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Reading Skills and School Readiness of Kindergarten Pupils at Cogon Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the reading skills and school readiness of kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School, Monreal, Masbate, and examined the relationship between these variables. Using a descriptive-quantitative, correlational design, the study included 34 kindergarten pupils through total enumeration during School Year 2024–2025. Researcher-developed reading assessments and teacher observation checklists measured foundational literacy and cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor readiness. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, and Pearson correlation. Most pupils correctly recognized selected letters (97.06% for A, M, S, and E) and answered simple story-comprehension questions (88.24%–97.06%). However, performance was weaker in recognizing the sound associated with C (26.47%) and identifying the words *book* and *school* (35.29% each). School-readiness competencies were generally rated as often demonstrated, with comparatively lower performance in expressive communication, confidence, counting, and selected fine-motor activities. Reading skills and school readiness exhibited a very strong reported positive relationship ($r = 0.9882$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that stronger literacy performance was associated with greater developmental readiness. Teachers should prioritize phonological awareness, vocabulary enrichment, integrated developmental activities, and home-school collaboration. The single-school sample, correlational design, and limited assessment domains restrict generalizability and causal interpretation. The study provides localized evidence to guide responsive kindergarten instruction, strengthen educational sustainability, and support Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly Target 4.2 on early childhood development and readiness for primary education.

Keywords: *Early Literacy, Kindergarten Pupils, Letter Recognition, Phonological Awareness, Reading Skills, School Readiness, Social-Emotional Readiness*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading skills and school readiness are essential components of early childhood education because they support children's development and preparation for formal learning. Foundational literacy abilities, including letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, contribute to children's capacity to understand written language and participate in classroom activities. School readiness also encompasses cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical development. Recent research highlights the importance of examining these interconnected abilities during the transition to primary education (Józsa et al., 2022; Marks et al., 2023; Logan et al., 2024). Accordingly, this study investigates the reading skills and school readiness of kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School and examines the relationship between these variables as a basis for strengthening early childhood instruction.

1.1 Background and Context of the Study

School readiness is a multidimensional concept involving children's cognitive abilities, language development, social-emotional competence, and physical preparedness for classroom learning. Józsa et al. (2022), through an eight-year longitudinal investigation, demonstrated the predictive importance of preschool readiness skills for subsequent academic achievement. Similarly, Marks et al. (2023) established that children's emotional knowledge and teacher–child relationships contribute to academic readiness. These findings emphasize that preparing children for formal schooling requires attention to both academic and developmental competencies. Foundational reading skills are particularly important during the transition from kindergarten to Grade 1. Logan et al. (2024) examined early language development, letter knowledge, and phonological awareness in relation to kindergarten readiness and subsequent reading achievement. Their findings highlighted the importance of considering foundational literacy abilities together when examining school preparedness. Similarly, Silinskas et al. (2024) demonstrated the relevance of word reading and language comprehension in explaining reading development during the transition to primary education. These studies provide contemporary empirical support for examining early literacy through emergent literacy and the simple view of reading. Appropriate instructional experiences also contribute to early literacy development. Lo and Xu (2022) found that structured language-focused instruction improved selected vocabulary and comprehension-related skills among prekindergarten and kindergarten children. Korat et al. (2022) demonstrated the benefits of teacher-supported electronic storybook reading for children's story comprehension. Furthermore, Coyne et al. (2022) reported sustained improvements in knowledge of specifically taught vocabulary following supplemental kindergarten vocabulary instruction. These findings emphasize the importance of developmentally appropriate learning activities, guided instruction, and accessible reading materials. In the Philippine context, Diaz et al. (2022) examined oral language development within the kindergarten curriculum and identified strengths and gaps in its language competencies. Bloem and Wydick (2023) further demonstrated the importance of kindergarten educational experiences for subsequent academic performance in the Philippines. Consistent with these findings, the Department of Education (2023) emphasized foundational literacy, holistic development, play-based learning, and continuous assessment in its redesigned kindergarten curriculum under the MATATAG framework. The present study was conducted at Cogon Elementary School in Barangay MacArthur, Monreal, Masbate, during School Year 2024–2025. The school serves a community where farming and fishing are major livelihood activities and where limited instructional resources and infrastructure present challenges to educational delivery. These contextual conditions underscore the importance of understanding pupils' existing competencies and identifying learning needs through school-based assessment.

1.2 Research Problem

Despite the recognized importance of early literacy and holistic development, kindergarten pupils may demonstrate different levels of preparation for formal schooling. Differences in letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension may occur alongside variations in cognitive readiness, language and communication, social-emotional readiness, and motor and physical readiness. Logan et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of assessing foundational literacy competencies when examining readiness outcomes, while Marks et al. (2023) emphasized developmental factors beyond academic skills. At Cogon Elementary School, the central research problem concerns the reading skills and school readiness of kindergarten pupils and whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables. Specifically, the investigation examines pupils' performance across four reading-skill dimensions and four school-readiness dimensions. Understanding these relationships is necessary to identify instructional priorities and provide evidence for improving developmentally appropriate kindergarten learning activities.

1.3 Research Gap

Existing studies provide substantial evidence concerning early literacy development and children's preparedness for formal schooling. Józsa et al. (2022) examined the long-term predictive value of preschool readiness, while Marks et al. (2023) investigated the contribution of emotional knowledge and teacher–child relationships to academic readiness. Logan et al. (2024) and Silinskas et al. (2024) explored foundational reading abilities and their relationships with subsequent literacy development. Meanwhile, Lo and Xu (2022) and Korat et al. (2022) investigated instructional approaches designed to support language and comprehension. Although these studies contribute important evidence, they address different developmental dimensions, instructional approaches, populations, and educational settings. McCartan et al. (2023), through a systematic review of centre-based early education interventions, also emphasized limitations in existing evidence concerning the measurement of school readiness and the need for further context-specific investigation. Within the Philippine context, Diaz et al. (2022) focused on kindergarten oral language competencies, while Bloem and Wydick (2023) examined broader academic outcomes associated with kindergarten participation. However, these investigations do not directly establish the relationship between the four specified dimensions of reading skills and the four dimensions of school readiness among kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School. The present study addresses this localized gap by examining both variables within the same school setting. Its contribution lies in providing school-specific evidence regarding pupils' foundational reading abilities, developmental readiness, and the relationship between these areas, thereby informing appropriate early childhood instructional support.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess the reading skills and school readiness of kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School and determine whether a significant relationship exists between these variables. Guided by contemporary research emphasizing the interconnected development of early literacy and school-readiness competencies (Józsa et al., 2022; Logan et al., 2024; Silinskas et al., 2024), the investigation specifically seeks to determine pupils' reading skill levels in terms of letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. It also aims to assess school readiness in terms of cognitive readiness, language and communication, social-emotional readiness, and motor and physical readiness. Finally, the study examines the relationship between overall reading skills and school readiness to identify areas requiring additional instructional support.

1.5 Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

This study may provide valuable school-based evidence for improving early literacy instruction and kindergarten readiness assessment. Its findings may assist kindergarten teachers in identifying pupils' strengths and developmental needs, selecting appropriate instructional strategies, and developing learning activities that address specific reading difficulties. Evidence supporting structured language instruction and vocabulary development highlights the potential value of targeted and developmentally appropriate learning experiences (Lo & Xu, 2022; Coyne et al., 2022). For school administrators and the Department of Education, the findings may provide information for strengthening instructional materials, teacher development, and early childhood education programs consistent with the MATATAG Curriculum (Department of Education, 2023). Parents and community stakeholders may also benefit from greater awareness of the importance of supporting literacy development and school readiness through appropriate home and school learning experiences. The study's principal contribution is the generation of localized evidence concerning the relationship between reading skills and multidimensional school readiness. This evidence may guide instructional planning, learner assessment, and the development of responsive early childhood education initiatives at Cogon Elementary School.

1.6 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

This study primarily aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly Target 4.2, which promotes access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education to ensure children's readiness for primary schooling. It also supports the foundational literacy objectives associated with Target 4.1, which emphasizes effective learning outcomes in basic education. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025) recognizes quality early childhood education and improved learning outcomes as essential priorities for achieving inclusive and equitable education. By assessing reading skills and school readiness, the study contributes to educational sustainability through evidence that may support continuing improvements in foundational literacy instruction. It also supports institutional sustainability by providing information for responsive assessment, instructional planning, and appropriate allocation of learning resources. Furthermore, its implications for community sustainability include encouraging cooperation among teachers, parents, and local stakeholders in supporting children's early learning and development. Through these contributions, the study provides a basis for strengthening inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and sustainable kindergarten education within the local school community.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative approach to assess the reading skills and school readiness of 34 kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School, Monreal, Masbate. Structured reading assessments and teacher observations were used to measure foundational literacy competencies and developmental readiness. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between reading skills and school readiness.

2.1. Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-quantitative research design to assess kindergarten pupils' reading skills and school readiness without manipulating the learning environment. Reading skills were examined in terms of letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, while school readiness was assessed through cognitive readiness, language and communication, social-emotional readiness, and motor and physical readiness. The design enabled the researcher to describe pupils' existing competencies and examine the relationship between reading skills and school readiness using numerical assessment results.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Cogon Elementary School, located in Barangay MacArthur, Monreal, Masbate, Philippines, during School Year 2024–2025. The school serves a rural community where farming and fishing are major sources of livelihood. Its geographical location and limited educational resources provided the local context for assessing kindergarten pupils' foundational literacy skills and developmental readiness.

2.3 Sampling Technique

The study employed total enumeration sampling, involving all 34 kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School who met the established participation criteria. This technique allowed the researcher to assess the identified kindergarten population rather than selecting a smaller sample. The respondents provided the primary data for evaluating reading skills, school readiness, and the relationship between these variables.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: the Kindergarten Reading Skills Assessment and the Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment. The reading assessment was administered individually and measured letter recognition, letter-sound recognition, vocabulary, and listening comprehension through letter identification, sound recognition, familiar-object identification, and questions about a story read aloud. Correct responses received one point, while incorrect or missing responses received zero. School readiness was assessed through teacher observations during regular classroom activities, covering cognitive, language and communication, social-emotional, and motor and physical competencies. Each indicator was rated using a four-point scale ranging from 1 (Not Yet Demonstrated) to 4 (Always Demonstrated). The instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing with participants excluded from the actual study, followed by revisions and reliability procedures. After securing school authorization and coordinating with the kindergarten teacher, the researcher conducted the assessments and organized the recorded responses for analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Frequency counts and percentages summarized pupils' performance across the reading assessment indicators, while weighted means described their school readiness ratings and the reported assessment results. Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between reading skills and school readiness. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level. The findings were interpreted to identify pupils' strengths, developmental needs, and areas requiring additional instructional support.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained permission from the appropriate school authorities and coordinated with the kindergarten teacher before conducting the assessments. The study's purpose and procedures were explained to the concerned individuals, and the manuscript reported that the necessary consent and safeguards for involving young learners were observed. The researcher also committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the collected information and using the findings exclusively for academic research purposes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Reading Skills of Kindergarten Pupils

3.1.1 Letter Recognition

The findings revealed varying levels of letter recognition among the 34 kindergarten pupils. The highest performance was recorded for the letters A, M, S, and E, correctly identified by 33 pupils

(97.06%), followed by R with 31 correct responses (91.18%). Lower performance was observed for D (47.06%), T (52.94%), and C (58.82%). These results indicate that most pupils demonstrated strong recognition of selected letters, although certain letter forms remained difficult to identify. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening alphabet knowledge through targeted and developmentally appropriate activities. Hervina and Yudha (2025) demonstrated the usefulness of contextualized instructional materials in developing letter recognition, while Chin et al. (2024) emphasized interactive games as an approach to improving kindergarten learners' alphabet knowledge. Similarly, Roberts and Smolkowski (2025) demonstrated positive outcomes from structured early reading instruction involving letter names, letter sounds, and word recognition. These studies support the use of guided letter-identification activities, visual materials, and interactive exercises to address the pupils' identified difficulties.

3.1.2 Phonological Awareness

The results showed differences in pupils' ability to recognize letter sounds. The highest performance was recorded for M, S, and N, with 33 pupils (97.06%) correctly identifying their sounds, followed by L with 32 correct responses (94.12%). Conversely, C obtained the lowest performance, with only nine pupils (26.47%) answering correctly. The letters B, T, P, and D also recorded relatively low percentages ranging from 47.06% to 52.94%. These findings indicate that recognition of certain letter-sound relationships remained an area requiring improvement. Bdeir et al. (2022) demonstrated that systematic phonological awareness instruction can strengthen kindergarten children's foundational reading abilities. Similarly, Debataraja et al. (2023) emphasized the value of combining phonics instruction with engaging learning activities to develop reading readiness. Cho et al. (2025) further highlighted the importance of assessing letter-sound knowledge and related early literacy competencies to identify learners requiring additional support. These findings support providing structured phonological awareness activities, including sound recognition, oral exercises, and letter-sound matching.

3.1.3 Vocabulary

The vocabulary assessment revealed uneven performance across the selected words. The highest percentage was recorded for *flower*, correctly identified by 33 pupils (97.06%), followed by *dog* with 32 correct responses (94.12%) and *pencil* with 30 (88.24%). In contrast, *book* and *school* obtained the lowest scores, with only 12 pupils (35.29%) correctly identifying each word. The words *chair* and *house* were correctly identified by 17 pupils (50.00%). These findings indicate differences in pupils' familiarity with the vocabulary included in the assessment. The results emphasize the importance of providing varied and meaningful vocabulary-learning experiences. Andari and Wiguna (2022) examined children's songs as instructional resources for English vocabulary acquisition, while Karote Rajan and Saadat (2024) demonstrated the usefulness of nursery rhymes in kindergarten vocabulary instruction. Similarly, Putri and Rustipa (2023) highlighted songs as an engaging approach to developing vocabulary among young learners. Cabell et al. (2025) further established that structured, content-rich literacy instruction can strengthen children's knowledge of specifically taught vocabulary. These findings support the use of storytelling, picture identification, songs, rhymes, and interactive conversations to reinforce unfamiliar words.

3.1.4 Reading Comprehension

The findings indicated consistently high performance across the five comprehension questions. Items concerning the person who went to school, the person greeted, and the place where the

character sat obtained 33 correct responses (97.06%) each. The question concerning the accompanying person recorded 32 correct responses (94.12%), while the question concerning the objects brought obtained 30 correct responses (88.24%). Overall, pupils demonstrated strong comprehension of the simple story presented during the assessment. The findings suggest that most pupils could understand and recall information from a short story read aloud, although some differences remained in identifying specific details. Tolentino et al. (2023) emphasized the relevance of storybooks in supporting kindergarten listening comprehension, while Korat et al. (2022) examined the contribution of supported electronic storybook reading to children's understanding of narratives. Cabell et al. (2025) also highlighted the value of structured interactive read-aloud activities in developing language and content knowledge. These studies support continued storytelling, questioning, identification of important details, and story-retelling activities to strengthen comprehension.

3.2 School Readiness of Kindergarten Pupils

3.2.1 Cognitive Readiness

The findings indicated that kindergarten pupils often demonstrated the assessed cognitive competencies, with a reported grand mean of 2.97. Identifying basic shapes obtained the highest mean of 3.03, followed by identifying basic colors (3.00). Lower ratings were recorded for identifying common objects (2.88) and counting objects correctly (2.85). These findings indicate that pupils demonstrated several foundational cognitive abilities, although performance varied across specific assessment indicators. The results suggest that learners possessed basic conceptual skills supporting classroom participation, while object identification and counting required additional reinforcement. Pico et al. (2023) examined the importance of early childhood educational experiences in relation to kindergarten cognitive development. Duncan et al. (2023) further demonstrated that cognitive, language, literacy, and mathematics competencies are interconnected components of school readiness. These findings support developmentally appropriate activities involving object recognition, counting, sorting, observation, and simple problem-solving.

3.2.2 Language and Communication Readiness

The language and communication assessment recorded a reported grand mean of 2.84, interpreted as Often Demonstrated. Listening when someone was speaking received the highest mean of 3.12, while expressing ideas through simple sentences and answering questions appropriately each obtained a mean of 2.82. The remaining indicators, including understanding instructions, communicating needs, and participating in conversations, generally reflected pupils' developing communication abilities. The findings indicate that listening was a relative strength, while expressive language and responding to questions required further instructional attention. Hayag et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of language development and social-emotional learning in kindergarten instructional practice. Similarly, Cho et al. (2025) demonstrated the value of assessing early language and literacy competencies to identify specific learning needs. These findings support classroom opportunities for storytelling, picture description, guided conversations, role-playing, and question-and-answer activities that encourage pupils to express ideas clearly.

3.2.3 Social-Emotional Readiness

The findings showed that pupils often demonstrated the assessed social-emotional competencies, with a reported grand mean of 3.15. Sharing materials with others received the

highest mean of 3.41, followed by playing appropriately with classmates (3.38). Separating appropriately from parents or caregivers obtained a mean of 3.15. Lower ratings were observed for managing simple emotions (2.88) and demonstrating confidence when performing tasks (2.82). These results indicate stronger performance in peer interaction and cooperation than in some aspects of confidence and emotional regulation. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening emotional confidence and self-regulation alongside positive peer relationships. Jaquilmac and Fortich (2025) emphasized storytelling as a learning activity that can support emotional expression, empathy, cooperation, and social interaction among kindergarten learners. Marks et al. (2023) similarly demonstrated the relevance of emotional knowledge and teacher–child relationships to academic readiness. These findings support the continued use of collaborative activities, storytelling, guided interaction, and developmentally appropriate classroom responsibilities to strengthen social-emotional competencies.

3.2.4 Motor and Physical Readiness

The motor and physical readiness assessment recorded a reported grand mean of 3.01, indicating that the assessed skills were often demonstrated. Holding a pencil properly obtained the highest mean of 3.38, followed by drawing basic shapes (3.09). Lower ratings were recorded for cutting along simple lines (2.82), coloring within boundaries (2.88), and tracing basic letters (2.88). These findings indicate that pupils demonstrated several foundational motor abilities, although selected fine-motor tasks required additional practice. The results suggest that fine-motor coordination should remain an important consideration in kindergarten instructional planning. Paguyan et al. (2025) demonstrated the potential of structured movement-based activities in developing locomotor skills among kindergarten learners. Aydoner and Bumin (2025) also examined the relationships between motor, sensory, visual-perceptual, and executive-function skills and children's school readiness. These findings support providing regular opportunities for drawing, coloring, tracing, cutting, and physical activities appropriate to pupils' developmental needs.

3.3 Relationship Between Reading Skills and School Readiness

The Pearson correlation analysis reported a very strong positive relationship between reading skills and school readiness among the 34 kindergarten pupils, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.9882$ and 32 degrees of freedom. The reported two-tailed probability value was 0.0000, below the established 0.05 significance level. Accordingly, the original study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that a statistically significant positive relationship existed between reading skills and school readiness. The findings indicate that pupils with higher assessed reading skills also tended to demonstrate higher school-readiness ratings. This relationship is consistent with research recognizing the interconnected nature of foundational literacy and broader developmental competencies. Duncan et al. (2023) emphasized substantial shared variation among early childhood school-readiness constructs, while Logan et al. (2024) examined the relationships among early language development, emergent literacy, and kindergarten readiness. Nevertheless, the observed correlation does not establish a causal relationship. The strength of the reported association should also be interpreted in relation to the assessment procedures and the potential overlap among the measured competencies.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the reading skills and school readiness of 34 kindergarten pupils at Cogon Elementary School, Monreal, Masbate. Findings revealed varying levels of foundational literacy, with pupils demonstrating strong performance in recognizing selected letters, identifying familiar

words, and comprehending simple stories. However, difficulties remained in recognizing certain letter sounds and vocabulary items. School readiness assessments indicated that pupils often demonstrated cognitive, language and communication, social-emotional, and motor and physical competencies, although some areas required further development, particularly expressive communication, counting, emotional confidence, and fine-motor coordination. Furthermore, the study reported a very strong positive relationship between reading skills and school readiness (r = 0.9882), indicating that pupils with stronger reading abilities also tended to demonstrate higher developmental readiness. Collectively, these findings emphasize the interconnected nature of early literacy and school preparedness and provide school-specific evidence for strengthening developmentally appropriate kindergarten instruction.

Based on the findings, kindergarten teachers should strengthen foundational literacy instruction through regular phonological awareness exercises, letter-sound recognition activities, vocabulary enrichment, storytelling, and guided comprehension tasks. Particular attention should be given to skills with lower assessment results while maintaining pupils' strengths in letter recognition and listening comprehension. Teachers should also incorporate counting games, object-identification activities, classroom conversations, cooperative play, and fine-motor exercises to address identified developmental needs. Parents should reinforce classroom learning through consistent home-based reading activities, storytelling, vocabulary practice, and age-appropriate educational games. School administrators should provide suitable instructional materials, support teacher development, and encourage stronger collaboration between teachers and parents. Regular assessments and classroom observations should be conducted to monitor pupils' progress and guide instructional adjustments. Future researchers should examine reading skills and school readiness among larger kindergarten populations and investigate additional factors that may influence children's early literacy development and preparation for formal schooling.

The study was limited to 34 kindergarten pupils from Cogon Elementary School during School Year 2024–2025, restricting the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings. Its descriptive-correlational design established associations but could not determine causal relationships. The assessments focused on selected reading skills and developmental readiness indicators using researcher-developed instruments and teacher observations. Other potentially relevant factors, including socioeconomic conditions, family background, home learning environments, and teaching strategies, were not directly examined. Future investigations may include larger samples, multiple schools, additional developmental variables, and longitudinal assessments to strengthen the applicability and interpretation of the findings.

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