

Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical and Professional Practices: Its Effects to Learners Assessment Readiness

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Abstract- This study aimed to assess the pedagogical and professional practices along the PPST domains of the Kindergarten teachers of Labo, East District and its effects to the learners' assessment readiness in the new normal. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1. What is the level of Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical practices along the PPST domain as to: a. content knowledge and pedagogy b. learning environment c. diversity of learners d. curriculum and planning e. assessment and reporting?; 2. What is the level of Kindergarten teachers' professional practices along PPST domains as to a. community linkages and professional engagement and b. personal growth and professional development?; 3. What is the result of the school readiness assessment of Kindergarten learners in the new normal?; 4. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' pedagogical practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness?; 5. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' professional practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness? and 6. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher respondents in the implementation of distance learning systems?; 7. What action plan can be proposed to enhance the Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional practices in the implementation of the distance learning system? This study applied the descriptive-correlational method of research. The major informants were the 32 Kindergarten teachers of Labo East District. The pertinent data were collected using survey questionnaires and a consolidated report on school readiness assessment. Descriptive statistics using percentages, weighted mean, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were also applied for the data treatment. The study found that: Most of the teacher-respondents excelled in the pedagogical domain of content knowledge and pedagogy compared to the other domains. Thus, it

shows that Kindergarten teachers are more pedagogically equipped, trained, skilled, and competent.; 2. The professional development practices of the respondents were assessed and identified at an average level only. Thus, it implies that Kindergarten teachers still face the needs and demands of pursuing higher education and other professional advancement measures and practices.; 3. The readiness assessment and performance of the learners were viewed at an average level only. It only at tests to the reality that the pandemic crisis has posed certain limitations and challenges against the learners' access to opportunities to improve their performance.; The domains of the diversity of learners correlated with the slightly advanced development of the learners' assessment readiness while the domains of assessment and reporting correlated with the average level of learners' assessment readiness.

Indexed Terms- Kinder, Pedagogical, Professional, Distance Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

The early childhood education, as described by Gallego (2020) plays salient and indispensable roles, functions, and contributions to the early learning engagement of learners who are deemed beginners in education including Kindergarten learners. The foundation of early childhood education linked to the learning engagement of the learners is attained through employing a holistic approach to education. It is a holistic approach as the early childhood education teachers strive not just to develop the early literacy skills of the learners but also the early foundation of good values and positive character development.

In addition, Cadampog (2021) cited that early childhood education teachers execute relevant and

multiple functions and duties in support of children's education. These functions are defined and reflected in the pedagogical and professional standards for the teaching profession. Specifically, the pedagogical contributions and services of the early childhood education teachers can be viewed and recognized in the contexts of content knowledge and pedagogy, diversity of learning, learning environment, curriculum and planning and assessment and reporting. These five pedagogical areas and domains reflect the organization, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the roles of early childhood education teachers in the academic development of the learners along with instructional and curricular aspects.

The DepED Order No. 42, series of 2017 otherwise known as the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) cites the need for the recognition of the essentiality of professional standards to foster lifelong learning and continuous professional development and advancement of the teachers. The PPST serves to set out specific expectations of the teachers along the stages of well-defined professional development.

Thus, guided by this republic act, the Kinder teachers can gain a more in-depth and profound realization of the need to align their pedagogical and professional practices to the developmental needs of their learners. This act concretizes the source of motivation for the teachers to maximize their pedagogical and professional services that can contribute to holistic educational support to Kinder pupils. Another salient legal basis of this study is the DO 57, s. 2015 or the Utilization of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) Tools for System Assessment which states how the DepEd recognizes the significance of measuring learners' learning outcomes over time. These student-learning outcomes are utilized as indirect indicators of the effectiveness and efficiency of the curricular reform implementation. In the context of the locale of this study, as sourced from the consolidated data from the Early Childhood Checklist Development (ECCD) District Coordinator, it shows that Labo East District is comprised of 21 elementary schools, with 32 kindergarten teachers. All these elementary

schools are also offering Kindergarten education in this modular. Printed modular modality is the most widely used alternative method in the district to make instruction accessible for all learners with or without access to the Internet and other ICTs at home. Moreover, according to the head of the Kindergarten department from SDO Camarines Norte Division Office, schools are conducting online learning sessions but to a minimal extent. From the year 2020, the kindergarten teachers have attended and participated in different seminars in distance learning.

Thus, because of these, the researcher finds motivation in pursuing a study that assesses and examines the level of competence and capabilities of the kindergarten teachers of Labo East District to adapt their pedagogical and professional skills to the new normal distance learning system. Researcher 6 delves into the strategies and practices employed by kindergarten teachers to support the distance learning system along the various domains and integral areas of teaching and professional development that define the standards of the teaching profession. Moreover, to substantiate and justify the essentiality of the pedagogical and professional services of the kinder faculty matched with the new normal, its effects to the level of assessment readiness of the learners were also compared, analyzed and discussed in this research.

II. METHOD OF RESEARCH

This study employed quantitative research utilizing descriptive method. This is to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically being studied. Specifically, in this study, this method described and analyzed the level of pedagogical practices of Kindergarten teachers along the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) domains, the level of professional practices of the teacher-respondents along the PPST domains, and the level of school readiness assessment of the Kindergarten learners in the new normal and the challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents in the implementation of the distance learning system.

Furthermore, the descriptive method was used in the description of the contents of the action plan to

enhance the Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional practices along the PPST domains.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

There were two groups of respondents and sources of data in this study. The first group consisted of the 32 Kindergarten teachers in Labo east district. They were included as respondents via total enumeration. The criteria for utilizing total enumeration for the teacher-respondents was the need to maximize the access to the data on school readiness assessment of the Kinder pupils sourced from all the 32 Kindergarten teachers.

The second group of respondents were composed of the 13 Master Teachers of Labo, Elementary School and 4 Master Teachers in TulaynaLupa Elementary School. These instructional leaders were included in the study through the use of the purposive sampling method. The major criteria for the purposive selection of these respondents include their actual experiences, training, and expertise in providing instructional leadership and mentoring services in pedagogical and professional domains to the Kinder teachers. Thus, the total number of respondents of this study is 49, 32 were Kinder teachers and 17 were Master Teachers of Labo East District.

The researcher first submitted to School Division Superintendent (SDS), and Public Schools Division Superintendent (PSDS) a letter of formal request to conduct the study. After approval, the researcher sought permission from different school heads to access information and ask for data in the district office about the final list or total population of Kinder teachers and the principals to use these data for the identification of the respondents of the study.

- Description of the Respondents

This study involved 49 respondents. Out of these 49 respondents, 32 were 42 Kinder teachers and 17 were Master Teachers of Labo East District. The Kinder teachers were the major subjects of assessment and analysis in terms of their pedagogical and professional practices in the distance learning system. On the other hand, the Master Teachers served as the major informants or sources of data and information on the observations of the level of pedagogical and professional practices of the Kinder teachers. This

was due to the direct and practical experiences of the Master Teachers in their professional working relations with the Kinder educators in the district.

- Research Instrument

The pertinent data in this study were gathered using survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire used was adopted from the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers tool. This questionnaire functioned in data collection about the readiness level of pedagogical practices of kindergarten teachers along the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers domains including content knowledge and pedagogy, curriculum, and planning, learning environment, diversity of learners, and assessment and reporting. The adopted survey tools were also utilized in the collection of relevant data about the level of professional practices of the teachers anchored with Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) domains such as community linkages and professional engagement and personal growth and professional development. Furthermore, the questionnaires were also used in data acquisition on the challenges encountered by the Kinder teachers along pedagogical and professional practices.

- Data Gathering Procedure

The ethical considerations and aspects of the study were first addressed before the formal implementation of the study. These ethical aspects include seeking the approval of the school head, PSDS, SDS and district and division committees for the conduct of data collection in the elementary schools of Laboeast district. Likewise, the Kindergarten teachers who served as informants of this study were subjected to a planning conference to orient them about the objectives and purposes of their involvement in the research. Letters of request were also sent to the teacher-respondents. Informed consent was also sent to the parents of the selected Kindergarten learners to be involved in this research. Parents were assured that the Data Privacy Act would protect the interest and welfare of their children to be involved in this study.

After securing the approval and ethical aspects of the study, the research aligned the data collection methods and processes to the new normal situations 43and consideration for health and safety purposes

and needs. Thus, for more safety purposes and compliance with protocols in times of pandemic, the researcher distributed online questionnaires to the teacher-respondents via social media. The survey questionnaires were converted into Google Forms to facilitate ease of distribution to the teacher-respondents. Manual distribution of survey forms was done for respondents with no access to social media. The survey was conducted to obtain pertinent data on the level of alignment and adherence of the pedagogical and professional practices of Kindergarten faculty to the distance learning system and the challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents along pedagogical and professional practices.

- Statistical Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics was used in this study for the treatment, analysis, and interpretation of data. Specifically, weighted mean was used for the statistical treatment of data in the problem 1 on the level of Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical practices along the PPST domain as to content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning and assessment and reporting and in problem 2 on the level of Kindergarten teachers' professional practices along PPST domain as to community linkages and professional engagement and personal growth and professional development. This was also utilized in the treatment of data on the challenges encountered by the teacher respondents in the implementation of the distance learning system and in the discussion of the developed action plan to enhance the Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies in the implementation of the distance learning system.

Meanwhile, the percentage method was applied in the treatment of data in problem 3 on the result of the school readiness assessment of kindergarten learners. Finally, Kendall Tau was used to measure the relationship between two columns of ranked data. It was utilized in the statistical treatment of data on the significant relationship between the teachers' pedagogical practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness and the significant relationship between the teachers' professional practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyzes the results of the study about the level of Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical practices along the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) domains as to content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning and assessment and reporting; the level of Kindergarten teachers' professional practices along PPST domains as to community linkages and professional engagement and personal growth and professional development; the result of the school readiness assessment of Kindergarten learners; the challenges encountered by the teacher respondents in the implementation of distance learning system; the significant relationship between the teachers' pedagogical practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness; the significant relationship between the teachers' professional practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness; and the action plan developed to enhance the Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies in the implementation of the distance learning system.

- Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices along the PPST Domain

The study first identified the pedagogical practices of the teacher-respondents along with the standards set by PPST.

Table 1 shows the data on the level of pedagogical practices of the Kindergarten teachers along the PPST domain of content knowledge and pedagogy. It was found that in general, the respondents attained a high level of pedagogical practices in content knowledge and pedagogy, with a grand mean of 3.57 or higher. This implies that the high level of pedagogical practices of the teacher-respondents along new normal content knowledge and pedagogy can be justified by the reality that the DepEd has an established and comprehensive system that fosters sufficient access of teachers to the standard content knowledge, instructional contents, and prescribed pedagogies.

The foundation of content knowledge and pedagogical mechanisms were fortified, hence, the only mandate for the teachers is how to align and adapt these instructional sources and systems to the distinctive nature of distance learning systems. However, with the extent of teachers' training, practices, and expertise in teaching and delivery of these established content knowledge and pedagogies across learning areas, it is expected that they can attain a high degree of proficiency in terms of adaptation of instructional services to the nature of new normal education.

The findings were affirmed by the study of Dasilva (2017) which also attested and concluded that the established and fortified pedagogical practices of the teachers in line with the domains of content knowledge and pedagogy can be attributed to the sufficiency and consistency of their acquired training on these areas. The sustainable training actively attended to by the teachers exposes them to ample opportunities to broaden and maximize their orientation, education, and knowledge in terms of delivery of instructional content and application of a variety of pedagogies. The study also concluded that the continuous training programs offered to teachers allow them to discover and learn new pedagogies and methods that apply and are adaptable to a variety of educational situations, needs, scenarios, and challenges.

Table 1
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices as to Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I utilize developmentally appropriate new normal learning modalities to provide content knowledge across curriculum areas and subjects.	4.00	High
2. I can apply the positive use of ICTs and educational technology in utilizing distance learning modalities across learning areas.	3.94	High
3. I apply distance learning modalities that help my learners develop and hone critical and creative thinking and higher-order thinking skills.	3.94	High
4. I can apply the use of my mother tongue, English and Filipino, and other languages of instruction that suit the new normal supplemental learning materials.	3.63	High
5. I employ learning modalities that help promote and foster the development of literacy and numeracy skills among my learners.	2.00	Very Poor
6. I apply research-based knowledge in the new normal instructional delivery.		
Overall Weighted Mean	3.57	High

The results also showed that the leading pedagogical skill of the respondents in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy was utilizing developmentally appropriate new normal learning modalities to provide content knowledge across

curriculum areas and subjects with the highest mean of 4.00 or higher. This was the highest pedagogical skill in this domain among the teacher-respondents due to the comprehensiveness of the scope, options, and alternatives offered by the education department in terms of a variety of distance learning modalities and methods. With these higher preferences and alternatives, teachers are offered wider opportunities to align instructional content knowledge and pedagogies facilitated via LDM with the actual learning needs, demands, and status of the learners in the new normal. Proper adaptation and access to alternative methods enable the teachers to employ developmentally appropriate modalities for the learners.

The results are attested in the study of Tamales (2020) assessed the teachers' competence levels in the utilization of learning delivery modalities. It was revealed that most of the teacher-respondents highly agreed that learners' access to the most accurate modalities depends on their situations and scenarios under home-based, distance learning. Thus, to attain this, the teacher-respondents in this study realized that having multiple modalities offered by DepEd is equal to having wider opportunities and services for the learners to align their learning needs to the distinctive features and functions of new normal education.

Table 2
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices as to the Learning Environment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I extend support services for my learners' participation in the learning process under a distance learning system.	4.00	High
2. I apply strategies towards proper and effective management of learning delivery modalities.	3.94	High
3. I can apply child-friendly measures and practices in learning modalities that promote learners' safety and security.	3.84	High
4. I set and nurture fair learning environment for my learners while being subjected to distance learning.	3.84	High
5. I employ child-friendly strategies for the appropriate management of learners' behavior while being subjected to distance learning.	1.06	Very Poor
6. I nurture a distance learning environment designed for purposeful learning.		
Overall Weighted Mean	3.43	Sufficient

Table 2 contains the data on the level of pedagogical skills of the Kindergarten teachers adapted to the distance learning system in terms of learning environment. The results showed that in general, the teacher-respondents attained a sufficient level of pedagogical skills adapted to the distance learning system along the domain of learning environment, with a grand mean of 3.43 or sufficient. It only implies that the sufficient level of pedagogical skills of the teacher-respondents in the learning environment can be justified by the sufficient collaborative support services that they have received

from different sectors in pursuing the instructional sustainability for the learners even amidst crisis.

The support services extended by the school leaders, barangay leaders and various stakeholders especially during the distribution of distance learning materials to the residences or homes of the learners made it possible for the teachers to cope well with the pedagogical roles along new normal learning environment.

This sufficient level of pedagogical expertise in line with learning environment can also be justified by the established knowledge, competence and acquired trainings and expertise of teachers in aligning pedagogical services to variety of learning settings and systems. It only shows that teachers are sufficiently trained in supporting diverse educational environments either within the classroom or beyond the school setting. These are corroborated by the study of Buena (2019) which examined the pedagogical flexibility of ECED teachers across learning environments and situations.

The results of the study showed that the capacity of most of the teacher-respondents to adapt to a variety of learning environments and situations can be linked with their continuous and active involvement in faculty training programs and with their experiences in various school-community relations programs and affairs.

Table 3 shows the level of pedagogical skills in terms of diversity of learners. It was found that in general, the Kindergarten teachers attained a sufficient level of pedagogical skills in terms of the diversity of learners adapted to the distance learning system, with an overall mean of 3.29 or sufficient. It implies that the teacher-respondents are sufficiently cognizant and knowledgeable about the contexts of individual differences among the learners even in this time of pandemic crisis, particularly in terms of capacities to access a variety of learning delivery modalities.

It implies further that teachers are aware of the reality that in the distance learning system, the diversity of learners is not just evident in terms of differences in cognitive levels and academic competencies but also in terms of background and status that influence their

extent of utilization of LDM. Thus, established knowledge of the principle of individual differences among learners' learning systems, gained the highest weighted mean of 3.94 or higher. It reflects the reality that the teacher-respondents are aware that the diversity of learners in this new normal learning can be also viewed in broader and more profound aspects besides cognitive and literacy skills.

Table 3
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices as to the Diversity of Learners

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I consider and attend to the issues concerning my learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences in this new normal distance learning system.	3.94	High
2. I get to know and study my learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds.	3.88	High
3. I provide pedagogical and instructional services to my learners from indigenous groups and communities in this new normal distance learning.	3.84	High
4. I am sufficiently trained and competent in teaching and handling learners with disabilities, giftedness, and talents under the distance learning system.	3.81	High
5. I can serve the learning needs of my learners from different circumstances in the new normal distance learning system.	1.00	Very Poor
Overall Weighted Mean	3.29	Sufficient

This diversity can be reflected along the personal, physical, behavioral, and socially oriented differences among the learners that affect their engagement in LDM. That is why besides academic support, the teachers also strive to offer holistic services to the learners including social support towards efficient coping mechanisms to the challenging distance learning system.

The findings are attested by the study of Festin (2019) which explored the best practices of teachers to sustain holistic support services to learners amidst learning in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that most of the teacher-respondents strongly adhered to the principle that the individual differences of their learners amidst the crisis should be sustainably supported by the balance of the provision of educational and social support. It was also concluded that a holistic approach made it possible to sufficiently cater to the diverse learning needs and status of the learners in the new normal.

Table 4
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices as to Curriculum and Planning

Indicators	Weighted Average	Interpretation
1. I plan and manage the use of learning modalities.	4.00	High
2. I align the targeted learning outcomes specified in lesson plans and instruction to the curriculum-based learning modalities.	3.94	High
3. I ensure the relevance and responsiveness of LDM to the learning programs.	3.94	High
4. I design and develop my version of distance learning resources including ICT-based learning tools.	1.38	Very Poor
5. I am willing to engage in professional collaboration with co-teachers and instructional leaders towards the enrichment of teaching practice in the distance learning system.		
Overall Weighted Average	3.45	Sufficient

Table 4 shows that along the domain of curriculum and planning adapted to the distance learning system, the leading pedagogical skills of the respondents were planning and managing the use of learning modalities and aligning the targeted learning outcomes specified in lesson plans and instruction to the curriculum-based learning modalities, which gained the highest mean of 4.00 or high. This high level of curriculum and planning skills can also be justified by the respondents' proper and sufficient orientation and expertise on various curriculum guidelines, plans and programs that promote the

development of multiple competencies among the learners.

In this new normal distance learning system, this is particularly evident in the adherence of teachers to the provisions of MELC and other guidelines adapted to new normal education. Specifically, MELC represents the most essential learning competencies or the most vital and indispensable academic skills anchored on curriculum-prescribed knowledge and competencies in certain grade level and learning areas, especially at the midst of the past pandemic crisis.

According to Llego (2021), the release of MELC was designed to enable the department to focus instruction on the most essential and indispensable competencies that learners must acquire even amidst the crisis, as the challenges in the learning delivery were anticipated.

The results imply that the education department and its partner schools and divisions have established and sustainable curriculum system and framework that are adaptable to the changing learning needs and scenarios. Thus, with this established system, the teachers can readily access the pedagogical and professional support services that they need to adapt to the adjustments in the curriculum and planning system during this time of pandemic. As affirmed by the study of Tan (2020) which focused on the teachers' coping capacities and adaptive skills towards the changing curriculum processes and system in the new normal distance learning system,

Table 5
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical Practices As Assessment and Reporting

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I design, select, organize, and utilize assessment strategies that are developmentally appropriate for the learners in this new normal.	3.94	High
2. I monitor and evaluate my learners' progress and achievements under new normal modalities.	3.84	Poor
3. I give relevant feedback to my learners to improve learning in this new normal.	1.63	Very Poor
4. I use assessment data to enhance the teaching and learning practices and programs in the distance learning system.	1.38	
5. I communicate and report to the key stakeholders the learners' needs, progress, and achievement in this new normal.		
Overall Weighted Mean	2.93	Sufficient

Table 5 represents the tabulated data on the level of pedagogical skills of the Kindergarten teachers along with assessment and reporting adapted to the new normal distance learning system. It can be seen that in general, the respondents attained a sufficient level of pedagogical skills along assessment and reporting

during the distance learning system, with an overall mean of 2.93 or sufficient.

The findings imply that despite the temporary postponement of periodical examination or standard assessment tools; the teachers are still able to sufficiently engage in the utilization of alternative assessment tools. These alternative assessment tools include the parallel assessment. With the use of parallel assessment tools, teachers can sustain and support opportunities to evaluate and monitor learners’ performance and outcomes under LDM-based learning.

The results are supported by the study of Villarosa (2020) which suggests that the majority of the teacher-participants attained a higher degree of assessment and reporting skills and services due to their acquired and honed knowledge, training, and experiences in the design and use of a variety of assessment tools. This implies that schools, districts, and divisions have also managed to sustain collaborative faculty training programs in learning and exploring alternative assessment tools that are adaptable to the learning system amidst the pandemic.

- Level of Kindergarten Teachers’ Professional Practices along PPST Domain

The study also covered the teachers’ self-assessment of their professional practices adherent to the PPST domains such as community linkages professional engagement personal growth and professional development. The obtained information on the assessment of the professional practices of the respondents in terms of community linkages and professional engagement aligned with distance learning.

Table 6
Level of Kindergarten Teachers’ Professional Practices as to Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I establish learning environments that are responsive to community contexts in the distance learning system.	4.00	High
2. I comply with and uphold salient school policies and procedures in terms of community and professional relations in utilizing LDM.	3.00	Sufficient
3. I engage and motivate parents and the school community in the educative process under the distance learning system.	1.47	Very Poor
4. I always ensure that professional ethics are applied in my community-based and professional endeavors while utilizing the LDM.		
Overall Mean	3.09	Sufficient

The tabulated data showed that in general, the teacher-respondents attained a sufficient level of professional skills in terms of community linkages and professional engagement aligned with distance learning, with an overall mean of 3.09 or sufficient. This implies that the sufficient level of professional practices of teachers along with community linkages and professional engagement can be explained by the

reality of the community-based nature and functions of the distance learning system.

It further implies that the teachers are sufficiently exposed to opportunities to align and adapt their professional services and advocacies to community-based learning via home-based learning settings and systems for the learners. It also reflects the reality that the implementation of the learning delivery modalities highly required the support services of community leaders and stakeholders, hence, teachers were even more honed to align their professional knowledge and skills to the community-based nature of distance learning.

Table 7
Level of Kindergarten Teachers' Professional Practices as to Personal Growth and Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I value professional links with my colleagues in this new normal.	3.94	High
2. I align my professional practices with relevant philosophies of teaching in the new normal distance learning system.	3.88	High
3. I value and uphold the dignity of teaching as a profession in this new normal.	3.81	High
4. I sustain my professional development goals even amidst crisis.	1.00	Very Poor
5. I embrace professional reflections and learning to improve my professional practices under the distance learning system.		
Overall Weighted Mean	3.30	Sufficient

Table 7 reflects the data on the level of professional skills of the Kindergarten teachers along the domain of personal growth and professional development adapted to the distance learning system. In general, the respondents attained a sufficient level of professional skills in terms of personal growth and professional development adapted to the distance learning system, with a grand mean of 3.30 or sufficient.

This implies that despite of the pandemic crisis, many Kinder teachers have managed to uphold, embrace, and foster opportunities to hone their personal and professional development and progress. It can be justified by the reality that the varied and multiple experiences and challenges posed by the pandemic and the distance learning system have exposed teachers to ample opportunities to discover, learn, and explore professional knowledge and skills, particularly in terms of academic crisis management and professional resiliency.

• Result of the School Readiness Assessment of Kindergarten Learners

The study also delved into the analysis of the results of the school readiness assessment of the Kinder pupils in the selected schools to gain pertinent information on the status of new normal distance learning in the locale.

Table 8 shows the data on the level of school readiness assessment of the Kindergarten pupils of Labo East District during the distance learning system from the school year 2021-2022.

It was found that the majority or 95.54 percent of the Kinder pupils or 1264 pupils attained average overall development or average level of school readiness. This was followed by 2.26 percent who attained significant slightly advanced overall development. On the other hand, 1.96 percent attained a significant delay in overall development, and only 3 pupils or 0.22 percent attained significant highly advanced overall development.

Table 8
Consolidated Readiness Assessment Result of Kindergarten Learners

Schools' Assessment	Readiness of Pupils	Total Number	Percentage
Average Development	Over-all	1,264	95.54
Significant Advance Development	Slightly Over-all	6	1.97
Significant Delay Development	Slightly Over-all	3	0.23
Significant Advance Development	Highly Over-all		
Total Population of Kinder Pupils		1,323	100

These findings imply that despite of the adverse disruptions and impacts of the pandemic crisis, the majority of the Kindergarten learners of Labo, East District schools have still managed to attain average level of development or average degree of school readiness. This can be justified by the sustainable and uncompromised pedagogical and professional support services of Kinder teachers for the distance learning engagement of the learners. The disruptions in the face-to-face instruction did not completely hinder the teachers from employing alternative strategies, systems, and platforms to sustain and support learners' access to new normal instruction.

- Significant Relationship between Teachers' Professional Practices and Kindergarten Learners' Assessment Readiness

The data in Table 9 show that the professional practices of the teachers in terms of community linkages and professional engagement shared a significant relationship with the slightly advanced development and highly advanced learners' readiness of the pupils. This implies that the professional practices of the teachers with community involvement also faced limitations in terms of contributions towards the academic development of the learners during the new normal distance learning has something to do with the school readiness assessment of the kinder learners. It implies that the

professional practices and community-based services of the teachers contribute to this advancement in establishing a learning environment that is responsive to the community context.

These are attested by the related study of Galvez (2019) which determined the effects of limitations in the professional engagement of the teachers on the learners' performance in the distance learning system. The study also found that the majority of the teacher-respondents also claimed that they could not fully offer professional support services to their students particularly during the peak of lockdown and community quarantine in the first onset of the pandemic that led to temporary school closures.

Table 9
Correlation Between the Teachers' Professional Practices and the Kindergarten Learners' Assessment Readiness

Variables	Community Linkages & Professional Engagement	Personal Growth and Professional Development
Slightly Delay	$\tau = -0.104$	-0.072
Average Over-all Development	$\tau = -0.191$	0
Slightly Advanced	$\tau = 0.302^*$	0.520**
Highly Advanced	$\tau = 0.331^*$	0.548**

The results showed that the professional practices in terms of personal growth and professional development shared a highly significant relationship with the slightly advanced and highly advanced e and slightly advanced development of the learners. It only shows that the teachers' professional development practices such as value professional links with their colleagues in the new normal enhanced/ helped their practices professionally. Moreover, professional knowledge includes alternative practices to serve the needs of the learners even amidst crisis, hence, advanced development was served by the kindergarten teachers.

The results are affirmed by the study of Talento (2021) which delved into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the level of resiliency and values

system of the basic education teachers of the Division of Aklan. The study concluded that the teacher-respondents still showed determination and resilience towards their support services for the learners as part of their personal values system and growth even with the adverse experiences of pandemic. The teacher-respondents claimed that it was an integral part of their personal and professional growth to continue and sustain quality and meaningfulness of services for their pupils no matter what crisis or adversities come their way not sufficiently apply their higher education, research-based knowledge and professional development skills in translating opportunities to guide and support the students' performance. This was primarily because of lack of face-to-face instruction that also led to poor performance of many learners during pandemic.

• Significant Relationship Between Teacher Pedagogical Practices and The Kindergarten Learner's Assessment

The data in Table 10 show that the pedagogical practices of the teachers in terms of community linkages and professional engagement shared significant relationship with the slightly advanced and average development or learners' readiness. It only implies that the pedagogical practices of the teachers also faced limitations in terms of contributions towards the academic development of the learners during the new normal distance learning.

Slightly advance development still implies limitations and insufficiencies in meeting the standards of learning objectives, performance and outcomes expected among the learners. It implies that the professional practices of the teachers did not contribute to this advancement due to highly strict public protocols and restrictions against face-to-face instruction and communication that time of crisis.

Table 10
Correlation Between the Teachers' Pedagogical Practices and the Kindergarten Learners' Assessment Readiness

Variables	Slightly Delay	Average	Slightly Advance	Highly Advance
Content Knowledge and pedagogy	$\tau = -0.94^{**}$	0.272	0.160	0.04
Learning Environment	$\tau = 0$	0.093	0.177	0.177
Diversity of Learners	$\tau = -0.155$	0.084	0.367*	0.149
Curriculum, and planning	$\tau = -0.135$	-0.248	0.025	0.258
Assessment and reporting	$\tau = -0.094$	0.367*	0.160	0.04

Legend:

** *Highly Significant* $p < 0.01$

* *Significant* $p < 0.05$

NS not significant

The findings of the study on the negative highly significant relationship between content knowledge and pedagogy and the slightly delay development only implies that the slight or limited level of development and performance of the learners cannot be directly attributed or linked with the teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy.

• Challenges Encountered by the Teacher Respondents in the Implementation of Distance Learning System

The vitality of the study was also reinforced by the analysis of the various challenges and problems faced by the Kindergarten teachers in the selected schools during their endeavor to execute distance learning functions and roles. These challenges were identified and tackled during the interviews and focus group discussions with the teacher-respondents.

The results of the survey showed that the leading challenge encountered by the teacher-respondents in

the implementation of the distance learning system was the rigorous and difficult process of producing teacher-made distance learning materials and limited resources to support its production. This was primarily due to the variety and multiplicity of areas and aspects that need to be met and considered in the development of these materials. These considerations include the diverse learning needs and demands of the Kinder learners especially when it comes to the forms of materials that match with their capacity to access technological platforms in this new normal.

- Action Plan Proposed to Enhance the Kindergarten Teachers' Pedagogical and Professional practices

Based on the results of the study, the researcher attended 5-Day In-Service Training for teachers as a resource speaker. This was participated by three big schools in Labo East District – Labo Elementary School with 6 Kindergarten teachers and 84 teachers, Fundado Elementary School with 2 Kindergarten teachers and 23 teachers, and TulaynaLupa Elementary School with 5 Kindergarten teachers and 39 teachers. As resource speakers, all the participants designed and developed an action plan, specifically to foster enhancement in the pedagogical and professional practices of Kindergarten teachers along with the implementation of a distance learning system and face-to-face classes.

The core objective of the action plan is the need to address a variety of challenges, issues, and problems encountered by the teacher-respondents on the implementation of pedagogical and professional practices in the new normal distance learning system. Specifically, the negative findings of the study that are proposed to be addressed by the action plan include the rigorous and difficult process of producing teaching-learning materials, limited transparency and validity of the assessment, postponement of the standard learning assessment system at the height of the pandemic and challenging design of the alternative learning assessment tools, lack of access to the Internet of the majority of learners, demands for guiding and assisting parents on proper mentoring services for Kinder pupils, limited ICT skills of the learners, unfavorable attitudes of parents towards distance learning system, distance of learners' residence from school and

transportation problems, limited teacher-training programs on LDM, experiences of stress among teachers during LDM, mental and emotional stress of the learners during LDM and poor performance and assessment results of the learners.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the objectives and contents of the study. It also presents the summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the results, and proposed recommendations for each problem.

This study aimed to assess the pedagogical and professional practices along the PPST domains of the Kindergarten teachers of Labo East District and its effects on the learners' assessment readiness in the new normal. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1) What is the level of Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical practices along the PPST domain as to content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum, and planning, and assessment and reporting? 2) What is the level of Kindergarten teachers' professional practices along PPST domains as to community linkages and professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development? 3) What is the result of the school readiness assessment of Kindergarten learners in the new normal? 4) Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' professional practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness? 5) Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' pedagogical practices and the Kindergarten learners' assessment readiness? 6) What are the challenges encountered by the teacher respondents in the implementation of the distance learning system? and 7) What action plan can be proposed to enhance the Kindergarten teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies in the implementation of the distance learning system?

V. FINDINGS

The findings of the study were summarized as follows:

1. The study found that most of the teacher-respondents excelled in the pedagogical domain of content knowledge and pedagogy compared to the other domains. Thus, it shows that Kindergarten teachers are more pedagogically equipped, trained, skilled, and competent. Further, the professional development practices of the respondents were assessed and identified at an average level only. This implies that Kindergarten teachers still face the needs and demands of pursuing higher education and other professional advancement measures and practices.
2. The readiness assessment and performance of the learners were viewed at an average level only. This attests to the reality that the pandemic crisis has posed certain limitations and challenges against the learners' access to opportunities to improve their performance. Furthermore, the domains of diversity of learners correlated with the slightly advanced development of the learners' assessment readiness while the domains of assessment and reporting correlated with the average level of learners' assessment readiness.
3. The professional practices community linkages and professional engagement correlated with the slightly advanced development or learners' readiness while the personal growth and professional development correlated with the highly advanced development of the learners. The most complex, crucial, and challenging areas of teachers' performance during distance learning were in terms of learning resources, performance monitoring, assessment system, issues on transparency of assessment results, and parental involvement in home-based learning.
4. The developed action plan specifies, organizes, and aligns the proposed interventions and practices to the negative findings and identified challenges and least implemented practices of the Kindergarten teachers along pedagogical and professional domains of teaching in the new normal distance learning system.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Most of the teacher-respondents excelled in the pedagogical domain of content knowledge and pedagogy compared to the other domains. Thus, it shows that Kindergarten teachers are more pedagogically equipped, trained, skilled, and competent.
 2. The professional development practices of the respondents were assessed and identified at an average level only. Thus, it implies that Kindergarten teachers still face the needs and demands of pursuing higher education and other professional advancement measures and practices.
 3. The readiness assessment and performance of the learners were viewed at an average level only. It only attests to the reality that the pandemic crisis has posed certain limitations and challenges against the learners' access to opportunities to improve their performance.
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4. The professional practices community linkages and professional engagement correlated with the slightly advanced development or learners' readiness while the personal growth and professional development correlated with the highly advanced development of the learners.
 5. The domains of the diversity of learners' pedagogical practices correlate with the slightly advanced development of the learners' assessment readiness while the domains of assessment and reporting correlate with the average level of learners' assessment readiness. Content knowledge and pedagogy have a negative high relationship with slightly delay development of the learners.
 6. The most complex, crucial, and challenging areas of teachers' performance during distance learning were in terms of learning resources, performance monitoring, assessment system, issues on transparency of assessment results, and parental involvement in home-based learning.
 7. The developed action plan specifies, organizes, and aligns the proposed interventions and practices to the negative findings and identified challenges and least implemented practices of the Kindergarten teachers along pedagogical and professional domains of teaching in the new normal distance learning system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the results of the study, the following recommendations are given:

1. It is suggested that the training programs for Kinder teachers along the new normal distance learning system be separated and enhanced for the pedagogical domains and professional domains. New and relevant strategies, innovations, and interventions can be discovered and conceptualized separately for pedagogical and professional domains during the teacher-training programs.
2. School heads, expert teachers, and instructional leaders can pursue the organization of collaborative training programs and mentoring services on the alignment of professional development activities of the Kindergarten teachers to the distance learning system and new normal education. These include professional training on supporting learning delivery modalities with research-based knowledge and innovative practices.
3. Kindergarten teachers can pursue the implementation of educational innovations, collaborative projects, educational research, or intervention-oriented training programs to address the other major areas of gaps, problems, and deficiencies during the distance learning system.
4. Further educational studies can be conducted about the sustainable assessment and monitoring system of the Kinder pupils' performance, competencies, and assessment readiness. This can be attained through the support of special committees comprised of teachers and instructional leaders who will manage the collaborative academic readiness evaluation system. Relevant research can also be pursued to determine and address other potential factors affecting the learners' assessment readiness can be considered and pursued.
5. Teacher-researchers can pursue further research in line with the exploration and enhancement of pedagogical and professional innovations that can improve learners' school readiness performance. These can be individual or collaborative educational studies that are designed and intended to seek and explore solutions, strategies, and interventions to the learning

difficulties and challenges of Kinder pupils that hinder the positive attainment of school readiness.

6. Collaborative intervention planning and implementation can be facilitated by the Kinder teachers together with instructional leaders and other experts towards the exploration and utilization of best practices and interventions to respond to problems on distance learning materials, assessment, and partnership with parents.
7. The developed action plan can be also subjected to validation by the school heads, Master Teachers, and other school leaders to ensure its accuracy and applicability in the pedagogical and professional empowerment of Kinder teachers. Recommendations and suggestions that will be gathered from the leaders and experts can be applied and integrated into the refinement of the inputs of the action plan.

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