

BUILDING SCHOOL READINESS THROUGH PRE-K/DAYCARE PROGRAM: LITERACY, NUMERACY AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROVINCE OF CATANDUANES

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Pre-K/Day Care programs in fostering school readiness among children in the Province of Catanduanes, focusing on literacy readiness, numeracy skills, and socio-emotional growth. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes learning as a socially mediated process within the Zone of Proximal Development, the research explored how these domains interact to support holistic development. A descriptive–correlational design was employed, involving a stratified random sample of ninety-nine Kindergarten teachers from the Division of Catanduanes. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed observational rating scale validated by experts and tested for reliability, yielding a Spearman–Brown coefficient of .787 for the entire instrument. Indicators were rated on a four-point Likert scale, and weighted means were computed to determine developmental levels, while Pearson product–moment correlation was used to examine relationships among variables at a 0.05 level of significance.

Findings revealed that children often demonstrated literacy readiness, with an overall weighted mean of 2.84. Among its subdomains, reading comprehension and early writing emerged as the strongest area (WM = 3.00), followed by letter recognition and vocabulary (WM = 2.82), while phonological awareness was the weakest (WM = 2.71), indicating the need for targeted interventions in sound manipulation and rhyming skills. Numeracy skills were also rated as often demonstrated (WM = 2.84), with number recognition and counting as the most developed subdomain (WM = 3.07), and shape, pattern, and measurement awareness close behind (WM = 3.04). However, basic operations and problem-solving were only sometimes demonstrated (WM = 2.41), suggesting that abstract reasoning and multi-step tasks remain challenging for learners at this stage. Socio-emotional growth was the strongest domain overall, with a weighted mean of 3.19, reflecting children's high levels of confidence, motivation for learning, self-regulation, and positive peer interaction.

Correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between literacy readiness and numeracy skills ($r = 0.098$), confirming that these domains develop independently in early childhood. In contrast, a strong positive relationship was found between literacy readiness and socio-emotional growth ($r = 0.826$), and a moderate positive relationship between numeracy skills and socio-emotional growth ($r = 0.641$). These findings underscore the critical role of socio-emotional competencies in supporting academic development and suggest that programs integrating literacy and numeracy instruction with socio-emotional learning can enhance overall school readiness. Based on these results, an action plan was proposed to strengthen phonological awareness and problem-solving skills through daily rhyming activities, sound games, and hands-on math experiences using manipulatives, while sustaining socio-emotional strengths through cooperative play, role-playing, and thematic projects that combine academic and social-emotional objectives.

The study concludes that Pre-K/Day Care programs in Catanduanes provide a solid foundation for school readiness, particularly in socio-emotional development, but require targeted interventions in phonological awareness and early mathematical reasoning. Practical implications include prioritizing teacher training in phonological and numeracy instruction, resource allocation for print-rich and manipulative-based learning environments, and embedding socio-emotional learning strategies into daily classroom routines. While findings are context-specific and limited by the descriptive–correlational design, they offer valuable baseline data for local policy-making and program improvement. Future research should consider longitudinal tracking, direct child assessments, and comparative studies across regions to enhance generalizability and inform national strategies for early childhood education.

Keywords: Descriptive Correlational Study, School Readiness, Pre-Kindergarten/Daycare Program, Early Literacy And Early Numeracy Skills, Socio-Emotional Development