

Song-Based Materials and Filipino Kindergartens' Social and Emotional Development

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Abstract: Song-Based Materials and Filipino Kindergartens' Social and Emotional Development. Objectives: The study investigated the effects of song-based instructional materials to learners' social and emotional aspects. **Methods:** Employing the one-group quasi experimental design through purposive sampling, the researchers administered the intervention using the mother tongue to twenty kindergarten pupils (10 males and 10 females). **Findings:** Dependent t-test on the results showed a significant difference on social and emotional development. Furthermore, the materials built and enhanced the emotional and social aspects of the children because through the use of the students' mother tongue was incorporated in their daily activities. **Conclusions:** The use of original Filipino songs can be used in the day-to-day learning, which develops the social and emotional aspects of kindergarten pupils. These songs may help build and establish good social and emotional aspects of the child towards oneself and to others.

Keywords: Filipino, kindergarten, mother-tongue, socio-emotional skills, song-based materials.

Abstrak: Bahan Ajar Berbasis Lagu dan Pengembangan Sosial dan Emosional Siswa Taman Kanak-Kanak Filipina. Tujuan: Penelitian ini menyelidiki pengaruh bahan ajar berbasis lagu terhadap aspek sosial dan emosional peserta didik. **Metode:** Dengan menggunakan desain kuasi eksperimental satu kelompok melalui sampling purposif, peneliti memberikan perlakuan menggunakan bahasa ibu kepada dua puluh siswa taman kanak-kanak (10 laki-laki dan 10 perempuan). **Temuan:** Hasil uji-t dependen menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan terhadap perkembangan sosial dan emosional. Selain itu, instrumen yang digunakan mampu membangun dan meningkatkan aspek emosional dan sosial anak karena melalui penggunaan bahasa ibu siswa dilibatkan ke dalam aktivitas sehari-hari. **Kesimpulan:** Penggunaan lagu asli Filipina dapat digunakan dalam pembelajaran sehari-hari untuk mengembangkan aspek sosial dan emosional siswa Taman Kanak-kanak. Lagu-lagu ini dapat membantu membangun dan membangun aspek sosial dan emosional yang baik pada anak baik terhadap diri sendiri maupun orang lain.

Kata kunci: Orang Filipina, taman kanak-kanak, bahasa ibu, keterampilan sosial-emosional, bahan ajar berbasis lagu.

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■ INTRODUCTION

The society generally views the child as fragile, innocent, and meek. Within these descriptions and knowledge, it is but appropriate to guard and handle a child with care, especially during the developing years. Likewise, children are limited in venting out or verbalizing their thoughts on the context of how they feel and at some extent in interacting with others as an expression. Even in history, children were often seen as simple and little versions of adults that some people might think that they are not capable of thinking into bigger perspectives. The developing years of a child involves physical, mental, emotional, and social development of children (Cherry, 2018). The early years of life show and express a unique opportunity to lay the foundation of a healthy growth and development due to its great progress and vulnerability. Thus, the first five years of a child's life has a strong impact on the social-emotional development according to research in early childhood education (Martin & Sontag-Padilla, 2014). The behavioral, cognitive, and social-emotional development is vital to a child's success in school and can affect a child's mental health if exposed to early negative experiences (Cooper, Masi, & Vick, 2009).

It is imperative to note the crucial role of songs and music in the lives of people, as these elements are evident in almost all aspects of our lives. Songs and music occupy a crucial part of an individual's identity as it creates a niche in everyday experiences. Among children, music has been instrument to convey expressions of joy and love. It also serves as a vehicle that complements efforts towards the development of social and emotional skills of children. In an early childhood education classroom, songs and music facilitate the dynamics of interaction and engagement. Music is also seen as an avenue to assist children in strengthening their learning facilities.

Emotional and social skills contribute to the development of recognizing and managing emotions to have fulfilling relationships with one's self and others (KidsMatter Australian Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative, 2014). However, one out five children that enter Kindergarten has poor social-emotional skills. One of the reasons could be that the child may have limited peer interaction due to inability to join and play with friends. When social-emotional health is affected, self-esteem issues and academic relationship challenges arises (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Education, 2016).

One of the key factors to develop the socio-emotional aspect is through a nurturing bond between the child and school. A school is no different from a home and is considered as the world of young learners. It is a place to represent, reason, interact, relate, and expose them to positive learning experiences. The kindergarten classroom prepares children in their critical year with tasks to meet academic challenges and expectations they may encounter in the primary grades (NAEYC, 2009). Through these efforts, a child feels the sense of belongingness and safety inside the classroom, a small yet representative section of the community.

In dealing with children, it does not stop on one domain only but it dwells on the holistic being of the child developed accordingly. According to Philippine Basic Education (2013), holistic approach produces not only a socially-competent individual, but also improves test scores. In scrutinizing public school education, one can focus on academics alone dejectedly losing sight of other important areas of child development, which each educator should take into consideration. A child is expected not only to master basic skills but also grow healthy - physically, emotionally and socially. Social and emotional learning can be integrated inside lessons

and activities in other forms of learning. A child's social-emotional development fulfills several functions (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016) and covers the ability to identify and understand one's feelings and others, possesses self-regulations, develops sympathy and empathy for others, and creates positive relationships (Housman, 2017).

Social-emotional development shows attribute of being multi – faceted and multi – functional in the area of child's development. It includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and harmonious relationships with others peers (Mihaela, 2015). The main features of emotional area include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to read and understand emotional states in others, to manage and handle strong emotions and their expression in a constructive and objective manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop sympathy and empathy for others, and to establish and maintain positive relationships (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009). "The preschool period is particularly important moment for the development of social skills among children," research suggests that music activities enable children to better decode the musical aspects (such as rhythm, stress, and intonation) of speech, and even to better identify emotions and tones in spoken language. All of these skills—listening, decoding speech, connecting with others, adjusting to a group—are essential to the development of what one study defines as "social competence" (Dumbleton & Bennett, 2010).

Another way of creating positive experiences for children is through songs (Rabinowitch, Cross, & Burnard, 2012). Songs used by language teachers worldwide help the pupil's verbal learning, specifically in remembering words due to phraseological patterning (Tegge, 2015). In addition, Tegge

(2015) believes that songs and poems have the characteristic of being extraordinarily memorable and classroom songs and poems can give full mnemonic for learning. Tamaela (2016) even found that 85% (N= 30) of the participants displayed a positive attitude towards the materials and 96% (N=30%) exhibit a high understanding of the content. Using songs for learning suggests an outlet to memorize and recall knowledge of concepts (Tegge, 2015).

Furthermore, study found that preschoolers who engaged in participatory group music and movement activities showed greater group solidarity, cooperation, and prosocial behavior when compared to children who did not engage in the same music activities. Research suggests that they might support infants' earliest abilities to engage in positive social interactions with others (Guilmartin, 2015). Singing and dancing together led to the improvement of empathy skill for children with whom they were making music while adult-child music and movement communications can lead to a better communication and increased emotional and social coordination and connection, both rhythmically and emotionally.

To bridge the gap between the scarcities in the literature and the provision for holistic development to kindergarten, the present study viewed conceptualized and conducted. The socio-emotional song-based materials are (original songs derived from the usual use of public domain songs) that can add-on the collection of songs and can enhance social and emotional skills among kindergarten pupils.

As sufficed by Varela, et al. (2016) in a study in the Philippine setting, the Kindergarten curriculum framework is a developmentally appropriate curriculum that is age, individual, and socio-culturally appropriate (NAEYC, 2009). Hence, kindergarten teachers must provide developmentally appropriate curriculum that is creative and highly engaging to unlock children's

potentials and talents. The goals taken from K to 12 Philippine Basic Education Curriculum Framework are the guiding principles of the Kindergarten Curriculum, together with its alignment with the National Early Learning Framework (DepEd, 2016). This serves as a guide for the holistic development of children ages five to six years old considering their developmental tasks and milestones. The focus of this study is the Social-Emotional Development domain which is the child's ability to relate to others, as well as express and understand one's self and his/her feelings. The study, likewise, focuses on the collective views and a vantage point of the song-based materials which connects to how children perceive, learn and connects to others, and importance of social and emotional development for young children and the need for developing this domain in teaching kindergarten pupils with the integration of songs.

A creative early childhood curriculum provides the development of intellectual functioning through activities planned by educators. The theory of Vygotsky in which an adult or peer uses "scaffolding" to support a child in the competencies he/she already has in order to develop new and high-level concepts. Therefore, Vygotsky has emphasized that children learn best when they are more exposed to activities with the guidance of more knowledgeable individuals to help the process of learning. In the present study, the learners were provided with song – based materials as stimuli to help them improve their social and emotional skills and cope with the activities they have in the classroom.

Music activities enable the development of social competence of children through decoding musical aspects, recognizing emotions and tones in spoken language, connecting and adjusting with others that is linked in improving children's confidence and social participation (Dumbleton & Bennett, 201). Children who participate in

group music and movement activities showed cooperation, empathy, positive social behavior, and unity compared to children who did not participate in the same music activities. The songs should let the pupils have an experiential encounter that would be engaging and at the same time teach them lessons about their daily activities (Tamaela, 2016). Thus, the emotional vocabulary and emotions qualities are developed through listening to music and can minimize emotional distress (Edgar, 2013). An increase of rhythmic emotional and social coordination manifests in the form of an adult-child interaction through music and movement activities that lead to development of positive social interaction (Guilmartin, 2015).

This study is undertaken to answer the following: (1) determine pupils' mean scores of social and emotional developments; and (2) identify the significant difference on social and emotional development before and after exposure to song-based materials (i.e. 5 songs made by one of the researchers).

■ METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized the quasi-experimental research using the pre-test post-test design. The participants were purposely selected based on the result of the screened pupils who have underdeveloped social and emotional skills. The pupils were exposed to the song-based materials and were given post-test after exposure to treatment.

Research Sampling and Participants

The researchers selected the school and the group of pupils based on the largest population out of eight partner schools in Metro Manila with the following criteria: (1) currently enrolled in an early education program as Kindergarten; (2) handled by practice teachers deployed in different partner schools; and (3) screened using the red flag indicators or underdeveloped social and

emotional development. A total of 20 kindergarten pupils (10 females and 10 males) from the identified public school, participated in this study. The parents of the twenty (N = 20) kindergarten students from an Elementary School were asked to thoroughly read and willingly sign the consent form. The said consent contained a brief description of the study, intervention-using songs with mother tongue, the procedure, risks and discomforts and confidentiality of all the data that were gathered in the study. The researchers carefully chose the participants and asked permission from the parents through a letter to allow their child to participate in the said study.

Instrumentation

Original Filipino Song-Based Materials

Song-based materials made by the researchers are original self-composed songs that discuss social and emotional skills a Kindergarten must possess. The modules included are: [1] Kamusta Ka (Respect, Listening), [2] Pamantayan (Understanding Rules & Boundaries), Tamang Oras (Sharing & Taking Turns), [4] Maglaro at Magligpit (Playing in groups, sharing, cleaning up, value of time), and [5] Usap Tayo Kaibigan (Handling feelings and emotions).

The first song, “Kamusta Ka?” (How Are You?) allows the class to gather and prepare for the day’s activity. The song “Usap Tayo Kaibigan” (Let’s Talk My Friend) points out the importance of verbalizing and listening to one another and to oneself. The song “Maglaro at Maligpit” (Let’s Play and Clean Up After) encourages and supports children in the development of practical life skills. Another song entitled, “Pamantayan” (Classroom Rules) helps the pupils become mindful about classroom rules. Considering children’s normal behavior, waiting for one’s turn is one of the most difficult tasks which they find hard to follow, the song “Tamang Oras” (Right

Time) teaches the children to listen and wait for their turn.

The experts in the field of research, child psychology, early childhood education, pediatrician, music arranger, and the like validated descriptively the original songs. The study took place for 8 weeks (2 months) as an intervention to the socio-development of the learners.

Developmental Checklist

The DAP: IQ by Reynolds and Hickman (2004) is a screening test designed for children through adults ranging (age from four-to-89 years of age) to estimate IQ. The participant can take this checklist individually or group administered and scored by individuals who have had formal comprehensive training in assessment.

SEDAL

The SEDAL is a behavioral assessment scale designed to establish social-emotional progress in children and adults with a developmental age ranging from 0 to 14. Test results deliver crucial information, key in supporting the individual’s ongoing positive growth and development. It includes 152 items divided equally into two interrelated domains, social and emotional, classified in increasing age categories from 0 to 14. Its broad application is useful for children with intellectual disabilities, behavioral problems, sensory or motor disabilities, and normal developing children.

Data Collection

The researchers measured the intellectual capacity of the subjects (N=20) using DAP: IQ on the 1st and 2nd week. To administer the DAP: IQ, the examinee is asked to draw a picture of himself/ herself when provided with the standardized instructions in the examiner’s manual. If the examinee draws a side view or only a head, the researchers repeat the directions repeated and

the student can draw another figure. The drawing session approximately lasts around eight to fifteen minutes to administer and to obtain a score for the examinee. The proponent reported alpha coefficients for 22 selected age intervals for the entire normative sample ($N = 2,295$). The median alpha coefficient was .82 and ranged from .74 to .87 for the selected age intervals. The alpha coefficients for white, African-American, Hispanic, and for those participants who listed "Other" for race, ranged from .73 to .80.

The scores set the baseline measure for the participant's current mental ability before exposure to the intervention. Afterwards, the researchers delivered the 5-modular self-made songs (i.e. original songs) that addressed the subjects' enhancement for social-emotional development. The rapport and observation towards the subjects, specifically the pre-test measure of social-emotional development using SEDAL was established on the 3rd week. The 5-modular songs that targeted and enhanced the child's social and emotional development was delivered on the 4th to 8th week. The last week allocated the post-test measure.

Working with song-based materials (as the independent variable) using self-composed songs as task variable, the researchers intentionally manipulated a single treatment group. The social and emotional skills serve as the outcome measure to assess if there is a change in behavior (Myers & Hansen, 2014). Specifically, using original

compositions as a task variable in the classroom-based instructions served as an intervention in the acquisition of social and emotional skills among kindergarten pupils.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section reports the result of the implementation of song-based materials. The researchers affirmed that after exposure to the song-based materials, the social and emotional development of pupils has improved.

Pretest and Post Test Scores of Social and Emotional Development

Children's involvement in early social learning contributes to the fundamental emotional development (Fries & Pollak, 2016). Table 1 shows the using the mean scores of the social development acquired using SEDAL. The researchers garnered a pre-test score of 12.40 ($SD=3.085$), and a post-test score of 14.25 ($SD=1.618$). This leads to a mean difference of 1.85. Table 1 describes an accumulated score after being exposed to the intervention. With focal measures on social development domain focuses on topics that include: initiating contact, social independence, moral development, impulse control, self-awareness, and social assessment skills. Similarly, Adu & Frimpong (2018) found out that incorporating songs and rhymes makes the teaching-learning process more engaging.

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test scores of social and emotional development

	Variable	Mean	N	SD	SEM*
Social	PreSoc	12.4	20	3.085	0.69
	PostSoc	14.25	20	1.618	0.362
Emotional	PreEmo	11.15	20	3.558	0.796
	PostEmo	12.7	20	1.49	0.333

Note: SEDAL* (Social and Emotional Development Age Level - Standard Error of the Mean)

Children's social-emotional competence acts as prerogative for desirable outcomes in life, as educational interventions are considered to yield favorable results (Blair, et al., 2018) Table 1 shows the obtained mean scores of the emotional development using SEDAL wherein the researchers gained a pre-test score of 11.15 (SD=3.558), and a post-test score of 12.70 (SD=1.490). This implies a mean difference of 1.55. The following are the most manifested behaviors of the emotional aspect that learners attained which these characteristics are great aids for the total development of every learner: self-image, emotional independence, sense of reality, moral development, regulation of emotions, and fears. According to Desyandri (2017), values are internalized in the form of self-expression through singing. Moreover, it has been concluded that when children are engaged in 'musical scaffolding,' their capacity to express is also supported (Kondo, 2019).

The concern being given to develop children's intellect is noticeable during primary years (Tarasova, 2016). The 0-6 year bracket of children encompasses emotional competence development (Housman, et al., 2018), It can be noted how parents struggle to invest on children's activities and academic engagement during this period. While a growing interest springs from integrating socio-emotional competence in highlighting the growth of children, contemporary attempts that look at these aspects are still scarce. A study by Peralta – Carcelen, et al. (2017)

recognizes two facets of child development: behavior and socioemotional development, along with sociodemographic elements. The authors further noted that "neuromotor abnormalities and cognitive and language functions" are linked with issues in socioemotional competence.

It is also worthy to note how crucial the roles of socio-emotional competence are in terms of children's engagement with others. On a larger context, it advances being emphatic, sensitive, and responsive. It triggers the ability to extend oneself in distinguishing feelings of oneself and others, self-expression, and ideas and feelings of others and oneself. Childhood experiences shape socio-emotional competence and family members, friends, and even caregivers contribute to a healthy and successful skill development. In the long run, these characteristics are brought by the children in their growing years: serving as their frame of references in dealing with various life situations.

Social Development before and after intervention

Table 2 depicts an achieved score after the exposition to song-based materials as the intervention. Yeni (2017) classified that the children's imagination is dependent on the progress of their ability to sing. While emotional development section measures closely connected dimensions, such as: self-image, emotional independence, sense of reality, moral development, regulation of emotions, and fears.

Table 2. Difference on social development before and after the intervention

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	Tcrit	Tobt	Pvalue	Effect Size, d
Pre	12.4	3.085	19	2.861	3.634**	0.007	1.179
Post	14.25	1.618					

Note: Critical value at alpha 0.05 (2.093)*, and alpha 0.01 (2.861)**

Referring to the scores shown in Table 2, the computed value on social development with $t_{obt}[t \text{ statistic value}](19) = 3.634^{**}$ is larger than the critical value for both alpha 0.05 (t_{crit} [the value that must exceed in rejecting the null hypothesis] = 2.093) and 0.01 ($t_{crit} = 2.861$). On the other hand, the pvalue, the attributed pvalue (0.0072) is lower than the significant level of alphas 0.05 and 0.01, one should reject the null hypothesis H_0 , and accept the alternative hypothesis H_a . The increased scores of the social skills among the subjects pave its worth after being exposed to the song-based materials. Hence, the risk to reject the null hypothesis H_0 while it is true is lower than 0.72%. The effect size $d = 1.179$ indicates large effect as reported by Cohens (1988) while Hattie (2007) interpreted it as zone of desired effects because of having a value higher than 0.40. Hattie refers to real educational contexts and therefore uses a more benignant classification, compared to Cohen (Lenhard & Lenhard, 2017).

Children's creativity and imagination are authentic and genuine manifestations of how they

perceive the world around them. It is also an evidence of development as they deal with various life events, particularly self-expression and relationship building. It is imperative that adults provide opportunities for children to perform tasks that showcase creativity and playful experiences. While there are studies relating to these suggested activities, parents may still opt to choose activities that fit their child's context and ability to further enhance the support being extended to them. Reaching the children's potential may be achieved through numerous ways that are simple and doable and that includes integrating song-based activities. In the long run, notable gains can be attained through this scheme, including establishing children's self-confidence and critical thinking.

Emotional Development before and after intervention

Table 3 depicts an achieved score after the exposition to song-based materials as the intervention in terms of emotional development.

Table 3. Difference on emotional development before and after the intervention

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	Tcrit	tobt	pvalue	Effect Size
Pre	11.150	3.558	19	2.861	5.700**	0.000	1.849
Post	12.700	1.490					

Note: Critical value at alpha 0.05 (2.093)*, and alpha 0.01 (2.861)**

Based on the scores illustrated in Table 3, the computed value of the emotional development with $t_{obt} (19) = 5.700^{**}$ is greater than the critical value for both alpha 0.05 ($t_{crit} = 2.093$) and 0.01 ($t_{crit} = 2.861$). Concerning pvalue, the gained pvalue (0.0004) is lower than the significance level of alphas 0.05 and 0.01, one should reject the null hypothesis H_0 , and accept the alternative hypothesis H_a , overtly showing that the improved values of the emotional skills among

the subjects were noted after exposure to song-based materials. Hence, the risk to reject the null hypothesis H_0 while it is true is lower than 0.04%. Thus, the effect size $d = 1.849$ reported a large effect by Cohen (1988), on the other hand, Hattie (2007) confirms the effect size as zone of desired effects because it falls above the required value of 0.40. Lenhard and Lenhard (2017) interpreted the value to give clarity on the use of both medium to evaluate the effect of the intervention to the

subjects. In a similar study by Movallali, et al. (2018), it has been recognized the contribution of songs for children in terms of their emotional development, noting that songs and rhymes also aid in facilitating the learning process of children with hearing impairment.

While exposing children to various modalities to enhance their socio-emotional development may be considered a complex and delicate task, parents and caregivers may opt to resort to activities related to songs and music being effective in bringing desirable impact on children. Making them familiar with songs and music would contribute to desirable behavior and attitude, relationship-building, and expressiveness. It could also be an opportunity for children to harness musicality and inclination to arts. Songs are also capable of facilitating effective self-expression as music is considered an emotional experience for children and adults alike. Enabling children's socio-emotional development through song-based materials do not only provide avenues for musicality and singing alone, but this could also breed desirable impact in terms of self-worth and belongingness.

■ CONCLUSIONS

The study presents the effects of song-based materials on how children perceive, learn and connect to others reiterating the importance of developing skills that are necessary for their holistic development. The age of five is considered as one of the critical years of a child according to the NAEYC (2009) highlighting the fundamental role of social and emotional development that is significant in the preparation for rigorous challenges that child may face in the primary grades. In addition, the Philippine Kindergarten Curriculum emphasizes the role of educators in fostering developmentally appropriate opportunities for growth and development (DepEd, 2016) which will maximize

the child's potential. Due to paucity in research in the Early Childhood literature about the use of song-based materials, this study answers the use of original song-based materials as influence of social and emotional development of kindergarten pupils.

There has been a significant increase of social and emotional development seen on the participants more than ever that the songs were written in their mother tongue. This was strengthened by the discussion made by the practice teachers using the validated modules which was incorporated in the participants' daily routine activities. The exposure to the originally made song-based materials demonstrated the connection of their knowledge and experiences through the social and emotional skills that were evidently shown by the children through the daily routine activities practiced in the classroom.

The study is limited with within-group design. Use of comparison groups to validate the effectiveness of the original song-based materials and its modules as intervention in enhancing social and emotional skills is highly recommended. To ensure the effectiveness of the material, this can be given in a longer time frame to test the amplification of participants' retention towards the social and emotional skills that were taught. This research also suggests conducting a seminar – training program to public and private school teachers to introduce and familiarize the utilization of song – based materials. A training program for parents can also be given to support and strengthen the given activities by the teachers to ensure the effectiveness of the said materials.

Song-based materials used as a tool for learning social and emotional skills to the learner supports the theory of Vygotsky that adults play a significant role in harnessing the potentials of children during formative years. The role of adults serving as the “more knowledgeable others” provide the scaffolding the participants need.

Therefore, integrating the use of songs in teaching and learning process can address children who maybe lacking social and emotional skills.

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