
Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Prencesita P. Alot¹, Edilberto Z. Andal Ed. D.²

^{1,2}LSPU SPCC Graduate Studies and Applied Research, Philippines,

ABSTRACT: The term kindergarten came from a German origin that means “children’s garden. It serves as a transition period from home or preschool to formal education. The main purpose of kindergarten is to provide foundation for the child’s wholistic development. In Kindergarten program, children are engaged in different activities that are age appropriate. These activities are designed to promote the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children . Many research have shown that during the early years, rapid brain development occurred forming the foundation for future academic success. This stage is crucial because it is during this time that they develop the essential skills to prepare them for Grade 1 . This study sought to find out how the implementation of a kindergarten curriculum affects the readiness of our young learners for formal education. Several variables related to curriculum were considered in this study. These were the objectives of kindergarten curriculum in the Philippines, the Budget of Work provided by DepEd, the instructional materials used, the teacher’s competencies, learning environment and lesson planning. It was then correlated with the basic competencies expected from kinder pupils in terms of health and well-being, socio-emotional development, language, literacy and communication (listening/viewing, speaking, reading, writing), mathematics and understanding the physical and natural environment. This research was conducted in the Schools Division of San Pablo wherein 70 kindergarten teachers from public schools were the respondents. The research method used was a quantitative descriptive method with Pearson product-moment correlation. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between the implementation of the curriculum and the pupils acquired basic competencies.

KEYWORDS: competencies, curriculum, implementation, kindergarten.

I. INTRODUCTION

Under the Republic Act 10157 or the Kindergarten Education Act, kindergarten will become an essential part of the basic education system in the Philippines. This makes kindergarten the first stage of compulsory and mandatory formal education for five-year-old children. It means that children have to complete this one-year preparatory education before they can be admitted in Grade 1. This Act also ensures that all children will be given equal opportunities to successfully develop their physical, social, intellectual, emotional, skills stimulation and values formation that will make them adapt to the formal education easily. The goal of the State is to provide an education which is learner-centered and caters to the needs of children in terms of their cognitive and cultural capacity, the diversity of learners.

The Department of Education adopted the general principles of the National Early Learning Framework (NELF) in crafting the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework, which draws from the objectives of the K-12 Basic Education .Kindergarten Curriculum Framework (KCF) demonstrates the theoretical foundation for teaching-learning in the formative years which are built on constructivism, integrative, thematic ,collaborative, inquiry based and reflective teaching in play-based approaches with application of the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP).

According to Clough, Nutbrown, and Selbie (2008), recent studies focused on the different aspects of children’s life. They believed that young children are born capable of understanding the world around them if they are exposed to the proper environment and qualified teachers. Bredekamp (1997) holds the idea that children’s brains are ready to learn when all the conditions are met. To them, during the brain process, both the environment and genes take an important role which in turn builds the brain, therefore, these vulnerable children needs to be given the necessary attention and effective teaching in order for them to realize their potentials fully.

If the curriculum will be implemented properly, young children coming from low socio-economic background can acquire the early reading and numeracy skills. They can also develop high cognitive and positive self-image which will allow them to cope with children from high and middle socio-economic class. Based on the study conducted by Oppenheim and Koren-

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Karie (2002), children who undergo early education have a higher chance to complete their high school and pursue their college education

The word "implementation" refers to "actual use" of curriculum/syllabus or anything in practices (Marsh 2008). Curriculum is a plan that turns into a reality when teachers implement it in the class and benefit the learners. Hasan (1984) echoes what Fullan and Pomfret put forward that curriculum implementation is "efforts made to realize ideas, concepts, and values in the written form into reality".

The DepEd Budget of Work (BOW) is a reference for teaching in preparing daily or weekly lessons. It is regarded as one of the instructional resources for instructors who manage classrooms with many grade levels. The budgeted set of works includes several K-12 Basic Education Curriculum competencies, skills, activities with time allotments, and objectives. Kindergarten CLMD4A BOW includes a quarter, MELCs, learning competencies, and an assignment that could be either the first to appear or a follow-up competency. The basic features and frameworks of early childhood education had taken into consideration the areas of child development. (DepEd R4A CLMD)

According to Onditi (2018), educational materials have some inherent benefits for teaching and learning. Because they increase students' interest in learning, teachers are given engaging venues for sharing information throughout lessons. To explain challenging concepts with ease, teachers often use instructional materials. They typically ease the burden and reduce the tension associated with teaching and learning. They are crucial forces for the learners' intellectual and social growth.

The intellectual and social growth of kids during their formative years is significantly aided by kindergarten teachers. The education that instructors provide children with is crucial in deciding their possibilities for the future. Teachers provide the tools and environment for their students to develop into responsible adults, whether in preschools or high schools or in private or public schools (Hodgkinson, 2003).

A stimulating environment is necessary for preschool education in order to maximize learning. Children's readiness, the classroom atmosphere, teaching techniques, assessment, and instructional materials are just a few of the variables that contribute to the effectiveness of the simulative environment in the teaching and learning process. (Rajapaksha & Chaturika, 2015)

Aggarwal (2001) describes a lesson plan as a blueprint, a road map for action, or an extensive list of teaching and learning activities that take place in a classroom. Although flexible, Aggarwal describes it as a systematic approach to teaching the concepts, abilities, and attitudes. According to Arrends (2009), a daily lesson plan outlines the subject matter to be covered, the motivational strategies to be employed, the processes and tasks that students will complete, the supplies required, and the method of evaluation.

In the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum, there are several areas of development that teachers need to assess to find out if the pupils acquired the basic competencies that will enable them to adjust to the demands of Grade 1.

The prime of life is in early childhood. The best time to develop their motor skills is right now. The stimulation will significantly hasten the development of motor skills because the nervous system's growth starts at this time. Children who solely engage in passive play, like using touch screens on iPhones, will see a decline in their motor skills. (Cristia A., Seidl A., 2015). According to Madrona (2014), the goal of motor development is to attain self-control so that we can take advantage of all of our body's potential for movement. Motor function, which is the practice of movements aimed at the various connections that children make with their environment, is one way that this development is demonstrated.

The framework of social and emotional learning (SEL), which organizes social and emotional competencies around five types of competence: self and social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, has been the main area of study for socio-emotional competencies at schools (Greenberg et al., 2003; Jones and Doolittle, 2017), programs that focus on these competencies have been linked to improved self-regulation, fewer disruptive behaviors, decreased anxiety, and better institutional adaptation. (Durlak et al., 2011).

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) asserts that the preschool/kindergarten stage of development maintains the development of communication, language, and literacy through the Continuum of Development. The abilities displayed by infants and toddlers continue to grow as kids learn to communicate effectively with peers and adults using both spoken and nonverbal cues. Their growing vocabulary helps kids to explain and interpret their experiences and the environment around them. They take note of environmental print, practice literacy, and grow more conscious of its influence on human behavior. They become more phonologically aware as they manipulate words, identify letters, and start to write them.

According to Sutari (2000), reading is the process of deciphering written or printed language by analyzing its letters or symbols. Reading is the process of learning a new language's whole linguistic meaning through the sign that is used to represent it. The significance of phonological awareness and phonics abilities for beginning readers has been extensively studied. A "strong and significant predictor of word reading skills in elementary children" is phonological awareness (Park & Lombardino, 2013)

As opposed to being a passive process, hearing requires active cognitive skills. Children begin to acquire and enhance this talent during the preschool years by hearing stories, repeating them, and applying memory technique (Vesu-Petra et al., 2008)[23]

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Writing instruction in preschool places more of an emphasis on procedural information, such as letter production and fine motor skills, than it does on the meaning-making processes involved in writing (such as interpersonal communication, visual representations, and recording ideas). Children learn to write by regularly practicing the act of writing and experimenting with print (Tolchinsky 2014).[24]

It is emphasized how important it is to be able to communicate with others, to comprehend what they are trying to say, and to share their own experiences. Communication is an interaction-based social activity that allows people to communicate actions, feelings, and experiences (Brodin 2018).[25]

Speaking abilities are the first factors to ensure that children engage with teachers and friends because they are employed in verbal exchanges throughout teaching and learning activities (Gu, 2015)[26]

Young children learn daily mathematics in their natural environments, which includes more than just numeracy and covers a range of concepts including pattern, space, and shape in addition to number and operations. It involves both skills and concepts, is both concrete and abstract, and can be learnt both naturally and with adult guidance. It is also true that lower-SES children perform less proficiently in math than their middle-SES peers, especially when metacognition is needed, but they enter early childhood education environments with the fundamental knowledge and abilities they need to become proficient in math. (Lewis et al.,)[27] Pre-school children are capable of engaging in sophisticated discourse. It was found that when young learners were given opportunities to explain their thinking, elaborate on concepts, and generate mathematical discourse, they also used high-level mathematical activities (Sfard, 2008).

Children who have a solid foundation in a particular subject area (such as mathematics or a branch of science) progress more quickly in learning increasingly difficult skills. Since mathematics and science are "privileged domains," that is, areas in which kids naturally like to learn, experiment, and explore, they enable nurturing and extending the scope of the learning that kids are already actively engaged in. (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001)

Childhood is a time for exploring the natural world. When seen as a means of creating understanding and cultivating concepts, science makes sense as a topic of study for young children. Children's investigations into relevant phenomena provide a rich environment for the development of a variety of cognitive skills as well as the foundational experiences for subsequent science study. Additionally, it provides a setting for kids to learn and practice a variety of foundational math and literacy skills. (Worth, 2010)

Supporting young children's development of scientific thinking during their early years can help them easily transfer their thinking abilities to other academic domains, potentially boosting their academic success and sense of self-efficacy (Kuhn & Pearsall, 2000).

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Acquisition of Pupil's Basic Competencies. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the teacher's profile in terms age, gender, educational attainment and years in service.
2. How do the teacher's perceived the implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum in terms of objectives of kindergarten, Budget of Work, Materials/resources, teacher's competencies, learning environment, lesson planning?
3. What is the teacher's perception of children's basic competencies in terms of health, well-being and motor skills, socio-emotional development, language, literacy and communication (listening/viewing, speaking, reading, writing), mathematics and understanding the physical and natural environment.
4. Are the pupil's competencies significantly related to the teacher's profile and in the implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum?

Research Hypotheses

1. Pupil's acquisition of basic competencies is not significantly related to teacher's profile
2. Pupil's acquisition of basic competencies is not significantly related to
 - 2.1 Objectives of Kindergarten;
 - 2.2 Budget of Work;
 - 2.3 Materials/ Resources;
 - 2.4 Teacher's Competencies;
 - 2.5 Learning Environment;
 - 2.6 Lesson Planning?

2. METHOD

The research designed utilized for this study was descriptive survey. The descriptive survey design was employed because the study sought to collect data from the kindergarten teachers in public schools in the Division of San Pablo City regarding their perception in the Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum in the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies.

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

A purposive sampling method was utilized because they have the characteristics that will best answer my research question. In this study, kindergarten teachers from the public schools in the Division of San Pablo were the target respondents. A total of 70 kinder teachers participated in the study. The researcher constructed the survey questionnaire as the main instrument to gather the needed data for the study based on different literature to cover all the variables explored in the study. It was structured on a 5 point Likert scale. It was checked by the panel and underwent the pilot testing. The Cronbach's alpha measurement showed that each parameter in the study's item had a good to excellent level internal consistency.

To answer the prevailing problem and questions of the study, the data gathered were subjected to the following statistical treatment.

Simple descriptive statistics like frequency distributions and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents with respect to their age, gender, educational attainment and years in service.

The mean and standard deviation were used to describe the general perception of the respondents to each variable.

To determine the relationship between the teacher's profile and the basic competencies of the learners and the relationship between curriculum and competencies, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used wherein **correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

3. RESULT

Research Question 1. What is the teacher's profile in terms age, gender, educational attainment and years in service?

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

PERSONAL INFO		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE	30 years and below	10	14
	31-40 years old	35	50
	41-50 years old	16	23
	51 and above	9	13
	TOTAL	70	100
GENDER	Male	0	0
	Female	70	100
	TOTAL	70	100
YEARS IN SERVICE	0-5 years	15	21
	6-10 years	37	53
	11-15 years	11	16
	16-20 years	4	6
	21 and above	3	4
	TOTAL	70	100
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	BS Degree Holder	23	33
	BS w/MA units	30	43
	MA Graduate	15	21.4
	MA w/ Doctoral units	2	3
	TOTAL	70	100

Table 1 shows that 50% of my respondents belong to age bracket of 31-40 years old, all are female, 53

% have been teaching for 6-10 years and 43 % are Bachelors Degree Holder with MA units. It means that most of them belong to the middle age group and teaching for 6-10 years. 66% of the respondents are into graduate studies to develop professionally.

Research Question 2. How do the teacher's perceived the implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum in terms of objectives of kindergarten, Budget of Work, Materials/resources, teacher's competencies, learning environment, lesson planning?

Table 2. Teacher's perception in the implementation of kindergarten curriculum

Variables/ Indicators	OverAllMean	OverallSD	Over all Interpretation
1 Objectives of Kindergarten	4.83	.55	Highly Practiced
2 Budget of Works	4.73	.59	Highly Practiced
3 Materials	4.60	.57	Highly Practiced
4 Teacher's Competencies	4.79	.53	Highly Practiced
5 Learning Environment	4.70	.56	Highly Practiced
6 Lesson Planning	4.76	.50	Highly Practiced

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that all the variables being considered In the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum was highly practiced. Variable 1 or the objectives of the kindergarten curriculum got the highest overall mean of 4.83. It implies that the respondents agreed that the objectives of kindergarten are observed in the implementation of the curriculum. Overall, the objectives of kindergarten education are to provide a foundation for future learning and help children develop the skills they need to succeed academically and socially The standard deviation ranges from .50-.59 which means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread because they are close to the mean This means that they take into consideration each variable when teaching the kindergarten.

Research Question 3: What is the teacher's perception of children's basic competencies in terms of health, well-being and motor skills, socio-emotional development, language, literacy and communication (listening/viewing, speaking, reading, writing), mathematics and understanding the physical and natural environment?

Table 3. Teacher's Perception on Pupil's Acquired Basic Competencies

	Indicators	Over AllMean	OverallSD	Over all Interpretation
1	Health, Well-being and motor skills	4.80	.55	Highly Competent
2	Socio- emotional development	4.79	.55	Highly Competent
3	Language, Literacy and Communication			
	a. Listening/ Viewing	4.69	.61	Highly Competent
	b. Speaking	4.75	.58	Highly Competent
	c. Reading	4.76	.57	Highly Competent
	d. Writing	4.77	.57	Highly Competent
4	Mathematics	4.79	.55	Highly Competent
6	Understanding the Physical and NaturalEnvironment	4.79	.55	Highly Competent

Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed in all the variables being considered in the pupil's acquisition of basic competencies. They perceived that in terms of different areas or variable, the pupils are considered highly competent especially in terms of health, well-being and motor skills having the highest overall mean of 4.80. Motor skills are essential in the development of kinder pupils. Once developed, it will allow children to engage in various physical activities and interact with their environment. It will also enable them to participate and perform in the different academic tasks. Children who have good socioemotional skills typically perform better academically. Preschoolers are better prepared to learn, participate in class activities, and develop cognitive skills when they can control their emotions, concentrate, and cooperate well with others.

Table 4. Relationship Between the Teachers' Profile and Acquisition of Pupil's Basic Competencies

Teachers' Profile	Pupils' Basic Competencies							
	Health Well-being	Socio-Emotional Dev't	Listening Viewing	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Math	Understanding Physical and Natural Environment
Age	.89	.132	.121	.104	.067	.080	.082	.029
Years in Service	.210	.174	.116	.133	.094	.179	.156	.074
Educ'l Attainment	.021	.177	.176	.178	.202	.178	.133	.137

****Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed)**

The relationship between a teacher's profile—their educational background and teaching experience—and the students' development of basics skills may not always be straightforward. Numerous research have looked into this relationship and produced contradictory results. While some studies have not identified a significant association, some have indicated a favorable correlation between teacher traits and student achievement in basic competencies. In summary, the relationship between a teacher's profile and the acquisition of basic competencies is complex and can be influenced by various factors.

Table 5. Relationship between Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum And Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Kindergarten Curriculum	Pupils Basic Competencies							
	Health Well-being	Socio-Emotional Dev't	Listening Viewing	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Math	Understanding Physical and Natural Environment
Objectives	.915**	.908**	.825**	.816**	.812**	.835**	.858**	.875**
Budget of Work	.835**	.807**	.747**	.736**	.739**	.757**	.743**	.786**

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

Materials	.738**	.717**	.687**	.675**	.707**	.708**	.706**	.750**
Teachers' Competencies	.836**	.795**	.709**	.757**	.802**	.786**	.812**	.821**
Learning Environment	.779**	.744**	.733**	.750**	.811**	.793**	.805**	.826**
Lesson Planning	.827**	.757**	.779**	.773**	.790**	.781**	.795**	.834**

**Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows the significant relationship between implementing the Kindergarten Curriculum and acquiring Basis Competencies. The findings show that the Kindergarten Curriculum correlated with the Acquisition of Basic Competencies. It implies that when the Kindergarten Curriculum is highly practiced in terms of objectives, Budget of Work, Materials/resources, teachers' competencies, learning environment and lesson planning, will positively impact the acquisition of basic competencies of the kinder pupils.

The Objectives of Kindergarten are significantly related to the acquisition of basic competencies. One of these is to successfully promote their physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development and values formation to prepare them for Grade 1. An effective curriculum provides teachers, students, school leaders, and community stakeholders with a measurable plan and structure for quality education. When teachers utilize appropriate learning materials in teaching kindergarten, the acquisition of basic competencies by providing concrete experiences, facilitating multisensory learning, and promoting active participation of learners. It also creates stimulating environments that nurture the children holistically. By applying their competencies, teachers can create a positive and enriching learning environment that fosters the holistic development of kindergartners, promotes engagement and motivation, and lays a strong foundation for future academic success. Effective lesson planning considers young children's developmental needs, interests, and abilities, ensuring that appropriate learning experiences are provided to support their growth and development.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings gathered in the study led to the formulation of the following conclusion:

1. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' profile and the acquisition of basic competencies is *sustained*.
2. The hypothesis stating that pupils' acquisition of basic competencies is not significantly related to implementing kindergarten curriculum is *not sustained*.

It can be concluded in the study that the implementation of the Kindergarten Curriculum is effective in developing the basic competencies of the kinder pupils in the Division of San Pablo if the different variables are taken into consideration when teaching. However, the profile of the teachers have no direct effect on the pupil's basic competencies.

The researcher recommended that the teachers may continue to implement the kindergarten curriculum since it was found effective in developing the basic competencies of the pupils. Teachers may continue to research on how to improve the delivery of the lessons and develop our competencies for our pupils. School head may give the kinder teachers technical assistance and the resources they need in teaching kindergarten. Future researcher may conduct other studies to find out other factors that may affect the children's acquisition of basic competencies.

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Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum and the Pupil's Acquisition of Basic Competencies

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