



# The Developmental Readiness of Government School Teachers

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

School readiness involves readiness in terms of ability to reading, writing and use numbers along with emotional and psychological readiness to make successful entry to formal schooling. It has been established that academic readiness is the most important component of school readiness. The present study was aimed to assess the knowledge of rural and urban government school teachers of Ludhiana regarding developmental readiness. The study was based on 100 teachers (i.e. 50 rural and 50 urban) teaching Class – I. The sample was selected from seven Government Primary Schools purposively selected from rural as well as urban locales of Ludhiana District. Self-Structured Teachers' Knowledge Questionnaire was used to assess the academic readiness of rural and urban government school children. The questionnaire comprised of five open ended questions relating to academic readiness expected to be achieved by students of Class-I. The comparison between knowledge levels of rural and urban teachers revealed that urban teachers had better knowledge than rural teachers. Teachers play an important role in building a child's success in their first years of school. They provide structure and help children grow in their pre-reading and pre-writing skills, teach pre-arithmetical skills and help children understand themselves.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

School readiness involves readiness in terms of ability to reading, writing and use numbers along with emotional and psychological readiness to make successful entry to formal schooling. It has been established that academic readiness is the most important component of school readiness. It is an assessment, based on qualitative and quantitative knowledge, about whether or not a child is ready to accomplish the various demands of an organized educational environment. Academic readiness encompasses readiness for reading, writing and numbers. All these three dimensions are important components of school readiness and must work in accordance, as school readiness is a period of changeover that requires the overlap between individuals, families and social systems [1].

An important component of academic readiness is reading readiness and it has been outlined as the point at which a child changeover from being 'non-reader', to a 'reader'. The process of learning to read is a milestone in a child's development. The reading skills such as phonological awareness and rapid naming are immensely predictive of word reading such as word recognition [2]. Reading readiness means the stage when children are mature enough to learn to read.

The second important component of academic readiness is writing readiness. Writing consists of a highly complex neuro-developmental process, which involves multiple brain mechanisms. Learning to write is generally considered a complex procedure as it involves thinking process. Childhood writing ability develops as their visual and motor skills develop. Skills required for writing readiness incorporates recognizing own name in print, attempting to write letters in own name, identifying two words that rhyme/sound the same when given rhyming picture words, recognizing ten alphabet letter names (may include those in own name) by pointing to requested letter [3]. Formal writing should be introduced only when the child is ready for it.

According to Olsen and Lauren [4], School Preliminary Initiative Indicators, children who come into a children's nursery should inform them about life, objects, concepts and conventions. Because academic demands are

harder, many parents are surprised if their child is ready to meet the kindergarten's intellectual demands. It is important to consider the child's predecessors and math's children when thinking about whether a child is ready for the important transition to the school. The researcher says that the most important factor in predicting a more academic achievement is that children start school to master the early concepts of mathematics and literacy. They insist that mastering the early-mathematical skills, not only achievements in mathematics in mathematics, but also for future achievement.

A study was conducted by Gala and Sonawat [5] to find out the formal and informal preschool teachers about mathematical readiness with the help of purposive sampling technique 16 formal and 16 informal preschool teachers from two English medium schools were selected for the study. Questionnaire and observation schedule was used for pretesting and 15 hours classroom observation. After an intervention workshop post testing was done for 15 hours in both the schools. The results revealed that there was an increase in perception knowledge, attitude and practices about mathematical readiness from pre to post testing in both the school. The comparative analysis showed a significant difference in knowledge of the formal school teachers about the concepts of mathematical readiness. Observation at other end showed gap between knowledge and practices of the formal school teachers. Lack of implementation of mathematical readiness in formal school indicated that knowledge is insufficient for transforming it to the classroom situations.

Manhas and Qadiri [6] conducted a comparative study of preschool education in early childhood education centres in India. The sample of 120 teachers (60) anganwadi workers and 60 preschool teachers) from four districts of the Kashmir division. The four districts were selected at random from a total of 10 districts. From each district, 15 anganwadis and 15 preschools were selected at random, and from each anganwadi and preschool, one teacher was selected purposively to inform the researchers about the nature of preschool education imparted at their early childhood education center. The tool used for data-gathering in the present study was a self-devised interview schedule. The data was analyzed through content analysis. The data obtained from the subjects depicts that the

activities being carried out at the ECD centres were clubbed into four categories: cognitive, language, fine motor skills and creative activities. Some of the preschools (41.6%) conducted multiple activities to promote language development among children – for example, picture reading, describing objects, the naming and identification of pictures, and story narration. Only some of the anganwadis (46.6%) engaged the children in these activities regularly, and mainly focused on picture reading and describing objects. The findings also reflect that 53.3% of the anganwadis and 44% of the preschools involved the children in only one fine motor skills activity, which involved matching objects, but it is also evident that 31.6% of the preschools conducted multiple activities – for example, painting, puzzles and clay modelling. The results also showed that the preschools engaged the children in various creative activities, such as painting, music, clay modelling and completing puzzles. In contrary, the anganwadis did not provide these activities. Thus, the results confirm that the preschools provided abundant opportunities for children to participate in developmental activities with the provision of different types of teaching and play materials whereas anganwadis in rural areas did not prepare children well for formal education.

Qualified and properly trained teacher is a key to success in any circumstances. Landry et al. [7] studied on Enhancing Early Literacy Skills for Preschool Children for 2 years. Twenty Head Start sites along with 750 teachers were included in the research with 370 classrooms. On teacher intervention greater gains were found for children in target classrooms than control groups for all skills such as vocabulary, language, early literacy and cognitive readiness but particularly for language skills in second year and this varied by program site. The presence of a research based early literacy curriculum, higher levels of teacher education and full day verses half day programs were significant moderators of intervention effect. With one year of training teachers were likely to implement activities encouraging skills in the early phonological awareness stages i.e. listening, rhyming whereas the additional year of training appeared to support teachers promoting the development of more complex skills like syllabication, onset rhyme. Monthly liaison meetings were found to be critically important to ensure the fidelity of scaling up the model. These meetings allowed for group problem solving and sharing of information.

Keeping this in mind the present research paper, 'knowledge of rural and urban government school teachers regarding development readiness' has been planned.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was based upon a sample of 100 teachers teaching Class-I students drawn equally from rural and urban schools of Ludhiana district. The teachers were equally distributed according to their locales (50 rural and 50 urban). For selection of the sample, list of Government Primary Schools of Ludhiana district was procured from the official website of the District Education Officer, Ludhiana. For rural sample: Seven Government Primary Schools were purposively selected from the Block – I of Ludhiana district. For urban sample: one zone i.e. zone D was purposively selected from the Ludhiana district. Out of these selected rural and urban schools the required numbers of teachers were randomly selected for the data collection.

Self Structured Teachers Knowledge Questionnaire was prepared to evaluate knowledge of rural and urban teachers across various domains of academic readiness. The total scores obtained were divided equally across three levels of teacher's knowledge i.e. high, average and poor. The questionnaire with statements relating to academic readiness expected to be achieved by students' of Class-I was given to the advisory committee members for assessing the content validity of the statements. After incorporating suggestions from the committee, 5 open ended questions were finalized. The questionnaire was prepared in Punjabi vernacular and pretested on 5 teachers each from rural and urban settings which were excluded from the final sample.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 highlights overall per cent distribution of all teachers regarding knowledge of academic readiness. The finding revealed that the percentage of rural teachers (82%) was higher in low level of knowledge and least (2%) in high level of knowledge regarding the different domains of academic readiness expected to be achieved by Class-I children. On the other hand the percentage of urban teachers was higher (70%) in low level of knowledge followed by 24 per cent of teachers who had average level of knowledge and only six per cent of them had high level of knowledge. The overall picture

depicts that majority of rural and urban teachers had poor level of knowledge regarding academic readiness. Only negligible number of teachers were having good knowledge however, the picture of urban teachers was slightly better than rural teachers.

Levels of knowledge regarding academic skills of rural teachers across different socio personal variables were evaluated in Table 2. As per the results depicted in the table, it was observed that highest number of teachers from all the age group was found to have low levels of knowledge in academic readiness. However maximum (90.90%) numbers of teachers with low knowledge belong to the age group of 33-41 years of age followed by (76.92%) of teachers who were of less than 33 years of age. In addition to this 73.3 percent of the teachers who were more than 41 years of age were also found to have poor knowledge regarding academic readiness. In the domain of education qualification maximum number of teachers were found in low levels of knowledge. However maximum (88.88%) number of teachers with low knowledge were those who did diploma in elementary teacher training followed by (87.87%) of the teachers who did B.A/B.Ed degree. In addition to this 50 percent of the M.A/M.Ed teachers were also found to have poor knowledge academic readiness. Similarly, in the domain of type of degree held, highest number of teachers irrespective of their teaching experience was found in low level of knowledge. It was evident from the table that all 100 percent of the teachers who did degree through correspondence were found to have poor knowledge about academic readiness. However, the picture was slightly better in case of teachers who studied on regular basis as atleast 20.45 percent of the teachers were having average level of knowledge. It was evident from the table that all. In the domain of teaching experience, it was observed that highest number of teachers was found to have low levels of knowledge regarding academic readiness. However maximum (90.00%) number of teachers with low knowledge was those who were had the teaching experience of 6 years or more followed by 78.57 percent of the teachers with the teaching experience of 3-5 years or more. In addition to this 71.42 percent of the teachers with the low levels of knowledge were having the teaching experience of 2 years or less. However, data regarding average level of knowledge revealed that number of teachers having less than 2 years of experience was comparatively more in this

category as compared to others. The data gives the clear description of the fact that younger teachers were having better knowledge than their counterparts who were teaching for longer period of time. The reason for this could be that teachers with latest and recent degrees had better idea about importance of academic readiness in young children than the ones who did their degrees years back.

Table 3 depicts the level of knowledge regarding academic skills of urban teachers. As per the results depicted in the table, it was observed that majority of the teachers from all the age group were found to have low levels of knowledge in academic readiness. However maximum (80.00%) numbers of teachers with low knowledge belong to the age group of 41 years or above followed by (76.92%) of teachers who were of less than 33 years of age. In addition to this (70.58%) of the teachers who were more than 41 years of age were also found to have poor knowledge regarding academic readiness. In the domain of education qualification maximum number of teachers was found in low levels of knowledge. However maximum (80.00%) number of teachers with low knowledge were those who were B.A/B.Ed followed by (72.72%) of the teachers who did M.A/M.Ed degree. In addition to this (66.66%) of the teachers with diploma in elementary teaching training found to have poor knowledge academic readiness. Similarly in the domain of type of degree held, highest number of teachers was found in low level. However, (76.19%) of the teachers who did regular degree had low level knowledge than the teacher who did correspondence degree (75.00%). In the domain of teaching experience, it was observed that highest number of teachers was found to have low levels of knowledge in academic readiness. However maximum (88.88%) number of teachers with low knowledge were those who were have the teaching experience of 2 years or less followed by (76%) of the teachers were found to in low level with the teaching experience of 6 years or more. In addition to this (68.75%) of the teachers with the low levels of knowledge were having the teaching experience of 3-5 years.

Table 4 portrays correlation between socio personal variables and knowledge of teachers. Non-significant results were found in all the domains of socio personal profile with knowledge of the teachers. It is evident from the results of the study that majority of the teacher respondents had poor level of knowledge

regarding academic readiness variables despite Class-I students and the type of educational of the number of years a teacher has taught qualification they have.

**Table 1. Locale differences in knowledge of teachers regarding academic readiness**

Levels of knowledge of teachers	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)		Z value
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	
High	1	2.00	3	6.00	1.02
Average	8	16.00	12	24.00	1
Low	41	82.00	35	70.00	1.40

**Table 2. Per cent distribution of knowledge of rural teachers across various socio-personal variables**

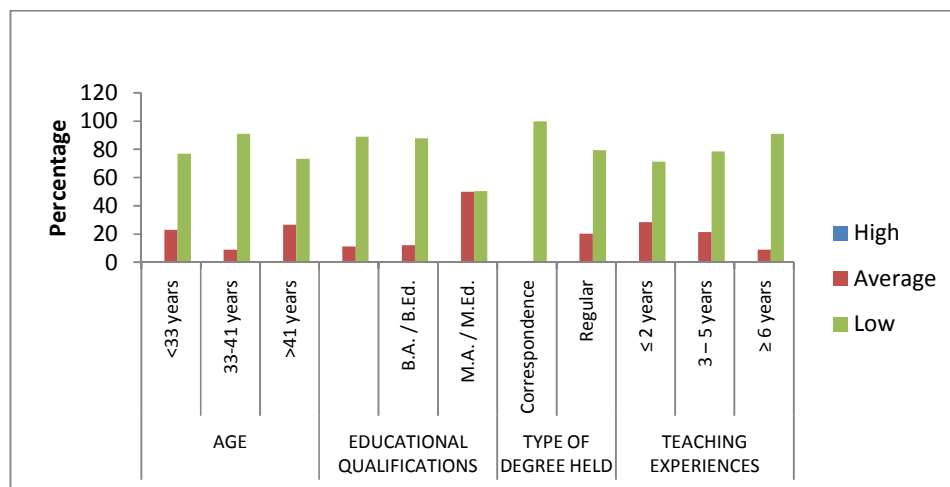
Socio personal domains	High		Average		Low	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>1. Age</b>						
<33 years	0	0.00	3	23.07	10	76.92
33-41 years	0	0.00	2	9.09	20	90.90
>41 years	0	0.00	4	26.66	11	73.33
<b>2. Educational qualifications</b>						
Diploma in elementary teacher training	0	0.00	1	11.11	8	88.88
B.A. / B.Ed.	0	0.00	4	12.12	29	87.87
M.A. / M.Ed.	0	0.00	4	50.00	4	50.50
<b>3. Type of degree held</b>						
Correspondence	0	0.00	0	00.00	6	100
Regular	0	0.00	9	20.45	35	79.54
<b>4. Teaching experiences</b>						
≤ 2 years	0	0.00	4	28.57	10	71.42
3 – 5 years	0	0.00	3	21.42	11	78.57
≥ 6 years	0	0.00	2	9.09	20	90.90

**Table 3. Per cent distribution of urban teachers across different levels of knowledge regarding academic readiness**

Socio personal domains	High		Average		Low	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>1. Age</b>						
<33 years	1	7.69	2	15.38	10	76.92
33-41 years	0	0.00	5	29.42	12	70.58
>41 years	1	5.00	3	15	16	80
<b>2. Educational qualifications</b>						
Diploma in elementary teacher training	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.66
B.A. / B.Ed.	1	4.00	4	16.00	20	80.00
M.A. / M.Ed.	1	4.54	5	22.72	16	72.72
<b>3. Type of degree held</b>						
Correspondence	1	12.50	1	12.50	6	75
Regular	1	2.38	9	21.42	32	76.19
<b>4. Teaching experiences</b>						
≤ 2 years	0	0.00	1	11.11	8	88.88
3 – 5 years	1	6.25	4	25.00	11	68.75
≥ 6 years	1	4.00	5	20.00	19	76.00

**Table 4. Correlation between socio personal variables and knowledge of teachers**

Domains of socio personal profile	Knowledge of the teachers
Age	0.02
Educational Qualification	0.15
Type of degree held	0.09
Teaching experience	0.02



**Fig. 1. Per cent distribution of knowledge of rural teachers across various socio-personal variables**

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers play an important role in building a child's success in their first years of school. They provide structure and help children grow in their pre-reading and pre-writing skills, teach pre-arithmetical skills and help children understand themselves.

1. The results of the present study highlighted the need to spread awareness among teachers regarding the need for academic readiness in children and to lay the foundation for kids to understand what "school" actually is.
2. Teachers need to be well equipped with the knowledge so that they can so that they can enhance the academic skills of children.
3. Teachers must be made aware on how they can develop these skills through items available and used daily at home.
4. The contents related to academic readiness in children must be included in B.Ed. and all teachers training programme curriculum.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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