**Effect of Early Childhood Prepatories onThe Fine Motor Skills Development of Kindergarten Learner**

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**Abstract**

 This study sought to determine the effect of Prefatory Approach on the fine motor skills development of the kindergarten learners. This study made use of quasi-experimental research design, which is a non-equivalent control group pre test-post test design. Non-equivalent design is a good design when the researcher has access to one group for experimentation (Vockel 1983). The researcher opted to use this design because the subjects of the study are intact group of learners. This study was conducted in Matutungan Elementary School, Division of Davao del Sur. The subjects in this study were the 30 kindergarten learners- 15 are from section A which comprised the controlled group and 15 are from section B composed the experimental group. The composition of these two sections is heterogeneous therefore pupils of section A and B have identical range of performance. This study made use of the non-random assignment of subjects where all learners of both sections A and B were involved as subjects of the study. This study revealed that the utilization of prefatory approach has developed the fine motor skills of the kindergarten learners. It also revealed that there is magnitude of difference between the post test scores of the controlled and experimental groups. The pre-test scores of the kindergarten learners both controlled and experimental groups is at the Developing level. The post-test scores of the controlled group is at the Approaching Proficiency level while the post test scores of the experimental group is at the Proficiency level.

**Keywords:** Early childhood, prefatory, fine motor development, kindergarten learner

1. **Introduction**

Fine motor skills are fundamental to a child’s overall development, enabling them to perform essential tasks such as writing, drawing, and manipulating objects with precision. However, delays or deficiencies in fine motor skills have become a pressing concern in early childhood education worldwide. Globally, studies highlight that inadequate stimulation during early childhood leads to developmental delays, which can affect academic achievement and social interactions (Anderson et al., 2019). Reports from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasize that a lack of early intervention programs, particularly in underprivileged areas, contributes to global disparities in childhood development (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) notes that insufficient motor skill development in early years impacts children’s readiness for primary education, perpetuating educational inequities (WHO, 2021).

Nationally, the Philippines faces significant challenges in addressing early childhood education needs. A report from the Department of Education (DepEd) highlights that while kindergarten enrollment rates have increased, the quality of foundational skills, including fine motor development, remains inconsistent across regions (DepEd, 2020). The Philippine Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council also identified a lack of specialized teaching strategies and materials tailored to developing motor skills (ECCD Council, 2021). Additionally, studies reveal that many kindergarten programs in the country focus heavily on cognitive skills, often neglecting the importance of physical and motor development (Reyes & Santos, 2022).

Locally, schools in Davao del Sur reflect similar challenges, particularly in providing effective interventions for fine motor skill development among kindergarten learners. Teachers in Matutungan Elementary School report that some children struggle with tasks requiring manual dexterity, such as holding pencils or cutting with scissors, which hinders their classroom participation and confidence (Garcia, 2022). Furthermore, limited resources and outdated teaching methods exacerbate the problem, leaving many learners unprepared for the next stages of their education (Torres, 2021). Parental involvement in early childhood development also varies widely across communities, impacting the consistency of skill-building activities at home (Delos Reyes, 2021).

Synthesizing these global, national, and local issues underscores the urgent need for innovative approaches to early childhood education that address fine motor development. The Prefatory Approach, a method emphasizing preparatory activities designed to enhance fine motor skills through structured and engaging tasks, offers promising solutions to this challenge. This study investigates the effect of the Prefatory Approach on the fine motor skills development of kindergarten learners. By examining its impact, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights to improve early childhood education practices, ensuring that children are equipped with the foundational skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

**Literature Review**

**Introduction**
The development of fine motor skills in early childhood is a critical component of educational success, particularly for kindergarten learners. Research underscores the role of innovative approaches in addressing challenges related to motor development, with global perspectives offering diverse insights. This literature review examines existing studies and theories related to fine motor skill development from ASEAN, European, African, and Australian contexts, identifies gaps in current knowledge, and establishes the foundation for this study.

**Fine Motor Skill Development in ASEAN Countries**

Studies in Southeast Asia emphasize the importance of culturally adaptive practices in early childhood education. In the Philippines, Reyes and Santos (2022) found that limited resources and traditional teaching methods hinder fine motor skill development, urging a shift toward innovative approaches. Similarly, in Thailand, Chaipong et al. (2021) highlighted the role of play-based learning in enhancing hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity among young learners. Malaysia’s government-initiated preschool programs focus on integrating motor skill activities into daily routines, which have shown improvements in children's writing readiness (Ismail & Ahmad, 2020). However, across ASEAN countries, studies reveal gaps in teacher training for implementing specialized motor skill development programs (Nguyen & Tran, 2021).

**Fine Motor Skill Development in European Countries**

European research often links fine motor skills to broader cognitive and academic achievements. In Finland, Jokinen et al. (2020) found that structured fine motor skill exercises improve handwriting and early literacy. In the United Kingdom, Baker and Jones (2021) identified that preschool children who engaged in fine motor activities, such as cutting and tracing, showed better performance in mathematics and problem-solving tasks. Germany’s early childhood curriculum emphasizes motor activities as part of holistic development, with studies by Müller et al. (2021) demonstrating the benefits of incorporating physical and motor skills into educational frameworks. Despite these findings, gaps remain in evaluating long-term impacts of motor-focused interventions on academic outcomes.

**Fine Motor Skill Development in African Countries**

In African contexts, the development of fine motor skills often intersects with challenges related to resource availability and access to quality education. A study in South Africa by Dlamini et al. (2021) found that motor skills are often overlooked in early childhood programs due to a focus on cognitive development. Similarly, studies in Kenya revealed that children from underprivileged communities lack access to materials such as writing tools and manipulatives, negatively affecting their motor skill growth (Ochieng & Auma, 2020). However, interventions such as locally sourced play-based activities have shown promise in bridging these gaps (Nyaga & Wanjiru, 2019). Across African countries, there is a need for policies that prioritize balanced motor and cognitive development in early education.

**Fine Motor Skill Development in Australia**

Australia has been at the forefront of integrating innovative practices for motor skill development in early education. Studies by Wilson and Brown (2020) indicate that incorporating digital tools, such as touch-screen activities, enhances children’s motor coordination. The Australian Early Years Learning Framework emphasizes play-based and inquiry-driven approaches, with research by Thompson et al. (2021) showing significant improvements in fine motor and cognitive outcomes. However, gaps persist in ensuring equitable access to these resources, particularly in rural and indigenous communities (Smith & Johnson, 2022).

**Gaps in Current Knowledge**

Across ASEAN, European, African, and Australian contexts, common gaps emerge in the literature. First, while the importance of fine motor skills is universally recognized, there is limited research on the comparative effectiveness of specific approaches, such as the Prefatory Approach. Second, studies often focus on short-term impacts, leaving long-term effects on academic performance and developmental outcomes underexplored. Additionally, there is a lack of cross-cultural studies that evaluate how contextual factors influence the effectiveness of motor skill interventions.

**Discussion**

This literature review highlights the global recognition of fine motor skill development as a critical component of early childhood education. ASEAN studies emphasize the need for teacher training and resource allocation, while European research links motor skills to academic achievements. African literature underscores resource constraints but demonstrates innovative localized interventions, and Australian studies advocate for integrating technology and structured frameworks. Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in the evaluation of specific approaches, such as the Prefatory Approach, and their long-term effectiveness. Addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the impact of the Prefatory Approach on fine motor skills development, contributing to the global body of knowledge in early childhood education.

1. **Methodology**

This chapter presents the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures used to investigate the effect of the Prefatory Approach on the fine motor skills development of kindergarten learners. It explains the rationale behind the selected methods and provides a detailed account of how the research was conducted to ensure reliability and validity.

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, specifically a non-equivalent control group pre-test-post-test design. This design is appropriate when working with intact groups where random assignment is not feasible (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). It allows for the comparison of outcomes between an experimental group exposed to the Prefatory Approach and a control group using traditional methods. The design enables the measurement of changes in fine motor skills development over time, as well as the determination of the effectiveness of the intervention.

Research Environment and Participants

The study was conducted at Matutungan Elementary School, Division of Davao del Sur, where two kindergarten sections were selected as the research subjects. The participants comprised 30 learners: 15 from Section A (control group) and 15 from Section B (experimental group). The two sections were heterogeneous, ensuring similar baseline characteristics. This non-random assignment of participants was necessary due to the natural grouping of students, which is common in educational settings (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using a researcher-developed fine motor skills checklist that included tasks such as drawing, cutting, and manipulating objects. The instrument was reviewed by experts in early childhood education to ensure content validity and alignment with the study’s objectives (Anderson et al., 2020). Both groups underwent a pre-test to measure their baseline fine motor skills before the intervention. The experimental group was then exposed to the Prefatory Approach, which involved structured, play-based activities designed to enhance fine motor skills, while the control group followed the standard kindergarten curriculum. After four weeks of intervention, both groups took a post-test to assess changes in their fine motor skills.

Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were computed to describe the pre-test and post-test performance of both groups. Paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores within each group. Independent sample t-tests were used to compare the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups to assess the effectiveness of the Prefatory Approach. Statistical significance was set at p<0.05p < 0.05, consistent with best practices in educational research (Field, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from the parents of all participants. Confidentiality of the learners’ data was maintained, and participation was entirely voluntary. The study ensured that the intervention posed no harm to the children and aligned with their developmental needs (Bryman, 2020).

Rationale for Method Selection

The quasi-experimental design was chosen because it allows for practical implementation in a real-world classroom setting without disrupting existing group assignments (Shadish et al., 2021). The use of pre-test and post-test assessments ensures the accurate measurement of changes over time. The combination of descriptive and inferential statistics provides a comprehensive analysis of the data, enabling the study to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of the Prefatory Approach.

1. **Results**

This section presents the findings of the study on the effect of the Prefatory Approach on the fine motor skills development of kindergarten learners. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments of both the experimental and control groups. Results are summarized with the help of tables and charts, focusing on factual observations without interpretation.

**Pre-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups**

The pre-test assessed the baseline fine motor skills of both groups before the intervention.

| **Group** | **Mean Score** | **Standard Deviation** | **Descriptive Level** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experimental | 2.45 | 0.32 | Developing |
| Control | 2.50 | 0.30 | Developing |

**Key Findings:**
Both the experimental and control groups were at the "Developing" level, indicating comparable starting points. The small difference in mean scores (0.05) and similar standard deviations suggest that the groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the study (Anderson et al., 2020).

**Post-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups**

The post-test measured fine motor skills after the intervention.

| **Group** | **Mean Score** | **Standard Deviation** | **Descriptive Level** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experimental | 4.10 | 0.28 | Proficiency |
| Control | 3.35 | 0.31 | Approaching Proficiency |

**Key Findings:**
The experimental group, which underwent the Prefatory Approach, improved to the "Proficiency" level, with a mean score of 4.10. In contrast, the control group improved to the "Approaching Proficiency" level, with a mean score of 3.35. The larger improvement in the experimental group indicates a stronger effect of the intervention (Taylor & Green, 2020).

**Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores**

A paired t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within each group.

| **Group** | **Mean Difference** | **t-value** | **p-value** | **Significance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experimental | 1.65 | 8.45 | < 0.001 | Significant |
| Control | 0.85 | 4.23 | < 0.05 | Significant |

**Key Findings:**
Both groups showed significant improvements from pre-test to post-test. However, the experimental group exhibited a larger mean difference, suggesting that the Prefatory Approach had a greater impact on fine motor skills development (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

**Comparison of Post-Test Scores Between Groups**

An independent t-test compared the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

| **Metric** | **t-value** | **p-value** | **Significance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Post-Test Scores | 6.78 | < 0.001 | Significant |

**Key Findings:**
The significant difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups confirms the effectiveness of the Prefatory Approach in improving fine motor skills compared to traditional methods (Baker & Jones, 2021).

**Discussion**

The results of this study demonstrate the effectiveness of the Prefatory Approach in enhancing the fine motor skills of kindergarten learners. The significant improvement observed in the experimental group’s post-test scores compared to the control group underscores the potential of structured, play-based activities in addressing developmental needs. This finding aligns with Wilson and Brown (2020), who emphasized that hands-on, engaging approaches are critical for fine motor development in early childhood education. The experimental group reaching the "Proficiency" level suggests that the Prefatory Approach successfully bridged gaps in fine motor skill acquisition, supporting theories of experiential and activity-based learning (Anderson et al., 2020).

The results also highlight the limitations of traditional methods used by the control group, which only achieved an "Approaching Proficiency" level. This outcome reinforces the findings of Smith and Johnson (2021), who noted that standard teaching practices often neglect the nuanced needs of motor skill development. Moreover, the greater improvement in the experimental group reflects the Prefatory Approach’s ability to foster critical neural connections through repetitive, structured tasks, as supported by Zhao et al. (2024).

Despite the study's promising findings, limitations must be acknowledged. First, the small sample size of 30 learners limits the generalizability of the results. Second, the study was conducted in a single school, which may not represent the diversity of educational contexts across regions. Lastly, the intervention duration of four weeks may not capture long-term impacts on motor skill retention and application. Addressing these limitations in future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Prefatory Approach’s effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

This study confirms that the Prefatory Approach significantly enhances the fine motor skills of kindergarten learners, as evidenced by the experimental group’s substantial improvement compared to the control group. The results highlight the importance of integrating structured, play-based activities into early childhood education to promote fine motor development. This research contributes to the growing body of evidence advocating for innovative teaching strategies tailored to developmental needs (Taylor & Green, 2020). While the findings offer valuable insights, further studies with larger sample sizes, diverse settings, and extended intervention periods are recommended to validate and expand upon these results.

Recommendations

For the Department of Education, it is recommended to integrate the Prefatory Approach into the national early childhood curriculum to address gaps in fine motor skill development effectively. Additionally, the department should provide funding for training programs and resources to support innovative, play-based interventions in kindergarten classrooms. Developing policies that emphasize the importance of motor skill development as a foundational component of early education is essential to ensure that children acquire critical developmental skills at an early age.

School heads are encouraged to adopt structured, play-based approaches like the Prefatory Approach to enhance fine motor skills among learners. Allocating resources for teacher training and procuring materials necessary for implementing activity-based learning strategies will strengthen the effectiveness of these interventions. Furthermore, regular evaluations of early childhood programs should be conducted to identify and address gaps in fine motor skill development, ensuring continuous improvement in program implementation.

Teachers are advised to incorporate hands-on, play-based activities targeting specific fine motor skills, such as drawing, cutting, and manipulating objects, into their daily lessons. Participation in professional development programs will enable teachers to learn and implement innovative teaching approaches, such as the Prefatory Approach, effectively. Additionally, monitoring and documenting students’ motor skill progress will allow teachers to adapt teaching methods and interventions to meet the individual needs of their learners.

For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies with larger sample sizes and across diverse educational settings to validate the effectiveness of the Prefatory Approach further. Exploring the long-term impacts of the Prefatory Approach on learners’ academic and developmental outcomes will provide valuable insights into its sustained benefits. Additionally, future investigations should examine the applicability of the Prefatory Approach in addressing other developmental skills, such as gross motor or cognitive abilities, to expand its potential impact on early childhood education.

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