

Kindergarten Pupils' Well-Being Through Nutrition Awareness And Active Play In Kaingin Elementary School

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Abstract

This action research examined the well-being of kindergarten pupils through the integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities at Kaingin Elementary School, San Pascual Sub-Office, Division of Batangas, during School Year 2025–2026. The study was anchored on the premise that early childhood is a critical period for establishing healthy habits, promoting physical development, and strengthening children's social, emotional, and cognitive foundations. It aimed to determine the level of well-being of kindergarten pupils in terms of physical, social, emotional, and mental health; assess how nutrition awareness and active play enhance pupils' daily routines; evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions; identify challenges encountered during implementation; and provide a basis for improving play-based activities.

The study employed a survey questionnaire as part of data gathering procedure. Participants were the parents or guardians of 40 kindergarten pupils aged five to six years old enrolled at Kaingin Elementary School. A researcher-made validated questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data gathering. Responses were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, ranking, and weighted mean.

Findings revealed that kindergarten pupils generally demonstrated positive but developing levels of well-being. In terms of physical health, social health, emotional health, mental health, the composite mean of 2.94 Often indicated that pupils generally displayed strength during play and healthy eating behaviors, although stamina and endurance remained limited.

The integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities also showed positive effects on pupils' daily routines. Physical fitness, cognitive development and socio-emotional skills registered a composite mean of 2.84 Often and Always.

In terms of effectiveness, nutrition awareness and active play were found to contribute positively to pupils' physical, social, and emotional development.

The study also identified several challenges encountered during the implementation. The most prominent difficulty was pupils' failure to consistently follow instructions during class



activities. The challenges included limited stamina during active play, occasional lack of interest in participating in physical activities, difficulty performing certain physical tasks, and unhealthy eating habits at home. These factors suggest that home environment, behavioral guidance and physical readiness significantly influence the effectiveness of school-based nutrition and active play interventions.

Overall, the findings indicate that kindergarten pupils are generally developing positively across physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and nutrition-related dimensions. However, they continue to require sustained support in physical endurance, emotional regulation, social cooperation, communication, healthy eating habits, and independent learning. The study concluded that nutrition awareness and active play are effective and practical strategies for promoting the holistic development of kindergarten pupils. Continued collaboration among teachers, parents, and school administration is recommended to strengthen classroom practices and home support systems that will further enhance children's overall well-being and school readiness.

Keywords: *well-being, nutrition awareness, physical health, school readiness, classroom practices, healthy eating habits.*

Introduction

Early childhood is considered a vital stage in a child's development because it is during this period that healthy habits, behaviors, and learning foundations are established. Proper nutrition and active play are important factors that contribute to the physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being of kindergarten pupils. Nutrition awareness helps children develop healthy eating practices that support growth and active participation in school activities, while active play promotes physical fitness, social interaction, emotional expression, and cognitive development. Because of this, schools play an important role in providing activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and holistic development among young learners.

Studies have shown that nutrition education and play-based activities positively influence children's school readiness, behavior, and overall well-being. However, some kindergarten pupils still experience difficulties related to physical endurance, emotional regulation, healthy eating habits, and classroom participation. In Kaingin Elementary School, these concerns were observed among some kindergarten learners, indicating the need for interventions that are engaging, developmentally appropriate, and beneficial to children's overall growth. The integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities may help address these concerns by encouraging healthier routines and improving pupils' daily learning experiences.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the well-being of kindergarten pupils through nutrition awareness and active play activities in Kaingin Elementary School. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of pupils' physical, social, emotional, and mental health, evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions, identify challenges encountered during implementation, and propose enhanced activities that may further support the holistic development and school readiness of kindergarten pupils.

Research Questions

This study aims to promote the well-being of kindergarten pupils by integrating nutrition awareness and active play into their daily learning experiences. It seeks to explore how simple nutrition education activities and structured play can influence pupils' healthy habits, attentiveness, social interaction, and overall classroom participation as perceived by their parents.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of well-being of kindergarten pupils in terms of:
 - 1.1 physical health
 - 1.2. social health
 - 1.3 emotional health
 - 1.4. mental health
2. How does the integration nutrition awareness and active play activities enhance pupils' daily routines in terms of?
 - 2.1 physical fitness
 - 2.2 cognitive development
 - 2.3 social-emotional skills
3. How effective is nutrition awareness and active play in kindergarten pupils in terms of:
 - 3.1 physical health
 - 3.2 social health and
 - 3.3 emotional health

4. What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the nutrition awareness

and active play activities?

5. Based on the analysis, what enhanced activities may be proposed?

Methodology

This section shows the research design, subject of the study, data gathering instrument, data gathering procedure and data analysis plan.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design to assess the effectiveness of the integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities in the classroom. The approach combines observation, intervention, and evaluation to ensure practical application and measurable outcomes.

Participants

The participants of the study were parents/guardians of 40 kindergarten pupils aged five to six years old, enrolled in a Kaingin Elementary School in the District of San Pascual.

Research Instrument

To measure the outcomes, the study used researcher-made questionnaires that served as the instruments in gathering data.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process began with securing the necessary permissions to conduct the study. The researcher first sought approval from the school principal of Kaingin Elementary School. After approval was granted, informed consent letters were distributed to parents or guardians of the 40 kindergarten pupils to ensure voluntary participation and ethical compliance. Only pupils with signed consent forms were included in the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The researcher used different tools in analyzing and interpreting the quantitative data like percentage, and weighted mean.

Frequency Distribution, it was used to determine how many pupils chose a particular answer.

Percentage, it was used to show the proportion of pupils with correct nutrition knowledge and to show the percentage of pupils who regularly engage in active play.

Ranking, it is used to determine the most preferred play activities, and to identify which healthy foods pupils like the most.

Weighted Mean, it is used to determine pupils' average level of well-being, and measure the extent of their participation in physical activities.

Results

1. Table 1 shows that the overall physical well-being of the children is “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 2.94, indicating a generally satisfactory condition. The highest-rated indicator is “feel strong when they play” (3.60, Always), followed by “eat healthy food” (3.20, Always). Meanwhile, “sleep well at night” (3.00) and “have normal height and weight” (2.70) are often observed. The lowest rating is “don’t feel tired fast when they run” (2.20, Sometimes), suggesting that some children may have lower stamina.
2. Table 2 shows that children demonstrate a high level of social behavior with a composite mean of 3.68 (Always). They most consistently show kindness in talking with friends (4.00) and enjoy being with classmates (3.80). They also like playing with peers, sharing toys, both rated as Always. However, working well in group activities received the lowest mean (3.30, Often), indicating that cooperation in structured tasks still needs improvement. Overall, the results suggest that children have strong peer relationships and positive social interaction.
3. Table 3 results show that children’s emotional well-being is generally “Often” experienced, with a composite mean of 3.00. They are most positive when going to school (4.00) and while playing with classmates (3.80), indicating strong feelings of happiness in school and social settings. However, lower ratings for knowing how to manage sadness (1.90) and communicating negative feelings (2.40) suggest that emotional regulation and expression are still limited. Overall, children show positive emotions but still need support in handling and expressing difficult feelings.
4. Table 4 results show that children’s cognitive/learning performance is generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 2.89. The highest indicator is “asking the teacher when they do not understand” (3.50, Always), indicating that children are active in seeking help during learning. This is followed by “liking to learn new things” (3.30, Often) and “focusing when the teacher is speaking” (3.00, Often), showing moderate engagement in learning activities. However, lower scores in “remembering lessons” (2.40, Sometimes) and “getting high scores in quizzes” (2.30, Sometimes) suggest that retention of lessons and academic performance still need improvement. Overall, the findings indicate that while children are curious and participative in class, their academic achievement and memory skills are still developing.
5. The results show that children’s physical fitness is generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 2.84. The highest-rated indicator is “feel strong when they run, jump, and play every day” (3.80, Always), indicating good basic strength and active participation in play. This is followed by “feel energetic and ready for school activities” (3.40, Often), showing moderate energy levels. However, lower ratings for “can move without getting tired quickly” (2.20, Sometimes) and “can play for a long time with friends” (2.30, Sometimes) suggest limited stamina and endurance in sustained physical activities. Meanwhile, “doing daily physical activities well” (2.50, Often) reflects an average ability to perform routine movements. Overall, the findings indicate that while children are generally active and strong, their endurance and sustained physical fitness still need improvement.
6. The results show that children’s cognitive development is generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 2.94. The highest indicator is “can think clearly and understand the teacher” (3.50, Always), followed by “can focus on classwork” (3.40, Often), indicating good comprehension and attention in class. However, moderate scores in “remembering lessons” (2.80) and “finishing tasks without giving up” (2.60) suggest developing memory and persistence skills. The lowest rating is “understanding new things and doing them

independently” (2.40, Sometimes), showing that some children still need guidance when learning new tasks. Overall, the findings indicate that children have developing cognitive abilities, with strengths in understanding and focus but needing improvement in memory, independence, and task completion.

7. The results show that children have a high level of social-emotional skills, with a composite mean of 3.52 (Always). The highest indicator is “talking nicely to classmates and teachers” (4.00, Always), followed by showing kindness through helping and sharing (3.90, Always), indicating strong positive interaction and empathy. Other indicators such as feeling calm and safe in school (3.40) and feeling happy when playing with classmates (3.30) are interpreted as Often, showing generally positive emotions and school experiences. However, sharing materials during activities received the lowest mean (3.00, Often), suggesting that sharing behavior is still developing in some situations. Overall, the findings indicate that children demonstrate strong communication and kindness, with generally positive emotions, but still need improvement in consistent sharing during activities.

8. The results show that children’s nutrition and physical activity-related behaviors are generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 2.76. The highest indicator is “getting tired quickly when playing” (3.00, Often), suggesting that some children still experience low endurance during physical activities. This is followed by “liking to play outside” (2.90, Often) and “feeling strong during exercise or play” (2.80, Often), indicating moderate physical activity and strength. However, lower ratings for “liking to eat fruits” (2.70, Often) and “liking to drink milk” (2.40, Sometimes) suggest that healthy eating habits are still inconsistent among some children. Overall, the findings indicate that while children are fairly active and engaged in play, their nutrition habits and physical endurance still need improvement.

9. The results show that children’s social behavior is generally “Sometimes” observed, with a composite mean of 2.48, indicating that their social interaction skills are still developing. The highest indicator is “helping friends during play time” (3.40, Often), showing that children are most active in assisting peers during play. This is followed by “taking turns during games” (2.70, Often) and “following rules during play” (2.50, Often), which suggest moderate cooperation and rule awareness. However, lower ratings for “sharing toys or food” (2.20, Sometimes) and especially “talking with classmates during activities” (1.60, Sometimes) indicate limited communication and sharing behaviors in some situations. Overall, the findings suggest that while children show some positive cooperative behaviors, their social interaction, communication, and sharing skills still need further development.

10. The results show that children’s emotional well-being is generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 3.38. The highest indicator is “feeling proud when finishing a game or activity” (3.90, Always), followed by “feeling happy when eating healthy food” (3.60, Always), indicating positive emotions linked to achievement and healthy habits. Meanwhile, “feeling excited during playtime” (3.40), “feeling good when exercising or moving” (3.10), and “smiling and laughing during play with others” (2.90) are interpreted as Often, suggesting generally positive but not always consistent emotional responses during physical and social activities. Overall, the findings indicate that children generally experience positive emotions in play, exercise, and healthy eating, with strong feelings of pride and satisfaction, but their enjoyment during peer play is slightly less consistent.

11. The results show that children’s condition is generally “Often” observed, with a composite mean of 3.00. The highest indicator is “not following instructions in class activities” (3.50,

Always), suggesting that some children frequently struggle with classroom discipline and compliance. Other indicators such as difficulty running, jumping, or moving quickly (3.10), unhealthy eating habits (2.90), and feeling tired or uninterested in activities (2.80) are interpreted as Often, indicating moderate concerns in physical activity and nutrition behaviors. The lowest indicator is “feeling that activities are too difficult for their body” (2.70, Often), showing that this is still present but less prominent compared to other factors. Overall, the findings suggest that while children are generally active, there are concerns in following instructions, maintaining healthy habits, and physical engagement, which may affect their participation in activities.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that kindergarten pupils generally demonstrated positive but developing levels of physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being through the integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities. Pupils showed strengths in social interaction, participation in play, and willingness to learn, indicating that these activities positively influenced their overall development and classroom engagement. The results also showed that children often practiced healthy behaviors and experienced positive emotions during school activities; however, some still faced challenges in physical endurance, emotional regulation, communication, healthy eating habits, and independent learning. These findings suggest that nutrition awareness and active play are effective strategies in promoting the holistic development and school readiness of kindergarten pupils, although continuous support and collaboration among teachers, parents, and school administrators remain necessary to further strengthen children’s well-being and development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The findings showed that kindergarten pupils generally demonstrate moderate to positive development which is the interpretation often.
2. In terms of integration of nutrition awareness and active play activities to enhance pupils’ daily routines shows that their endurance and stamina are still limited, and some have inconsistent healthy eating habits that result with a verbal interpretation of often.
3. For the effectiveness of nutrition awareness, children are fairly active and engaged in play, show some positive cooperative behavior, healthy eating and strong feelings but their enjoyment during peer play is slightly less consistent that result with a verbal interpretation of often.
4. Regarding the challenges encountered during the implementation of the nutrition awareness and active play activities, the findings suggest that while children are generally active, they are concerned in following instructions, maintaining healthy habits, and physical engagement which result with a verbal interpretation of often.
5. The proposed enhanced activities are needed to promote the kindergarten pupils’ well-being.

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