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Kindergarten Teachers' Teaching Methods for School Readiness Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the profile of kindergarten teachers and the teaching methods they employ in fostering pupils' school readiness skills in the Lopez Jaena District. Using a descriptive research design with quantitative and qualitative approaches, data were gathered from 30 kindergarten teachers through survey questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that most teachers possess adequate educational qualifications, relevant teaching experience, and have attended early childhood-related trainings. Results further showed that teachers consistently implement developmentally appropriate strategies across literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral/self-regulation readiness domains, with all areas rated as Strongly Agree. Teachers also effectively utilize available instructional resources, particularly DepEd-provided materials, manipulatives, and teacher-made resources, although the use of digital tools and parent collaboration was less emphasized. Despite strong instructional practices, teachers encountered challenges related to class size, resource limitations, curriculum demands, home support, and workload. Overall, the study concludes that kindergarten teachers are capable and committed to fostering holistic school readiness, but enhanced institutional support and stakeholder collaboration are necessary to sustain effective implementation.

Keywords: school readiness, kindergarten teachers, literacy readiness, numeracy readiness, socio-emotional development, early childhood education

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Introduction

School readiness is a critical foundation for lifelong learning and later academic success. Internationally, it is understood as the development of children's cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, and behavioral skills necessary for effective participation in formal schooling (Smith, 2020). These competencies include early literacy and numeracy, self-regulation, social interaction, and adaptability to classroom routines (Johnson, 2021). Studies emphasize that the implementation methods of kindergarten teachers greatly influence how these skills are fostered in young learners (Nguyen, 2023). Teacher-guided practices such as structured play, storytelling, and collaborative activities create opportunities for children to bridge informal home learning with structured school settings (Patel, 2022). Thus, globally, the focus has been on improving how teachers implement readiness strategies to ensure that learners are prepared for the challenges of primary education.

In the Philippine setting, the Department of Education underscores kindergarten education as the official entry point to the K–12 Basic Education Program, guided by Republic Act 10157 or the Kindergarten Education Act. This policy stresses the holistic development of five-year-old children through developmentally appropriate practices that enhance readiness for Grade 1 (DepEd, 2020). Despite these efforts, national and regional assessments reveal persistent gaps in readiness outcomes, particularly in rural and under-resourced communities (Reyes, 2021). PISA 2022 showed that foundational literacy and numeracy remain weak, reflecting challenges in early years instruction (OECD, 2022). The World Bank (2022) further reported that Filipino children experience high levels of early learning poverty, with many entering Grade 1 lacking mastery of school readiness skills. Local research also suggests that inconsistencies in teacher methods and parental involvement contribute to uneven readiness development (Garcia, 2022).

Scholars consistently highlight that readiness instruction is most effective when it balances academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional components. Chandra (2024) emphasized that interactive storytelling, play-based learning, and daily routines foster holistic readiness by addressing both cognitive and affective domains. Lopez (2023) argued that scaffolding techniques, such as guided modeling and feedback, significantly enhance children's self-regulation and cooperative skills. Similarly, Smith (2020) noted that readiness programs must integrate behavioral adjustment skills alongside literacy and numeracy to ensure smoother transitions to Grade 1. Nguyen (2023) added that teachers' preparedness and professional training play a decisive role in determining the success of readiness strategies. These scholarly perspectives confirm that effective readiness instruction is multidimensional and requires both structured pedagogy and supportive environments.

In the Lopez Jaena District, Division of Misamis Occidental, kindergarten teachers face multiple contextual challenges in fostering school readiness. The district is largely rural, with many families depending on farming and small-scale livelihoods, which affects the resources available for children's education. Teachers often rely on printed materials and limited classroom resources, while large class sizes and diverse learner backgrounds make individualized support difficult. Reports from schools indicate that while literacy and numeracy activities are prioritized, socio-emotional and behavioral readiness are not consistently addressed (Garcia, 2022). Local monitoring further shows that learners entering Grade 1 often demonstrate basic decoding skills but continue to struggle with classroom behavior, social interaction, and independent learning (Reyes, 2021). These observations point to a gap between the holistic readiness outcomes mandated by policy and the actual practices being implemented in Lopez Jaena District.

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation methods used by kindergarten teachers in Lopez Jaena District, Division of Misamis Occidental, in developing pupils' school readiness skills. Specifically, it seeks to identify the teaching strategies employed to enhance literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral competencies. It also aims to document the challenges encountered by teachers in applying readiness methods within a resource-constrained rural context. By analyzing these practices, the study intends to evaluate the extent to which teachers' methods align with national policy expectations and the holistic framework of school readiness. Ultimately, the research seeks to contribute data-driven insights that will support both school-level and district-level efforts to improve readiness outcomes.

Hence, the study is expected to reveal that kindergarten teachers in Lopez Jaena District employ a mix of play-based, modular, and routine-driven strategies, but with varying effectiveness across readiness domains. While literacy and numeracy are likely to be emphasized, socio-emotional and behavioral skills may be less consistently

integrated. The findings are also anticipated to highlight systemic challenges, including resource limitations, lack of specialized training, and socio-economic constraints affecting pupils’ readiness. Nonetheless, it is expected that some innovative practices will emerge, especially where teachers adapt strategies creatively or involve parents in readiness activities.

Methods

The study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine how kindergarten teachers implemented teaching methods for developing pupils’ school readiness skills in the Lopez Jaena District, Division of Misamis Occidental, during School Year 2025–2026. The quantitative component gathered measurable data through a structured questionnaire on teachers’ profiles, teaching methods, instructional resources, and challenges, which were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, the qualitative component used semi-structured interviews and open-ended responses to explore teachers’ experiences, perspectives, challenges, and recommendations. The integration of both types of data provided a more holistic understanding of kindergarten teaching practices and enabled the study to identify not only the commonly implemented strategies but also the contextual factors influencing their effectiveness, thereby strengthening the credibility and depth of the findings and supporting meaningful recommendations for improving school readiness instruction.

Results and Discussions

Table 1

Summary of Methods Employed by Kindergarten Teachers in Fostering School Readiness Skills

School Readiness Domain	Overall Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Literacy Readiness	3.55	0.49	Strongly Agree
Numeracy Readiness	3.56	0.49	Strongly Agree
Socio-Emotional Readiness	3.55	0.49	Strongly Agree
Behavioral / Self-Regulation Readiness	3.50	0.51	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	3.54	0.50	Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents a summary of the methods employed by kindergarten teachers in fostering pupils’ school readiness skills across four major domains: literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral/self-regulation readiness in the Lopez Jaena District. As reflected in the table, all domains obtained overall weighted means ranging from 3.50 to 3.56, all of which are interpreted as *Strongly Agree*. The computed grand mean of 3.54 with a standard deviation of 0.50 further indicates that kindergarten teachers consistently and effectively implement varied teaching strategies to support pupils’ holistic school readiness.

Among the domains, numeracy readiness obtained the highest overall weighted mean (WM = 3.56, SD = 0.49), suggesting that teachers place strong emphasis on hands-on, interactive, and experiential approaches in teaching early mathematical concepts. Literacy readiness and socio-emotional readiness both recorded an overall weighted mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.49), indicating that teachers equally prioritize the development of early language skills and socio-emotional competencies through engaging, play-based, and socially interactive activities. Meanwhile, behavioral and self-regulation readiness obtained the lowest, yet still high, overall weighted mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.51), reflecting teachers’ consistent efforts to establish routines, promote positive behavior, and develop pupils’ independence and self-control.

The results imply that kindergarten teachers in the district adopt a balanced and holistic approach in preparing pupils for formal schooling. The strong ratings across all domains demonstrate teachers’ awareness that school readiness extends beyond academic skills and includes socio-emotional competence and behavioral regulation. By integrating developmentally appropriate strategies such as storytelling, manipulatives, cooperative play, positive reinforcement, and routine-based instruction, teachers create learning environments that support pupils’ overall growth and readiness for Grade 1.

The quantitative findings are strongly supported and contextualized by the qualitative results of the study. Across the identified themes—*Preventive Classroom Management Strategies*, *Classroom and Learner-Related Challenges*, *Curriculum and Instructional Demands*, *Resource and Material Constraints*, *Home and Community-Related Challenges*, and *Teacher-Related and Professional Challenges*—teachers consistently emphasized the need to address all readiness domains simultaneously. Teachers described how literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral skills are not taught in isolation but are integrated within daily routines, play-based activities, and classroom interactions.

One participant shared:

“We don’t focus on reading or counting alone. While doing activities, we also teach sharing, following rules, and controlling emotions.” (P4)

This qualitative insight explains the consistently high ratings across all readiness domains, as teachers intentionally embed multiple readiness skills within single learning activities.

Another teacher explained:

“Songs, games, and group activities help pupils learn numbers and letters, but at the same time they learn how to cooperate and behave.” (P1)

This statement supports the high means for numeracy, literacy, and socio-emotional readiness, showing how integrated, play-based strategies address both academic and non-academic readiness skills.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of routines and behavior support in sustaining learning across domains. One participant noted:

“If pupils cannot control their behavior, learning will not happen, so routines and discipline are very important.” (P6)

This explains why behavioral and self-regulation readiness, while slightly lower than other domains, still received a *Strongly Agree* rating—teachers recognize it as foundational to effective instruction in all other areas. Furthermore, under the theme *Resource and Material Constraints*, teachers shared that despite limited materials, they maximize available resources to support all readiness domains. This reinforces the quantitative finding that teachers consistently implement readiness strategies across domains regardless of contextual challenges.

These integrated findings are anchored on established theories and legal mandates that emphasize holistic early childhood development. The results align with Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory, which underscores the role of social interaction in learning; Piaget’s Cognitive Development Theory, which highlights the importance of concrete experiences for young learners; and Erikson’s Psychosocial Development Theory, which stresses the development of initiative, emotional competence, and self-regulation in early childhood. In the Philippine context, the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012 (RA 10157) and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533) mandate the use of play-based, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate practices to ensure learners’ readiness for formal schooling.

Classroom and Learner-Related Challenges

The findings revealed that kindergarten teachers experienced various classroom and learner-related challenges in implementing teaching methods for developing pupils’ school readiness skills. These challenges included managing large class sizes with diverse learner needs, addressing differences in pupils’ readiness levels, handling behavioral and attention difficulties, coping with limited instructional time, and maintaining pupils’ focus during learning activities. Teachers noted that pupils differed in literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional development, and self-regulation, making it difficult to provide individualized attention while maintaining effective whole-class instruction. Behavioral and attention difficulties also required considerable time, patience, monitoring, and redirection, while multiple classroom responsibilities and interruptions further limited the time available for readiness-focused activities. These conditions required teachers to continuously adjust their strategies and differentiate instruction according to pupils’ developmental needs.

The findings further indicated that these classroom and learner-related challenges were interconnected and

significantly influenced the consistency and effectiveness of readiness instruction. The varying pace of learning among pupils required teachers to balance remediation and enrichment while sustaining engagement and classroom management. Limited instructional time also made it difficult to provide the repeated practice and reinforcement needed to develop literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral/self-regulation skills. The results therefore suggest the need for stronger institutional support, including manageable class sizes, sufficient instructional time, teacher assistance, and continuous professional development in differentiated instruction and behavior management. Addressing these challenges would enable kindergarten teachers to provide more responsive and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that effectively foster pupils' school readiness skills.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that kindergarten teachers in the Lopez Jaena District are generally academically and professionally prepared to implement teaching methods that develop pupils' school readiness skills, as evidenced by their educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and participation in early childhood-related trainings. The teachers consistently employ developmentally appropriate and varied strategies across the domains of literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral/self-regulation readiness, reflecting a holistic approach to preparing pupils for formal schooling. They also demonstrate resourcefulness in utilizing available instructional resources, particularly DepEd-provided materials, visual aids, manipulatives, and art-based resources, although the use of digital resources and collaboration with parents and the community are comparatively less emphasized. However, despite strong implementation, teachers continue to face significant challenges such as large and diverse classes, limited time, insufficient materials, curriculum demands, varying home support, and workload-related concerns. Overall, the study affirms that while kindergarten teachers are capable and committed in fostering school readiness, strengthened institutional support, improved access to resources, and increased stakeholder collaboration are essential to further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of readiness-focused instruction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, kindergarten teachers are encouraged to continue and enhance developmentally appropriate, integrated, play-based, and multisensory teaching strategies that address pupils' literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and behavioral/self-regulation readiness while engaging in continuous reflection, collaboration, and professional learning; school administrators are encouraged to provide sustained instructional and organizational support through regular training, mentoring, improved classroom spaces, adequate instructional materials, manageable class sizes, and reduced non-teaching workload; the Department of Education is encouraged to strengthen policies, professional development programs, and access to developmentally appropriate resources while maintaining a balance between curriculum standards and play-based, child-centered instruction; parents and guardians are encouraged to actively collaborate with teachers and reinforce school readiness skills at home through positive routines, emotional regulation, and early literacy and numeracy activities; and future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of the study through larger samples, comparative, longitudinal, or experimental designs and to develop and evaluate intervention programs addressing classroom management, parental involvement, resource limitations, and other challenges affecting pupils' school readiness.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest

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