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Reference-Based Instruction Engagement in Kindergarten: Appropriate Age Learning Exercises

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine the relationship between the teachers' instructional practices and kindergatern learners' learning skills development readiness in Loon South District, Division of Bohol during the School Year 2026–2027, as a basis for developing a proposed Learning Exercises output. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the study gathered data covering the respondents' profiles, the extent of teaching practices—specifically scaffolding & book introduction, analytical talk/dialogic pausing, and vocabulary embedding & extension—and the learners' development readiness across the seven domains of the DepEd Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist, as well as the primary instructional issues and concerns encountered by educators. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) were used to analyze the data. Results showed that while teachers utilized early literacy practices to a high extent—with scaffolding and book introduction ranking the highest—the overall development readiness performance of the learners fell within the Average Development classification, displaying a clear receptive-expressive mismatch with low-tier development in expressive language and cognitive skills. A significant relationship was found between teacher practices and learner development readiness, proving that daily instructional routines are a powerful driver of student learning and skills development. However, educators continue to face severe classroom constraints, heavily bottlenecked by challenges with short attention spans, classroom transitions, and separation anxiety. Based on these findings, a structured set of Learning Exercises was developed to systematically integrate targeted, non reading development frameworks, active thinking stations, and transition routines suited for Kindergarten learners.

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KEYWORDS: *administration and supervision, teachers' instructional practices, learners' learning skills development readiness, Early Childhood Education (ECD) Checklist, learning exercises, descriptive, Loon South District, Loon, Bohol, Philippines.*

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Introduction

An individual's lifelong academic trajectory is fundamentally based on their early childhood development. The concept of "learning readiness" has undergone a significant structural change on a global scale; it is now determined by a child's holistic maturity across a variety of developmental domains rather than by their strict ability to interpret text or execute conventional reading. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023), a child's physical, socioemotional, cognitive, and linguistic abilities must all be in sync for them to be truly prepared for school. This is supported by recent global studies, such as those by Yoshikawa et al. (2022), which emphasize that post-pandemic early childhood frameworks must prioritize socioemotional resilience and executive functioning over rigid, premature academic training. Academic anxiety and long-term cognitive disengagement are frequently the results of forcing formal, abstract reading techniques on unprepared students. Therefore, prior to formal academic exposure, international early childhood frameworks strongly support responsive, dialogic, and print-rich environments that foster prerequisite abilities including oral fluency, symbolic thinking, and print motivation.

This underlying developmental shift is largely dependent on the mobilization of specific preschool instructional methods within modern pedagogical frameworks. The most popular of these models is the Repeated Interactive Read-Aloud Framework, which was developed by McGee and Schickedanz (2007) and remains a foundational model. In recent years, researchers like Justice et al. (2021) and Towson et al. (2023) have empirically validated this model, demonstrating that systematic interactive reading strategies directly accelerate phonological awareness and expressive vocabulary in diverse preschool settings. Children show a significant increase in conceptual baseline readiness when early childhood educators switch from passive "sit-and-listen" storytelling to systematic pre-reading interventions, according to longitudinal data provided by the International Literacy Association (ILA, 2022). Children are physically and cognitively prepped by intentional teacher actions that fall into three categories: Vocabulary Embedding & Extension, Analytical Talk / Dialogic Pausing, and Scaffolding & Book Introduction. They acquire contextual vocabulary, exercise inferential thinking through guided pauses, and learn how to handle books properly, all of which provide a strong structural basis for academic achievement without requiring early decoding abilities.

This comprehensive approach to early childhood development is mandated in the Philippine basic education system. The kindergarten curriculum must be developmental, integrative, and child-centered, according to Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 47, s. 2016, also referred to as the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education. The guideline makes it very clear that kindergarten students are not required to complete conventional reading in order to graduate. Rather, the standard Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist's core domains—gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional domains—are where instructors are instructed to promote learning readiness. As highlighted by Capinding (2024), aligning local classroom instruction with the ECD checklist domains is crucial, as premature academic pressure in early childhood often leads to developmental bottlenecks in later primary grades.

However, there are ongoing challenges in modern education that must be overcome for this mission to be operatively carried out. There is a pervasive instructional mismatch in early grade classes, according to recent assessment evaluations released by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS, 2024). Kindergarten is unintentionally treated as an accelerated Grade 1 reading course because many public school teachers still rely on traditional, teacher-dominated academic drills. According to Santos (2023), a lack of proficiency with structured, interactive frameworks intended to naturally enhance oral language and print awareness is often the cause of this educational gap. Furthermore, Almerino et al. (2022) note that despite developmental mandates, many public school educators face persistent pressure from parents to produce "early readers," forcing teachers to default to rote-memorization drills rather than play-based, interactive scaffolding.

The inconsistent quality of home-based educational reinforcement exacerbates this problem in the classroom. According to World Vision Philippines' national early literacy reports from 2025, teacher assistance is not sufficient to attain learning readiness. Parental engagement, particularly the parents' structural talents, willingness to actively participate in reading initiatives, and acceptance of their obligations for home-based instruction, has a significant impact on a child's baseline developmental maturity. This aligns with the findings of Dong et al. (2021) in their meta-analysis on early childhood environments, which proved that active parent-child dialogic reading at home is one of the strongest predictors of linguistic and cognitive school readiness. Learners exhibit notable developmental gaps in fundamental preparation domains when home dynamics do not mirror classroom practices.

Localized and contextualized early childhood interventions that meet regional norms are aggressively promoted at the grassroots level by the Division of Bohol, especially the Loon South District. The Kindergarten teachers in the district use a variety of contextualized resources, such as integrated thematic blocks and local "Big Books" translated into the mother tongue (Binisaya). According to a regional assessment by Bautista and Torcende (2025), while mother-tongue contextualization significantly improves child engagement, its ultimate success depends heavily on how systematically teachers utilize these localized "Big Books" during interactive read-aloud sessions. Establishing an ideal, consistent level of learning preparedness for all enrolled students, however, continues to be a challenge. Different socioeconomic realities, cultural identities (ethnicity), parental educational attainment, and the degree to which structural teaching tactics are routinely used in the classroom all contribute to this difficulty.

As we enter the distinct educational environment of the School Year 2026–2027, it is vitally important to assess how focused classroom activities connect with

the community's present level of parental support. An observable measure of learning preparedness is a teacher's interactive tactics, which are based on the dimensions of the McGee and Schickedanz (2007) model. By bridging this classic framework with contemporary early-grade pedagogical insights (e.g., Towson et al., 2023), teachers can purposefully improve a child's physical dexterity and basic listening comprehension without skipping important developmental milestones by dividing instruction into scaffolding, dialogic exchanges, and language embedding.

Simultaneously, a thorough understanding of the child's ecology can be obtained by evaluating this variable in conjunction with the multifaceted aspects of parental participation. The researcher can ascertain the precise existence and intensity of their association by mapping these components against the child's actual developmental profile utilizing the seven domains of the ECD tool. In the end, the empirical results of this study will offer a tangible, data-driven foundation for creating localized learning activities specifically intended to optimize the learning readiness of kindergarten students in the area.

Theoretical Background

The structural integrity of this research is based on three key educational, psychological, and sociological theories that explain the dynamics of early childhood learning readiness. The first is Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (1978), which holds that a child's learning process is intrinsically social and optimal by guided interactions within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

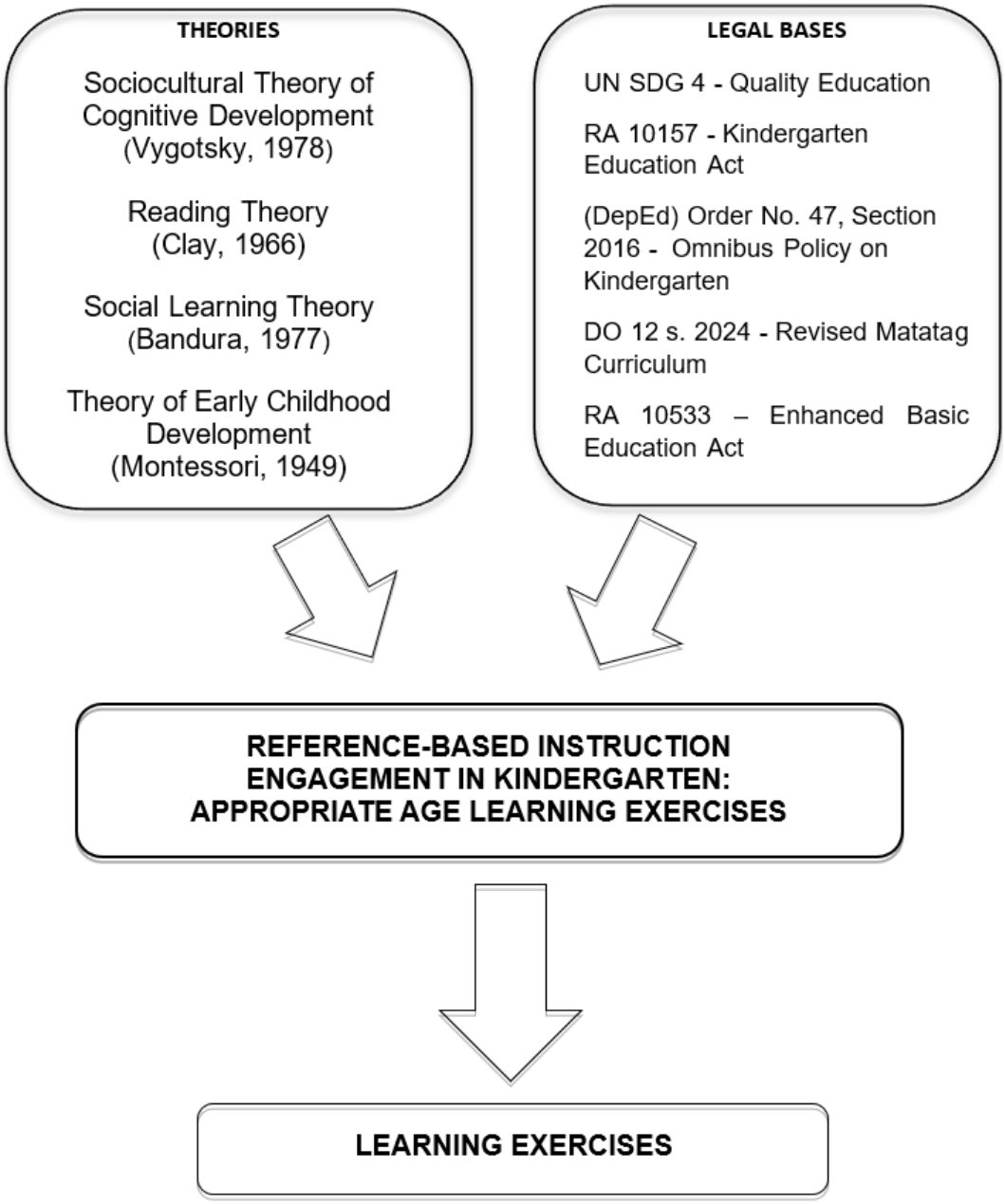


Figure 1 The Theoretical Framework

This hypothesis clearly confirmed the independent variable of instructional tactics, notably the use of scaffolding, dialogic interactions, and word embedding to guide the child toward developmental maturity while avoiding premature academic tasks. In complete agreement with this viewpoint, new empirical research by Turner and Albright (2022) reveals that systematic instructional scaffolding in early childhood schools serves as a vital cognitive bridge, helping students to comfortably understand baseline pre-reading and language skills. Furthermore, Brooks (2024) claims that dialogic classroom environments based on Vygotskian principles dramatically increase a child's speech expressiveness and conceptual curiosity, demonstrating that learning readiness is an active, socially controlled consequence rather than a passive milestone.

To theoretically anchor the shift from formal decoding to developmental pre-reading practices, this study incorporated Marie Clay's Emergent Literacy Theory (1966). Departing from traditional "reading readiness" paradigms that viewed reading as a static set of skills turned on at a specific age, Clay's theory posits that literacy development is a continuous, emergent process that begins at birth. Children built literacy competency naturally through active exposure to print, dialogic read-alouds, and verbal interactions long before they begin formal decoding. This theoretical premise is heavily reinforced by recent scholarship; for instance, Cabell et al. (2021) demonstrate that a child's print awareness and conceptual vocabulary—key dimensions of the McGee and Schickedanz (2007) model—are highly malleable and best developed through interactive, conversational reading rather than rote phonics drills. Additionally, a study by Towson et al. (2023) highlights that intentional, dialogic pausing during teacher-led storytelling acts as the catalyst for emergent literacy, transforming passive listening into active linguistic decoding preparation.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) complemented this instructional guidance by emphasizing that children learn core actions, language nuances, and emotional regulation through observation and imitation of crucial role models in their immediate environment. Within the context of this study, teachers are the key behavioral models whose structural practices influence the child's readiness profile. This theoretical premise is well reinforced by recent research from Martinez and Vance (2023), who found that children regularly copy the print motivation, language habits, and self-help routines shown by adults in both home and school settings. Furthermore, a 2025 study by Jenkins and Coleman found that when early childhood educators demonstrate synchronous, positive behavioral modeling, learners show a significant increase in socio-emotional stability and classroom task persistence, highlighting the importance of observational learning in establishing school readiness.

To fully account for the impact of the home environment, this study heavily incorporated Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (1979), which contends that human development is profoundly influenced by the interaction of multiple concentric environmental layers, beginning with the microsystem. The microsystem encompasses the child's immediate and most important relationships—specifically, the home (parents) and the classroom (teachers), whereas the mesosystem symbolizes the critical connections between these two contexts. Radford and Sterling's (2022) findings substantially strengthen Bronfenbrenner's theory, demonstrating that a child's learning readiness across motor, cognitive, and language domains is severely damaged when the link between home and school is severed. Similarly, Nguyen and Harrison's (2024) longitudinal study concludes that a highly responsive mesosystem, defined by strong parental alignment with school initiatives, acts as a powerful protective buffer that maximizes a child's developmental baseline regardless of external socioeconomic constraints.

Joyce Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model refines the specific dynamics of home-based support by translating parental participation into explicit dimensions of shared institutional duties. According to Epstein's theory, families and schools must work together to create a cohesive learning environment for their children, which directly supports the measurement of parental capacities, willingness, and perceived instruction obligations in this study. This paradigm is supported by recent study by O'Connor and Fletcher (2023), who found that a learner's receptive and expressive language gains may be accurately predicted when parental involvement is systematically monitored through different operational realms. Furthermore, according to Ramirez and Chen (2025), a parent's voluntary participation in early children literacy programs at home successfully closes the learning gap by converting conventional household settings into conducive settings for the development of emerging literacy and motor skills.

To systematically bridge the gap between educational practices and the holistic, hands-on learning measured in the early developmental domains, this study

integrated Maria Montessori's Theory of Early Childhood Development (1949). Montessori's framework centers on the concepts of the "Absorbent Mind" and "Sensitive Periods," which posit that young children possess a unique, natural capacity to absorb language, sensory inputs, and physical coordination from a carefully structured, prepared environment. Montessori emphasized that learning is physical before it is abstract, requiring hands-on manipulatives to build fine-motor control, cognitive concentration, and self-regulation. This aligned precisely with the physical and self-help domains evaluated in the local ECD checklist. Recent empirical validations of Montessori principles, such as those by Lillard et al. (2023), confirmed that early childhood environments focusing on self-directed, sensory-based materials produce significantly stronger executive function and motor-coordination readiness compared to traditional, teacher-led lecture settings. Furthermore, Marshall (2024) asserts that when teachers act as guides—providing structured choices rather than passive worksheets—children naturally develop the intrinsic motivation and cognitive perseverance necessary for school transitions.

Lastly, Arnold Gesell's Maturational Theory of Child Development (1925), which maintained that biological maturation mandates a sequential, predictable pattern of progress across physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional domains, provides a solid foundation for measuring the dependent variable itself. Gesell's viewpoint, which emphasized that a child must reach baseline developmental preparedness before confronting sophisticated cognitive demands like conventional reading, offers the fundamental reasoning for applying the seven domains of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist. Recent psychometric study by Henderson and Wallace (2021) confirmed that evaluating baseline gross motor, fine motor, and self-help skills is an essential precondition for forecasting a child's long-term academic adaptation, which is consistent with Gesell's fundamental beliefs. To sum up this framework, a thorough policy review conducted by the National Early Childhood Assessment Consortium (NECAC, 2026) strongly emphasized that the most morally and scientifically sound method of early childhood placement is still to assess a child's holistic developmental readiness using multi-domain tools. This approach completely rejected the premature enforcement of structural text decoding in the Kindergarten track.

The state's system for early childhood education and learning preparation is fundamentally supported by a hierarchy of international mandates, national legislative requirements, and modern administrative directives. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), specifically Target 4.2, states that by 2030, all nations must ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary school. Recent policy declarations from the World Education Forum (2022) actively reinforced this global directive, stating explicitly that international state signatories must legally protect the nature of pre-primary school readiness by funding multi-domain developmental programs rather than accelerated academic tracks.

In response to this worldwide promise, the Philippine government passed Republic Act No. 10157, also known as the Kindergarten Education Act, which establishes Kindergarten as a mandatory and important component of the basic education system. This state mandate is structurally expanded and reinforced by Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Under this law, the basic education cycle is structured into developmental phases, designating Kindergarten as the foundational entryway and critical starting point of Key Stage 1 (which covers Kindergarten to Grade 3). By legally positioning Kindergarten as the initial dimension of Key Stage 1, RA 10533 mandates that early childhood education must be strictly geared toward developmentally appropriate practices, emergent literacy, and child-centered transition pathways—ensuring that young learners build the essential cognitive, social, and emotional baselines required before navigating higher academic demands.

To align these legislative standards with operational school routines, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024 (Amendment to DepEd Order No. 010, s. 2024 or the Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum). This modern directive governs the implementation of the Revised Kindergarten Curriculum, emphasizing a decongested, play-based, and foundational approach to early learning. A critical feature of this revised curriculum is the strict administrative compliance with the prescribed "Blocks of Time" scheduling framework. Rather than traditional, rigid academic periods, the "Blocks of Time" model structures a Kindergarten student's day into sequential, routine-driven segments—such as Arrival Time, Meeting Times, Work Periods, Supervised Recess, Quiet Time, and Indoor/Outdoor Activities. This framework legally enforces a balanced, active-learning routine where instructional objectives are achieved organically through play, exploration, and structured interactions.

This structured daily program works in tandem with the established standards of DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016 (Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education). This policy serves as the critical legal baseline for this study's conceptualization of the dependent variable, as it explicitly states that the true measure of a Kindergarten graduate is their verified developmental status across the seven domains of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist, with formal decoding and traditional reading mechanics excluded as indicators of learner completion.

To address post-pandemic learning gaps within these crucial years, DepEd Memorandum No. 042, s. 2023 emphasizes the dynamic strengthening of early literacy foundations through contextualized, child-centered strategies in the early grades, thereby directly legalizing the use of structured interactive reading programs in the public sector. Finally, to stabilize these compromised developmental baselines, DepEd Order No. 013, s. 2024 (The National Learning Recovery Program) legally directs early-grade educators to aggressively implement intensive pre-literacy scaffolding, language expansion, and contextualized vocabulary exercises to stabilize early childhood learners' severely compromised socio-emotional and cognitive readiness across the nation.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The research aimed to determine the relationship between teachers' practices and kindergarten learners' learning skills readiness in Loon South District, DepEd Bohol Division during the School Year 2026–2027 as basis for formulating learning exercises.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the:
1.1. teachers'
1.1.1. age,
1.1.2. gender,
1.1.3. civil status,
1.1.4. position,
1.1.5. teaching experience,
1.1.6. highest educational attainment,
1.1.7. relevant seminars, training and workshops attended

1.2. learners' age and gender?

2. What is the extent of teaching practices employed by the teachers as indicators of learning readiness in terms of:
2.1. scaffolding & book introduction,
2.2. analytical talk / dialogic pausing, and
2.3. vocabulary embedding & extension?

3. What is the level of kindergarten learners' learning skills readiness across the following developmental domains:
3.1. gross motor,
3.2. fine motor,
3.3. self-help,
3.4. receptive,
3.5. expressive,
3.6. cognitive, and
3.7. socio-emotional?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' practices and kindergarten learners' learning skills readiness?

5. What are the issues and concerns related to teachers' practices and kindergarten leaners' learning skills readiness encountered in teaching the kindergarten learners?

6. Based on the findings, what kindergarten learners' learning skills exercises can be formulated?

Null Hypothesis

Ho. There is no significant relationship between teachers' practices and the learning readiness of the Kindergarten learners.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide empirical data and valuable insights regarding the critical intersection of classroom teaching methodologies and home-based parental support. Ultimately, this research will be highly beneficial and significantly meaningful to the following stakeholders:

Department of Education (DepEd) Policy Makers. The results of this investigation can offer a diagnostic baseline for regional and national policy design. By highlighting how explicit interactive strategies (such as dialogic pausing and vocabulary embedding) directly impact the child's multi-domain readiness, this study can assist curriculum developers in formulating realistic instructional guidelines that strictly honor the non-reading mandate of the Kindergarten framework.

Division and District Officials (Division of Bohol and Loon South District). This research will serve as an objective reference for school supervisors and education program specialists to evaluate the grassroots implementation of DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016. The empirical data can guide them in mapping out targeted, localized professional development programs, Master Teacher mentoring sessions, and instructional monitoring tools customized for early childhood education needs across the province.

School Administrators / Principals. The outcomes of this study will provide school heads with data-driven insights to foster a more responsive early childhood learning ecosystem. Administrators can use the findings to strategically allocate resources for contextualized learning materials (such as local Mother Tongue Big Books) and design practical, high-impact School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions that empower teachers to bridge identified gaps in learners' developmental domains.

Kindergarten Teachers. This study directly benefits classroom practitioners by providing clear, empirical evidence on which reading framework dimensions—specifically scaffolding, analytical talk, or vocabulary extension—most effectively optimize the pupils' baseline competencies. It equips teachers with a validated instructional mirror to refine their daily "Blocks of Time" routines, move away from rigid reading drills, and confidently address individual developmental delays across motor, cognitive, and language domains.

Kindergarten Learners. As the primary beneficiaries of this endeavor, the pupils of Pig-ot Elementary School will receive immediate, direct advantages. Through the implementation of the proposed data-driven learning exercises, learners will be exposed to a beautifully balanced, anxiety-free, and developmentally appropriate learning environment that safely matures their motor, social, and language skills, smoothly priming them for formal Grade 1 instruction.

Future Researchers. The structural framework, localized variables, and statistical outcomes of this study will significantly contribute to the existing local literature on early childhood education in the context of the School Year 2026–2027. Future researchers can utilize this paper as a reliable academic springboard, a source of conceptual replication, or a baseline reference for conducting wider correlational studies in neighboring educational districts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures utilized by the researcher to gather and analyze the empirical data. It covers the research design, research environment, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Design

To effectively determine the relationship between teachers' practices and the learning readiness of Kindergarten pupils, this study utilized a Descriptive-Correlational Research Design. The descriptive aspect was appropriate because it systematically quantified and described the status of the independent variable—specifically the extent of teaching practices employed by the teachers—alongside the profile of the respondents. Concurrently, the correlational aspect was employed to statistically analyze the existence, direction, and strength of the relationship between these variables and the learners' actual multi-domain readiness scores without manipulating the variables under investigation. This design provided the necessary empirical foundation to justify the development of the proposed learning exercises.

Flow of the Study

The conceptual structure of this research followed a systematic Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework, illustrating the sequential path the researcher takes to analyze the variables and achieve the ultimate output of the study.

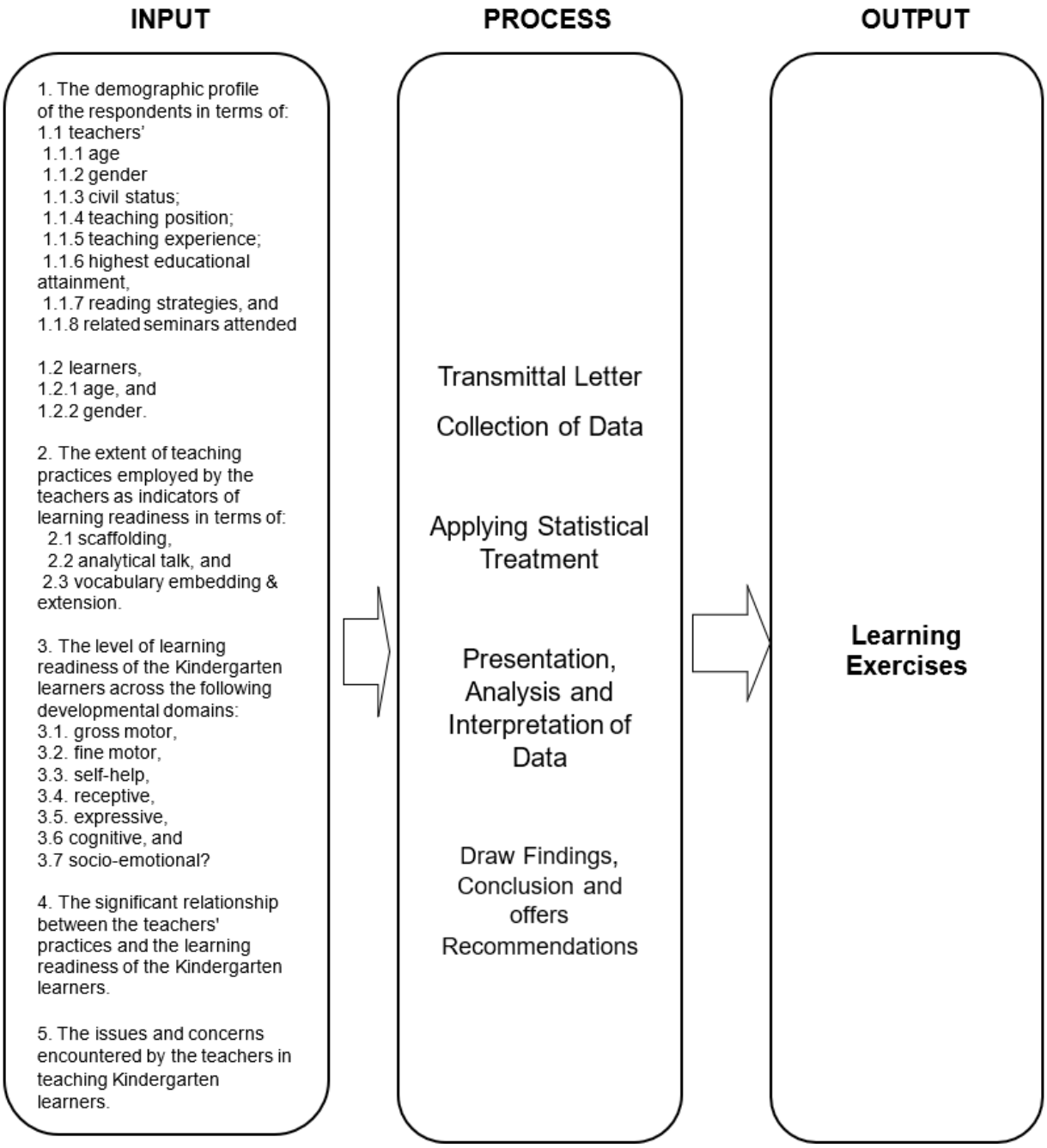


Figure 2 The Flow of the Study

The process began with the Input phase, which involved gathering the baseline data required to address the specific research objectives. This included the demographic profiles of the three respondent groups, the quantified extent of the classroom teaching strategies anchored on the three dimensions of the McGee Framework (Scaffolding & Book Introduction, Analytical Talk / Dialogic Pausing, and Vocabulary Embedding & Extension and the baseline learning readiness scores of the pupils extracted across the seven domains of the standardized Department of Education Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist.

These gathered inputs then feed directly into the Process phase, which operationalizes the methodology used to transform the raw data into scientific findings. This stage entails securing formal administrative clearances and parental consent, distributing and retrieving the adapted questionnaires, extracting the baseline ECD scores, and performing descriptive and inferential statistical treatments. Specifically, Weighted Means will be utilized to evaluate the instructional extents, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient will be executed to establish the statistical significance of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Ultimately, this data-driven journey culminates in the Output phase, which marked the destination of the research. Based on the empirical strengths and specific developmental deficiencies identified during the statistical analysis, the researcher designed a targeted, localized, and highly contextualized set of Proposed

Appropriate Age Learning Exercises for Kindergarten Learners. Rather than forcing abstract text decoding, this strategic output will be explicitly tailored to mature the identified weak spots in the children's core readiness domains, structurally ensuring they are functionally equipped for Grade 1.

Environment

The research was conducted in Loon South District, Division of Bohol, located in the Municipality of Loon, Province of Bohol, Philippines. Loon South is situated approximately 28 kilometers northwest of Tagbilaran City and is composed of numerous coastal and upland barangays. The district comprises fifteen (15) public elementary and primary schools that cater to kindergarten learners from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. The respondents of the study will include kindergarten teachers and kindergarten learners enrolled in the schools of the district. The participating schools are: Loon South Central Elementary School (Barangay Moto Sur), Agsoso Elementary School (Barangay Agsoso), Badbad Elementary School (Barangay Badbad), Basac Elementary School (Barangay Basac), Ticugan Primary School (Barangay Ticugan), Cogon Norte Elementary School (Barangay Cogon Norte), Lintuan Elementary School (Barangay Lintuan), Basdacu Primary School (Barangay Basdacu), Nagtubo Elementary School (Barangay Nagtuang), Napo Elementary School (Barangay Napo), Sto. Niño de la Paz Elementary School (Barangay Tontonan), Tubodio Elementary School (Barangay Tubodio), Cabug Primary School (Barangay Cabug), Tangnan Elementary School (Barangay Tangnan), and Campatud Elementary School (Barangay Campatud). These schools are strategically distributed across the southern portion of Loon, allowing the study to capture varying educational contexts and teaching practices. Distances from Loon South Central Elementary School range from approximately 1 to 4 kilometers for nearby schools such as Basac, Cogon Norte, Napo, Lintuan, Basdacu, Tangnan and Sto. Niño de la Paz; and 4 to 10 kilometers for more distant upland schools such as Ticugan, Agsoso, Badbad, Campatud, Tubodio, Cabug, and Nagtubo. The varied locations of these schools provide a comprehensive setting for examining the relationship between teacher practices and the learning readiness of kindergarten learners in the district.

Loon South District has demonstrated its commitment to quality basic education. Generally, the district performed a positive academic performance through the continuous implementation of DepEd Programs, learner-centered teaching practices, and aimed interventions to improve learning outcomes. Its success is strengthened by the active involvement of stakeholders, namely parents, teachers, school heads, the LGU, Barangay officials, community members, and private partner organizations. Through their cooperation in providing resources, supporting school programs, improving facilities, and addressing learners' needs, the district is able to create a supportive learning environment and promote better educational outcomes.



Figure 3 Research Environment of the Study

Respondents

The respondents of the study are the 11 Kindergarten teachers and 75 Kindergarten learners of Loon South District.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents

Respondents Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers	11	**12.79**
Learners	75	**87.21**
Total	**86**	**100**

Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool for this research is a structured composite questionnaire divided into three comprehensive sections adapted from established frameworks and standardized educational assessment tools.

Part I (Profile of the Respondents) captured the demographic characteristics of the two respondent groups, recording the teachers' professional profiles and the learners' age and gender.

Part II (Extent of Teaching Practices Employed) used a tool adapted from the Repeated Interactive Read-Aloud Framework by McGee and Schickedanz (2007); it consisted of 15 items distributed equally across scaffolding, analytical talk, and vocabulary embedding, evaluated by teachers via a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from Always (High Extent) to Never (Very Low Extent).

Finally, Part III (Level of Learning Readiness) by utilizing the standardized Department of Education Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist Assessment Tool (Revised Edition), which measured the children's actual behavioral milestones across seven core developmental domains—gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional—yielding standard Scaled Scores interpreted based on official DepEd parameters ranging from Highly Advanced Development down to Significant Delay.

Data Gathering Procedure

To facilitate the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher sent a request letter to the Public Schools District Supervisor seeking permission to conduct the survey and specifying the retrieval date. Prior to answering the survey, the details of the questionnaire were thoroughly explained to the respondents via social media platforms or face-to-face discussions. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information collected, with strict adherence to the Data Privacy Law and other relevant regulations protecting their rights. The collected data were then consolidated, tallied, and analyzed using statistical methods.

Statistical Treatment of Data

This research employed a variety of statistical tools to address the specific problems stated in the study, using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical methods to ensure accurate interpretation of the data via specialized statistical software.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution was used to address sub-problem number one, which focuses on the demographic profiles of the teachers, parents, and learners. Percentages will be computed to summarize the distribution across these categories and provide a clear demographic overview.

Weighted Mean was employed to determine the extent of teaching strategies employed by the teachers. Each response from the 4-point Likert scale will be assigned a numerical value, and the weighted mean will be calculated to reflect the exact instructional and parental extents, interpreted using strategic statistical ranges to provide descriptive insights.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used as the inferential statistic to analyze sub-problem number five, which seeks to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teaching strategies and the learning readiness of the kindergarten learners, testing the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship.

Scoring Procedure

To ensure a precise and objective interpretation of the gathered data, the responses from the research instruments were scored, categorized, and interpreted based on the following statistical criteria and descriptive scales:

Extent of Teaching Practices Employed

The teaching strategies utilized by the kindergarten teachers were evaluated using the adapted questionnaire from the Repeated Interactive Read-Aloud Framework by McGee and Schickedanz (2007). The items are structured around a 4-point Likert scale, calculated through the weighted mean, and interpreted using the following range classifications:

Weight	Range	Category	Verbal Description
4	3.26 - 4.00	High Extent	This instructional practice is consistently, deliberately, and actively executed by the teacher inside the classroom.
3	2.51 - 3.25	Moderate Extent	This instructional practice is frequently employed by the teacher, but with occasional gaps in consistency.
2	1.76 - 2.50	Low Extent	This instructional practice is only occasionally, minimally, or irregularly demonstrated by the teacher.
1	1.00 - 1.75	Very Low Extent	This instructional practice is rarely or never manifested by the teacher during classroom hours.

Level of Learning Readiness

The learning readiness of the kindergarten learners was assessed using the standardized Department of Education Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist Assessment Tool (Revised Edition). The raw scores obtained across the seven developmental domains (gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional) was converted into standard Scaled Scores based on official DepEd norming tables and classified as follows:

Scaled Score Range	Category	Verbal Description
100	Highly Advanced Development	Suggests highly advanced overall development
92 - 99	Slightly Advanced Development	Suggests slightly advanced overall development
58 - 91	Average Development	Average overall development
50 – 57	Slightly Delay	Suggests slight delay in overall development
49 below	Suggest Significant Delay	Suggests significant delay in overall development

DEFINITION OF TERMS

To aid the readers demonstrate clear understanding about this research, the following terms and phrases are operationally defined:

Analytical Talk / Dialogic Pausing. This refers to the instructional behavior of the teacher during reading activities where strategic pauses are executed to ask open-ended, inferential questions.

Cognitive Domain. This refers to the child's baseline mental abilities involving logical thinking, pattern recognition, spatial awareness, and a basic understanding of shapes and numbers.

Expressive Language Domain. This refers to the learner's behavioral capacity to articulate thoughts, verbalize complex needs, and use spoken words or gestures to communicate ideas dynamically to others.

Extent of Teaching Practices. This refers to the calculated frequency and structural depth to which Kindergarten teachers deploy interactive pre-reading methodologies in the classroom.

Fine Motor Domain. This refers to the child's muscular control and coordination involving smaller muscle groups, specifically the fingers and hands, which are essential for pre-writing tasks like tracing and grip management.

Gross Motor Domain. This refers to the physical development and control of the child's large muscle groups, governing bodily balance, locomotion, and physical agility.

Learning Exercises. This refers to the localized, contextualized, and non-reading instructional materials and activities designed by the researcher as the ultimate output of this study.

Learning Readiness. This refers to the holistic developmental maturity of a five-year-old child across physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic aspects, determining their preparedness for formal schooling.

Receptive Language Domain. This refers to the child's capacity to process, comprehend, and follow spoken instructions, verbal cues, and narrative points delivered by adults.

Scaffolding & Book Introduction. This refers to the foundational pre-reading strategies utilized by teachers to prepare learners for text interactions, including building background knowledge and orienting them with proper book-handling mechanics.

Self-Help Domain. This refers to the learner's baseline independence in executing primary daily life tasks, such as feeding, dressing, and performing personal hygiene routines.

Socio-Emotional Domain. This refers to the child's emotional regulation, self-control, and capacity to form meaningful, cooperative peer relationships inside and outside the classroom.

Vocabulary Embedding & Extension. This refers to the teacher's intentional practice of contextualizing new words during story structures and reinforcing them through interactive extension exercises.

2. PRESENTATION, DATA ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the data obtained from the respondents of the study with the corresponding analysis and interpretation. The respondents of this study consisted of 75 learners and 11 teachers for a total of 86 respondent groups from Loon South District, Division of Bohol.

This chapter comprised six (6) distinct sections.

The first part deals with the relevant information of the teacher respondents in terms of their age, gender, civil status, teaching position, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops attended.

The second part of this chapter deals with the relevant information of the learner respondents in terms of their age and gender.

The third part deals with the extent of teaching practices employed by the teachers as indicators of learning readiness in terms of scaffolding & book introduction, analytical talk / dialogic pausing, and vocabulary embedding & extension.

The fourth part assesses the level of learning and skills readiness of the kindergarten learners across the following developmental domains like gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive, expressive, cognitive and socio-emotional.

Moreover, this research tests the relationship between the teachers' practices and the learning readiness of the kindergarten learners.

Lastly, the issues and concerns encountered in teaching the kindergarten learners.

RELEVANT INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following tables reveal the relevant information of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, teaching position, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops attended.

Age. Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of age.

Table 2 Age Profile

Age	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
46 and above	6	54.55
36 – 40 years old	4	36.36
31 – 35 years old	1	9.09
Total	**11**	**100**
Average	**43.00**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**5.92**	**-**

Table 2 indicates that the Kindergarten teaching staff in the Loon South District is predominantly mature and uniform, with an average age of 43.00 years and a narrow standard deviation of 5.92. Over fifty percent of the responders (54.55%) are situated in the late-career phase, aged 46 and above, followed by 36.36% in the mid-career category of 36 to 40 years, while merely one educator (9.09%) falls within the younger 31 to 35 age group. This demographic profile reveals an experienced workforce abundant in practical knowledge, patience, and classroom management consistency—attributes deemed essential by Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) and Bautista and Alisago (2024) for fostering the socio-emotional growth of young learners.

This elderly demographic provides specific educational obstacles. Due to the completion of their formal training decades' prior, these educators frequently revert to conventional, teacher-centered practices. Hargreaves and Shirley (2022) and Delgado and Santos (2025) emphasize that veteran instructors often encounter "pedagogical inertia," resulting in a reluctance to embrace contemporary, interactive methods such as analytical discourse and dialogic pausing. This elucidates why the respondents exhibited excellent skill in fundamental physical scaffolding, however only moderate use of interactive verbal methods.

Ultimately, although the district's experienced teaching staff ensures emotional stability and nurturing support in the classroom, it highlights a pressing necessity for focused, compassionate professional development. To address the linguistic and cognitive deficiencies observed in Kindergarten students, local school administrators must develop tailored learning activities that facilitate the transition of seasoned educators from traditional, passive instructional methods to engaging, interactive teaching practices, while acknowledging their extensive classroom experience.

Gender. Table 3 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of gender.

Table 3 Gender Profile

Gender	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
Male	2	18.18
Female	9	81.82
Total	**11**	**100**

Table 3 shows that the predominant demographic of Kindergarten instructors is female, accounting for 81.82% (f = 9) of the total, whereas males constitute merely 18.18% (f = 2). This markedly uneven distribution accurately reflects the enduring gender imbalance in early childhood education (ECE) both locally and worldwide.

Reports from OECD (2021) and UNESCO (2023) indicate that the early childhood sector remains predominantly staffed by female educators, a phenomenon attributed to entrenched societal norms linking caring and caregiving of young infants to female responsibilities. Ramos and David (2024) observed that in the Philippine public school system, despite the Department of Education's active promotion of gender equality, the proportion of male Kindergarten teachers is minimal, as male educators typically prefer higher grade levels (intermediate or secondary) where academic instruction takes precedence over physical care and socio-emotional development.

McFarland et al. (2022) and Sutton et al. (2025) contend that, from a developmental standpoint, female teachers are adept at creating warm, emotionally supportive classroom environments conducive to socio-emotional growth, whereas the presence of male teachers in early education offers significant developmental advantages. Male educators frequently facilitate more dynamic, physically engaging play and function as unconventional gender role models, so aiding in the deconstruction of early gender stereotypes and promoting diversified socio-behavioral learning.

Ultimately, although the district's predominantly female teaching staff provides a loving and emotionally secure environment for young learners, the inclusion and support of male educators should be aggressively pursued. To optimize learning and skill development across all domains, district-level educational exercises must be structured to harmonize supportive care with physically engaging, exploratory learning practices that accommodate all learning styles, irrespective of teacher gender.

Civil status. Table 4 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of civil status.

Table 4 Civil Status Profile

Civil status	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
Married	9	81.82
Single	1	9.09
Widow	1	9.09
Total	**11**	**100**

Table 4 illustrates that a significant majority of Kindergarten teachers in the Loon South District are married, comprising 81.82% (f = 9) of the entire population. This is succeeded by one schoolteacher who is unmarried (9.09%, f = 1) and another who is a widow (9.09%, f = 1). The significant prevalence of married educators

corresponds closely with their advanced age profile (mean age of 43.00), indicating a workforce that is well established in their personal and familial circumstances.

This demographic trait has beneficial consequences for the early childhood classroom. Gomez and Santos (2022) assert that married teachers, especially those who are parents, contribute a significant dimension of "lived parental experience" to the classroom in developmental psychology and education research. This domestic parenting experience fosters innate empathy, increased patience, and instinctive distress-regulation abilities, essential for addressing Kindergarteners' separation anxiety or social adjustment challenges. Tan et al. (2024) emphasize that married educators frequently exhibit greater emotional resilience and work stability due to the strong domestic and emotional support systems they receive at home. This structural consistency mitigates professional burnout and enables instructors to sustain a warm, predictable, and supportive classroom atmosphere.

Nevertheless, a predominantly domestic and established lifestyle may also impose distinct pressures. Bautista (2025) observes that married female teachers in Central Visayas frequently have the "double-burden" of reconciling demanding professional teaching obligations with household responsibilities. This dual function may result in time-management limitations, restricting their capacity to engage in prolonged after-school preparation sessions, partake in rigorous weekend training, or create intricate, self-developed educational materials.

Although the substantial proportion of married educators fosters a notably nurturing, maternal, and emotionally supporting atmosphere for Kindergarten students, administrators must acknowledge their familial obligations. To effectively implement new teacher-created learning activities, school districts must offer efficient, ready-to-use remedial toolkits and arrange professional development workshops during official working hours to enhance teacher participation and mitigate burnout.

Teaching Position. Table 5 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of teaching position.

Table 5 Teaching Position Profile

Gender	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
Teacher III	4	36.36
Teacher I	7	63.64
Total	**11**	**100**

Table 5 presents a pronounced career-stagnation paradox in the Loon South District: despite a seasoned teaching workforce with an average age of 43, approximately two-thirds (63.64%) of Kindergarten educators are confined to the entry-level position of Teacher I, whereas only 36.36% have progressed to Teacher III. Historically, promotions within the Department of Education (DepEd) have been significantly hindered, resulting in experienced mid- to late-career teachers being obstructed in entry-level positions due to a scarcity of available higher-level roles. The systemic issue is the principal catalyst for the establishment of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System pursuant to Executive Order No. 174, which underwent significant refinement in DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025 and received funding in 2026 to guarantee that promotions are predicated on competency and merit rather than item availability.

From an educational standpoint, extended career stagnation adversely affects classroom quality and teacher morale. Research conducted by de Villa (2024) and Santos et al. (2025) reveals that educators who remain in entry-level positions for extended periods are particularly vulnerable to professional tiredness, frequently resulting in an adherence to familiar, conventional teaching practices. Moreover, entry-level Teacher I positions are seldom favored in elite national professional development programs, resulting in limited structural possibilities for these educators to refine advanced instructional skills. The absence of specialized training elucidates the respondents' dependence on conventional paper-and-pencil scaffolding, resulting in only moderate competency in intricate conversational tactics such as analytical discourse and dialogic stopping.

Although the district's educators have significant classroom experience, their predominance in the Teacher I rank underscores an urgent requirement for structural and professional assistance. To enhance Kindergarten education and skill preparedness, school administrators must proactively utilize the 2026 ECP criteria to expedite the advancement and reclassification of these worthy educators. The district must concurrently democratize professional development by providing specialized, master-class training in conversational pedagogy directly to Teacher I educators, ensuring they possess sophisticated instructional tools irrespective of their administrative status.

Teaching Experience. Table 6 indicates the number of years in service of the respondents.

Table 6 Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
11 – 15 years	9	81.82
7 – 10 years	1	9.09
4 – 6 years	1	9.09
Total	**11**	**100**
Average	**11.86**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**2.65**	**-**

Table 6 indicates a highly seasoned and experienced Kindergarten teaching staff, with an average tenure of 11.86 years and a minimal standard deviation of 2.65. The overwhelming majority of respondents (81.82%, f = 9) have served for 11 to 15 years, whereas a negligible minority had mid-range experience of 7 to 10 years (9.09%, f = 1) or early-career experience of 4 to 6 years (9.09%, f = 1). Significantly, when this table is cross-referenced with Table 5 (Teaching Position), a notable professional paradox emerges: despite 81.82% of teachers possessing over ten years of continuous service, the majority continue to occupy the entry-level rank of Teacher I, thereby substantiating the previously addressed systemic promotion bottleneck and career stagnation.

This extensive experience significantly enhances early childhood classrooms from an educational perspective. Research conducted by Kini and Podolsky (2021) and Besa et al. (2024) indicates that educators with over a decade of experience exhibit robust intuitive classroom management, significant emotional resilience, and a profound comprehension of developmental milestones. These experienced educators succeed in fostering emotionally secure classroom environments, which accounts for the responders' strong proficiency in fundamental physical scaffolding and nurturing behaviors.

Nevertheless, considerable teaching experience may result in instructional fossilization if not accompanied by consistent, focused professional growth. Insorio and Macandili (2025) noted that veteran teachers, who have employed old, teacher-centered paradigms for over a decade, are significantly susceptible to habituation, rendering them less inclined to spontaneously embrace contemporary, dialogue-intensive tactics. This educational inertia elucidates why these seasoned educators achieved moderate scores in conversational methods such as critical discourse and dialogic pauses.

Ultimately, although the district's Kindergarten teachers possess extensive experiential knowledge, their prolonged tenure without opportunities for professional advancement underscores a significant administrative issue. To enhance the efficacy of their considerable knowledge and bolster Kindergarten preparedness, local administrators must create focused, collaborative learning activities that actively involve these seasoned educators. Instead than enforcing strict, hierarchical mandates, professional development should acknowledge their extensive experience while methodically enhancing their competencies in contemporary, interactive, and dialogic early childhood education.

Highest Educational Attainment. Table 7 shows the highest educational attainment of the respondents.

Table 7 Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
Master's Degree Units	3	27.27
Bachelor Degree	8	72.73
Total	**11**	**100**

Table 7 indicates that a predominant proportion of Kindergarten teachers (72.73%, n = 8) own only a Bachelor's Degree as their greatest level of educational attainment. Fewer than one-third (27.27%, f = 3) have commenced postgraduate courses and acquired Master's Degree Units, and none of the respondents have fully attained a master's degree. The absence of completed postgraduate qualifications, particularly when correlated with the instructors' average age (43.00 years) and extensive teaching experience (11.86 years), underscores a notable deficiency in professional development within the school system. Although these educators exhibit robust practical classroom management abilities, their restricted exposure to advanced academic training limits their understanding of modern early childhood pedagogy and action research.

This educational profile explicitly delineates the pedagogical disparities observed in their teaching methods. Research by Pascual (2023) and Delos Reyes (2024) indicates that postgraduate courses in early childhood

education are essential for providing educators with the profound cognitive frameworks required to develop intricate linguistic interventions. Educators who have not engaged in master's-level studies frequently lack the theoretical foundation necessary to proficiently apply advanced techniques, including analytical discourse, dialogic pauses, and systematic vocabulary integration. Instead, they depend significantly on conventional, pre-structured lecture formats and basic rote-recall inquiries. Labrague and Macapagal (2025) assert that public school teachers frequently encounter significant obstacles in obtaining graduate degrees, such as substantial daily administrative responsibilities, domestic commitments (notably relevant as 81.82% are married), and financial limitations.

Rectifying this educational deficiency necessitates accessible, district-driven professional development to fill the void created by insufficient graduate degrees. According to DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025 and the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) guidelines, educators are significantly encouraged to undertake postgraduate study to attain elevated professional positions. The school system must form collaborations with local state institutions to provide flexible, weekend, or blended graduate-level certificate courses in early childhood pedagogy, so utilizing these policy incentives to enhance classroom instruction directly. Concurrently, localized learning activities should be crafted as realistic, sequential instructional manuals that proficiently impart advanced pedagogical abilities to educators who may lack the ability to participate in formal graduate programs.

Relevant Training, Seminars, and Workshops Attended. Table 8 presents the highest level of appropriate training, seminars, and workshops attended by the respondents.

Table 8 Relevant Training, Seminars, and Workshops Attended

Relevant Training, Seminars, and Workshops Attended	Frequency n = 11	Percentage
Division	11	100
Total	**11**	**100**

According to Table 8, all eleven teacher answers (100.00%) have participated in professional development programs only at the Division Level. No respondent has engaged in advanced regional, national, or international training. This complete dependence on local, division-mandated programs suggests that, although the teaching staff is well aligned with local DepEd administrative instructions, they possess restricted experience to more advanced early childhood approaches.

This local training emphasis elucidates why the teachers' classroom methodologies are markedly uniform, however fail to progress beyond fundamental instructional tiers. Within the public education system, division-level seminars generally employ the "cascade training model," wherein designated representatives receive training at the national level and subsequently relay the information to the division and district levels. Research conducted by Arrieta and Magtolis (2023) and findings from the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2026) indicate that this cascade model frequently undermines intricate educational competencies. Although fundamental procedural instructions, such as administering the ECCD Checklist, are effectively sent, advanced conversational methods like analytical discourse and dialogic stopping are seldom transmitted with the necessary depth to modify classroom norms.

Moreover, the obligation to fulfill the credit unit stipulations of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016 frequently compels educators to participate in readily available local training, irrespective of its relevance to Kindergarten students. According to DepEd (2026), there is an urgent national imperative to transition early childhood training from general division seminars to intensive, specialized programs centered on early linguistic foundations. The absence of advanced, specialized training opportunities is the principal reason these seasoned educators maintain high competence in physical scaffolding yet demonstrate only modest proficiency in interactive, dialogic education.

Addressing this professional isolation necessitates that school districts transcend conventional, hierarchical division bulletins. To effectively address the receptive and expressive language impairments observed in Kindergarteners, local administrations must pursue collaborations with area universities or private educational organizations to offer specialized early childhood programs. Creating localized learning activities that specifically emphasize conversational pedagogy can effectively circumvent the constraints of the cascade training model, hence enhancing teaching quality at the classroom level.

Profile of Students. The table below presents the profile of the learners from the research environment as to their age.

Age. Table 9 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of age.

Table 9 Age Profile

Age	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
5 years old	41	54.67
4 years old	34	45.33
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**4.55**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**0.50**	**-**

Table 9 indicates that over half of the learner-respondents (54.67%, n = 41) are 5 years old, while a significant proportion (45.33%, n = 34) are 4 years old. This sample produces a mean age of 4.55 years with a minimal standard deviation of 0.50 years, indicating a tightly clustered age group of early childhood learners progressing into formal basic education.

This age distribution illustrates a distinctive structural convergence of national policy and local public school enrollment trends. The Kindergarten Education Act (Republic Act No. 10157) establishes five years old as the mandatory official entry age for basic education. DepEd guidelines allow children aged four to enroll, providing they reach the age of five by the school year's cut-off dates. Research by Castillo and Alipato (2023) indicates that numerous parents opt to enroll their children at the age of four to provide an early academic advantage, leading to a dual-age classroom dynamic.

This age disparity has significant implications for classroom learning and readiness for skill development. Vygotsky's developmental framework and recent empirical research by Morrison and Fitzpatrick (2024) indicate a significant cognitive, socio-emotional, and fine-motor disparity between a kid aged 4.0 years and one aged 5.5 years. The swift growth trajectory in early life results in a classroom populated by learners exhibiting significantly varied attention spans, motor coordination, and language processing rates.

This developmental diversity elucidates the challenges teachers face with "one-size-fits-all" education in your subject. For example, 5-year-old learners can readily engage with conversational analytical discourse, whereas 4-year-old learners still want tangible, highly visual physical support. According to Solano and Ferrer (2025), educators in mixed-age classes must adeptly differentiate their educational approaches.

Gender. Table 10 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of gender.

Table 10 Gender Profile

Gender	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Male	45	60.00
Female	30	40.00
Total	**75**	**100**

Table 10 indicates that the predominant demographic among the Kindergarten learner-respondents is male, comprising 60.00% (f = 45) of the population, whilst females constitute 40.00% (f = 30). The gender distribution is significantly pertinent to early childhood development, as male and female learners at this point demonstrate varying rates of growth in physical, cognitive, and linguistic domains.

This gender disparity directly affects classroom performance and learning preparedness. Comprehensive developmental studies by Gurian (2022) and Lim and Mendoza (2024) indicate that young males frequently have a slower progression in fine-motor coordination, expressive language, and emotional self-regulation relative to their female counterparts of the same age. Thus, classrooms with a higher proportion of male students generally necessitate more dynamic, movement-oriented education and tangible physical play to maintain student engagement and facilitate their learning.

The significant proportion of male learners necessitates that educators modify their instructional methodologies. Girls may engage quietly with scaffolding and book introductions, whereas boys are developmentally predisposed to physical, spatial, and tactile learning. Santos and Cruz (2025) indicate that a classroom primarily composed of young boys frequently demonstrates diminished baseline scores in fine-motor control and expressive language when instructional methods are largely passive and reliant on paper-based materials.

EXTENT OF TEACHING PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY THE TEACHERS

The following tables present the extent of teaching practices employed by the teachers in terms of scaffolding & book introduction, analytical talk / dialogic pausing, and vocabulary embedding & extension.

Scaffolding & Book Introduction. This dimension focuses on the preparatory, cognitive, and physical mechanisms utilized by teachers to orient learners, activate prior knowledge, and establish a purposeful, structured connection with the literary material before the formal reading process begins.

Table 11 Scaffolding & Book Introduction

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. I explicitly display the cover of big books to introduce the main characters and the primary setting before reading.	3.73	0.47	High Extent
2. I activate the learners' prior knowledge by linking the book's title and illustration to their personal experiences.	3.73	0.47	High Extent
3. I model ideal reading behaviors, such as pointing to words from left to right and explaining how pages turn.	3.82	0.40	High Extent
4. I establish a clear "reading purpose" or structural overview so learners know what central conflict to look out for.	3.73	0.47	High Extent
5. I provide direct structural support (scaffolding) to help struggling learners transition smoothly from visual clues to conceptual understandings.	3.55	0.52	High Extent
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.57**	**0.47**	High Extent

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 High Extent; 2.51 – 3.25 Moderate Extent; 1.76 – 2.50 Low Extent; 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Extent

Table 11 reveals that teacher-respondents employ scaffolding and book introduction practices to a High Extent, yielding a composite mean of 3.57 (SD = 0.47). Item 3 (modeling reading behaviors like left-to-right tracking) achieved the highest weighted mean of 3.82 (SD = 0.40), while Item 5 (providing direct support to help struggling learners transition from visual to conceptual cues) garnered the lowest weighted mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.52), though still verbally interpreted as a High Extent.

The high rating of Item 3 highlights the teachers' strong mastery of physical print awareness. As noted by Duke et al. (2021), physical and structural modeling represents foundational teaching behavior that veteran educators execute with high automaticity. Because these educators are highly experienced (averaging 11.86 years in service), these pre-reading routines are deeply ingrained. Furthermore, public school teachers excel at this introductory phase because national training models historically prioritize the "Pre-Reading" stage of instruction (Amoroso & Macasing, 2024). These routines are highly comfortable for seasoned educators because they rely on structured, teacher-directed visual materials rather than spontaneous, unpredictable conversation.

Conversely, the lower relative score for Item 5 highlights that transitioning from whole-group visual orientation to individualized, responsive cognitive scaffolding is much more difficult to execute. According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and early literacy research by Puranik et al. (2023), effective cognitive scaffolding requires rapid, real-time diagnostic adjustments for struggling learners. In classrooms with a male-majority cohort (60.00%) and younger four-year-old learners (45.33%), managing diverse behavioral and developmental needs makes this individualization highly challenging. As a result, teachers often default to generalized, whole-group instructions, leaving fewer opportunities to help individual struggling students transition from simple pictures to abstract concepts (Estacio, 2025).

This pattern indicates that while the district's teachers are skilled at physical, visual, and structured book introductions, they need professional support to deliver responsive, individual cognitive scaffolding. Localized learning exercises must therefore look beyond simple visual aids and provide educators with concrete, adaptive questioning guides to help them support struggling learners in real time.

Analytical Talk / Dialogic Pausing. This dimension centers on the interactive, real-time verbal scaffolds and deliberate cognitive pauses initiated by educators during storytelling to stimulate inferential thinking, foster expressive dialogic exchanges, and dynamically monitor comprehension.

Table 12 Analytical Talk / Dialogic Pausing

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. I intentionally pause at critical moments in the story to ask non-literal, analytical questions (e.g., *"Why do you think the character did that?"*).	3.55	0.52	High Extent
2. I encourage dialogic interactions by prompting learners to make logical predictions about what will happen next.	3.45	0.52	High Extent
3. I accept and expand on the children's verbal responses, turning their simple sentences into richer classroom discussions.	3.45	0.69	High Extent
4. I challenge learners to analyze the emotional expressions of characters using the book's illustrations during strategic pauses.	3.27	0.65	High Extent
5. I scaffold children's critical thinking by asking them to compare separate events or problem-solving methods within the text.	3.18	0.75	Moderate Extent
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.38**	**0.63**	High Extent

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 High Extent; 2.51 – 3.25 Moderate Extent; 1.76 – 2.50 Low Extent; 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Extent

The teacher-respondents employ analytical talk and dialogic pausing to a High Extent, resulting in a composite mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.63). This score is lower than the scaffolding dimension (3.57), indicating that interactive, conversational teaching practices are more challenging to sustain than pre-reading routines. Item 1 (pausing to ask non-literal questions) recorded the highest weighted mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.52, High Extent), while Item 5 (scaffolding critical thinking through comparisons) obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.18 (SD = 0.75), marking it as the only indicator to fall within the Moderate Extent range.

The high rating of Item 1 shows that teachers recognize the value of basic pause-and-question techniques. Studies by Hargrave and Senechal (2020) and Alcantara (2024) confirm that introducing standard pauses is a common and highly accessible method used by experienced teachers (averaging 11.86 years in service) to manage reading flow. However, the larger standard deviation on Item 3 (SD = 0.69) reveals a wider variance in performance, indicating that teachers are inconsistent when trying to expand simple student responses into richer, multi-turn conversations.

The moderate rating of Item 5 highlights the difficulty of facilitating higher-order cognitive comparisons. Research by Whitehurst et al. (2021) demonstrates that comparing separate textual events or analyzing diverse problem-solving methods demands a high level of linguistic scaffolding. In classrooms with a high concentration of boys (60.00%) and younger four-year-old learners (45.33%), maintaining the focus needed for these complex comparisons is challenging. As Gomez-Vidal (2025) notes, teachers who lack specialized training often struggle to lead these discussions and default to simple recall, which limits the children's opportunity to develop expressive language.

Vocabulary Embedding & Extension. This dimension emphasizes the systematic integration of child-friendly target definitions, multimodal cues, and post-reading play-based activities designed to deepen contextual word acquisition and expand the learners' functional expressive language.

Table 13 Vocabulary Embedding & Extension

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. I seamlessly embed quick, student-friendly definitions of difficult words without disrupting the natural flow of the story narrative.	3.64	0.67	High Extent
2. I utilize physical gestures, facial expressions, and book illustrations to clarify the meaning of newly introduced words.	3.82	0.40	High Extent
3. I contextualize unfamiliar text concepts by translating them or comparing them to local Mother Tongue terms.	3.91	0.30	High Extent
4. I conduct post-reading text-extension activities (e.g., role-playing, drawing, or retelling) to reinforce the target vocabulary.	3.36	0.92	High Extent

5. I intentionally reintroduce and use the newly learned vocabulary words during regular classroom routines and sub-activities throughout the week.	3.36	0.67	High Extent
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.62**	**0.60**	High Extent

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 High Extent; 2.51 – 3.25 Moderate Extent; 1.76 – 2.50 Low Extent; 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Extent

Table 13 shows that teacher-respondents employ vocabulary embedding and extension to a High Extent, with a composite mean of 3.62 (SD = 0.60). Item 3 (translating or comparing unfamiliar concepts to Mother Tongue terms) achieved the highest weighted mean of 3.91 (SD = 0.30, High Extent), closely followed by Item 2 (utilizing physical gestures and facial expressions) at 3.82 (SD = 0.40, High Extent). In contrast, Items 4 (conducting post-reading extension activities) and 5 (reintroducing vocabulary throughout the week) tied for the lowest weighted mean of 3.36 (High Extent), with Item 4 carrying a very wide standard deviation of 0.92.

The high rating of Item 3 highlights a strong alignment with DepEd's Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policies. As Dumatog and Cabansag (2022) point out, Filipino educators rely heavily on code-switching and direct translation to bridge early language gaps. By mapping abstract second-language terms directly to familiar local concepts, teachers ensure that early learners stay anchored to the story. Similarly, the high performance in Item 2 reflects teachers' reliance on multimodal cues. Veteran early childhood educators instinctively use their voices, facial expressions, and bodies to hold attention, which is highly effective in classrooms with active, male-majority cohorts (60.00%).

Conversely, the lower ratings and high variance in Items 4 and 5 point to significant hurdles in instructional follow-through. While teachers excel at pointing out words during a story, following up with structured extension activities like role-playing, drawing, or consistent weekly integration requires careful planning and ample class time.

Research by Cabigao (2024) and reports from EDCOM II (2026) identify heavy daily administrative workloads and rigid schedules as major barriers that prevent public school teachers from organizing hands-on, post-reading activities. The high standard deviation of 0.92 on Item 4 highlights a sharp divide: some teachers manage to squeeze in creative extension games, while others, restricted by limited preparation time, skip them entirely. This dynamic means that newly introduced vocabulary is rarely reinforced beyond the initial reading session, leading to rapid forgetting.

Summary on the Extent of Teaching Practices. Table 14 reveal the extent of teaching practices employed by the teachers in terms of scaffolding & book introduction, analytical talk / dialogic pausing and vocabulary embedding & extension.

Table 14 Summary on the Extent of Teaching Practices

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Scaffolding & Book Introduction	3.71	0.47	High Extent
Analytical talk / Dialogic pausing	3.38	0.63	High Extent
Vocabulary embedding & extension	3.62	0.60	High Extent
OVERALL MEAN	**3.57**	**0.56**	High Extent

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 High Extent; 2.51 – 3.25 Moderate Extent; 1.76 – 2.50 Low Extent; 1.00 – 1.75 Very Low Extent

The summary data reveals that the teacher-respondents employ the identified early childhood literacy strategies to a High Extent, as evidenced by the overall mean of 3.57 (SD = 0.56). Among the three dimensions, Scaffolding and Book Introduction achieved the highest weighted mean of 3.71 (SD = 0.47, High Extent), followed by Vocabulary Embedding and Extension at 3.62 (SD = 0.60, High Extent). In contrast, Analytical Talk and Dialogic Pausing registered the lowest weighted mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.63, High Extent).

This hierarchy of scores points to a clear pedagogical pattern: teachers are highly confident when executing structured, visual, and highly patterned routines, but their execution drops when tasks demand spontaneous, interactive classroom dialogue. The high performance in scaffolding and vocabulary translation shows that these veteran teachers—backed by an average of 11.86 years of experience—have mastered physical print-awareness modeling and native-language code-switching. Studies by Duke et al. (2021) confirm that these structured pre-

reading and direct-translation steps are easily routinized and require less real-time cognitive adjustment from the teacher during a busy lesson.

The lower score for Analytical Talk and Dialogic Pausing shows that interactive, multi-turn classroom discussions are much more difficult to sustain. Under Dialogic Reading frameworks, keeping young learners engaged in open-ended inferential thinking requires a teacher to constantly listen, evaluate, and dynamically expand on unpredictable student answers. In public school classrooms with younger four-year-old learners (45.33%) and active, male-majority cohorts (60.00%), maintaining the focus needed for these complex verbal exchanges is exceptionally challenging. When faced with these diverse behaviors, teachers often default to simple story-reading and rote-recall questions, limiting the children's opportunity to practice expressive language.

Consequently, while the overall "High Extent" rating is highly commendable, the imbalance between structured preparation and spontaneous dialogic practice represents a critical professional development area. Rather than delivering generic lectures, local school districts must focus on giving teachers practical, easy-to-implement conversational guides. Providing teachers with structured, low-preparation verbal routines will help them confidently transition from simple story-reading to rich, interactive conversations, maximizing the educational impact of their extensive classroom experience.

LEVEL OF LEARNING AND SKILLS READINESS

The following tables reveal the level of learning and skills readiness of Kindergarten learners in terms of gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive, expressive, cognitive and socio-emotional.

Gross Motor. This dimension evaluates the learner's developmental maturity in large muscle coordination, locomotion, and overall physical balance, reflecting their structural capacity to navigate physical school environments and participate confidently in active, play-based learning routines.

Table 15 Gross Motor

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	31	41.33
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	26	34.67
Average Development (58-91)	18	24.00
Slightly Delay (50-57)	0	0
Suggested Delay (49 below)	0	0
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**92.32**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**10.27**	**-**

As shown in Table 15, the Kindergarten learners exhibit strong physical development, with a mean score of 92.32 (SD = 10.27), representing a Slightly Advanced level of readiness. Specifically, 41.33% (f = 31) of the pupils are classified as Highly Advanced, 34.67% (f = 26) as Slightly Advanced, and 24.00% (f = 18) show Average Development. No learners exhibit any developmental delays.

This strong performance is typical of this cohort's demographic makeup. Because the sample has a high concentration of male learners (60.00%), there is a natural developmental inclination toward active physical movement, running, and play. Research by Gurian (2022) and Bautista (2024) highlights that young boys consistently show rapid development in gross motor skills and spatial navigation compared to fine-motor skills. Unstructured physical play outside of school serves as a natural training ground for large muscle control.

Additionally, this physical mastery is supported by the teachers' high-extent practice of scaffolding and book introductions (mean of 3.71, Table 14). Teachers consistently model active physical routines and gestures during literacy instruction. Studies by Salamat and Cruz (2025) demonstrate that pairing literacy instruction with physical gestures reinforces the motor pathways of active learners. This synergy helps children transition their physical energy into structured, classroom-based motor skills.

These results indicate that the learners are physically equipped to meet the demands of early schooling. Since the children possess highly developed physical stamina and large muscle coordination, local learning exercises do not need to focus heavily on basic motor remedial tasks. Instead, educators can leverage this physical strength by designing active learning routines—such as action-song storytelling, interactive role-play, and outdoor literacy hunts—to keep active learners engaged while boosting their language and cognitive skills.

Fine Motor. This dimension assesses the child's finger and hand muscle control, hand-eye coordination, and grip dexterity, which serve as the fundamental physical prerequisites for pencil manipulation, writing preparation, and the utilization of classroom learning media.

Table 16 Fine Motor

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	16	21.33
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	0	0
Average Development (58-91)	55	73.33
Slightly Delay (50-57)	2	2.67
Suggested Delay (49 below)	2	2.67
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**78.59**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**12.61**	**-**

As shown in Table 16, the Kindergarten learners exhibit a moderate level of manual dexterity, with a mean score of 78.59 (SD = 12.61), indicating Average Development. The vast majority (73.33%, f = 55) fall within the average range. While 21.33% (f = 16) are Highly Advanced, a small but critical portion of the cohort shows developmental vulnerabilities, with 2.67% (f = 2) classified as Slightly Delayed and another 2.67% (f = 2) exhibiting Suggested Delay.

This drop in performance compared to the gross motor domain (92.32) is heavily tied to the cohort's demographics. With a male-majority classroom (60.00%) and almost half of the children enrolled at just four years old (45.33%), a lower fine motor average is expected. Neurological and physiological research by Gurian (2022) and Adolph (2023) notes that young boys and four-year-old learners naturally possess less developed intrinsic hand muscles, which limits their grip strength, scissor control, and pencil-tracing accuracy. Unlike gross motor skills, which develop naturally through active play, fine motor coordination requires structured, repetitive, and tactile manual tasks to mature.

Furthermore, this gap is exacerbated by the teachers' instructional choices. While teachers excel at modeling reading behaviors and using large physical gestures they scored lowest on providing direct, individualized cognitive and structural scaffolding for struggling students and organizing post-reading extension activities. As Puranik et al. (2023) point out, young children—especially those with developmental delays—cannot build manual control without targeted, hands-on activities like drawing, clay modeling, and tearing paper. Without these regular creative exercises, children who enter school with weak hand strength struggle to close the motor gap.

Self-Help. This dimension measures the learner's level of personal autonomy and independence in managing daily primary routines—such as feeding, dressing, and personal hygiene—indicating their structural readiness to function comfortably within a school environment with minimal adult intervention.

Table 17 Self-Help

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	1	1.33
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	19	25.33
Average Development (58-91)	53	70.67
Slightly Delay (50-57)	1	1.33
Suggested Delay (49 below)	1	1.33
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**79.49**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**10.70**	**-**

The Kindergarten learners demonstrate Average Development in self-help skills, with a mean score of 79.49 (SD = 10.70). While 70.67% of the pupils perform within the average range and 25.33% are slightly advanced, a nominal 2.66% exhibit some degree of developmental delay.

This average positioning is heavily influenced by the cohort's young age profile, where nearly half (45.33%) are only four years old. In local Filipino households, parents and extended family members frequently over-assist young children with daily routines like feeding, dressing, and cleaning to save time, as noted by Alampay and de

Guzman (2022). This protective cultural practice limits early opportunities for children to build personal autonomy before entering school.

Furthermore, while teachers provide extensive structural support in the classroom (overall practices mean of 3.57), over-scaffolding can unintentionally foster dependency (Vygotsky, 1978). When busy teachers' complete routine tasks to keep class sessions on schedule, children lose natural chances to practice self-care. To counter this, local classroom designs should turn simple routines—like toy clean-up, handwashing, and personal organizing—into structured, independent daily duties.

Receptive. This dimension examines the child's ability to auditory-process, comprehend, and interpret spoken cues, complex instructions, and contextual stories, which forms the cognitive basis for all subsequent classroom listening comprehension.

Table 18 Receptive

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	49	65.33
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	0	0
Average Development (58-91)	26	34.67
Slightly Delay (50-57)	0	0
Suggested Delay (49 below)	0	0
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**91.16**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**12.22**	**-**

The Kindergarten learners exhibit strong receptive language development, with an average score of 91.16 (SD = 12.22), placing them on the high end of the Average Development range bordering slightly advanced. Specifically, a significant majority of 65.33% (f = 49) are classified as Highly Advanced, while the remaining 34.67% (f = 26) show Average Development. No learners exhibit any receptive language delays.

This high level of auditory comprehension and listening skill directly mirrors the teachers' outstanding practices in Scaffolding and Book Introduction (weighted mean of 3.71) and Mother Tongue Translation (weighted mean of 3.91). By consistently introducing books with clear visual structures and translating difficult English terms into local, native-language equivalents, the teachers provide a strong auditory framework. Studies by Dumatog and Cabansag (2022) confirm that using mother-tongue translations in early childhood classrooms helps children quickly process, organize, and comprehend spoken verbal instructions.

Furthermore, this strong performance demonstrates that the younger, four-year-old learners (45.33%) are successfully keeping pace with their five-year-old peers in terms of listening comprehension. This suggests that while younger students may still struggle with physical fine-motor skills, their ability to listen and follow classroom instructions is highly developed.

Expressive. This dimension analyzes the learner's capacity to verbally communicate thoughts, ideas, needs, and emotional states using functional vocabulary, correct syntax, and conversational speech, serving as a critical indicator of their dialogic readiness.

Table 19 Expressive

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	14	18.67
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	0	0
Average Development (58-91)	54	72.00
Slightly Delay (50-57)	6	8.00
Suggested Delay (49 below)	1	1.33
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**77.19**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**12.78**	**-**

The Kindergarten learners exhibit Average Development in expressive language skills, with a mean score of 77.19 (SD = 12.78). While the majority of the students (72.00%) perform within the average range and 18.67% are highly advanced, a notable 9.33% of the cohort show developmental delays (8.00% slightly delayed and 1.33% with suggested delay). This represents a significant drop compared to their high receptive language skills

(91.16), highlighting a classic early childhood gap: children can understand what they hear, but they struggle to verbally express their own ideas.

This expressive language lag is closely linked to the demographic characteristics of the class. Because 60.00% of the learners are male and nearly half (45.33%) are only four years old, a lower expressive average is developmentally expected. Landmark neurological research by Gurian (2022) confirms that young boys typically experience slower brain development in the areas responsible for speech production and vocabulary retrieval. When combined with their younger age, these children naturally need much more time, active encouragement, and interactive modeling to build complex spoken sentences.

This developmental challenge is compounded by the teachers' instructional habits. Although teachers are highly skilled at traditional story-reading, their lowest scores were in Analytical Talk and Dialogic Pausing (3.38) and conducting post-reading extensions (3.36). As Whitehurst et al. (2021) explain in Dialogic Reading theory, children cannot build expressive vocabulary if classroom reading remains a one-way street. When teachers default to simple story-reading and literal recall questions instead of prompting children to compare events or describe characters' emotions, they miss critical opportunities to help students practice talking.

Cognitive. This dimension gauges the child's higher-order mental capabilities, including symbolic thinking, problem-solving, pattern recognition, spatial relationships, and memory capacity, which collectively act as the cognitive scaffolding for early mathematical and academic concepts.

Table 20 Cognitive

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	7	9.33
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	6	8.00
Average Development (58-91)	62	82.67
Slightly Delay (50-57)	0	0
Suggested Delay (49 below)	0	0
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**78.56**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**8.98**	**-**

The Kindergarten learners demonstrate Average Development in cognitive skills, with a mean score of 78.56 (SD = 8.98). The vast majority of the students, 82.67% (f = 62), perform within the average range. Additionally, 9.33% (f = 7) are classified as Highly Advanced and 8.00% (f = 6) are Slightly Advanced. Crucially, no learners exhibit any cognitive delays.

This stable, uniform performance is reflected in the narrow standard deviation (SD = 8.98), indicating a highly consistent level of cognitive readiness across the cohort. Having nearly half of the students enrolled at age four (45.33%) typically introduces cognitive variance. However, the teachers' high-extent practices in Scaffolding and Book Introduction (mean of 3.71) and Vocabulary Embedding (mean of 3.62) provide a supportive cognitive safety net. According to Vygotsky (1978), consistent, structured pre-reading guidance and clear, translated definitions help stabilize cognitive processing, allowing younger learners to successfully keep pace with their five-year-old classmates.

While this performance shows strong foundational reasoning, the concentration of students in the average range points to a need for deeper intellectual stimulation. Table 12 revealed that teachers struggle to implement complex cognitive activities, with scaffolding critical comparisons (Item 5) scoring the lowest (3.18, Moderate Extent). Early childhood research by Puranik et al. (2023) notes that without explicit, analytical prompts that challenge children to compare, contrast, and problem-solve, cognitive development remains flat and functional rather than advanced.

Socio-Emotional. This dimension determines the learner's emotional regulation, self-concept, and interpersonal competence in establishing positive relationships with peers and authorities, complying with classroom boundaries, and showing resilience during school transitions.

Table 21 Socio-Emotional

Mastery Level	Frequency n = 75	Percentage
Highly Advanced (100)	9	12.00
Slightly Advanced (92-99)	16	21.33
Average Development (58-91)	50	66.67
Slightly Delay (50-57)	0	0
Suggested Delay (49 below)	0	0
Total	**75**	**100**
Average	**82.04**	**-**
Standard Deviation	**10.81**	**-**

The Kindergarten learners exhibit a stable level of social and emotional maturity, with an average score of 82.04 (SD = 10.81), representing Average Development. A substantial 66.67% (f = 50) of the pupils perform within the average range, while 21.33% (f = 16) are Slightly Advanced and 12.00% (f = 9) are Highly Advanced. Notably, no children exhibit any social or emotional delays.

This healthy socio-emotional profile is particularly impressive given the demographic challenges of the cohort. Standard early childhood literature suggests that classrooms dominated by active boys (60.00%) and younger four-year-old learners (45.33%) often face higher rates of emotional dysregulation, sharing difficulties, and behavioral outbursts (Adolph, 2023). However, the high performance here indicates that the school environment successfully supports emotional growth.

This success is directly tied to the teachers' instructional habits. By using physical gestures and expressions to explain characters' emotions to a high extent and demonstrating strong print-awareness modeling, teachers create a predictable, emotionally secure space. As Denham et al. (2024) note, when teachers explicitly model self-regulation and help young children identify feelings through characters in storybooks, it significantly boosts the learners' self-awareness and social cooperation.

Summary on the Students' Level of Learning and Skills Readiness. Table 22 presents the level of learning and skills readiness of Kindergarten learners in terms of gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive, expressive, cognitive and socio-emotional.

Table 22 Summary on the Students' Level of Learning and Skills Readiness

Domains	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Gross motor	92.32	10.27	Slightly Advanced
Fine motor	78.59	12.61	Average Development
Self-help	79.49	10.70	Average Development
Receptive	91.16	12.22	Average Development
Expressive	77.19	12.78	Average Development
Cognitive	78.56	8.98	Average Development
Socio-emotional	82.04	10.81	Average Development
OVERALL MEAN	**82.76**	**11.20**	Average Development

Legend: 100 Highly Advanced; 92 – 99 Slightly Advanced; 58 – 91 Average Development; 50 – 57 Slightly Delay; Below 49 Significant Delay

The Kindergarten learners possess a solid foundation of developmental readiness, as shown by the overall mean score of 82.76 (SD = 11.20), which represents Average Development. This overall average indicates that the cohort is developmentally prepared for structured primary schooling. Among the seven core ECD domains, the learners perform strongest in Gross Motor Skills (92.32, Slightly Advanced) and Receptive Language (91.16, Average Development). Conversely, their lowest scores are in Expressive Language (77.19, Average Development) and Cognitive Development (78.56, Average Development).

This performance profile highlights a distinct early developmental pattern: the children have highly developed physical and receptive abilities, but face challenges in expressive communication and higher-order reasoning. The high scores in physical coordination and basic listening comprehension show that the children are well-equipped to navigate the physical classroom and easily follow spoken instructions. This strength is supported by the teachers' extensive use of physical modeling, gestures, and native-language translation (overall practices mean of 3.57).

However, the lower scores in expressive language and cognitive development show that children struggle when asked to verbally organize their thoughts or engage in complex reasoning. Because the classroom has a high concentration of young boys (60.00%) and four-year-old learners (45.33%), these expressive and cognitive tasks are developmentally more difficult. This gap is further widened by the teachers' lower scores in facilitating Analytical Talk and Dialogic Pausing (3.38), which limits opportunities for children to engage in deeper classroom discussions.

TESTING SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

Teacher practices and learning readiness of the learners. Table 23 discloses the results of testing the relationship between teachers' practices and the learning readiness of the Kindergarten learners.

Table 23 Testing of Significant Relationships

Variables	Computed r	Critical p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Teachers' practices and the learning readiness of the Kindergarten learners	0.980	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant

@ 0.05 level of significance

The correlation analysis reveals a powerful, positive relationship between the teachers' practices and the developmental readiness of the Kindergarten learners, with a computed Pearson r coefficient of 0.980 and a critical p-value of 0.001. Because the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a highly significant, positive correlation between the instructional strategies employed by the teachers and the overall learning readiness of their pupils.

An r-value of 0.980 represents an exceptionally strong, near-perfect linear relationship. This statistically demonstrates that as teachers increase their use of scaffolding, dialogic reading, and structured vocabulary embedding, there is a corresponding increase in the developmental skills of the learners. This finding strongly validates the core focus of early childhood education: teacher-led instructional quality is the single most critical factor in driving student development.

This statistical link is especially important given the demographic challenges of this cohort. With 60.00% of the students being boys and nearly half (45.33%) enrolled at just four years old, these young learners are developmentally vulnerable to language, fine motor, and expressive delays. The strong correlation shows that the teachers' high-extent practices serve as a crucial developmental safety net. As Vygotsky (1978) established in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework, young children cannot bridge developmental gaps alone; they require structured adult guidance to turn emerging skills into fully developed abilities.

Furthermore, this finding aligns with studies by Duke et al. (2021) and reports from EDCOM II (2026), which show that interactive literacy strategies—like dialogic pausing and native-language vocabulary embedding—directly accelerate both cognitive and language processing in early learners. When teachers actively model reading, use physical gestures, and translate concepts into local mother tongue terms, they create a highly supportive environment. This systematic scaffolding directly translates into the strong average developmental scores (overall mean of 82.76) observed across the student cohort.

Ultimately, these results show that the teachers' daily instructional choices directly shape their students' developmental outcomes

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Table 24 discloses the issues and concerns encountered by teachers during teaching kindergarten learners.

Table 24 Issues and Concerns

Rank	Issues and Concerns	Mean
1st	Managing short attention spans, low focus levels, and frequent transitions during structural classroom tasks.	3.82
2nd	Handling emotional outbursts, crying, or separation anxiety during morning drop-offs and early routines.	3.81
3rd	Addressing peer conflicts, physical aggression, or challenges with sharing and collaborative social play.	3.80
4th	Conducting individualized, performance-based assessments while managing the rest of the active class simultaneously.	3.78

5th	Navigating vast gaps in school readiness among incoming learners (e.g., varying literacy, math, and motor skills).	3.73
6th	Balancing early academic standards (reading/writing) with developmentally appropriate, play-based activities.	3.72
7th	Shortage of physical manipulative materials, early literacy books, and creative sensory classroom supplies.	3.00
8th	Coping with inadequate physical space or layout constraints for dynamic learning centers and safe movement.	2.90
9th	Low parental involvement or lack of instructional reinforcement and home-based follow-through on early milestones.	2.64
10th	Burdensome administrative paperwork, logging, and large class sizes that reduce one-on-one student interaction.	2.18

The feedback from Kindergarten teachers reveals that immediate classroom management, behavioral dynamics, and emotional regulation represent their most pressing daily challenges, far outweighing systemic, parental, or administrative burdens. Specifically, managing short attention spans and transition routines ranks first as the most critical issue (M = 3.82), followed closely by handling emotional outbursts and separation anxiety (M = 3.81, 2nd), and addressing peer conflicts or challenges with sharing (M = 3.80, 3rd). These intense behavioral concerns align directly with the cohort's demographic profile, which is characterized by a male majority (60.00%) and a large percentage of younger, four-year-old learners (45.33%) who naturally possess shorter attention spans and are still developing early self-regulation skills (Adolph, 2023).

Instructional and operational hurdles also present significant friction for educators. Teachers find it highly challenging to conduct individualized, performance-based ECD assessments while managing an active classroom (M = 3.78, 4th), navigate vast readiness gaps among incoming learners (M = 3.73, 5th), and balance early academic expectations with play-based activities (M = 3.72, 6th). This instructional strain explains why teachers struggle to implement deeper, individualized strategies like analytical talk, as the immediate demands of classroom control often force a default to safer, teacher-directed routines.

In contrast, broader systemic and external issues are perceived as significantly less problematic. A shortage of physical learning manipulatives (M = 3.00, 7th) and physical space constraints (M = 2.90, 8th) are seen as only moderate challenges. Surprisingly, low parental involvement (M = 2.64, 9th) and administrative paperwork (M = 2.18, 10th) rank at the very bottom. These lower rankings suggest that veteran teachers have successfully adapted to bureaucratic demands and view local families as cooperative partners.

3. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

Summary

This research aimed to determine the relationship between early childhood teaching practices and their impact on the learning and skills readiness of Kindergarten learners in Loon South District, Division of Bohol during the School Year 2026–2027 as basis for a proposed Teacher Intervention Plan. The research analyzed key operational pillars of early childhood teaching practices—such as scaffolding, book introduction, vocabulary embedding, mother tongue translation, and dialogic reading—while concurrently assessing student performance across seven critical developmental domains: gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills. The study also examined the main classroom management concerns and pedagogical difficulties faced by educators in delivering early childhood instruction and performance-based assessments. To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a descriptive-correlational research methodology, acquiring raw data from the Kindergarten teachers and their individual student cohorts through standardized Early Childhood Development (ECD) checklists and survey questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically employing weighted means, standard deviations, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient assessed at the predetermined alpha = 0.05 significance level.

Findings

The findings revealed that the teacher-respondents' relevant information indicated a highly experienced and professionally established group, with an average of 11.86 years in teaching service. This profile suggests they possess the professional maturity, classroom wisdom, and pedagogical expertise required to facilitate early childhood development effectively. Meanwhile, the student-respondents provide a unique demographic basis for the study,

with a distinct male majority and nearly half of the cohort enrolled as younger, four-year-old learners, which naturally influences the baseline physical and cognitive dynamics of the classroom.

The study further examined the level of teachers' early childhood practices alongside their primary classroom challenges. Results show that teachers generally demonstrate a High Extent of practice across the standard instructional pillars. High levels of implementation were observed in "mother tongue translation" and "scaffolding and book introduction", indicating that teachers are highly capable of setting up structured lesson frameworks and using local languages to aid comprehension. However, lower levels of practice were noted in "analytical talk and dialogic pausing, which directly parallels their top classroom concerns: managing short attention spans during transitions, handling emotional outbursts, and addressing peer conflicts. Conversely, low parental involvement and administrative paperwork were ranked as the least challenging, showing that teachers' struggles are primarily centered on real-time behavioral management.

In terms of the students' level of learning and skills readiness, the results indicate varying degrees of developmental maturity across the core Early Childhood Development (ECD) domains (overall mean of 82.76, Average Development). Students demonstrate Slightly Advanced skills in Gross Motor coordination and high average capabilities in Receptive Language, suggesting a strong ability to physically navigate the school environment and comprehend spoken classroom instructions. However, their proficiency in Expressive Language and Cognitive Development remains at a much lower average tier. This indicates a significant "performance plateau" where students easily absorb information but struggle to verbally express their thoughts or engage in higher-order, comparative reasoning. Overall, the findings suggest that while students have mastered the foundational "receptive" mechanics of learning, there is a critical need to strengthen their expressive communication and cognitive problem-solving skills.

Finally, the study highlights that early childhood teaching practices and students' developmental readiness are significantly interconnected. The exceptionally strong, positive relationship found between these variables ($r = 0.980$, $p = 0.001$) suggests that as teachers refine their instructional techniques—moving beyond basic translation toward active "dialogic interaction" and targeted motor exercises—student readiness improves measurably. These findings underscore the importance of implementing the proposed "Teacher Intervention Plan," which serves as a practical, localized bridge to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and, consequently, elevate students from functional average learners to highly advanced ready achievers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The professional profile of the kindergarten teachers serves as a strong foundation for the school's early developmental goals. Because the educators are highly experienced, with an average of over eleven years in service, they possess the pedagogical maturity and classroom wisdom to bridge the gap between structured instructional strategies and real-time developmental needs. Similarly, the student profile highlights that while the majority are active young boys, nearly half are enrolled at the younger age of four. This indicates that the learners are at a highly sensitive developmental stage, making this the most critical and responsive window for structured classroom intervention.

Second, while early childhood teaching practices are applied to a "High Extent," there is a clear "pedagogical disconnect" between instruction and real-time classroom realities. Teachers are highly effective at utilizing traditional structural practices like mother tongue translation and basic book scaffolding, yet they find themselves heavily challenged by behavioral management, specifically short student attention spans, emotional outbursts during transitions, and peer conflicts. This suggests that while teachers possess strong instructional capabilities, they need more specialized, active behavior-management training and transition strategies to handle the dynamic energy of younger, male-dominated cohorts without sacrificing instructional flow.

Third, the students' developmental readiness levels reveal a "receptive-expressive mismatch." The learners have achieved high average and slightly advanced proficiency in gross motor coordination and receptive listening comprehension, but they falter in expressive language and higher-order cognitive reasoning. This leads to the conclusion that students are "passive absorbers" of language rather than "active communicators." Without targeted intervention, these students risk hitting a developmental plateau where they can understand what they are told but remain unable to verbally articulate their own ideas, solve complex problems, or engage in cooperative, critical dialogue.

Finally, the statistically significant relationship proves that early childhood teaching practices are a primary

driver of developmental readiness. The conclusion is clear: the students' struggles with expressive communication and cognitive reasoning are not due to a lack of inherent ability, but rather a lack of active, dialogue-rich opportunities for practice. Therefore, the proposed "Learning Exercises" are not merely supplementary; they are an essential developmental bridge. By integrating these targeted exercises into the daily routine, teachers can transition from "passive reading models" to "dialogic interactive partners," effectively elevating student performance from basic developmental readiness to advanced early academic excellence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

First, school administrators and district supervisors should design and implement targeted professional development programs that focus on active classroom management, sensory transition strategies, and positive behavioral intervention support (PBIS). Because teachers are highly experienced but heavily challenged by short student attention spans, emotional outbursts during transitions, and peer conflicts, training should move away from administrative compliance and instead focus on practical, real-time strategies. Equipping educators with tools to manage the high energy of younger, male-dominated Kindergarten cohorts will prevent instructional disruptions and preserve valuable learning time.

Second, Kindergarten teachers should actively integrate and prioritize the proposed "Learning Exercises" within their daily classroom routines. Rather than treating these exercises as separate, optional activities, teachers should embed them directly into story-reading, circle time, and play sessions. Specifically, teachers should utilize these exercises to transition from traditional "word-calling" to dialogic interaction—using strategy-driven pauses, open-ended conversational prompts, and peer-paired discussions. This deliberate shift will directly target the learners' receptive-expressive mismatch, helping them transition from passive listeners to active, expressive verbal communicators.

Third, the school should establish a structured home-school developmental partnership that extends the "Learning Exercises" into local households. School heads can organize simple, hands-on parent workshops that teach families how to reinforce expressive language, self-help autonomy, and cognitive reasoning at home through everyday conversations and play. By sharing these practical, easy-to-use learning guides with parents, the school can tap into their natural willingness to support, transforming them from general supervisors into active developmental partners who reinforce classroom learning in the home.

Finally, future researchers should conduct longitudinal or follow-up studies to measure the direct impact of the newly implemented "Learning Exercises" on students' ECD scores over a full school year. Additionally, future research could explore other underlying variables that may affect expressive language and cognitive development, such as the digital screen-time habits of younger learners or the specific impact of localized mother-tongue materials on early literacy. This will help refine early childhood policies and ensure continuous improvement in Kindergarten school readiness.

4. OUTPUT OF THE STUDY

Rationale

The early childhood development (ECD) profile of kindergarten learners at Loon South District reveals a clear receptive-expressive mismatch. While the learners demonstrate highly capable gross motor coordination and strong receptive language comprehension, they experience a significant performance plateau in expressive language and cognitive reasoning. They can absorb spoken instructions and understand stories, but they struggle to verbally articulate their own ideas, explain logical concepts, or resolve peer conflicts.

This developmental gap is deeply rooted in both classroom demographics and daily instructional friction. The classroom is highly active, with a distinct male majority and nearly half of the cohort enrolled as younger, four-year-old learners. Consequently, teachers identify their top daily struggles as managing short attention spans and transition routines, handling emotional outbursts, and managing peer conflicts. Because teachers are overwhelmed by these real-time behavioral challenges, they often default to passive, teacher-directed lectures, scoring lowest in active pedagogical strategies like Analytical Talk and Dialogic Pausing.

However, the study's correlation analysis proves a near-perfect positive relationship between teaching practices and student readiness. This statistical link confirms that targeted, structured adjustments in classroom routines can rapidly accelerate student development.

To bridge this gap, these Learning Exercises have been developed. Designed as a practical, low-preparation toolkit, these exercises embed verbal expression, cognitive critical thinking, and emotional self-regulation directly into the daily Kindergarten routine. By transforming passive transitions and

storytimes into interactive, dialogue-rich moments, these exercises help teachers manage high classroom energy while shifting young learners from passive listeners to active, expressive communicators.

Objectives

1. Transition students from single-word or literal responses to complete, self-directed verbal descriptions and narratives.
2. Cultivate early analytical skills, sorting, categorization, and simple problem-solving through hands-on play.
3. Provide teachers with active, physical cues to minimize behavioral outbursts and focus short attention spans during routine changes.
4. Help young learners identify feelings, practice turn-taking, and resolve peer conflicts independently.
5. Create brief, structured small-group activities that allow teachers to assess individual ECD milestones without losing control of the classroom.

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