



EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ECCD CHECKLIST IN ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) plays a vital role in ensuring that young learners achieve their developmental milestones through systematic assessment and holistic support. This study assessed the extent of utilization of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) checklist and its effectiveness in supporting the educational development of kindergarten students in the Districts of Hinabangan I and II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose De Buan, Wright I and Wright II, Schools Division of Samar, during the School Year 2025-2026. The study employed a quantitative-descriptive correlational design to determine how teachers' use of the ECCD checklist related to students' developmental performance. Findings revealed that most teacher-respondents were in their early to mid-thirties, predominantly female and married, with a stable economic background and strong professional engagement through in-service training. They exhibited a highly positive attitude toward ECCD and demonstrated a very high extent of utilization of the ECCD checklist across pre-assessment, assessment, and post-assessment stages. Student-respondents, on the other hand, performed well across all ECCD domains-gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive and expressive language, cognitive, and social-emotional-indicating holistic development. Significant relationships were found between teachers' profiles (age, gross monthly family income, relevant in-service trainings, and attitude toward ECCD) and their extent of ECCD checklist utilization, as well as between teachers' utilization of the checklist and students' developmental performance across all domains. However, the correlations were weak, suggesting that while ECCD checklist utilization contributed positively, other factors may also have influenced student outcomes. Teachers encountered moderate challenges in using the ECCD checklist, particularly time constraints during assessment. Based on these findings,

the study recommends strengthening ECCD checklist integration in teaching, enhancing teacher training and support, promoting positive attitudes toward early childhood education, providing administrative assistance during assessment periods, and exploring other factors that affect children's development to improve ECCD implementation and learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), ECCD checklist, teacher utilization, developmental domains, kindergarten education, assessment practices*

INTRODUCTION

The early years of a child's life are fundamental in shaping overall development, particularly in the Kindergarten stage where children begin to learn basic skills in thinking, interacting, and expressing themselves. Within classroom settings, children develop at varying paces, making it essential to monitor progress across different developmental domains. Early childhood development skills in Kindergarten hold significant importance as they provide valuable insights into each child's unique strengths and areas needing support, playing a crucial role in informing personalized teaching strategies (Taylor & Boyer, 2020).

Globally, the assessment of young children's developmental progress through structured tools is recognized as a critical component of early childhood education. International organizations emphasize that effective assessment systems ensure school readiness, support early identification of developmental delays, and contribute to improved long-term educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2017; UNICEF, 2023). Evidence further indicates that parenting interventions are particularly effective in low- and middle-income countries, showing significantly greater impacts on cognitive, language, and motor development compared to high-income countries (Jeong et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, early childhood care and development (ECCD) is institutionalized under Republic Act No. 8980 and the ECCD System Act (Republic Act No. 12199), providing a legal framework for integrated services (Laws.chanrobles.com, n.d.; ECCD Council, 2025). The ECCD Checklist has become a widely used instrument for systematically assessing developmental milestones. However, the usefulness of any assessment instrument depends on how consistently and accurately teachers apply it during instruction and observation; weak implementation can reduce the validity of assessment data (Philippine Society for Science and Education, 2023).

This study is grounded in several foundational theories. The Maturationist Theory (Gesell, 1925) emphasizes that development follows a biological timetable, while the Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget, 1952) and Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) highlight how children construct knowledge through environmental interaction and social mediation. Furthermore, Psychosocial Development Theory (Erikson, 1963) underscores social-emotional growth, and the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) situates the child within nested environmental systems. Formative and summative

assessment frameworks further guide teachers in systematically observing and responding to developmental milestones (MyBrightWheel, 2025).

Despite widespread use, there is limited published research specifically examining the ECCD Checklist's application and effectiveness in assessing Kindergarten students within Region VIII. This region oversees approximately 720,595 learners, with the Schools Division of Samar managing 741 schools (Philippine News Agency, 2024; DepEd National Inventory Dashboard, 2026). Localized data from the District of Wright II reveals that 85 to 90 percent of Kindergarten students experience difficulty during assessment activities, often feeling pressured or anxious, while 80 to 85 percent are not fluent in the language of instruction (ECCD Report S.Y. 2024-2025). Records from 2022 to 2025 indicate a consistent presence of developmental delays among roughly one-third of the Kindergarten population in the district.

Given these concerns, there is a need for an in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of the ECCD Checklist in the Districts of Hinabangan I, Hinabangan II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose De Buan, Wright I and Wright II to ensure it accurately reflects learners' abilities and supports informed instructional decisions.

Research Questions

This study assessed the extent of utilization of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Checklist and its effectiveness in supporting the educational development of Kindergarten students in the Districts of Hinabangan I, Hinabangan II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose De Buan, Wright I and Wright II, Schools Division of Samar, during the School Year 2025–2026

Specifically, the current research sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of the following variates, namely:
 - 1.1 age and sex;
 - 1.2 civil status;
 - 1.3 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.4 gross monthly family income;
 - 1.5 relevant in-service training; and
 - 1.6 attitude toward ECCD?
2. What is the extent of utilization of the ECCD checklist among teacher-respondents in the following areas:
 - 2.1 pre-assessment activity;
 - 2.2 during assessment activity; and
 - 2.3 post-assessment activity?
3. What is the ECCD performance of the student-respondents in the following areas, namely:
 - 3.1 gross motor domain;
 - 3.2 fine motor domain;
 - 3.3 self-help domain;

- 3.4 receptive language domain
 - 3.5 expressive language domain;
 - 3.6 cognitive domain; and
 - 3.7 social-emotional domain?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of utilization of the ECCD checklist among teacher-respondents and the following:
- 4.1 teacher-related variate; and
 - 4.2 ECCD performance of student-respondents along the aforementioned parameters?
5. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents in using the ECCD checklist?
6. What intervention program may be derived from the findings of this study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research approach with a descriptive-correlational design to determine the extent of utilization of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Checklist and its effectiveness in supporting the developmental progress of Kindergarten students in the Districts of Hinabangan I, Hinabangan II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose de Buan, Wright I, and Wright II, Schools Division of Samar, during the School Year 2025–2026. . The research investigated the relationship between teacher-related variables, the extent of checklist utilization, and the resulting ECCD performance of students.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted within the Schools Division of Samar, specifically covering the Districts of Hinabangan I, Hinabangan II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose De Buan, Wright I, and Wright II. This division manages 741 schools within Region VIII (Eastern Visayas), a region serving approximately 720,595 learners for the 2025–2026 school year. The selected locales encompass a diverse range of educational environments, from central elementary schools to remote upland settlements and coastal communities

Figure 1
The Map Showing the Map of Hinabangan, Samar

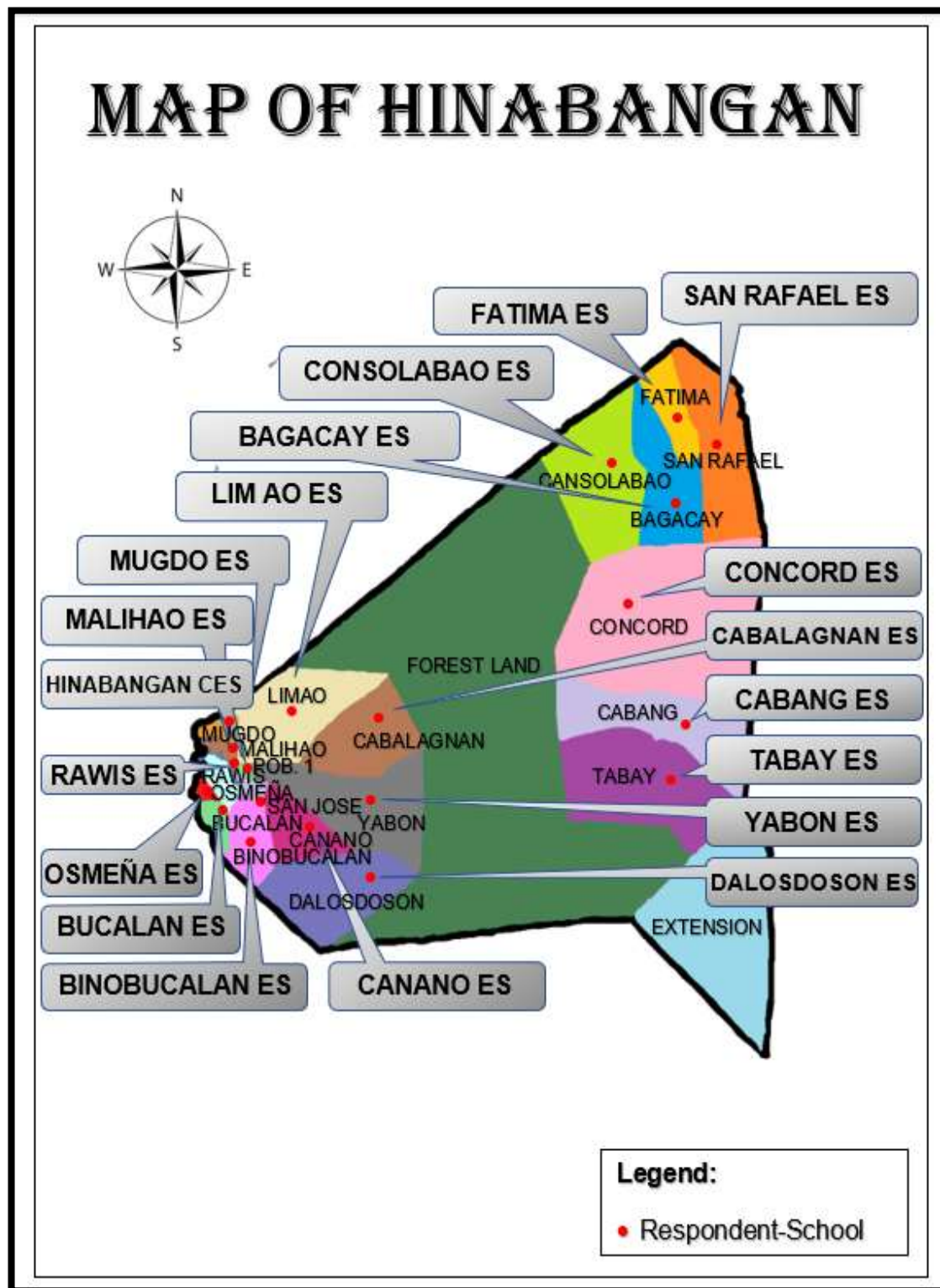


Figure 2
The Map Showing the Map of Jiabong, Samar

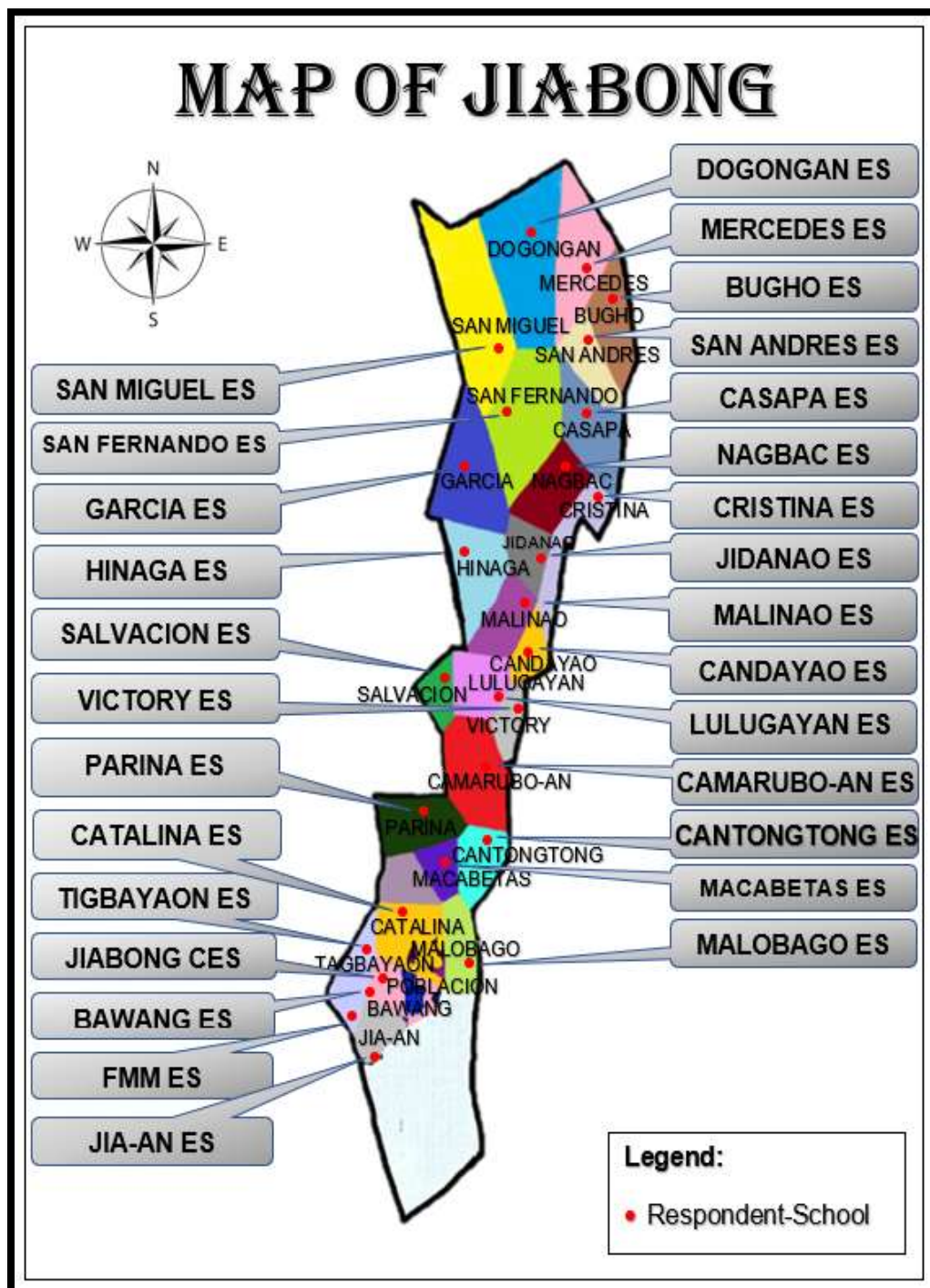


Figure 3
The Map Showing the Map of Motiong, Samar

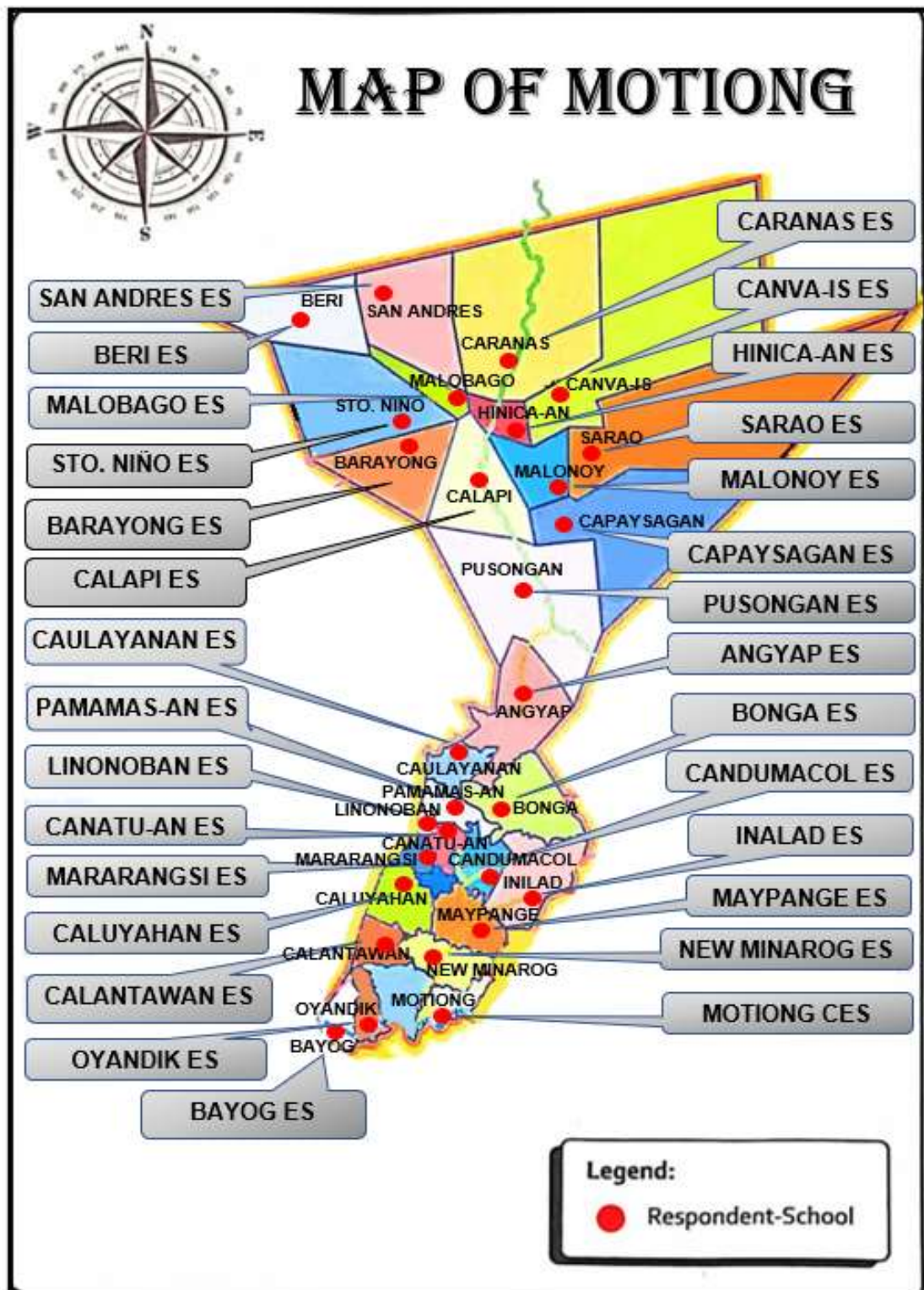


Figure 4
The Map Showing the Map of San Jose De Buan, Samar

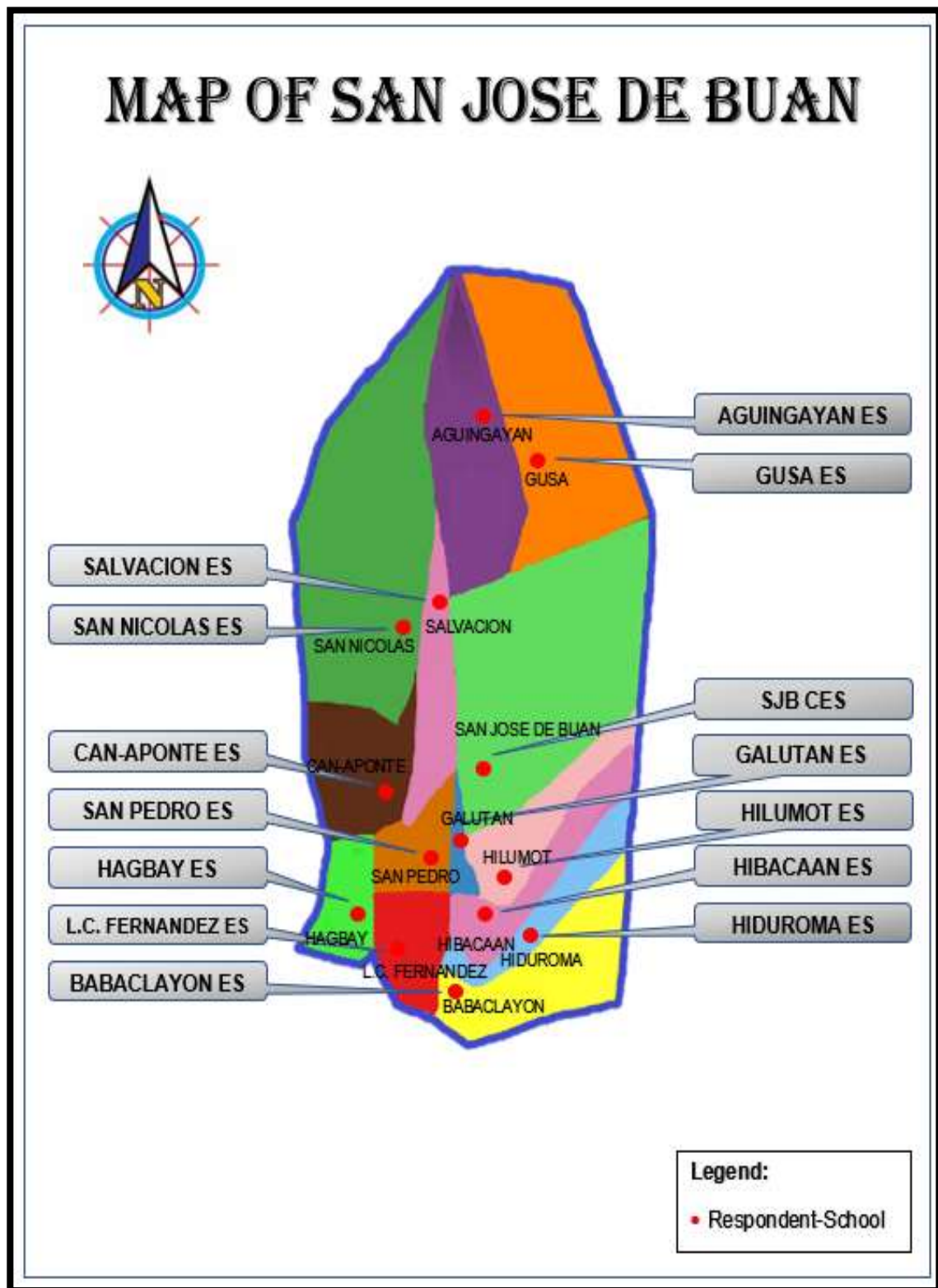
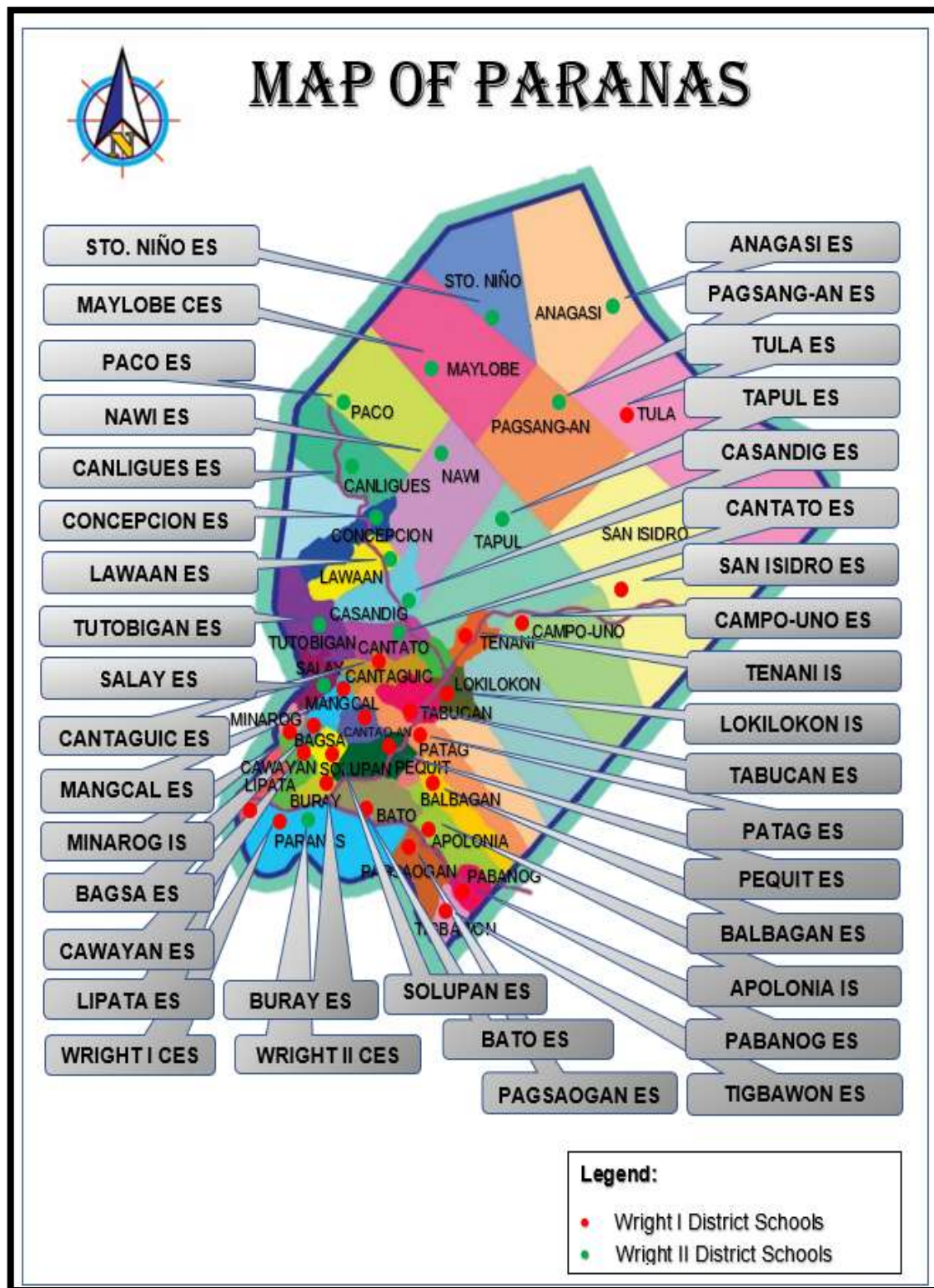


Figure 5
The Map Showing the Map of Paranas, Samar



Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study employed proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure that every school in the seven districts was represented. The teacher-respondents consisted of 141 Kindergarten teachers out of a total population of 143, representing a 100% response rate for the calculated sample. For the student-respondents, Slovin's Formula was utilized to determine the sample size from the total population to ensure a 0.05 margin of error and reasonable accuracy of results.

Table 1
Table 1 shows the number of respondents per district

District/School	N	n
<u>District of Hinabangan I</u>		
Binubucalan Elementary School	1	1
Bucalan Elementary School	1	1
Cabalagnan Elementary School	1	1
Canano Elementary School	1	1
Dalosdoson Elementary School	1	1
Hinabangan Central Elementary School	2	1
Lim-ao Elementary School	1	1
Osmeña Elementary School	1	1
Rawis Elementary School	1	1
Yabon Elementary School	1	1
<u>District of Hinabangan II</u>		
Bagacay Elementary School	1	1
Cabang Elementary School	1	1
Cansolabao Elementary School	1	1
Concord Elementary School	1	1
Fatima Elementary School	1	1
Malinao Elementary School	1	1
Mugdo Elementary School	1	1
San Rafael Elementary School	1	1
Tabay Elementary School	1	1
<u>District of Jiabong</u>		
Bawang Elementary School	1	1
Bugho Elementary School	1	1
Camarubo-an Elementary School	1	1
Candayao Elementary School	1	1
Cantongtong Elementary School	1	1
Casapa Elementary School	1	1
Catalina Elementary School	1	1
Cristina Elementary School	1	1
Dogongan Elementary School	1	1
FMM Elementary School	1	1

Garcia Elementary School	1	1
Hinaga Elementary School	1	1
Jia-an Elementary School	1	1
Jiabong Central Elementary School	3	2
Jidanao Elementary School	1	1
Luluhayan Elementary School	1	1
Macabetas Elementary School	1	1
Malinao Elementary School	1	1
Malobago Elementary School	1	1
Mercedes Elementary School	1	1
Nagbac Elementary School	1	1
Parina Elementary School	1	1
Salvacion Elementary School	1	1
San Andres Elementary School	1	1
San Fernando Elementary School	1	1
San Miguel Elementary School	1	1
Tigbayaon Elementary School	1	1
Victor Elementary School	1	1
<u>District of Motiong</u>		
Angyap Elementary School	1	1
Borayong Elementary School	1	1
Bayag Elementary School	1	1
Beri Elementary School	1	1
Bonga Elementary School	1	1
Canlantawan Elementary School	1	1
Calapi Elementary School	2	2
Caluyahan Elementary School	1	1
Canatu-an Elementary School	1	1
Candumacol Elementary School	1	1
Canva-is Elementary School	1	1
Capaysagan Elementary School	1	1
Caranas Elementary School	1	1
Caulayanan Elementary School	1	1
Hinica-an Elementary School	1	1
Inalad Elementary School	1	1
Linonoban Elementary School	1	1
Malobago Elementary School	1	1
Malonoy Elementary School	1	1
Maarangsi Elementary School	1	1
Maypange Elementary School	1	1
Motiong Central Elementary School	2	1
New Minarog Elementary School	1	1
Oyandik Elementary School	1	1
Pamamas-an Elementary School	1	1
Pusongon Elementary School	1	1
San Andres Elementary School	1	1

Sanao Elementary School	1	1
Sto. Niño Elementary School	1	1
<u>District of San Jose Buan</u>		
Aguingayan Elementary School	1	1
Babacayon Elementary School	1	1
Can-aponte Elementary School	1	1
Galutan Elementary School	1	1
Gusa Elementary School	1	1
Hagbay Elementary School	1	1
Hibacaan Elementary School	1	1
Hiduroma Elementary School	1	1
Hilumot Elementary School	1	1
L.C Fernandez Elementary School	1	1
San Nicolas Elementary School	1	1
San Pedro Elementary School	1	1
Salvacion Elementary School	1	1
San Jose de Buan Central Elementary School	2	2
<u>District of Wright I</u>		
Apolonia Elementary School	1	1
Bagsa Elementary School	1	1
Balbagan Elementary School	1	1
Bato Elementary School	2	2
Binogho Elementary School	1	1
Campo-uno Elementary School	1	1
Cantaguic Elementary School	1	1
Cantao-an Elementary School	1	1
Cawayan Elementary School	1	1
Lipata Elementary School	1	1
Lokilokon Elementary School	2	2
Mangcal Elementary School	1	1
Minarog Integrated School	1	1
Pabanog Elementary School	2	2
Pagsaogan Elementary School	1	1
Patag Elementary School	1	1
Pequit Integrated School	2	2
San isidro Elementary School	1	1
Solupan Elementary School	1	1
Tabucan Elementary School	1	1
Tenani Elementary School	1	1
Tigbawon Elementary School	2	2
Tula Elementary School	1	1
Wright I Central Elementary School	2	2

<u>District of Wright II</u>		
Anagasi Elementary School	1	1
Canligues Elementary School	1	1
Cantato Elementary School	1	1
Concepcion Elementary School	1	1
Casandig Elementary School	1	1
Lawaan Elementary School	2	2
Maylobe Elementary School	1	1
Nawi Elementary School	1	1
Paco Elementary School	1	1
Pagsang-an Elementary School	1	1
Salay Elementary School	1	1
Sto. Niño Elementary School	1	1
Tapul Elementary School	1	1
Tutobigan Elementary School	1	1
Wright II Central Elementary School	2	2
TOTAL	143	141
Response Rate	100%	

Instrumentation and Validation

The primary research instrument was a five-part questionnaire adapted from Villa and Toquero (2024).

- **Part I** gathered the teacher-respondents' personal profiles (age, sex, civil status, education, income, and training).
- **Part II** assessed attitudes toward the ECCD program using a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Part III** examined the extent of utilization of the ECCD Checklist across three phases: pre-assessment, during assessment, and post-assessment, using a 5-point frequency scale.
- **Part IV** recorded student ECCD performance across seven developmental domains using the standard three-point recording scale (Present, Observed, Reported).
- **Part V** identified challenges encountered by teachers, measured on a 5-point challenge scale.

The instrument underwent expert validation by a panel of oral examiners who reviewed its face, content, construct, pragmatic, and convergent-discriminant validity.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection began after securing authorization from the Schools Division Superintendent of Samar and obtaining permission from the respective Public Schools District Supervisors (PSDS). Subsequently, approval was sought from the respective school administrators to facilitate the conduct of the study among Kindergarten teachers

The researcher administered the questionnaires through both personal distribution and online platforms to ensure wider participation and accommodate respondents who could not be reached in person due to constraints related to location, availability, and time. This comprehensive approach resulted in a 100% retrieval rate, with all 141 target teacher-respondents successfully completing and returning the research instruments. Following retrieval, the data underwent manual editing and coding to ensure consistency and reliability in preparation for analysis. The organized data set was then forwarded to a statistician for appropriate statistical treatment, with results presented in tabular form to support data interpretation.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Frequency Count. This tool was used to determine the personal characteristics of the student-respondents in terms of the magnitude of occurrences.

Percentage. This measure was employed to convert the magnitude of occurrence of each variable relative to the total respondents using the formula (Sevilla et al., 1992:200):

$$P = [f/N] \times 100$$

where: P refers to the percentage;
 f refers to the number of occurrences; and
 N refers to the total number of samples.

Mean. This was utilized to express the average of identified characteristics of the respondents, specifically on data measured on ratio and interval scales. The formula used was (Freud and Simon, 1992:35):

$$\mu = \frac{\sum fX}{N}$$

where: μ refers to the arithmetic mean or average;
 f refers to the frequency of occurrence;
 X refers to the identified variable; and,
 n refers to the sample size.

Median. This statistical tool described the middlemost point of some identified characteristics of respondents in data that was not normally distributed on ratio and interval scales, using the formula (Ferguson & Takane, 1989:35):

$$M_d = \left(\frac{[1/2N - F]}{f} \right) i$$

where: M_d refers to the middlemost point of an array of observations;
 N refers to the total observations;
 F refers to the accumulated frequencies equal to or less than $1/2$ of the total observations; and
 f refers to the number of occurrences in the assumed midpoint step distribution.

Mean Absolute Deviation. This tool was used to describe the variability of non-normally distributed data with the formula (Ferguson & Takane, 1989:35):

$$MAD = \frac{\sum |X_i - \mu|}{N}$$

where: MAD refers to the mean average deviation;
 $|X_i - \mu|$ refers to the absolute difference between the observation and the mean; and
 n refers to the number of observations.

Mode. This tool calculated the most frequent observation, identified by the highest frequency recorded in the step distribution (Walpole, 1989:207).

Weighted Mean. This statistic was employed to determine the collective appraisal of the student-respondents regarding their attitudes and performance levels in ECCD domains (gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive, and social-emotional domains) using the formula (Pagoso, 1997:111).

The formula (Pagoso, 1997:111) were employed as follows:

$$\mu_w = \frac{\sum f_i X_i W_i}{n}$$

where: μ_w refers to the weighted mean;
 f_i refers to the frequency of a category of variable;
 X_i refers to the identified category of a variable;
 W_i refers to the weights that are expressed in a five-point scale; and,
 n refers to the sample size.

In interpreting the weighted mean for the attitude toward ECCD, the following set of five-point scales were used:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	
5	Strongly Agree	(SA)
4	Agree	(A)
3	Uncertain	(U)
2	Disagree	(D)
1	Strongly Disagree	(SD)

Furthermore, in interpreting the weighted mean for the performance level of the student-respondents on the ECCD along, gross motor domain, fine motor domain, self-help domain, receptive language domain, expressive language domain, cognitive domain and social-emotional domain, the following five-point scale was used:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	
4.50-5.00	Excellent	(E)
3.50-4.49	Good	(G)
2.50-3.49	Satisfactory	(S)
1.50-2.49	Needs Improvement	(NI)
1.00-1.49	Unsatisfactory	(U)

Spearman's Rank Coefficient of Correlation. The Spearman's Rho was used to measure the linear association between two variables with non-normal distribution, applying the formula (Walpole, 1997:460):

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N^3 - N}$$

where: ρ refers to the coefficient of linear association between paired ranks assigned to individual scores on two variables;
 D refers to the deviation between paired ranks; and
 N refers to the total number of paired observations.

Point Biserial Correlation. This statistical tool used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between one continuous variable and one dichotomous variable. It is a special case of Pearson's correlation coefficient, expressed mathematically as equivalent to Pearson's r when one variable is dichotomous (Osborne, 2005):

$$r_{pb} = \frac{M_1 - M_0}{s_n} \sqrt{\frac{n_1 n_0}{n^2}}$$

where: M_1 mean of the continuous variable for the group coded as 1 on the dichotomous variable;
 M_0 mean of the continuous variable for the group coded as 0;

S_n standard deviation of the continuous variable for all observations;
 N_1 number of cases in group coded as 1;
 N_0 number of cases in group coded as 0; and
 N total number of cases.

Eta Correlation (η). This statistical measure was used to determine the degree of association between a categorical variable with more than two groups and a continuous variable. It is appropriate when comparing mean differences across multiple groups such as districts, educational attainment, or other classifications. The formula is expressed as (Ferguson & Takane, 1989):

$$\eta = \sqrt{\frac{SS_{between}}{SS_{total}}}$$

where:

η refers to the eta correlation coefficient;
 $SS_{between}$ refers to the sum of squares between groups; and
 SS_{total} refers to the total sum of squares.

The value of eta ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates no association and values closer to 1 indicate a stronger association. Unlike other correlation coefficients, eta does not indicate direction but only the strength of the relationship.

In all cases in the testing the hypotheses, the decision whether the null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected, the following decision rule serves as guide: accept the null hypothesis if and when the computed value will turn lesser than the critical or tabular value or the p-value will turn greater than the α ; on the other hand, reject the null hypothesis if and when the computed value will turn equal or greater than the critical or tabular value or the p-value will turn equal or lesser than the α .

Finally, the hypotheses testing assumes the level of significance equals to $\alpha=0.05$ in a two-tailed test. Available statistical software or packages were utilized for accuracy and precision in the data processing.

RESULTS

The results of this study are derived from the systematic assessment of 141 Kindergarten teacher-respondents and their respective students across the Districts of Hinabangan I, Hinabangan II, Jiabong, Motiong, San Jose De Buan, Wright I, and Wright II. Through a combination of personal distribution and online platforms, the data collection process achieved a 100% retrieval rate, ensuring a complete dataset for analysis. The findings are presented in a systematic order corresponding to the six research questions, beginning with teacher profiles and concluding with the proposed intervention program.

To ensure accuracy, all data were processed using specialized statistical software with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The analysis utilized specific five-point interpretation scales to categorize teacher attitudes and student developmental performance, ranging from "Excellent" to "Unsatisfactory" for ECCD outcomes. This methodological framework allows for a nuanced evaluation of how the ECCD Checklist identifies age-appropriate milestones and detects developmental delays among the Kindergarten population in the Schools Division of Samar.

Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

The teacher-respondents have a mean age of 35.41 years, with the majority (38.30%) falling in the 32–36 age bracket. The group is predominantly female (85.8%) and married (68.79%). Academically, 70.92% hold a Baccalaureate degree, while 23.40% have achieved an MA degree. Financially, the mode for gross monthly income is 30,000 pesos, with 35.46% of respondents in the 35,000–39,999 bracket.

Table 2
Relevant In-Service Training of Teacher-Respondents

Level	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
National	1.76	Sometimes
Regional	1.88	Sometimes
Division	2.62	Oftentimes
District	3.18	Oftentimes
School	3.36	Oftentimes

Teachers reported a highly positive attitude toward the ECCD program, with a grand weighted mean of 4.75 (Strongly Agree). The highest-rated belief was that children in ECCD programs perform better in primary school (4.99).

Extent of Utilization of the ECCD Checklist

Utilization across all three assessment phases was interpreted as "Always". Pre-assessment activities earned a grand weighted mean of 4.63, during-assessment activities 4.74, and post-assessment activities 4.77. Notably, teachers use the checklist most frequently to find it helpful for monitoring progress (4.84) and identifying children needing additional support (4.84).

Table 3
Extent of Utilization of the ECCD Checklist of Teacher-Respondents Along with Pre-Assessment Activity

Statement	WM	I
1. Familiarity with the ECCD checklist and its domains.	4.80	A

2. I plan specific observation periods to complete the ECCD checklist for each child.	4.71	A
3. I receive support or training on how to use the ECCD checklist effectively.	4.39	O
Grand Weighted Mean	4.63	
Interpretation	Always	

Table 4

Extent of Utilization of the ECCD Checklist of Teacher-Respondents Along with During the Assessment Activity

Statement	WM	I
1. I integrate the ECCD checklist into my daily classroom routine.	4.67	A
2. I use the ECCD checklist to identify children who may need additional support or intervention.	4.84	A
3. I collaborate with parents or guardians when completing certain checklist items.	4.71	A
Grand Weighted Mean	4.74	
Interpretation	Always	

Table 5

Extent of Utilization of the ECCD Checklist of Teacher-Respondents Along with Post-Assessment Activity

Statement	WM	I
1. I record my observations on the ECCD checklist regularly.	4.80	A
2. I review and update each child's ECCD checklist periodically.	4.77	A
3. I use the ECCD checklist results for my lesson planning and classroom activities.	4.67	A
4. I find the ECCD checklist helpful for monitoring children's developmental progress.	4.84	A
Grand Weighted Mean	4.77	
Interpretation	Always	
Legend for Tables 3, 4, and 5:		
	4.50-5.00 Always	(A)
	3.50-4.49 Often	(O)
	2.50-3.49 Sometimes	(S)

1.50-2.49 Rarely (R)
1.00-1.49 Never (N)
Weighted Mean (WM)
Interpretation (I)

ECCD Performance of Student-Respondents

Overall, student-respondents achieved a High Developmental Performance (3.80). Very High Developmental Performance was observed in the domains of Fine Motor (3.88), Receptive Language (4.00), Expressive Language (4.00), and Social-Emotional (3.89). The Self-Help domain received the lowest mean score at 3.26, though still categorized as High Developmental Performance.

Table 6
ECCD Performance of the Student-Respondents Across the Developmental Domains

Developmental Domain	M	I
Gross Motor	3.84	HDP
Fine Motor	3.88	VHDP
Self-Help	3.26	HDP
Receptive Language	4.00	VHDP
Expressive Language	4.00	VHDP
Cognitive	3.70	HDP
Social-Emotional	3.89	VHDP
Overall Mean	3.80	
Interpretation	High Developmental Performance	

Legend:

3.85 – 4.00	Very High Developmental Performance	(VHDP)
3.00 – 3.84	High Developmental Performance	(HDP)
2.00 – 2.99	Average Developmental Performance	(ADP)
1.00 – 1.99	Low Developmental Performance	(LDP)
0.00 – 0.99	Very Low Developmental Performance	(VLDP)
	Mean	(M)
	Interpretation	(I)

Relationship Between Utilization and Profiles

As shown in Table 7, significant relationships were found between the extent of checklist utilization and several teacher-related factors.

Table 7
Relationship Between Extent of Utilization and Teacher Profile Variate

Variates	Association Coefficient	p-value	Decision
Age	$\rho = -0.259$ (Weak)	0.002	Reject H_0
Relevant In-Service Trainings	$\rho = 0.536$ (Moderate)	0.000	Reject H_0
Attitude Toward ECCD	$\rho = 0.514$ (Moderate)	0.000	Reject H_0
Gross Monthly Income	$\rho = 0.184$ (Very Weak)	0.029	Reject H_0

Relationship Between Utilization and Student Performance

There is a significant relationship between the extent of utilization and performance across all seven developmental domains, with all p-values equal to or less than 0.014. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.207 (Self-Help) to 0.377 (Social-Emotional), indicating that higher teacher utilization is linked to better student outcomes.

Table 8
Relationship Between the Extent of Utilization of the ECCD Checklist of Teacher-Respondents and the ECCD Performance of Students

Variates	Association		p-Value @ $\alpha=.05$	Evaluation/ Decision
	Coefficient	Degree		
Gross motor domain	$\rho = 0.313$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0
Fine motor domain	$\rho = 0.349$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0
Self-help domain	$\rho = 0.207$	Weak	0.014	S / Reject H_0
Receptive language domain	$\rho = 0.324$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0
Expressive language domain	$\rho = 0.338$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0
Cognitive domain	$\rho = 0.319$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0
Social-emotional domain	$\rho = 0.377$	Weak	0.000	S / Reject H_0

Legend: S = Significant ; NS = Not Significant

Challenges Encountered

Teachers experience a "Moderate Challenge" (3.13) in using the checklist. The most significant hurdle is "Time constraints during assessment" (3.55), which is categorized as a Major Challenge.

Table 9
Challenges Encountered by the Teacher-Respondents in Using the ECCD Checklist

Challenges	WM	I
1. Difficulty understanding some checklist items.	2.92	MoC
2. Children’s inability to perform some tasks due to age differences.	3.34	MoC
3. Time constraints during assessment.	3.55	MaC
4. Lack of training on how to use the checklist.	3.15	MoC
5. Difficulty in scoring and interpreting results.	2.86	MoC
6. The language used in the checklist is clear and age-appropriate.	2.99	MoC
7. The checklist is suitable for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.	3.05	MoC
8. I find it challenging to score children’s performance objectively.	3.11	MoC
9. There is sufficient administrative support in using the checklist.	3.09	MoC
10. Received adequate training on how to use the ECCD checklist.	3.22	MoC
Grand Weighted Mean	3.13	
Interpretation	Moderate Challenge	
Legend: 4.50-5.00 Extreme Challenge (EC) 3.50-4.49 Major Challenge (MaC) 2.50-3.49 Moderate Challenge (MoC) 1.50-2.49 Minor Challenge (MiC) 1.00-1.49 Not a Challenge at all (NaC) Weighted Mean (WM) Interpretation (I)		

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of the ECCD Checklist in the Schools Division of Samar. The teacher-respondents' profile, characterized by a mean age of 35.41 years and a high prevalence of Baccalaureate and MA degrees (94.32% combined), suggests a professionally mature and academically prepared workforce. This professional maturity is mirrored in their strongly positive attitude toward the ECCD program (GWM 4.75), particularly the near-unanimous belief (4.99) that ECCD participation improves primary school performance. This positive perspective is vital, as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) suggests that the teacher's attitude within the microsystem directly influences the quality of the child's developmental environment.

The "Always" extent of utilization across pre-assessment (4.63), during-assessment (4.74), and post-assessment (4.77) phases indicates that teachers have

deeply integrated the checklist into their pedagogical routines . The high utilization in identifying children needing intervention (4.84) and monitoring progress (4.84) aligns with the Formative and Summative Assessment Theory (MyBrightWheel, 2025), ensuring that the tool is used not just for recording, but for real-time instructional adjustments. However, the lower frequency of training at regional and national levels (1.88 and 1.76) compared to the school level (3.36) suggests that while teachers are consistent in their application, there is a localized reliance on professional development that could benefit from broader administrative support.

The student-respondents' High Developmental Performance (3.80) across all domains indicates that learners in the seven districts are generally on track with age-appropriate milestones. The Very High Performance in Receptive and Expressive Language (4.00) is particularly significant when contrasted with earlier reports from the District of Wright II, where 80 to 85 percent of students struggled with the language of instruction. This improvement suggests that effective teacher scaffolding, as posited by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), may be bridging the gap between student's independent abilities and their developmental potential. Furthermore, the high performance in fine motor skills (3.88) and social-emotional domains (3.89) supports Gesell's Maturationist Theory (1925) and Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (1963), reflecting both biological readiness and positive emotional regulation in the classroom

The correlational analysis reveals that relevant in-service training ($p = 0.536$) and attitude ($p = 0.514$) are the strongest predictors of checklist utilization. This confirms that a teacher's professional preparation and personal belief in the system are more influential than external factors like income ($p = 0.184$). Furthermore, the significant positive relationship between checklist utilization and student performance across all domains ($p \leq 0.014$) validates the premise that systematic monitoring leads to better educational outcomes. This supports the global findings of UNESCO (2020) and UNICEF (2021), which highlight that structured assessment tools are critical for ensuring school readiness and reducing learning gaps.

Despite these successes, the identification of "Time constraints during assessment" (3.55) as a Major Challenge remains a critical concern. This practical hurdle, combined with the moderate challenges in understanding items (2.92) and maintaining objectivity (3.11), explains why students in previous years may have felt pressured or anxious during assessment activities. While the overall performance is high, the lower mean in the Self-Help domain (3.26) suggests a specific area where the proposed Intervention Program can provide targeted support. By addressing these localized challenges and leveraging the positive attitudes of teachers, the Schools Division of Samar can ensure that the ECCD Checklist continues to serve as an effective instrument for fostering the holistic development of every Kindergarten learner.

Conclusions

This section addresses the specific research questions established in the study through a synthesis of the findings:

1. The Kindergarten teacher-respondents in the Schools Division of Samar are professionally mature, typically in their early to mid-thirties, and possess stable professional and economic backgrounds. They demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous professional growth through active participation in school and district-level trainings and maintain a highly positive attitude toward the essential role of ECCD in enhancing future academic success.
2. The ECCD checklist is utilized to a very high extent across all stages—pre-assessment, during assessment, and post-assessment. This consistent implementation confirms that the checklist is viewed as a vital tool for evaluating developmental progress and identifying students who require additional support.
3. Student-respondents demonstrate an overall High Developmental Performance across all assessed domains. While students generally meet expected milestones appropriate for their age, variations exist, with particularly high performance in language and fine motor skills and comparatively lower scores in self-help and certain cognitive areas.
4. Teacher-related factors, specifically age, relevant in-service training, and attitude, significantly influence the extent of checklist utilization. Professional development and a positive mindset are the primary drivers of effective assessment practices, whereas traditional demographic variables like sex and civil status have no significant bearing on implementation.
5. There is a significant positive relationship between the extent of checklist utilization and student developmental outcomes across all domains. While this highlights the supportive role of consistent monitoring, the weak nature of the correlations suggests that external factors such as home environment and individual learner differences also contribute to student progress.
6. Teachers encounter a moderate level of implementation challenges, with time constraints during assessment serving as the most prominent barrier. Streamlining assessment procedures and improving time management support are essential for enhancing teacher efficiency and the overall effectiveness of the ECCD program.

Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, the following recommendations are offered for the improvement of ECCD implementation:

1. *Capacity Building and Training*: Schools should provide regular orientation and refresher sessions to ensure teachers are well-guided in accurately using the ECCD checklist. Continuous professional development workshops should focus specifically on observation techniques, interpretation of results, and record-keeping.

2. *Instructional Alignment*: Teachers should use ECCD results as a primary basis for lesson planning, ensuring that classroom activities are responsive to the identified strengths and developmental needs of learners. Differentiated instruction should be applied to cater to varying developmental levels, particularly in self-help and cognitive skills.

3. *Institutional Support*: Educational agencies should consider providing resources and incentives, such as assessment kits and printed materials, particularly for teachers in lower-income brackets to ensure equitable implementation. Administrative assistance should be prioritized during assessment periods to address identified time constraints.

4. *Collaborative Practices*: Schools should establish peer support systems or collaborative learning communities where Kindergarten teachers can share best practices and provide constructive feedback on ECCD utilization.

5. *Future Research*: Subsequent studies should investigate additional variables such as the home environment, parental involvement, and specific instructional strategies to develop a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing early childhood developmental outcomes.

Intervention Program: SMART-K

As a direct output of this study, the Strengthening Monitoring and Assessment for Readiness and Tracking–Kindergarten (SMART-K) intervention program is proposed. This program is a structured three-day training workshop designed to enhance teachers' capacity in using the ECCD checklist accurately and consistently. The program focuses on:

- Day 1: Orientation on foundational understanding and implementation standards.
- Day 2: Hands-on workshops on assessment practices, observation techniques, and record-keeping.
- Day 3: Peer collaboration, collaborative lesson planning, and the application of results for differentiated instruction.

Ultimately, SMART-K seeks to ensure that every child's developmental progress is systematically monitored and that data-driven practices guide classroom instruction

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher conducted this study with strict adherence to established ethical research protocols. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully briefed on the nature and purpose of the research before data collection began. All

respondents were explicitly informed of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. To ensure the protection of the 141 teacher-respondents and their students, the anonymity of all individuals and specific schools was strictly maintained, and the study followed all relevant Data Privacy regulations. The well-being of all respondents was safeguarded throughout the assessment process, particularly in addressing the potential for assessment-related anxiety among Kindergarten learners. The researcher declares that no conflict of interest exists in the conduct of this study and that plagiarism was strictly avoided through proper citation of all adapted instruments and literature. Furthermore, there was no bias in the interpretation of the findings, which were processed using objective statistical tools to ensure accuracy. The results of this investigation were used purely for research purposes and to inform the development of the proposed SMART-K intervention program.

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