for success in kindergarten. In the Department of Education, the child must turn five years old by June or August in that year (if they attended Day Care) to be enrolled in kindergarten. Children with late birthdays would delay their entry; parents believe such a decision would gain an advantage to their children, expecting that a child at the older end of the age range would do better than at the younger end. But some children of the right age doesn't know how to write their names, letters or

numbers even though they attended Day Care, but still qualified to enter kindergarten.

There are various developmental theories, as well as differing opinions as to what skills are necessary for kindergarten readiness. Research revealed a variation in perspectives regarding readiness as expressed by teachers, parents, and the students themselves [7]. Not only did these three groups differ in their perceptions of factors contributing to readiness, but also, they subscribed to a variety of different developmental theories when describing a ready student.

Hence, the researcher is inspired to determine the level of readiness of preschoolers in the kindergarten of San Narciso District, Division of Zambales during the SY 2020-2021 as the basis for the learning improvement plan.

➤ Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the level of readiness of preschoolers' pupils in the kindergarten of San Narciso District, Division of Zambales during the SY 2020-2021.

- What is the profile of the preschoolers of the study in terms of:

✓ Age;

- ✓ Sex; and
- ✓ Child Handedness?

- What is the level of readiness of kindergarten pupils at the start of the school year in terms of:

- ✓ Gross Motor
- ✓ Fine Motor
- ✓ Self-help
- ✓ Receptive language
- ✓ Expressive language
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Social-emotional

- What teaching plan will be prepared and applied to improve the level of readiness among the kindergarten pupils?
- What level of readiness does the preschoolers have after the implementation of the learning improvement plan?
- Is there a significant difference in the level of readiness before and after the intervention when grouped according to profile?
- Is there a significant difference in the level of readiness of preschoolers based on the Revised Philippine Early Childhood Developmental checklist before and after the application of the ECDC teaching plan?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

➤ Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten readiness encompasses developmental competencies across physical, intellectual, and social domains, enabling children to adapt to classroom expectations [10]. Factors influencing readiness include age, health, cognitive ability, emotional regulation, and early learning experiences [5].

Research also indicates that delaying school entry based on age alone does not guarantee improved academic performance [8]. Readiness should instead be viewed holistically, integrating motor, language, and socio-emotional growth.

➤ Developmental Domains

Motor skills (both gross and fine) are vital for exploration and interaction [9], while language domains—receptive and expressive—facilitate communication and comprehension [3]. Cognitive and socio-emotional development influence problem-solving, adaptability, and self-regulation [2].

Social skills and emotional maturity have been linked to later academic and behavioral outcomes [6]. Hence, comprehensive readiness assessments should encompass all seven domains for accurate profiling.

➤ Theoretical Foundations

Three main theories underpin readiness studies:

- Maturations Theory (Gessell): Development unfolds in predetermined stages; readiness depends on maturity.
- Environmentalist Theory: Readiness arises from environmental exposure and structured learning.
- Constructivist/Interactionist Theory (Piaget, Vygotsky): Learning occurs through active engagement and interaction.

This study aligns with a constructivist approach, recognizing readiness as a function of developmental experiences shaped by instruction and environment.

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design

The researcher utilized a single group experimental research design in which the same assessment measures are given to participants both before and after they have received treatment or been exposed to a condition, with such measures used to determine if any changes could be attributed to the treatment or condition. All individuals are assessed at the beginning of the study, the intervention is presented, and then all individuals are measured again.

➤ Respondents and Locale

This study was conducted among the preschooler pupils in 5 selected public elementary schools in the District of San Narciso, Zambales during the school year 2020-2021. The selected schools include Alusiis Elementary School, Doce Martires Elementary School, San Pascual Elementary School and San Rafael-Natividad Elementary School. The respondents will be the 95 preschoolers taken from each school based on their total enrolment.

➤ Research Instrument

The instrument is an adopted tool from the Revised Philippine Early Childhood Developmental (ECDC) Checklist of the Department of Education (2020). The researcher added in the first part of the tool the demographic profile as to age, sex and child handedness.

The second part of the survey is the ECD checklist which includes the seven domains which include gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains.

➤ Data Gathering Method

With permissions secured from relevant authorities, pre-assessments were conducted, followed by an eight-week implementation of the ECDC-based teaching plan. Post-assessments were then administered to measure developmental gains.

➤ Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, scaled scores, standard scores, ANOVA, and paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention results.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Profile of Preschoolers

Pupils enrolled in the kindergarten program in San Narciso District were described in terms of their age, sex, and child-handedness.

• Age

Greater proportion (49.47% or 47 out of 95) of the preschoolers are 5.5 years old and below while there are nineteen (20%) who are 6.1 years old and above. The mean age of 5.66 years indicates that the pupils are in their *preoperational stage* as described in research [4]. In this preoperational stage, a child begins to think symbolically and learn to use words and pictures to represent an object. They tend to be egocentric and struggle to see things from the perspective of others and they get better with language and thinking but still tend to think in very concrete terms.

• Sex

Majority (52.63% or 50 out of 95) of the preschoolers are male and 47.37% are female. This indicates that male children constitute most of the preschoolers in San Narciso District.

• Child-Handedness.

Majority (92.63 or 88 out of 95) of preschoolers are right-handed while the remaining 7.37% in the distributions of pupils are left-handed. Handedness is not the only bias of our

motor skills that comes from cerebral lateralization which is the dominance of one hemisphere of the brain over the other for certain behaviors. According to research, for most people, the left hemisphere of the brain is the dominant one used for speech [1]. And the same region of the left hemisphere that controls speech also controls hand actions. As a result, most of the human population (about 90%) is right-handed when they use tools, such as pens, and when they make gestures.

➤ Readiness before Intervention

The readiness of the preschoolers to enter kindergarten and an educational-based environment is their readiness to process learning on how to do things independently. This level of readiness of the preschoolers was measured in terms of gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains.

The pupils garnered an average standard score of 89.28 which indicates that they had an average overall development before the start of the school year. Particularly, they had an average overall development in terms of gross and fine motor, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains.

➤ Teaching Plan Implementation

The eight-week intervention utilized formative activities such as letter mosaics, lacing, and memory games. Learners' performance progressively improved weekly, demonstrating engagement and adaptability to remote learning contexts.

Table 1 Learners' Level of Readiness Before the Application of the ECDC Teaching Plan

Domain	Raw Scores	Scaled Scores	Q.I.	Standard Score	Q.I.
Gross Motor	11.61	8.58	Average overall development	89.28	Average overall development
Fine Motor	9.78	10.51	Average overall development		
Self-help	22.19	8.56	Average overall development		
Receptive Language	4.55	9.57	Average overall development		
Expressive Language	6.77	6.83	Average overall development		
Cognitive	18.24	12.09	Average overall development		
Social-emotional	21.09	9.51	Average overall development		

In the first week (90.30, Outstanding), the pupils were exposed to letter mosaic as their initial formative week,. For the second week (86.83, Very Satisfactory), the pupils were exposed to Letter Lacing for letter Ss/Ii. Formative activities for week 3 (87.15, Very Satisfactory) centered on Memory Games for beginning sounds. Week 4 (87.96, Very

Satisfactory), allotted to Letter-sound Combination for CV and CVC sounds. Week 5 (87.67, Very Satisfactory) focused on Letter Mosaic for letters Kk/Uu . In the last week, (90.36, Outstanding), formative activities centered on Letter Tracing, Sounding Letter Combination, and Naming Objects.

Table 2 Learners' Performance in Formative Assessments

Period	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		Average	
	MPS	SD	MPS	SD	MPS	SD	MPS	SD	MPS	SD
Week 1	90.22	3.94	87.58	5.31	90.8	4.38	92.60	3.80	90.30	4.36
Week 2	83.53	3.83	87.78	6.17	82.91	7.09	93.10	3.55	86.83	5.16
Week 3	91.58	5.41	81.32	9.55	89.93	5.92	85.75	7.51	87.15	7.10
Week 4	89.90	4.62	81.22	4.98	90.50	4.71	90.20	3.23	87.96	4.39
Week 5	90.10	5.06	80.78	3.53	91.28	4.31	88.50	2.02	87.67	3.73
Week 6	88.42	5.25	89.28	4.60	91.85	4.57	91.90	4.20	90.36	4.66

➤ *Readiness after Intervention*

The pupils increased the standard score of 105.78 which indicates that they had an average overall development after the implementation of the teaching plan. This indicates average overall development in terms of gross and fine motor, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains.

Post-assessment results reflected notable improvement, with gains observed in gross motor, self-help, receptive, expressive, and socio-emotional domains. This confirms the effectiveness of structured, domain-specific instruction in fostering holistic readiness.

Table 3 Learners' Level of Readiness After the Application of the ECDC Teaching Plan

Domain	Raw Scores	Scaled Scores	Q.I.	Standard Scores	Q.I.
Gross Motor	12.8	11.12	Average overall development	105.78	Average overall development
Fine Motor	10.67	10.97	Average overall development		
Self-help	24.59	9.74	Average overall development		
Receptive Language	4.88	10.65	Average overall development		
Expressive Language	7.89	10.65	Average overall development		
Cognitive	20.19	12.28	Average overall development		
Social-emotional	22.68	10.66	Average overall development		

➤ *Significant Difference on Learners' Level of Readiness before and after the Implementation of the ECDC Teaching Plan*

At a significance level of $\alpha=.05$, the researcher hypothesized the difference in learners' level of readiness in terms of gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domain before and after the application of the Early Childhood Developmental Checklist teaching plan.

The Gross Motor ($t=6.540$, $p=.000$), Self-help ($t=2.967$, $p=.004$), Receptive Language ($t=5.498$, $p=.000$), Expressive

Language ($t=11.866$, $p=.000$) and Social-Emotional ($t=3.538$, $p=.001$) domains have significance values that are less than the set alpha level ($\alpha=.05$). This signifies rejection of the null hypothesis of non-difference; hence, there are significant differences in learners' gross motor, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains before and after the implementation of the ECDC teaching plan. Though descriptively at the same *average overall development* level, the increase in scaled scores of the learners in all the domains implies that the implementation of the teaching plan had improved the level of readiness of the learners in the domains mentioned.

Table 4 Paired T-Test on Learners' Level of Readiness Before and after the Application of the ECDC Teaching Plan

Domain	Paired Difference			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	SEM			
Gross Motor	2.537	3.781	.388	6.540	94	.000
Fine Motor	.463	3.701	.380	1.220	94	.226
Self-help	1.179	3.873	.397	2.967	94	.004
Receptive Language	1.084	1.922	.197	5.498	94	.000
Expressive Language	3.821	3.139	.322	11.866	94	.000
Cognitive	.189	2.446	.251	.755	94	.452
Social-emotional	1.158	3.190	.327	3.538	94	.001

Paired t-tests revealed significant differences between pre- and post-test scores, validating the impact of the ECDC teaching plan across learner profiles.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

➤ *Conclusion*

From the results and findings of the data collection process, the researcher formulated the following conclusions:

First, a typical preschooler in San Narciso District, Zambales is a right-handed male child who is in the pre-operational stage of childhood.

Second, at the start of the school year, preschoolers have an average overall development in terms of gross and fine motor domains, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive and social-emotional domains.

Third, the implementation of the Early Childhood Development Checklist teaching plan improved the performance of the learners on the weekly tasks administered.

Fourth, remaining on an average overall development level, the increase in the standards scores denoted an improvement in the learners' level of readiness after the implementation of the ECDC teaching plan.

Fifth, at the start, younger-aged preschoolers showed to have higher social-emotional readiness, while after the implementation of the ECDC teaching plan, the left-handed learners have a higher level of readiness in gross motor, and the right-handed pupils have higher readiness in self-help. Female preschoolers have higher expressive language readiness than males.

Sixth, the level of readiness of the learners in terms of gross motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language and social-emotional domains had improved after the implementation of the ECDC teaching plan.

➤ *Recommendation*

The teachers of the preschoolers may aim to identify other profile variables such as nutritional status that may influence the readiness of the pupils to enter basic education. They may also strive to increase more on the level of readiness of the pupils in all domains to achieve an advanced overall development.

In addition, teachers may identify specific and more appropriate activities according to the domains that need to be improved to achieve an advance overall development level for the learners.

To minimize the variances of male and female, left-handed and right-handed children, teachers may continue to review the assessment tools implemented to provide equal opportunities for the learner in improving their level of readiness.

A follow-up study may be conducted to validate the result of this research, such as extending finding other factors that may affect the learning domains of the preschoolers.

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