

**Phonological Competence of Kindergarten Learners in Leyte Division of Eastern Visayas Region, Philippines**

Dr. Noel P. Tancinco, Ivy P. Gonzales  
Sto. Niño Elementary School, Capoocan District, Capoocan Leyte, Philippines  
Biliran Province State University, Naval Biliran, Philippines

**Abstract.** The thrust of this study was to determine the phonological competence of kindergarten learners of school year 2017-2018. Specifically, it sought to find out the profile of the learners; the profile of teachers; ascertain the phonological competence of the learners in terms of phonological awareness and pronunciation difficulty of the learners; and identify the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers. This study utilized the descriptive-survey method using quantitative and qualitative research design to describe the set of the data collected. After thorough analysis of the gathered data, it was revealed that most of the profile of learners in terms of parents' educational qualification were High School Graduate.

The profile of Kindergarten teachers belonged to young age who were 20-30 years old. With regards to educational qualification, Kindergarten teachers obtained only a Certificate of Academic Requirements (CAR) in Masteral Program. None of them were Masteral degree holders, have attended trainings on Early Childhood in District level only. On the other hand, in terms of reading materials available at home learners have books at home. For audio-visual materials available at home, TV was rank 1, only 22 of the Kindergarten learners have laptops at home.

Further, the skill on naming upper case and lower case letters got the highest weighted mean of 2.40 interpreted as "Moderately Aware". However, skill on distinguishing words that rhyme got the lowest weighted mean of 1.20 interpreted as "Not Aware". The skill on differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin-pen, tin-ten etc.) got the highest weighted mean of 4.68 interpreted as "Very Much Difficult". While, the skill on reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men) got the lowest weighted mean of 3.41 interpreted as "Highly Difficult". Majority of the skills in pronunciation were considered as "Highly Difficult".

On the problems met by the teacher, it was revealed that on absence or lack of instructional materials and inadequate facilities and equipment were interpreted as "Always a Problem" with mean values of 4.34, and 4.28, respectively. While, item on utilization of children in livelihood activities got the lowest weighted mean of 1.15 interpreted as "Not a Problem at All".

After thorough analysis of the results based on the findings of the study, the researchers hereby conclude that the phonological awareness of Kindergarten learners was considered as "Moderately Aware" with average weighted mean of 1.94. Therefore, there is a need to design instructional materials for phonological skills development.

**Key words:** Kindergarten learners; Phonological awareness; Phonological competence; Phonological skills

**Introduction**

Phonological competencies refer to the ability to segment and manipulate the sounds of oral language. It is not the same as phonics, which involves knowing how written letters relate to spoken sounds. Activities that develop phonological awareness in children provide practice with rhyme and with beginning sounds and syllables (from ILA, International Literacy Association). It is a broad skill that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. Children who have

phonological awareness are able to identify and make oral rhymes, can clap out the number of syllables in a word, and can recognize words with the same initial sounds like 'money' and 'mother.'

Phonological competencies skills are important in order to develop good reading skills. Having good phonological awareness skills means that a child is able to manipulate sounds and words, or “play” with sounds and words.

According to Worth (2006), the importance of providing children with direct experiences with materials, objects, and phenomena is supported by experience and understanding of how learning takes place. While information can be remembered if taught through books and lectures, true understanding and the ability to use knowledge in new situations requires learning in which children study concepts in-depth, and over time and learning that is founded in direct experience. Therefore, the justification for hands-on learning is that it allows students to build understanding that is functional and to develop the ability to inquire themselves, in other words, to become independent learners. Thus, this study focused on determining the profile of the Kindergarten learners, ascertaining the phonological awareness of the learners, determining the pronunciation difficulty of the learners and identifying the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers. The data gathered served as bases in the development of instructional materials for skills development. Further, this study aimed to raise awareness of the range and relevance of learning and instructional materials that can be used effectively in teaching.

In Sto. Niño Elementary School, where the researcher is presently teaching Kindergarten pupils had experienced challenges in teaching Kindergarten pupils because of lack of instructional materials, changes of the curriculum, adapting to the newly introduced teaching strategy, not cooperative parents, inability of parents to help teach their children in doing homework, and among others.

The problems mentioned above, are also experienced by teachers in Capoocan District. But the problem that urgently needs to be addressed is the low performance level of the pupils caused by unmastered skills among pupils such as phonological awareness and pronunciation skills because of lack of suitable and varied instructional materials. Several instructional materials have been crafted by the teachers such as flashcards, charts, word strips, picture dictionary and among others. But none of these materials help improve the performance level of the pupils.

Overcoming the problems is the responsibility of everybody. And instructional material is one of the greatest weapon of a teacher in solving problems with regards to teaching-learning process. With the observations made and the experiences of the researcher with the current situation in the District of Capoocan, the researcher believed that there is a need to conduct a study on phonological awareness and pronunciation difficulty of Kindergarten learners with the end in view of designing instructional materials for skills development, hence, this study.

#### *Objectives of the Study*

This study generally aimed to assess the phonological competence of Kindergarten learners in Capoocan District, Leyte Division. Specifically, it sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the profile of the learners in terms of: educational qualification of the parents; reading materials available at home; and audio-visual materials available at home;
2. Determine the profile of the teachers in terms of: age; civil status; educational qualification; teaching experience; and trainings on early childhood;
3. Ascertain the phonological competence of the learners in terms of: phonological awareness such as: identifying sounds of letters; naming uppercase and lower case letters; matching uppercase and lower case letters; identifying beginning sound of a given word; and

distinguishing words that rhyme; pronunciation difficulty such as: Reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men); Reading of short /a/ words in CVC pattern (cat, man, bag); Differentiating and reading correctly the short /e/ and /a/ words (pan- pen, man-men, tan-ten etc.);

Reading of short /i/ words in CVC pattern (pin, big, fit); Differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin- pen, tin-ten etc.);

4. Identify the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers on the phonological competence of the Kindergarten teachers; and

5. Design an instructional material for phonological skills development.

### **Framework of the Study**

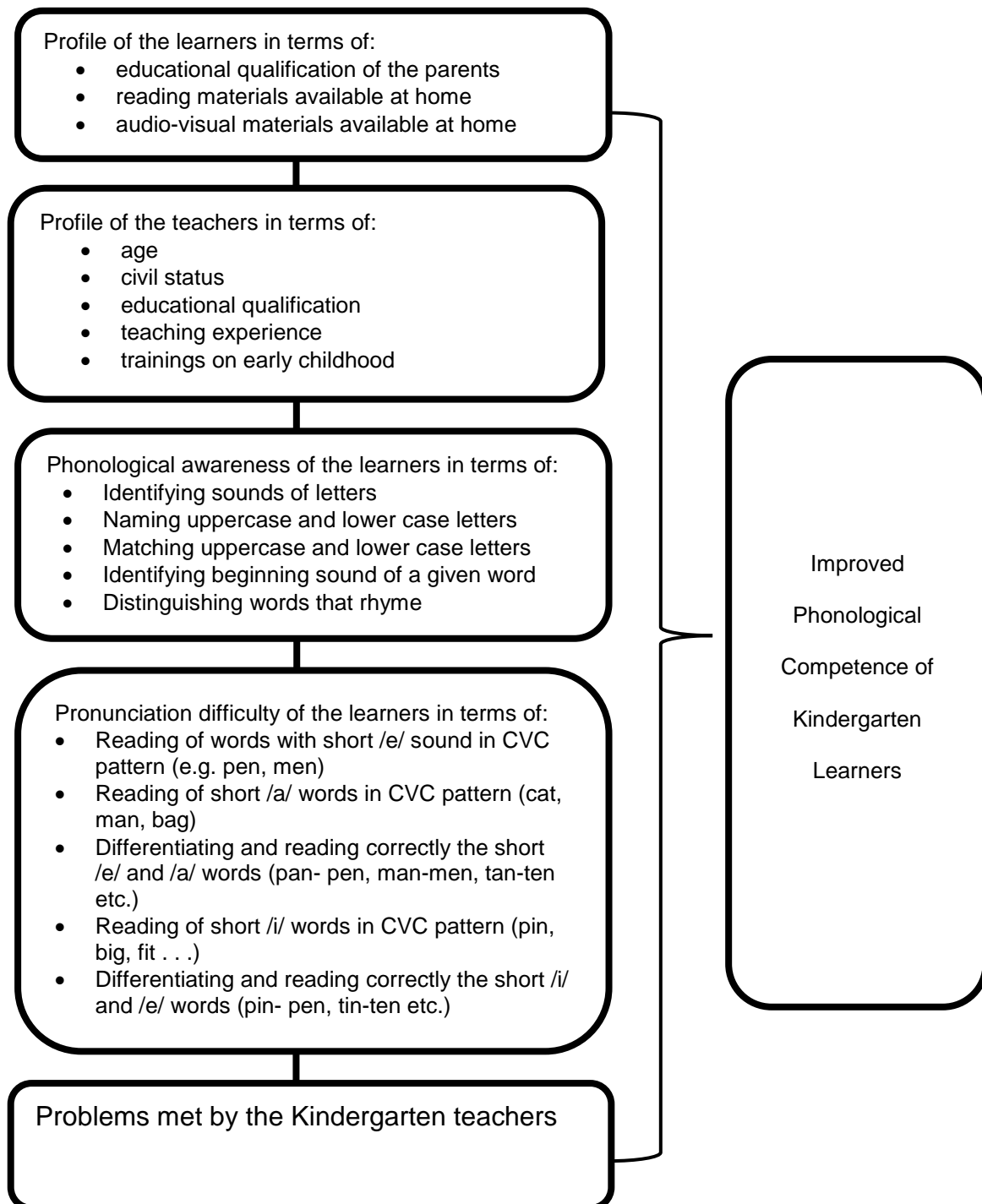
This study presents the theoretical and conceptual framework which guided the researcher in the conduct of this study.

*Theoretical framework.* This study is deeply rooted on Acculturation Model proposed by John Schumann. This theory describes the acquisition process of a second language (L2) by members of ethnic minorities (Ellis, 1994) that typically include immigrants, migrant workers, or the children of such groups. This acquisition process takes place in natural contexts of majority language setting. The main suggestion of the theory is that the acquisition of a second language is directly linked to the acculturation process, and learners' success is determined by the extent to which they can orient themselves to the target language culture (Van Patten, 2010). This interactive and dynamic model sees cross-cultural transition as a significant life event that involves adaptive change. The major task facing individuals in cultural transition is the development of stress-coping strategies and culturally relevant social skills. This will involve responses in affect, behavior and cognition for both stress-management and social skill acquisition, and should result in psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation. The model incorporates a wide range of micro and macro level variables, with implications for future research. At the micro-level, characteristics of both person and situation may be important. Individual variables such as personality, language competence and cultural identity, and situational factors such as length of cultural contact, cultural distance and social support are all relevant. At the macro-level, society of origin and society of settlement are also important, and social, political, economic and cultural factors are included. The theories cited provided the researcher a rich background and knowledge to generate implications for the preparation of instructional materials for phonological skills development among Kindergarten.

*Conceptual Framework.* The conceptualization of this study was developed through a combination of several different suppositions. The main objective of this study was to assess the phonological competence of Kindergarten learners in Capoocan District, Leyte Division. This study focused on: 1. Determining the profile of the learners in terms of, educational qualification of the parents; reading materials available at home; and audio-visual materials available at home; 2. Determining the profile of the teachers in terms of age, civil status, educational qualification, teaching experience; and trainings on early childhood; 3. Ascertaining the phonological competence of the learners in terms of phonological awareness such as identifying sounds of letters; naming uppercase and lower case letters; matching uppercase and lower case letters; identifying beginning sound of a given word; and distinguishing words that rhyme; and determining the pronunciation difficulty of the learners in terms of, reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men); reading of short /a/ words in CVC pattern (cat, man, bag); differentiating and reading correctly the short /e/ and /a/ words (pan- pen, man-men, tan-ten etc.); reading of short /i/ words in CVC pattern (pin, big, fit . . .), differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin- pen,

tin-ten etc.); 4. Identifying the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers on the phonological competence of the Kindergarten learners.

Further, the result of the analysis of data were the bases in the development of instructional materials for phonological skills development. This study would give significant contributions to the various individuals and organizations in the field of teaching. *School Heads, Teachers, Kindergarten Learners, Parents and Future Researchers*. The schematic diagram of the study is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. A schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the study**

### **Review of Literature**

Instructional materials can create the concrete, authentic whole-task experiences similar to complex real-world problems. Engaging learner-centered involvements that require learners to make use of learning objects to aid produce a solution to a problem.

One of the skills that need to be developed among Kindergarten learners is on phonological awareness. Without direct instructional support, phonological awareness eludes roughly 25 percent of middle-class first graders and substantially more of those who come from less literacy-rich backgrounds. Furthermore, these children evidence serious difficulty in learning to read and write (Adams, 2010).

One of the seven (7) domains needs to be developed among Kindergarten pupils is phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and work with sounds in spoken language. This skill is the foundation for learning to read. Reading actually starts with kids tuning in to the sounds of spoken words. That's where phonological awareness comes in.

English uses an alphabetic writing system in which the letters, singly and in combination, represent single speech sounds. People who can take apart words into sounds, recognize their identity, and put them together again have the foundation skill for using the alphabetic principle (Lieberman, Shankweiler, & Lieberman, 1989; Troia, 2004). Without phoneme awareness, pupils may be mystified by the print system and how it represents the spoken word. Readers with phonological processing weaknesses also tend to be the poorest spellers (Cassar et al., 2005).

In recent years, many researchers have explored the relationship between phonological awareness and success with reading and spelling. Phonological awareness is the area of oral language that relates to the ability to think about the sounds in a word (the word's phonological structure) rather than just the meaning of the word. It is an understanding of the structure of spoken language—that it is made up of words, and words consist of syllables, rhymes, and sounds. Fitzpatrick (2007) summarizes it best by saying that phonological awareness is “the ability to listen inside a word”.

Children who have well-developed phonological awareness when they come to school have a head start making sense of how sounds and letters operate in print. This ability is important for using sound-letter knowledge effectively in reading and writing. In fact, a student's level of phonological awareness at the end of kindergarten is one of the strongest predictors of future reading success, in grade one and beyond. Many children begin kindergarten with well-developed phonological awareness. Some seem to develop these skills fairly easily within a stimulating classroom environment, while others need more instruction that consciously and deliberately focuses on phonological awareness.

There are different levels of phonological awareness within words: syllables, onsets and rimes, and sounds. Recognizing this has important implications for supporting students' development of phonological awareness. Good readers look for familiar “letter patterns” as one strategy when attempting to decode or spell unfamiliar words—they use familiar sound chunks from known words, not just individual sounds. Thomas Gunning says that students look for “pronounceable word parts” (Richgels, Poremba, & McGee, 2006). This “chunking” of sounds makes the reading and spelling process much more effective and efficient. These letter patterns are based on familiar syllable or rhyme patterns as well as sound clusters and individual sounds.

This ability to look inside words for syllables, rhymes, and individual sounds when reading and spelling is based on the student's phonological awareness. Students have to be able to segment, blend, and manipulate syllables, onset and rime, and sounds if they are going to be successful in using letter-sound knowledge effectively for reading and writing. The



phonological awareness skills of segmenting and blending are the most highly correlated with beginning reading acquisition (Yopp, 2005).

Phonological awareness is often described as encompassing a continuum of skills, ranging from such basic skills as rhyming and alliteration to more complex skills such as identifying and manipulating phonemes, which are the individual sound units of a word (Snow et al., 2008). Phonological awareness has been found to have a significant and causal relationship with both early and future reading success (Gillon, 2014). Specifically, those children who experience difficulty understanding the phonology of their language often demonstrate later and persistent deficits in word recognition and spelling (Ball & Blachman, 2011).

Phonological awareness (PA) is one important prerequisite for reading proficiency because it helps initiate word-recognition development, which in turns supports reading comprehension (Al Otaiba et al., 2012; Justice, 2006; Nelson, 2010). The pivotal role of PA in the early stages of learning to read means it has become widely known as a powerful predictor and prognostic marker for identifying risk for reading problems in the early school years (Blachman et al., 2000; Ehri et al., 2001; Goswami, 2001; Pressley, 2006).

Many educators are now realizing that phonemic awareness is a contributor to reading 'success as well as a result of it. As Yopp & Yopp (2000) remark, while sensitivity to the sound basis of language, or phonemic awareness, supports literacy development, it is also an outcome of literacy experiences. They go on to say that phonemic awareness instruction should be viewed by educators as only one part of a much broader literacy curriculum, and that an overemphasis of phonemic awareness in the first years of education would limit children's opportunities for more comprehensive literacy development.

Some children may enter kindergarten with an awareness that words start with the same sound, even though they may not know which letter goes with that sound. Segmenting and blending individual sounds within words is the most difficult level of phonological awareness and has a strong correlation to learning to read. Some students in kindergarten may have difficulty with this initially because phonemic awareness appears to develop in a reciprocal (hand-in-hand) relationship with learning to read (Booth, 2009). However, kindergarten students will benefit from exposure to phonemic awareness activities through classroom literacy and wordplay activities.

Research supports the benefits of helping students develop phonological awareness to build success with learning to read and write. Phonological awareness (being able to segment, blend, and manipulate parts of words) occurs at the level of oral language, but it operates in concert with print awareness (how we record our oral language on paper). Students need to have well-developed levels of phonological awareness if they are going to be able to use their phonics knowledge effectively as one source of information as they read and write.

Further investigation into evidence based research revealed that phonological awareness instruction results in improved phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling. Foorman and Torgensen (2001) noted that phonological awareness instruction is most effective when provided in small groups (three to five students), while including alphabetic letters and fewer phoneme manipulations. In addition, Center, Freeman and Robertson (2001) identified the importance of quality whole class instruction in the early school years as well as specific intervention strategies for at risk students.

Providing instruction at the phoneme level to promote what is referred to as phonological awareness is important for school-aged children as it is considered to be the strongest predictor of future reading success of all the skills on the phonological awareness continuum (Adams, 2010; Gillon, 2014; Perez, 2008).

Oladipo (2001) asserted that instructional materials are important tools for enriching, visualizing, simplifying, transmitting and accelerating the teaching and learning processes, thus enhancing pupils' academic performance.

The importance of providing children with direct experiences with materials, objects, and phenomena is supported by experience and understanding of how learning takes place. While information can be remembered if taught through books and lectures, true understanding and the ability to use knowledge in new situations requires learning in which children study concepts in-depth, and over time and learning that is founded in direct experience. Therefore, the justification for hands-on learning is that it allows students to build understanding that is functional and to develop the ability to inquire themselves, in other words, to become independent learners (Worth, 2006).

As any good teacher knows, all students do not learn in the same way. In addition, it is common for a class of students to be at a variety of levels in any particular subject. Teachers need to use different teaching methods in order to reach all students effectively and use multi-level instructional materials that will address the different needs of learners. A variety of teaching strategies, a knowledge of student levels, giving appropriate instructional materials and an implementation of which strategies are best for particular students can help teachers to know which teaching methods will be most effective for their class (Syarafina, 2000).

According to Donovan and Bransford (2005), instructional materials can help pupils who need interventions to reach academic and behavioral goals. They allow pupils to practice the theoretical skills they learned during instruction and help to raise pupils' interest and reinforce memory retention.

In summary, the review related literature and studies provided the researcher with insightful and substantial background of the problem investigated. These materials served as a source of ideas for the researcher's development of the instructional materials for phonological skills development among Kindergarten learners.

### Methodology

This study utilized the descriptive-survey method using quantitative and qualitative research design to describe the set of the data collected. The method was used to answer questions posed in the study such as determining the profile of the learners, determining the profile of the teachers, ascertaining the phonological competence of the learners in terms of phonological awareness and pronunciation difficulty, and identifying the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers. The study was conducted in the selected elementary schools of Capoocan District, Division of Leyte. The respondents of the study were 243 Kindergarten learners and 13 teachers in the District of Capoocan, Leyte Division, for the school year 2017-2018. Convenience sampling was used. Respondents are picked on the basis of convenience in terms of availability, reach and accessibility. Table 1 present the respondents of the study.

**Table 1. Respondents of the study**

Name of School	Pupil-Respondents		Teacher-Respondents	
	f	%	f	%
Balud Elementary School	32	32	2	100
Capoocan Central School	43	43	3	100
Culasian	26	26	1	100
Pinamopoan	27	27	2	100
Lemon Elementary School	30	30	1	100
Lemon San Joaquin	33	33	2	100
Visares	31	31	1	100

Sto. Nino	21	21	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The instruments used in the study was the survey questionnaire for the teachers. Data were coded using the prescribed mode of coding qualitative outputs. From the system of coding, categories were identified as inputs for the discussion of results. Data gathered during the survey were coded, analyzed, and presented in tabulation from using descriptive statistics as to mean, range, relative frequency and percent. Data gathered through survey questionnaire were presented also in narrative form. A focus group discussion was used because respondents were asked for open-ended responses conveying thoughts or feelings. The survey questionnaire was used to derive numerical-based statistics or percentages.

### Results and Discussion

The data are presented in tables, followed by their descriptive interpretations. Results were presented according to the objectives of the study.

Profile of the Kindergarten Learners. The profile of the Kindergarten learners which were considered in this study includes the educational qualification of the parents, reading materials available at home, audio-visual materials available at home, and language spoken at home. Table 2 present the profile of the Kindergarten learners in terms of educational qualification of the parents.

**Table 2. Profile of the kindergarten learners terms of educational qualification of the parents**

<b>Educational Qualification of the Parents</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Elementary Level	17	6.99
Elementary Graduate	26	10.69
High School level	14	5.77
High School Graduate	101	41.57
College level	55	22.63
College Graduate	30	12.35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>100</b>

As depicted in Table 2, the profile of learners in terms of parents' educational qualification there were 101 or 41.57 percent who were High School Graduate. The result means that majority of the parents of Kindergarten learners were High School Graduate. This implies that parents are capable of assisting their children in doing school works particularly on improving phonological competence and pronunciation skills of their children.

*Profile of the Kindergarten Learners in Terms of Reading Materials Available at Home, and Audio-Visual Materials Available at Home.* Table 3 presents the profile of the Kindergarten learners in terms of reading materials available at home, and audio-visual materials available at home.

**Table 3. Profile of the kindergarten learners in terms of reading materials available at home, and audio-visual materials available at home**

<b>Reading Materials Available at Home</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Books	193	1
Magazines	29	4
News Papers	9	6
Comics	3	9



Catalogs	8	7
Novels	39	3
Dictionaries	52	2
Manuals	4	8
Encyclopedias	14	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>351</b>	
<b>Audio-Visual Materials Available at Home</b>		
Radio	98	4
DVD Player	164	2
CD Player	101	3
TV	238	1
Component	47	5
Laptop	22	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	

Among the reading materials at home, books were ranked 1. On the other hand, only 3 of the learner-respondents have comics at home. This finding revealed that books were the common reading materials that Kindergarten learners have at home. This implies phonological competence and pronunciation skills of Kindergarten learners can be enhanced if they will be exposed to different reading materials. For audio-visual materials available at home, TV was rank 1 wherein 238 Kindergarten learners have TV at home. Only 22 of the Kindergarten learners have Laptop at home. This means that most Kindergarten learners were exposed to TV as audio-visual materials available at home. This implies that phonological competence of Kindergarten learners can still be improved if they will have more exposure on the different audio-visual materials at their respective homes.

*Profile of Kindergarten Teachers.* Table 4 presents the profile of Kindergarten teachers in terms of age, civil status, educational qualification, teaching experience, and trainings on early childhood. Table 4 shows that 9 or 69 percent of the Kindergarten teachers belong to Young age who were 20-30 years old. But there was no Kindergarten teacher belong to Old age with an age of 51-60 years old. This means that majority of the Kindergarten teachers belong to Young age. This implies that they are still very able to teach Kindergarten learners to the fullest.

**Table 4. Profile of kindergarten teachers**

Age	f	%
Young age	9	69
Middle age	4	31
Old age	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Civil Status		
Single	8	62
Married	5	38
Separated	0	0
Widowed	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational Qualification		
With 18 and below Masteral Units	5	38
CAR in Masteral Program	8	62

Masteral Degree Holder	0	0
With 18 and below units in Doctoral's Degree	0	0
CAR in Doctoral's Degree	0	0
Doctoral Degree Holder	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Teaching Experience		
Least Experienced	10	77
Experienced	2	15
Highly Experienced	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>
Trainings on Early Childhood		
National Level	1	8
Division Level	10	77
District Level	13	100
School Level	7	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>59</b>

With regards to education qualification, it was found out that 8 or 62 percent of the Kindergarten teachers obtained CAR in Masteral Program. This means that majority of the Kindergarten teachers were gained CAR in Masteral Program. This implies that kindergarten teachers were still pursuing to obtain higher educational qualification in relation to teaching Kindergarten learners.

On the Trainings on Early Childhood attended by the Kindergarten teachers it was revealed that 13 or 100 percent of the teachers have attended in District Level. On the other hand, only 1 or 8 percent have attended in the National Level. Meaning, all of the Kindergarten teachers have attended the Trainings on Early Childhood at the District Level. Implication can be drawn that Kindergarten teachers can still improve their skills in teaching by attending trainings in different levels.

*Phonological Awareness of Kindergarten Learners.* Table 5 shows the phonological awareness of Kindergarten learners.

**Table 5. Phonological awareness of kindergarten learners**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Identifying sounds of letters.	2.88	Aware
Naming upper case and lower case letters.	2.40	Moderately Aware
Matching upper case and lower case letters.	1.55	Not Aware
Identifying the beginning sounds of a given word.	1.68	Not Aware
Distinguishing words that rhyme.	1.20	Not Aware
<b>AWM</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>Moderately Aware</b>

As shown in Table 5, skill on Naming upper case and lower case letters got the highest weighted mean of 2.40 interpreted as "Moderately Aware". However, skill on Distinguishing words that rhyme got the lowest weighted mean of 1.20 interpreted as "Not Aware". The findings of this study based on the gathered data, conveyed that majority of the skills on phonological awareness interpreted as "Not Aware". This skills of Kindergarten learners still have the chance to be improved.

*Pronunciation Difficulty of the Kindergarten Learners.* Table 6 present the pronunciation difficulty of Kindergarten learner.

**Table 6. Pronunciation difficulty of the kindergarten learners**

Indicators	WM	Interpretation
Reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men)	3.41	Highly Difficult
Reading of short /a/ words in CVC pattern (cat, man, bag)	4.10	Highly Difficult
Differentiating and reading correctly the short /e/ and /a/ words (pan- pen, man-men, tan-ten etc.)	4.26	Very Much Difficult
Reading of short /i/ words in CVC pattern (pin, big, fit . . .)	3.92	Highly Difficult
Differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin- pen, tin-ten etc.)	4.68	Very Much Difficult
<b>AWM</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>Highly Difficult</b>

As shown in Table 6, skill on Differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin- pen, tin-ten etc.) got the highest weighted mean of 4.68 interpreted as “Very Much Difficult”. While, the skill on Reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men) got the lowest weighted mean of 3.41 interpreted as Highly Difficult. Majority of the skills in pronunciation were considered as “Highly Difficult”. These difficulties experienced by the Kindergarten learners can be addressed if Kindergarten learners were exposed to different reading materials and audio-visual materials. This finding supports the study of Justin (2011) that phonological awareness and pronunciation skills of learners can be enhanced through constant exposure of learners to different reading materials and audio-visual materials. In her study it was also revealed that learners’ with a fully developed phonological awareness and pronunciation skills had great impact on reading performance of the learners.

*Problems Met by the Kindergarten Teachers.* Table 7 present the problems met by the Kindergarten teachers.

**Table 7. Problems met by the kindergarten teachers**

Indicators	WM	Interpretation
Irregular in attendance	2.70	A Problem
Do not perform assignment	3.30	A Problem
Do not participate in classroom activities and discussion	3.28	A Problem
Short listening span of pupils	3.22	A Problem
Poor health condition of pupils	2.97	A Problem
Absence or lack of instructional materials	4.34	Always a Problem
Inadequate facilities and equipment	4.28	Always a Problem
Difficulty in understanding lesson concepts	4.19	Oftentimes a Problem
Inability of parents to assist their children	2.72	A Problem
Absence or lack of reading materials at home	4.12	Oftentimes a Problem
Utilization of children in livelihood activities	1.15	Not a Problem At All
<b>AWM</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>A Problem</b>

Table 7 shows that problems on Absence or lack of instructional materials and Inadequate facilities and equipment were interpreted as Always a problem with mean values of 4.34, and 4.28, respectively. This implies that problems met by the teachers can be given solutions through construction of instructional materials. Instructional materials are beneficial

to teachers, learners and to teaching learning process. Further, instructional materials improve pupils acquisition of acknowledge and skills. The findings support the study of Schmitz (2011) that the use of instructional materials is very much vital in imparting knowledge and developing skills of pupils.

### Conclusions

After thorough analysis of the gathered data, it was revealed that on the profile of learners in terms of parents' educational qualification, there were 101 or 41.57 percent who were High School Graduate. Meanwhile, there were 14 or 5.77 percent of the parents who were High School Level.

On the profile of Kindergarten teachers, it was revealed that 9 or 69 percent of the Kindergarten teachers belong to Young age who were 20-30 years old. This means that majority of the Kindergarten teachers belong to Young age. With regards to education qualification, it was found out that 8 or 62 percent of the Kindergarten teachers obtained CAR in Masteral Program. However, none of them were Masteral Degree Holder, With 18 and below units in, Doctoral's Degree, CAR in Doctoral's Degree, Doctoral Degree Holder. This means that majority of the Kindergarten teachers were gained CAR in Masteral Program. On the Trainings on Early Childhood attended by the Kindergarten teachers it was revealed that 13 or 100 percent of the teachers have attended in District Level. On the other hand, only 1 or 8 percent have attended in the National Level. Meaning, all of the Kindergarten teachers have attended the Trainings on Early Childhood at the District Level. In terms of reading materials available at home, and audio-visual materials available at home, it was found out that 193 Kindergarten learners have books at home. Among the reading materials at home, books were ranked 1. On the other hand, only 3 of the learner-respondents have comics at home. For audio-visual materials available at home, TV was rank 1 wherein 238 Kindergarten learners have TV at home. Only 22 of the Kindergarten learners have Laptop at home.

Further, the skill on Naming upper case and lower case letters got the highest weighted mean of 2.40 interpreted as "Moderately Aware". However, skill on Distinguishing words that rhyme got the lowest weighted mean of 1.20 interpreted as "Not Aware". The skill on Differentiating and reading correctly the short /i/ and /e/ words (pin- pen, tin-ten etc.) got the highest weighted mean of 4.68 interpreted as "Very Much Difficult". While, the skill on Reading of words with short /e/ sound in CVC pattern (e.g. pen, men) got the lowest weighted mean of 3.41 interpreted as Highly Difficult. Majority of the skills in pronunciation were considered as "Highly Difficult". On the problems met by the teacher, it was revealed that on Absence or lack of instructional materials and Inadequate facilities and equipment were interpreted as Always a problem with mean values of 4.34, and 4.28, respectively. While, item on Utilization of children in livelihood activities got the lowest weighted mean of 1.15 interpreted as Not a Problem At All.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby proposed for consideration.

1. Construction of instructional materials for phonological awareness and pronunciation skills development must be given a budget.
2. Teachers must be sent to trainings and seminars on to enhance their teaching skills and competencies.
3. School-based workshops in construction of instruction materials for phonological awareness and pronunciation skills development must be conducted to be spearheaded by school heads.

4. Teachers must design instructional materials to be used both in the classroom and home of Kindergarten pupils for phonological awareness and pronunciation skills development specifically on phonological awareness and pronunciation.

5. School heads must provide technical assistance to Kindergarten teachers on appropriate teaching methods in teaching phonological awareness and pronunciation.

6. Further studies must be conducted in a larger scope and longer duration to validate the results gathered in the study.

## References

- Adams, M. J., Foorman, B. R., Lundberg, I. & Beeler, T. (2008). *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum*. Paul Brookes Publishing Co.
- Ajayi, Y. A. & Salami A. A. (2009). *An introduction to Educational Technology for Students and Teachers* (pp. 23-26). Ilorin: Decency Printers/Publishers.
- Bergen, 2009 as cited in *Playing and Learning*, Beverlie Dietze, Diane Kashin, 2011, page 5, Pearson Prentice Hall, ISBN 9780135125464
- Booth, D. (2009). Language Delights and Word Play. In I. Fountas & G. Pinnell (Eds.), *Voices on Word Matters* (pp. 91–101). Heinemann.
- Bruce, T. (2011). *Learning Through Play: For Babies, Toddlers and Young Children* (2nd ed.). London: Hodder Education.
- Calleja-Riel, E. (2000). *Mathematics Competencies of Entering Kindergarten Pupils*. MA (Elementary Mathematics) paper, UP, Quezon City.
- Chard, L. & Katz, P. (2001). *To Educate the Human Potential*. Oxford, UK: Clio Press Inc.
- Chick, G. (2010). Work, play, and learning. In D. F. Lancy, J. Bock, & S. Gaskins (Eds.), *The anthropology of learning in childhood* (p. 119–143). AltaMira Press.
- Cunningham, E. (2005). *Teaching Machines and Programmed Instruction: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc.
- Donovan, S. M. & Bransford, J. D. (2005). *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom*. Washington, DC: National Research Council.
- Fakomogbon, M. A. (2000). Monograph on Vocational Methods II for degree students. Unpublished, University of Ado Ekiti (UNAD).
- Fitzpatrick, J. (2007). *Phonemic Awareness: Playing With Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills*. Creative Teaching Press.
- Gardner, H. (2001). *To Open Minds*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Ibrahim, M. & Al-Shara, O. (2001). Impact of Interactive Learning on Knowledge Retention. Human Interface and the Management of Information. Interacting in Information Environments. Human Interface 2007. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol. 4558. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Ibrahim, S. A. (2000). Instructional materials. *Journal- Teachers Periscope of NUT*. Kogi State Wing, 1(2), 27-29.
- Isenberg and Quisenberry, 2002 as cited in *Thinking It Through: Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Classroom Playing is Learning*, page 12, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2010.
- Justin, N. (June, 2011), *The Impact of Phonological Awareness on Reading Acquisition: Discrepancy Between Research and Practice*. Graduate Faculty of the School of Education at Grand Valley State University. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1568&context=thes>
- Mendolle (2001). *Individualized Instruction*. Retrieved from [http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/13352/Cooperstein and Kocevar Weidinger](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/13352/Cooperstein%20and%20Kocevar%20Weidinger).
- Montessori, M. (2001). *To Educate the Human Potential*. Oxford, UK: Clio Press Inc.



- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, (2000).
- Oladipo, F. O. (2000). Communication as a Rescuer for Agricultural Development in Nigeria. A Case Study of Peasant Farmers in Kwara State. *Journal of Vocational and Technical Studies*, 2(1).
- Pestalozzi as cited by Theresa and Frank Caplan, *The Early Childhood Years*, (New York: The Putman Publishing Group, Inc., 2003).
- Pierce, B.N. (2005). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(1), 9-31.
- Richgels, D. J., Poremba, K. J., & McGee, L. M. (1996). Kindergarteners talk about print: Phonemic awareness in meaningful contexts. *The Reading Teacher*, 49(8), 632-642.
- Schmitz, S. L., Ph.D. (2011). *The Development of Phonological Awareness in Young Children: Examining the Effectiveness of a Phonological Awareness Program*, University of Nebraska. Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1113&context=cehdsdiss>
- Syarafina, F. (2010). *Importance of Learning Materials in Teaching Children*. Retrieved from: <http://www.wisegeek.com/>
- Trawinski, M. (2005). An outline of second language acquisition theories. Krakow: Academic Pedagogic Hamed Barjesteh & Reza Vaseghi, AASS, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 579-584, 2012.
- Wiltz and Fein, 2006 as cited in *Playing and Learning*, Beverlie Dietze, Diane Kashin, 2011, page 3, Pearson Prentice Hall, ISBN 9780135125464
- Yopp, H. K. (1995). Read-aloud books for developing phonemic awareness: An annotated bibliography. *The Reading Teacher*, 48(6), 538-542.