



School Readiness of Ummul Habibah Pre-School Students in Klambir V Kebun Village measured by the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST)

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Abstract. *The reason readiness matters are that children who are prepared for school will advance in their development. The term "school readiness" describes a child's ability to transition to school smoothly and successfully. Even among children of the same age, there are differences in a child's school readiness. The problem in today's society is that many parents think that the only aspect needed for children to enter primary school is the cognitive aspect, which includes the ability to write, read and count. The impact of this view is that many parents demand their children to be able to read, write and calculate after graduating from kindergarten because of the intense competition among favorite schools. In this study, a qualitative descriptive technique was used. The research was conducted at Ummul Habibah Pre-School, Klambir V Kebun village, Deli Serdang Regency. In this study, data collection methods used interview and observation. The three-pronged approach were used as data analysis—data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Based on the data result, the 5 children who were given the CPM and NST tests, had readiness to join the next school level. These children have adequate absorption and intelligence in solving problems and have adequate concentration. One of the intelligence factors in children's readiness to enter primary school can be explained that children who have high intelligence tend to have intelligent behavior in making decisions and solving problems. The results in the study illustrate that students who have high problem-solving test scores also have high scores in completing the readiness test (NST) and vice versa for students whose low problem solving test scores are also followed by low scores.*

Keywords School readiness, NST, Problem-solving skills

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "school readiness" refers to a range of developmental stages that kids need to go through in order to be ready for formal education, like kindergarten. In Indonesia, kindergarten is the first formal educational level. It is anticipated that kindergarten education will increase kids' appreciation for the developmental domains they are exposed to (Rozana et al., 2022). The term "school readiness" describes a child's ability to transition to school smoothly and successfully. Even among children of the same age, there are differences in a child's school readiness. Early preparation is necessary to ensure that children are prepared for school and the learning process. Children who are more prepared for school have a higher chance of succeeding in continuing their education beyond their current level. For the educational process to continue as an effective learning environment, school preparedness is a crucial component. Kids who are prepared for school will benefit and advance in the following phase of development. Children who lack forwardness, on the other hand, will become irritated in an academic setting (Wangke et al., 2021).

Aspects of child development are interwoven with school preparation. Gross motor skills, fine motor coordination, the ability to recognize fundamental skills like writing, reading, math, and language, motivation to learn new things, memory development—especially when it comes to what has been seen and heard—the capacity to comprehend oneself, boost one's self-esteem, and the development of emotions are some of these developmental aspects (Widya, 2019). According to the above hypothesis, a child's psychological and physical preparedness for school entry is combined. Children who meet certain requirements can enroll in elementary school or its equivalent. These requirements include mastery of the five senses, fluency in the language, maturity in the workplace, and a willingness to learn (in Ramadhini & Nasution, 2022).

Measurable academic skills that increase a child's chances of success in kindergarten and formal school settings are frequently included in the definition of school readiness. Youngsters with strong academic abilities and high IQs will finish these assignments faster. On the other hand, youngsters with low IQs will process information more slowly. Therefore, for a child to enroll in an educational program designed for a specific age group, they must possess a minimum of average intellect (in Rymanowicz et al., 2020).

The reason readiness matters are that children who are prepared for school will advance in their development. In the meantime, putting unprepared children in an academic setting will make them unhappy. This frustration can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as withdrawing, acting coldly, exhibiting physical symptoms, or finding it difficult to finish assignments at school. Youngsters who make academic progress will not become frustrated in the classroom and will be able to finish their homework with excellence. In contrast to kids who encounter learning challenges, they will also develop positive self-concepts and a strong desire to learn (in Muryani & Elshap, 2018).

Children may have trouble getting ready for school, particularly when they start formal education. According to teachers, 48% of kids have trouble transitioning to kindergarten. The most common issues mentioned include following instructions, functioning independently, and not having the necessary pre-academic skills. Most kids find that as they adjust over the elementary school years, these issues with being ready for school gradually go away, but some will continue to struggle with adaptation (Garon-Carrier et al., 2024). Children who struggle with expressive or receptive language, those who are behind in general understanding, and kids who act out are more likely to be less prepared for school. Research indicates that children who speak a minority language, come from low-income families, have parents with less education, and are boys are more likely to be underprepared for school (in Brandlistuen et al., 2021).

The environment a child grows and lives in has a significant impact on how prepared they are for school. Every kid in the United States would be safe, healthy, and able to reach their full potential, according to the kid Welfare League of America. There were five needs that all children have in common. First and foremost, kids require the necessities of a healthy diet, stable employment, sufficient clothing and housing, suitable schooling, and primary and preventive mental and physical health care. Second, children require healthy, supportive interactions in their peer groups, families, and communities. Third, kids require chances to hone their abilities and have a positive impact on their communities. Early evaluation and assistance are necessary for children exhibiting signs of disability in order to avert more severe issues down the road. Fourth, children must be shielded from violence and discrimination, as well as from harm, abuse, and neglect. Fifth, children require healing on a basic level. Children need us to lessen the impact of any harm they have experienced when caregivers and providers have failed to protect them. We may do this by offering them emotional support, attending to their physical and mental health requirements, and occasionally making amends through restorative judicial procedures. In order to meet these demands and help children become a priority at the family, community, and national levels, coordinated, comprehensive approaches are needed (Williams & Lerner, 2019).

The problem in today's society is that many parents think that the only aspect needed for children to enter primary school is the cognitive aspect, which includes the ability to write, read and count. The impact of this view is that many parents demand their children to be able to read, write and calculate after graduating from kindergarten because of the intense competition among favorite schools. Whereas the main thing needed is other abilities such as social and emotional abilities that need to be prepared before children enter primary school. There is an assumption that when parents can send their children to elementary school at the age of 6 years is an extraordinary thing. In fact, there are still many parents who call private teachers so that their children can read and count. Meanwhile, children's conditions at the beginning of school entry are still difficult to adapt, many children still do not have social readiness, children still run around in class, sometimes suddenly get angry when they don't understand the meaning of tasks from the class teacher, often angry at the teacher when they miss writing dictations and reading exercises. There are still children who are shy and afraid to say to go to the restroom and some even wet the bed in class. This is a problem that will have an impact on the child's psychology later.

When the child experiences something that is less pleasant to the child himself. A bad impression will be recorded in the child's memory throughout his life. Children will feel

embarrassed when they have made mistakes and may feel isolated in the play environment. The child will be more withdrawn, not confident and afraid to socialize and even the worst impact is that the child will experience academic failure. That is what becomes dangerous when children do not have readiness. Looking at the existing problems, it turns out that preparing children to enter elementary school is not only focused on cognitive aspects, but considering other aspects. It is not about the problem of children being able to read, write and count as a requirement for entering the basic education level but also paying attention to other aspects. Paying attention to these aspects can later support life skills so that children can develop their independence and can face problems in the future. Children can become independent individuals, care about the surrounding environment, have creative power, adapts and good morals so that they are useful in their lives.

For the benefit of the entire student body at Ummul Habibah Pre-School, it is critical to assess and enhance the current curriculum. This entails enhancing the curriculum to emphasize social-emotional, physical, and academic abilities in addition to academic ones. Children will therefore be more equipped to succeed academically in the future and to enter higher education. Some preschoolers struggle with things like not having the confidence to socialize with friends, so they only dare to interact with their closest friends; others find it difficult to work in groups; still others lack confidence in their own work; and still others are afraid to speak in front of others or voice their opinions (Widya, 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

School Readiness

When a child reaches school age, "school readiness" is one of the phrases that is commonly used. A youngster must possess a set of skills and abilities known as "school readiness" in order to thrive in the educational process. Additionally, a child's cognitive and socioemotional abilities that can help them engage in an educational program are included in the concept of school readiness. A child's learning and task completion depend on a variety of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive abilities that make them "school ready." In general, it can be said that a child's ability to support the learning process at school, including their cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral skills, is correlated with their preparedness for school. Numerous studies have demonstrated the link between academic success and a child's preparedness for school. Furthermore, future educational outcomes can be strongly predicted by early academic ability (Susanti et al., 2023).

The significance of school readiness elements in getting kids ready for formal schooling. Early childhood education is the first step in preparing students for school. The construction of early childhood education facilities begins when the children are between the ages of three and six. The goal is to stimulate their growth and development so that they are prepared for school and higher education. Every youngster is already aroused by a variety of stimuli; even their tiny brains will take in a variety of information when they first visit a preschool (Muzzamil et al., 2023).

Compared to their peers who had two or more bad childhood experiences, children who did not have any unfavorable childhood experiences were 2.59 times more likely to be regularly or consistently involved in school. These impacts were lessened by resilience, which was described in that study as "maintaining composure and control when faced with a challenge." It is obvious that reducing toxic stress and fostering children's resilience can help them be more prepared for school. Poverty is one of the most well-known risk factors for school preparation. Compared to 75% of children from moderate- or high-income households, less than half (48%) of children living in poverty are prepared for school by the time they are five years old. Regardless of race or ethnicity, poverty has an impact on school preparation, most likely due to a combination of parents' lower educational attainment, higher rates of single and adolescent parenthood, poorer health, and a lack of financial means. The poverty-related gap shrinks when family demographics are adjusted for variables like maternal education and single parenthood. A large portion of the gap can be addressed through remediation to end the cycle of unfavorable relationships that frequently affect one generation to the next (Williams & Lerner, 2019).

One important early-life component supporting well-being, good psychosocial development, and school adjustment throughout life is a child's school readiness, which is defined as their capacity to perform well in a school setting. Unprepared preschoolers run the danger of receiving worse grades, dropping out of school, and acting out in antisocial ways. On the other hand, being prepared to learn demonstrates a number of long-term advantages, including increased dedication to education, improved interactions with teachers and peers, and improved mental and physical health as one enters adulthood. Preschool-aged youngsters have shown a variety of school preparation characteristics during the last ten years. With an emphasis on school ready profiles most likely to experience ongoing challenges, this systematic review attempts to characterize current preschooler school readiness profiles and their relationships to later children's academic and social results (Garon-Carrier et al., 2024).

The Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST)

A examination known as the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids examination, or NST, was used to assess children's preparedness for school. It is one of the several assessments used to determine if a kid is prepared to start primary school. This exam was created by Prof. Dr. FJ Monks, Drs. NH Coffie, and H. Rost. The Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST) was created in Germany in Nijmegen, Netherlands. The Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST) is used to assess a child's maturity and preparedness for entry into primary school. Predicting a child's academic success is the second step, and identifying if a youngster is mature enough to need training, enrichment, growth, or improvement is the third. A method for measuring and assessing the maturity of several facets of development, such as motor, cognitive, and social and emotional elements, is the NST exam (Ramadhini & Nasution, 2022).

Each of the ten subtests in this test reveals a different talent. The test description includes illustrations, or you can fill in the picture with the answers all at once. Form observation and distinguishing skills (vorm waarneming en onderscheidings vermogen) constitute subtest 1; 2. Fine Motor (fijne motoriek) Subtest 2; 3. Subtest 3: Large, numerical, and comparative concepts (begrip voor grootte hoeveelheid en verhoudingen); 4. Sharpening observation (scherp waarnemen) is the fourth subtest. 5. Subtest 5: Capacity for critical thought (kritische waarneming); 6. Focus (taakspanning); 7. Subtest 7: Geheugen Memory; Object and situational assessment definition (object begrip en situatieboordeling) is the eighth subtest. 9. The ninth subtest is to mimic the narrative (weergeven van een verhaaltje); 10. Subtes 10: Menstekening (depicting individuals). The Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST), which assesses cognitive components, fine and gross motor skills, social assessment, and emotional intelligence, is one tool used to gauge children's preparation for school (Fauziyah, 2019).

3. METHODS

In this study, a qualitative descriptive technique was used. A descriptive research aimed to characterize modern phenomena, including both man-made and natural events. Giving a thorough, accurate, and genuine account of the characteristics and circumstances of a certain population is the aim of descriptive research (Ependi et al., 2023). Sugiyono (2018) defines qualitative research as a positivist-based research methodology that examines natural object conditions (as opposed to experimental settings) and uses researchers as the primary instruments. Triangulated (combined) data collection methods, qualitative and inductive data

analysis, and an emphasis on meaning rather than generalization characterize the findings of qualitative research.

The research was conducted at Ummul Habibah Pre-School, Klambir V Kebun village, Deli Serdang Regency. The research time was conducted in 1 month. In this study, data collection methods were used (Rahman & Kencana, 2020), as follows:

1. Interview

Data collection through interviews / verbally directly with the data source, through face-to-face. Respondents' answers were recorded and summarized by the researchers themselves.

2. Observation.

Systematic recording of symptoms that appear on the object of research.

3. School Maturity Test

This test is conducted individually by a psychologist. This test consists of Intelligence and School Maturity tests.

In this study, a number of characteristics were determined for the subjects in the study, including:

1. Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of respondents in this study are children aged 5-6 years.

2. Number of Samples

In this study and based on the above opinion, the number of respondents included was 5 children.

The three-pronged approach to data analysis—data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification—proposed by Miles and Huberman was used in this work (in Sukmadinata, 2006).

4. RESULTS

In this study there were 5 children with the age category of 5 years 8 months to 5 years 10 months where in the observation of the parents the child was able to join the elementary level on the grounds that he could read. In line with the parents' statements in the interview, namely:

“I want to enroll my child in elementary school this year, because he can already read”. (Interview with Mrs. F on December 20, 2023).

Following an evaluation of the test findings pertaining to learning preparedness using the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST), the following conclusions were drawn: a review

of five children. Five children are deemed prepared to engage in the primary school learning process, according to the data gathered from NST exam scores. In general, the results of data analysis show that there is an increase in the comparison presentation score between children who have readiness and those who do not have readiness based on IQ scores (CPM percentiles). This means that the higher the IQ score (CPM percentile) the higher the percentage of readiness. Or vice versa, the lower the IQ score (CPM percentile) the lower the percentage of unprepared children. The results of more data analysis obtained a picture as below:

Table 1. NST dan CPM Data Result

No.	Children's Initial Name	CPM	School Readiness (%)
1	FH	90	73%
2	M	101	90%
3	TU	93	75%
4	KR	98	85%
5	TW	104	93%
Total			83.2%

Based on the data in the study that of the 5 children who were given the CPM and NST tests, had readiness to join the next school level. These children have adequate absorption and intelligence in solving problems and have adequate concentration.

One of the intelligence factors in children's readiness to enter primary school can be explained that children who have high intelligence tend to have intelligent behavior in making decisions and solving problems. The results in the study illustrate that students who have high problem-solving test scores also have high scores in completing the readiness test (NST) and vice versa for students whose low problem solving test scores are also followed by low scores. Problem solving is one of the indicators/aspects of intelligence. The ability to solve problems is influenced by aspects of awareness of the problem at hand and the purpose / solving the problem at hand, including involving full awareness in perceiving the object / problem at hand, understanding language and experience so that all senses have a good level of sensitivity.

This means that in this case they are able to involve their five senses, especially the visual and auditory senses optimally in seeing the problem items in detail. So that they are able to perceive and understand the object / picture of the question as it should be, use knowledge and think convergently so that they answer the question items objectively and accurately.

Not only that, children with high intelligence tend to have better concentration and problem-solving skills. That is, they are able to direct and select the five senses that will be used to produce a more precise problem picture, store information (images or language) in

short-term memory and are able to operationalize their experience with the problems they face so that they are able to answer aitem questions or new knowledge will be stored in long-term memory and will be reappeared when needed.

Conversely, children who have low intelligence are less able to select and direct their sensory awareness of the objects or problems they face, they are also less able to fully concentrate on objects and their environment so that they experience obstacles in carrying out the short-term memory storage process, they are also less able to carry out logical thinking processes in using certain theories / laws in answering problems so that they also tend to have difficulty in processing information into answers to problems and processing experiences into long-term memories or new knowledge.

Preparing early childhood to enter primary school is an obligation for parents and teachers because with the readiness of children to enter primary school, this will help children to progress to the next stage of development properly. Preparing children to enter primary school does not only look at the child's ability in the cognitive aspect or assessing the child's readiness to enter primary school from the child's ability to read but the readiness of children to enter primary school must be seen from the maturity of its developmental aspects by paying attention to several factors including the child's physical health, age, intelligence, mental and emotional, motivation, interest and social. Children who have readiness to enter elementary school in general can be seen from three aspects of development, namely in terms of physical motor skills, children are able to go up and down stairs, roll over, throw and catch balls, hold pencils well, etc. while in terms of cognitive development children are able to classify objects, repeat stories, connect causes and effects while at the stage of social emotional development children are brave and feel safe and secure in their new environment, are able to interact with teachers, peers and are able to accept the rules that exist in their environment. As with the statement of a teacher that:

“The school never forces children to be able to do calistung because we realize that every child has their own strengths and our job here and also parents only stimulate children” (results of interviews with teachers on December 20, 2023).

Based on the data analysis above, it can be obtained that children aged 5-6 years with an average age of 5 years 10 months have readiness to attend school to the next level with a presentation of 83.2%.

5. DISCUSSION

Preparing children to enter primary school is a very important thing that parents should know and understand. Choosing to send children to school too early without considering the ability and maturity of the child's development will have a very fatal impact on the child. Early childhood school readiness is certainly different from one child to another, but we can see the readiness of children from the maturity of different aspects of physical motor, cognitive, social and emotional development which will directly help children in the learning process and their adjustment in their school environment. School readiness is the ability of children to reach an adequate level of emotional, physical and cognitive development so that children are able to succeed well. This school readiness consists of physical readiness and psychological readiness which includes emotional, social and mental readiness. A child is said to have physical readiness when his motor development is mature, especially the coordination between the eyes and hands (physio-motor) is well developed, emotional readiness has been achieved if the child can be emotionally independent enough to be separated from the help and guidance of adults, does not have difficulty separating for a certain time with his parents, can accept and understand every demand at school, and can control his emotions such as anger, fear, and envy. A more comprehensive viewpoint on school readiness makes the case that it is essential to take into account the various contexts, roles, and relationships that interact to affect the development of children and families. Examples of these include the definition of specific roles that are shared by professionals, home visitors, teachers, parents, and extended family members.

Teachers and parents define a child's readiness for primary school as their capacity to learn in an academic setting. The focus on academic abilities that a youngster must have before beginning primary school is the issue. For this reason, a large number of preschoolers in Indonesia are engaged in literacy programs in an effort to boost their academic abilities. These abilities are seen by educators and parents as necessary to be prepared for primary school. This result is in line with earlier research conducted in Indonesia, which discovered that academic aptitude was a useful tool for assessing a child's unique potential in relation to a few conventional expectation traits in elementary school and for gaining admission to preferred schools. Concepts related to elementary school preparedness are typically confused with children's academic abilities, or literacy skills, which include the capacity to read and write. Historically, there have been two distinct definitions of preparedness: school readiness and learner readiness. A child is considered to be ready to learn when they reach a certain developmental stage, which allows them to absorb particular content. The children's readiness

for school suggested that they would also be able to succeed in a "typical" school setting. As a result, there is still work to be done to change the misconception held by parents and educators in Indonesia about how prepared their kids are for elementary school. Children's readiness encompasses all facets of their growth, including their social, intellectual, and physical maturation. Children's preparedness for learning is highly supported by elements related to their health and physical-motor development. In a similar vein, a child's social-emotional growth will play a major role in determining how well-equipped they are to adjust to the elementary school transition period (in Pangestuti et al., 2018).

The ideas around school preparedness encompass student, family, and school readiness. The three parties have the power to affect young kids' behavior and psychology. It is advised that parents provide a solid foundation for their children's intellectual readiness for school by providing high-quality preschool education and parenting. On the other hand, schools must offer assistance in order to accommodate pupils with varying backgrounds and preparation levels. To raise awareness of the parents' role play in helping their children develop self-regulation skills and how these affect their readiness for school, special discussions can be held with the parents. This will assist parents in getting their kids ready for school. Instructors can also set up intervention programs to help elementary school pupils become more adept at self-regulation. It is also advised that educators talk to parents about the issues their children are having at school so that the two of them can work out solutions. In order to resolve concerns pertaining to school preparedness, it is critical that parents and teachers collaborate closely (Yong & Abdullah, 2022).

A person's vitality, equilibrium, and physical well-being are crucial components of learning readiness. An unwell youngster or one with specific physical issues may find it difficult to focus and learn. The family setting is crucial in helping a youngster get ready for school. Parents and their children should visit the doctor on a regular basis. During this medical examination, it will be made sure the child is free of illnesses, has received all recommended vaccinations, and is given guidance on how to keep their health at its best. Make sure the child eats a healthy, well-balanced diet. Serve nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein. Make sure your kids consume a healthy diet and stay away from foods that are heavy in sugar and saturated fats (Muzzamil et al., 2023).

Academic readiness in student conduct is measured by non-numerical academic capabilities; this is not found on student report cards or simply deduced from data displaying student aptitude and chronological age. In this study, the contextual academic skills that are developed through storytelling include language development, creativity, agility, student

responsiveness, causality thinking, understanding spoken information and visual aids, reflecting what is believed to, and appropriate interest in academic pursuits. These elements play a contextual role in how prepared students are for school. Previous studies have also demonstrated the beneficial effects of storytelling on children's information understanding, language development, and concept development (Mufrihah & Nisa', 2021). The best ways to encourage young children to be prepared for school have been the subject of numerous discussions in recent years. With teachers and other care providers collaborating directly with children, child-centered programs are the foundation of many of the most reputable early childhood interventions. The goal of universal kindergarten programming is to provide preschoolers with rigorous, child-centered training in school-based instructional environments, with the goal of promoting specific language, literacy, socioemotional, and mathematics abilities. As a result, early childhood educators give kids richer educational experiences in the hopes that they will pick up and hone the skills needed to succeed in school (Kokkalia & Drigas, 2019).

Even when two children are the same age, their preparedness for school does not always match. Numerous elements that affect children's development of school readiness are the reason of this. In addition to maturity, the environment in which kids grow shapes their preparedness for school. There will be differences in the preparedness of children upon starting elementary school. It all depends on how well-stimulated and matured you are. Children's developmental milestones in the areas of physical and motor, social, emotional, and cognitive maturation require care (Fauziyah, 2019).

6. CONCLUSION

There are two categories that are very important for us to pay attention to in preparing children for school, namely: school readiness and children's learning readiness. School readiness is related to the maturity of cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development aspects while learning readiness focuses more on the child's ability to process and receive learning at school. These two things are what we must prepare to prepare children to continue primary school so that children are ready to accept and face more complex learning. The NST was utilized in this study to assess children's readiness for school entry into ES. This exam was initially designed by Monks et al. and consists of ten subtests. The test description includes pictures, which you must complete immediately with the answers to reveal various abilities. These abilities include the ability to distinguish and observe, fine motor skills, concepts of large, number, and comparison, sharpening observation skills, critical thinking abilities,

concentration, object definition and situational assessment, role-playing, and describing people.

7. LIMITATION

One major limitation is the reliance on a single assessment tool, the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST), which, while standardized, may not comprehensively capture all dimensions of school readiness. The NST primarily focuses on cognitive and academic readiness, potentially neglecting critical social-emotional skills and other developmental aspects essential for a successful transition to formal schooling. This narrow focus can lead to an incomplete understanding of the students' readiness, as children may exhibit readiness in various forms that are not adequately measured by the NST.

Additionally, the context of Klambir V Kebun Village may impose cultural and socioeconomic factors that influence the results. The NST was designed in a different cultural context, which raises concerns about its applicability to the local population. Variations in educational practices, parental involvement, and community resources can significantly affect children's readiness for school, yet these factors may not be addressed within the scope of the NST. This cultural mismatch can lead to biased results, as the test may not account for local norms and values related to child development and education.

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