

TEACHING READINESS, PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, SELF-EFFICACY AND TEACHING COMPETENCE AMONG PRE-SERVICE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN TAMIL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Kumara Gengatharan^{1*}
Ravi Supramoney²
Sivakumar Arumugam³
Tamilmullai Thannimalai⁴
Uma Devi Rajandran⁵

¹ Research Unit Head: Institute Pendidikan Guru, Campus Sultan Abdul Halim, 08100, Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia (kumaran@ipsah.edu.my)

² Moral Unit Head: Institute Pendidikan Guru, Campus Sultan Abdul Halim, 08100, Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia (ravimoney1602@gmail.com)

³ Lecturer: Institute Pendidikan Guru, Campus Sultan Abdul Halim, 08100, Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia (sivakumar@ipsah.edu.my)

⁴ Teacher: SJKT Bestari Jaya, 45600 Bestari Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia (tha.tamilmullai@gmail.com)

⁵ Teacher: SJKT Ladang Coalfields, 47000 Sungai Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia (tkayalarum@gmail.com)

*Corresponding author: kumaran@ipsah.edu.my

Article history

Received date : 15-8-2026
Revised date : 16-8-2026
Accepted date : 15-10-2026
Published date : 20-10-2026

To cite this document:

Gengatharan, K., Supramoney, R., Arumugam, S., Thannimalai, T., & Rajandran, U. D. (2026). Teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy and teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers in Tamil language instruction. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 11 (87), 94 – 111.

Abstract: Professionalism among preservice teachers is fundamental to ensuring that Tamil language instruction at the preschool level is well planned, effective, and developmentally appropriate. This study aims to identify the levels of teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and Tamil language teaching competence among preservice preschool teachers, as well as to examine the relationships between the three predictor variables and teaching competence and their respective contributions to it. The study adopts a quantitative approach using a correlational survey design. The sample comprises 12 pre-service preschool teachers with experience teaching Tamil in Tamil schools. Data are collected using a structured questionnaire encompassing four main constructs: teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and Tamil language teaching competence. The instrument will undergo content validation by a panel of experts and pilot testing to establish its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics are used to determine the level of each variable, while Pearson's correlation is used to examine relationships between the variables. The findings are expected to indicate that teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, and self-efficacy are positively and significantly associated with Tamil language teaching competence, with self-efficacy and pedagogical knowledge expected to make greater predictive contributions. This study has the potential to strengthen teacher education programmes by providing empirical evidence on factors influencing pre-service teachers'

teaching competence. Its implications may assist institutes of teacher education in planning more systematic pedagogical training, practicum supervision, and professional development interventions to support the holistic and sustained improvement of Tamil language instruction at the preschool level.

Keywords: *Teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, teaching competence, Tamil language instruction, preservice preschool teachers*

Introduction

The professionalism of preservice preschool teachers is reflected in their capacity to translate professional preparation into developmentally appropriate and responsive classroom practices. In language education, this requires teachers to connect instructional content with children's linguistic experiences, learning needs, and developmental characteristics. Recent research by Veliz et al. (2025) highlights the importance of pedagogical knowledge in preparing early childhood educators to respond to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Their findings identify challenges in translating theoretical preparation into practice, reinforcing the need to examine the professional resources that teachers bring to early childhood classrooms. Within this broader concern, the present study focuses on teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and Tamil language teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers undertaking practicum.

In Malaysia, research on preschool language instruction demonstrates the complexity of supporting young children's emerging literacy. Syazreena et al. (2024), in a qualitative study involving 12 experienced preschool teachers across seven states, identified challenges related to differences in children's reading proficiency, limited attention, insufficient family support, and time constraints. Although their investigation concerned Malay reading instruction, these findings provide a relevant contextual basis for examining how teachers respond to diverse learning needs in preschool language classrooms. For Tamil language instruction, the corresponding question is how adequately preservice teachers are prepared to plan learning experiences, select suitable materials, sustain participation, and assess children's progress during practicum. The present study therefore approaches teaching competence as a context-specific professional capacity requiring empirical investigation.

Teaching readiness constitutes one important dimension of this investigation. In the present study, readiness refers to preservice teachers' perceived preparedness to undertake the planning, instructional, and classroom responsibilities associated with teaching Tamil at the preschool level. Abraham and Sickel (2025) examined preservice teachers' perceived preparation, readiness to engage in the profession, and teaching self-efficacy before and after a culminating field experience. Their findings supported relationships among these constructs and indicated that the contribution of particular dimensions of preparation changed across the field experience. This suggests that readiness should be examined in relation to practical teaching experiences, rather than inferred solely from participation in teacher education courses. It also provides a rationale for investigating readiness alongside other dimensions of professional preparation during practicum.

Pedagogical knowledge represents another relevant dimension because teachers need to understand how learning can be organised and supported. For this study, it encompasses knowledge of instructional approaches, classroom management, assessment, and adaptation to

preschool children's learning needs. Its application to Tamil language teaching may include selecting appropriate storytelling activities, guiding oral interaction, and adjusting instructional support. Veliz et al. (2025) found that early childhood educators' perceived preparation for culturally responsive practice involved both professional knowledge and opportunities to apply that knowledge in context. Their findings support examining whether preservice teachers' reported pedagogical knowledge is associated with their perceived competence in teaching Tamil. However, pedagogical knowledge and teaching competence remain conceptually distinct: the former concerns professional understanding, whereas the latter concerns the capacity to apply that understanding in teaching.

Self-efficacy adds a further dimension by focusing on teachers' beliefs about their ability to carry out instructional responsibilities successfully. In the present context, this concerns confidence in explaining learning content, engaging children, managing classroom activities, and responding to instructional difficulties. Recent Malaysian research by Arumugam and Mohamed (2025) examined self-efficacy and Malay language pedagogical content knowledge among 30 preschool teachers in Negeri Sembilan. Their investigation demonstrates the relevance of considering professional knowledge and efficacy beliefs together within preschool language education. Nevertheless, evidence concerning practising teachers and Malay language instruction cannot be assumed to describe preservice teachers teaching Tamil. Moreover, confidence in teaching should be distinguished from demonstrated teaching performance, making it necessary to clarify what questionnaire-based measures of competence actually represent.

Taken together, the reviewed studies provide a rationale for investigating readiness, pedagogical knowledge, and self-efficacy within a common research framework. However, they do not directly establish how these three constructs relate to Tamil language teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers during practicum. The research gap addressed here is therefore contextual and integrative: the present study examines these relationships within a specific teacher preparation setting and language-teaching context. It does not presume that relationships identified in other populations will necessarily occur with the same direction or magnitude in this group.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the levels of teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among 12 preservice preschool teachers, and to explore the relationships between the three proposed correlates and teaching competence. Given its small sample and correlational survey design, the investigation is positioned as an exploratory study providing preliminary, context-specific evidence. Its potential contribution lies in identifying areas requiring further attention in pedagogical preparation, practicum supervision, and professional development. Such evidence may inform more targeted support for preservice teachers while establishing a basis for subsequent research involving larger samples and direct measures of classroom practice.

Research Objectives

- i. To determine the levels of teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil.
- ii. To identify the level of self-efficacy among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil.
- iii. To determine the level of self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers.

Research Questions

- i. What are the levels of teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?
- ii. What is the level of self-efficacy among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?
- iii. What is the level of self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers?

Definition of Key Term

This section defines the key terms used in the study to ensure conceptual clarity and consistency of interpretation. These terms include teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, self-reported teaching competence, and pre-service preschool teachers. Each term is explained in relation to Tamil language instruction at the preschool level, with operational definitions specifying how the constructs are understood and measured within the study.

Teaching Readiness

Teaching readiness generally refers to the extent to which an individual is prepared to undertake the responsibilities and demands of classroom teaching. Recent research by Abraham and Sickel (2025) examined perceived preparation, readiness to engage in the teaching profession, and teaching self-efficacy before and after a culminating field experience. In the present study, teaching readiness refers to pre-service preschool teachers' perceived preparedness to undertake Tamil language instruction during practicum. It includes preparation to plan lessons, organise learning materials, and respond to the instructional requirements of the preschool classroom.

Pedagogical Knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge generally refers to teachers' understanding of the principles, processes, and approaches used to facilitate learning. Veliz et al. (2025) investigated the perceived pedagogical knowledge and preparedness of nine early childhood educators working in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. In this study, pedagogical knowledge refers to preservice preschool teachers' reported understanding of approaches appropriate for teaching Tamil to young children. Its proposed scope includes knowledge of child development, language-learning activities, classroom management, differentiation, and assessment. Illustrative applications include understanding when to use storytelling, songs, guided conversation, and play-based activities.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to organise and carry out the actions required to accomplish particular tasks. Bauml and Kyzar (2025) used a self-efficacy framework to investigate how an early childhood teacher education programme contributed to preservice teachers' confidence in teaching. In the present study, self-efficacy refers to preservice preschool teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach Tamil successfully during practicum. Proposed areas include confidence in explaining learning content, encouraging children's participation, managing learning activities, and responding when children experience difficulties.

Preservice Preschool Teachers

Preservice preschool teachers are individuals undertaking initial teacher education that prepares them to teach young children in preschool settings. Recent research by Bauml and Kyzar (2025) situated preservice teachers within a university-based early childhood educator preparation

programme. In the present study, preservice preschool teachers refer specifically to the 12 teacher education students undertaking a preschool practicum who have experience teaching Tamil in Tamil schools. They constitute the participants whose teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported teaching competence will be described. The term therefore identifies the study population and is not treated as a separately scored questionnaire construct.

Literature Review

Professional preparation for preschool language teaching involves several related but distinct dimensions: preparedness to undertake teaching responsibilities, understanding of pedagogy, beliefs about instructional capability, and the application of professional knowledge in practice. This review examines recent evidence concerning teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported teaching competence. Particular attention is given to the relevance and limitations of existing findings for preservice preschool teachers teaching Tamil during practicum.

Teaching Readiness and the Practicum Experience

Teaching readiness is increasingly examined as a developing aspect of professional preparation rather than an automatic outcome of completing teacher education coursework. Abraham and Sickel (2025) investigated preservice teachers' perceived preparation, readiness to engage in the profession, and teaching self-efficacy before and after a culminating field experience in an Australian initial teacher education programme. Their findings supported relationships among these constructs and identified changes in how particular dimensions of preparation contributed to readiness across the field experience. This indicates that readiness should be understood in relation to the practical demands encountered during professional preparation. Nevertheless, the study's focus on an Australian programme limits direct transfer of its findings to Malaysian preschool Tamil instruction. More recent evidence demonstrates that readiness and self-efficacy should not be treated as interchangeable. Susilowati et al. (2026), in a questionnaire study involving 123 economics education students, reported positive direct associations of pedagogical competence and microteaching quality with teaching readiness. However, self-efficacy did not have a significant direct effect within their model, while school field experience mediated the relationships examined. Although this population differs from preschool teachers, the findings challenge the assumption that confidence necessarily corresponds to preparedness. Because the evidence was obtained through questionnaire-based path analysis, the reported pathways should also be interpreted cautiously rather than treated as definitive causal mechanisms. Together, these studies support examining readiness as a distinct construct. For the present investigation, the relevant descriptive question concerns how prepared participants perceive themselves to be for the responsibilities of preschool Tamil instruction. Participation in practicum alone should not be taken as evidence that all participants have attained equivalent levels of readiness.

Pedagogical Knowledge in Preschool Language Education

Pedagogical knowledge becomes educationally meaningful when teachers can relate instructional approaches to children's developmental and learning needs. Veliz et al. (2025) explored the perceived knowledge and preparedness of nine early childhood educators working in culturally and linguistically diverse Australian settings. Participants' reported preparedness drew partly on experience, while their opportunities to provide responsive teaching were constrained by time, resources, and access to professional development. These findings indicate that pedagogical preparation cannot be understood solely as the possession of theoretical

knowledge; the conditions supporting its application also require attention. The qualitative design provides contextual insight, but the small sample does not establish how widespread these experiences are. Malaysian evidence further illustrates the demands of preschool language instruction. Syazreena et al. (2024) interviewed 12 experienced preschool teachers across seven states concerning difficulties in supporting Malay reading development. Reported challenges included differences in children's proficiency, limited attention, insufficient family support, and time constraints. Their findings suggest that language teaching requires the selection and adjustment of approaches to accommodate varied learning needs. However, the experiences of practising teachers teaching Malay cannot be assumed to represent those of pre-service teachers teaching Tamil. The study offers a relevant contextual comparison rather than direct evidence about the population investigated here. For the present study, this literature supports describing participants' reported pedagogical knowledge in areas such as instructional approaches, classroom management, differentiation, and assessment. General pedagogical knowledge should remain distinguishable from subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge. Where questionnaire items assess participants' understanding of how to teach particular Tamil language content, the instrument should explicitly acknowledge that subject-specific dimension.

Self-Efficacy in Early Childhood Teaching

Recent research positions self-efficacy as an important dimension of early childhood teacher preparation. Bauml and Kyzar (2025) used a self-efficacy framework to explore how a university-based early childhood educator preparation programme influenced preservice teachers' confidence in teaching. Their qualitative investigation directs attention to teachers' interpretations of their preparation and developing capability. For the present study, its relevance lies in recognising that participants' beliefs about their capacity to teach deserve examination alongside their reported knowledge and readiness. However, evidence about confidence does not independently establish the quality of classroom performance. Guo et al. (2025) provide complementary evidence concerning measurement. Their study developed and validated a 22-item Preschool Teachers' Sense of Teaching Efficacy Scale using a sample of 584 Chinese preschool teachers. The instrument covered teaching preparation, instructional strategies, evaluation, classroom management, and preschool-family cooperation, and demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties in that context. This supports a multidimensional understanding of preschool teaching efficacy. It also suggests that a general statement about feeling confident may overlook differences across teaching responsibilities. Nevertheless, validation in China does not establish validity for Malaysian preservice teachers or Tamil language instruction; any adaptation requires contextual review. Evidence published in 2026 further emphasises the task-specific nature of efficacy beliefs. Chung and Ho (2026) surveyed 438 Hong Kong preschool teachers concerning their self-efficacy for implementing musical play. Participants reported moderate efficacy, with lower efficacy concerning content knowledge than pedagogical content knowledge. Prior instrumental learning was associated with higher efficacy, whereas years of teaching did not significantly predict efficacy in this domain. Although the subject was music, the study cautions against assuming that general teaching experience guarantees confidence in every instructional area. By extension, Tamil teaching efficacy should be assessed through tasks relevant to Tamil instruction rather than inferred from general confidence as a preschool teacher.

Self-Reported Tamil Language Teaching Competence

Research on language-related competence in early childhood teacher education provides a useful comparison for the present study. Chien and Sun (2025) investigated growth mindset,

English pedagogical competence, and readiness for an integrated English curriculum among 283 Taiwanese preservice early childhood teachers. Using questionnaires and follow-up interviews, they identified the relevance of training and teaching experiences to readiness and recommended greater attention to practical classroom experience and tailored preparation. This study connects language-related competence with the specific demands of early childhood teacher education. However, differences in language, curriculum, and institutional context mean that its findings cannot establish the competence levels of Malaysian preservice teachers teaching Tamil. An important issue for the present research is the distinction between perceived competence and demonstrated performance. A questionnaire asking participants to evaluate their instructional capabilities produces evidence about their self-assessments. It does not directly establish whether their lessons meet externally assessed standards or improve children's learning. Accordingly, the present study uses the term "self-reported teaching competence" to identify the nature of its evidence. This distinction also has implications for questionnaire construction. Readiness items should concern preparedness to undertake teaching responsibilities; knowledge items should concern reported understanding; efficacy items should concern beliefs about capability; and competence items should concern participants' appraisal of their application of skills in practicum. These distinctions are proposed for the current instrument and require expert scrutiny to minimise unnecessary conceptual overlap.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature offers complementary perspectives rather than a single, uniform account of professional preparation. Studies of field experience highlight the development of readiness, research on pedagogical knowledge identifies the importance of context and opportunities for application, and efficacy studies demonstrate variation across instructional responsibilities. Language-focused research further indicates the value of examining professional preparation within a particular teaching domain. Collectively, these findings justify considering the four constructs together while preserving their conceptual differences. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed here do not directly provide a descriptive profile of all four constructs among pre-service preschool teachers teaching Tamil in the Malaysian practicum context. The gap addressed by the present investigation is therefore specific to its population, language, and professional setting. It is not a claim that research on preschool teacher preparation or Tamil education is absent. The present study responds by describing the levels of teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among 12 preservice preschool teachers. Its contribution is a preliminary account of participants' perceived preparation and instructional capability that may inform practicum guidance and subsequent investigation. Consistent with its descriptive design, the study will not test causal pathways or identify predictors of competence. Its findings should be interpreted within the participating group, with broader conclusions requiring larger and more varied samples and additional evidence from classroom observations or teaching assessments.

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology proposed for investigating teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among preservice preschool teachers. It addresses the research design, setting, sampling, instrument, validity, reliability, data collection, ethics, and analysis. Webster et al. (2025) emphasise methodological rigour across survey design, validation, administration, analysis, and

reporting. Although their guidelines were developed for radiation oncology research, these general survey principles provide useful methodological guidance for the present educational investigation. The proposed procedures are aligned with the study's three descriptive objectives. They will generate a profile of the participating teachers' perceptions without attempting to establish causal relationships or predictive effects.

Research Approach and Design

The study will employ a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Participants will complete a structured questionnaire once during a specified practicum period. Figueiredo et al. (2025) explain that cross-sectional designs describe characteristics at a particular point in time and are suitable for descriptive and exploratory investigations, while limiting conclusions about causality. This design is appropriate because the present study seeks to describe the levels of four constructs within a defined participant group. It will not introduce an intervention, follow participants across multiple measurement occasions, or compare experimental and control conditions. Teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge will be analysed separately, despite being grouped within the first research objective. Self-efficacy and self-reported teaching competence will also retain separate scores. This approach will preserve the distinction between preparedness, understanding, capability beliefs, and perceived application of teaching skills. As the data will be self-reported, the findings will describe participants' perceptions rather than independently verified knowledge or classroom performance.

Research Setting

The study will be conducted within the preschool teacher education programme at Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Sultan Abdul Halim involving students undertaking practicum in Kedah. The relevant placements will provide participants with experience teaching Tamil in preschool settings associated with Tamil schools. Stratton (2024) highlights the importance of reporting participant characteristics, recruitment procedures, and the period of selection so that readers can understand the scope of a study. These support providing a clear description of the institutional and practicum context in the present investigation. Data collection will occur during the 2nd practicum phase after participants have acquired experience conducting Tamil lessons in the 1st practicum phase. The report will describe the duration of practicum and relevant teaching exposure because participants may have different opportunities to plan lessons, manage activities, and assess children's learning. The setting will be described sufficiently to support interpretation while avoiding unnecessary disclosure of information that could identify individual participants.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population comprises pre-service preschool teachers with experience teaching Tamil during practicum. The accessible population will consist of eligible students from Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Sultan Abdul Halim from the PISMP batch during the study period. The planned participant group comprises 12 students. Eligibility will require participants to be enrolled in preschool teacher education, undertaking the relevant practicum, and experienced in conducting Tamil language instruction. Participation will also require informed consent. Stratton (2024) explains that purposive selection should be based on clearly specified characteristics relevant to the research question and cautions against treating non-randomly selected participants as representative of a wider population. Accordingly, the actual recruitment process will be documented rather than labelled solely based on sample size. If the 12 students constitute the entire eligible accessible group, all will be invited through an

attempted census. If the 12 are selected from a larger group, criterion-based purposive sampling is proposed, with the selection criteria and procedure explicitly reported. The final report will distinguish the number eligible, invited, consenting, responding, and included in analysis. The sample will support a small-scale descriptive account; it will not establish national patterns among Malaysian pre-service preschool teachers.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire will collect participant information and responses concerning the four constructs. Ferrando et al. (2025) recommend clear construct specification, careful item formulation, and response formats that match the meaning of the questions. These principles will guide the proposed questionnaire structure.

Section	Construct information	Proposed content
A	Participant background	Programme, practicum duration, and Tamil teaching experience
B	Teaching readiness	Preparedness for lesson planning, material preparation, and classroom responsibilities
C	Pedagogical knowledge	Reported understanding of instructional approaches, learning needs, classroom management, and assessment
D	Self-efficacy	Confidence in undertaking specific Tamil teaching tasks
E	Self-reported teaching competence	Appraisal of applying teaching skills during practicum

Validity of the Instrument

Instrument validity will be addressed through content review and examination of how prospective respondents understand the questions. Stefana et al. (2025) identify construct definition, expert feedback, and target-population evaluation as important parts of scale development. Their guidance supports reviewing both the relevance of questionnaire content and its comprehensibility to the intended respondents. A panel with expertise in preschool education, Tamil language pedagogy, and educational measurement will review the draft instrument. The panel size and selection criteria will be reported. Reviewers will assess item relevance, clarity, construct coverage, and contextual suitability. Particular attention will be given to overlap between readiness, self-efficacy, and competence. Items should distinguish preparation to teach, beliefs about capability, and appraisal of skills applied during practicum. A revision record will document expert comments and decisions to retain, revise, or remove items. Response-process checking will also be undertaken with individuals similar to the intended participants. The National Centre for Health Statistics (2024) identifies understanding how respondents interpret and answer questions as a central purpose of questionnaire evaluation. Participants in preliminary testing will therefore be asked to explain selected items in their own words and identify unclear expressions or response options. These procedures will provide initial validity evidence. They will not establish the instrument's factor structure, and the 12-person main sample will not be used to claim comprehensive psychometric validation.

Pilot Study and Reliability

A pilot study will be conducted before the main survey with 15 comparable preservice preschool teachers, preferably from a separate cohort. Pilot participants will not be included in the main dataset. The pilot will examine item clarity, instructions, completion time, missing

responses, and the suitability of the response categories. Participants will identify questions that are difficult to interpret or cannot be answered from their teaching experience. Necessary revisions will be completed before the main administration. Stefana et al. (2025) distinguish reliability evaluation from broader validity assessment within instrument development. Consistent with this distinction, the present study will evaluate internal consistency without treating it as proof that the questionnaire measures the intended constructs accurately. Cronbach's alpha will be estimated separately for each multi-item construct where the available pilot data permit meaningful calculation. Item content and response patterns will be considered alongside the coefficients. Items will not be removed solely to increase alpha if removal reduces coverage of an important aspect of the construct. Any reliability coefficient based on a small pilot or the 12-person main sample will be interpreted cautiously. The actual sample size and coefficient will be reported, and limitations arising from unstable or non-estimable values will be acknowledged.

Data Collection Procedure

Webster et al. (2025) identify survey dissemination, data completeness, and transparent reporting as important aspects of survey quality. These considerations will inform the administration and documentation of the present study. The researcher will first obtain the necessary institutional permissions and ethical clearance. The eligible participant group will then be verified, and the instrument will be finalised following expert review and pilot testing. Participants will receive an information sheet explaining the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality arrangements. After consent, the questionnaire will be administered on paper within the specified collection period. Standardised instructions will ask participants to respond independently with reference to their own practicum experiences. A neutral reminder may be issued where appropriate. The questionnaire will not be presented as part of practicum assessment. Returned questionnaires will be checked for duplicate submissions, invalid entries, and missing data. Participation and completion figures will be recorded. Original responses will be preserved, and any data-processing decisions will be documented.

Data Analysis

Data will be analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. A codebook will specify item labels, response values, missing-data codes, and scoring procedures. The dataset will be screened before analysis, with all corrections and exclusions documented. Ferrando et al. (2025) distinguish individual Likert-type items from multi-item scale scores and emphasise that scoring and interpretation require a clear measurement rationale. Accordingly, item responses and construct scores will be reported distinctly. Participant characteristics and individual item responses will be summarised using frequencies and percentages. Where the final instrument supports multi-item scoring, each construct will be described using its mean, standard deviation, and observed range. Medians and interquartile ranges may supplement these summaries where distributions are markedly skewed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey involving a planned group of 12 pre-service preschool teachers. It has specified procedures for recruitment, questionnaire preparation, initial validity review, pilot testing, reliability assessment, ethical administration, and descriptive analysis. The methodological approach emphasises transparent reporting, consistent with Webster et al. (2025). The final report will document the procedures actually completed, any departures from the proposal, and the resulting limitations. The findings will provide a context-specific account of teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge,

self-efficacy, and self-reported teaching competence. Conclusions will remain aligned with the descriptive objectives and the limits of a small, self-report dataset.

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents an illustrative descriptive analysis of teaching readiness, pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among 12 pre-service preschool teachers. The presentation follows the three research questions established for the study. The analysis uses frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and observed score ranges. Teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge are analysed separately under the first research question. Self-efficacy and self-reported teaching competence are presented under the second and third research questions, respectively.

Table 1: Simulated participant-level construct scores

Participant	Teaching readiness	Pedagogical knowledge	Self-efficacy	Self-reported teaching competence
P01	3.60	3.40	3.20	3.40
P02	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.80
P03	3.40	3.20	3.00	3.20
P04	4.20	4.00	4.00	4.00
P05	3.80	3.60	3.40	3.60
P06	3.20	3.00	2.80	3.00
P07	4.00	3.80	3.60	4.00
P08	3.60	3.40	3.20	3.40
P09	4.40	4.20	4.20	4.40
P10	3.40	3.20	3.00	3.20
P11	3.80	3.60	3.40	3.80
P12	4.20	4.00	3.80	4.00

Response Scale and Interpretation Criteria

The proposed response format uses five ordered categories. The numerical scores are consistent across the questionnaire, while the verbal labels reflect the meaning of each construct.

Table 2: Proposed five-point response criteria

Score	Teaching readiness	Pedagogical knowledge	Self-efficacy	Self-reported teaching competence
1	Not at all prepared	Very limited understanding	Not at all confident	Very limited ability
2	Slightly prepared	Limited understanding	Slightly confident	Limited ability
3	Moderately prepared	Moderate understanding	Moderately confident	Moderate ability
4	Well prepared	Extensive understanding	Very confident	Strong ability
5	Very well prepared	Very extensive understanding	Extremely confident	Very strong ability

Findings for Research Question 1

What are the levels of teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?

The descriptive results for teaching readiness are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Simulated descriptive statistics for teaching readiness

Construct	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Teaching readiness	12	3.80	0.37	3.20	4.40	High

The simulated teaching-readiness mean was 3.80, with a standard deviation of 0.37. Under the illustrative criteria, this represents a high overall level of reported readiness. Participant scores ranged from 3.20 to 4.40, indicating variation within the group.

Table 4: Simulated distribution of teaching-readiness levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	5	41.7
High	7	58.3
Total	12	100.0

Seven participants, representing 58.3% of the simulated group, were classified at the high level, while five participants, or 41.7%, were classified at the moderate level. None fell within the low category. The group mean therefore does not imply uniformly high readiness. The distribution shows that a substantial proportion reported moderate preparedness.

Pedagogical Knowledge

The results for pedagogical knowledge are presented separately in Table 5.

Table 5: Simulated descriptive statistics for pedagogical knowledge

Construct	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Pedagogical knowledge	12	3.60	0.37	3.00	4.20	Moderate

The simulated pedagogical-knowledge mean was 3.60, with a standard deviation of 0.37. This falls within the moderate category. Scores ranged from 3.00 to 4.20.

Table 6: Simulated distribution of pedagogical-knowledge levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	7	58.3
High	5	41.7
Total	12	100.0

Seven participants, or 58.3%, were classified at the moderate level, while five participants, or 41.7%, were classified at the high level. No participant was classified at the low level. In answer to Research Question 1, the simulated group reported high teaching readiness and moderate

pedagogical knowledge. The readiness mean exceeded the knowledge mean by 0.20 points. This is a descriptive difference only; it does not establish a statistically significant or educationally meaningful difference between the constructs.

Findings for Research Question 2

What is the level of self-efficacy among preservice preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?

Table 7 presents the simulated results for self-efficacy.

Table 7: Simulated descriptive statistics for self-efficacy

Construct	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Self-efficacy	12	3.43	0.43	2.80	4.20	Moderate

The simulated self-efficacy mean was 3.43, with a standard deviation of 0.43, corresponding to the moderate category. Individual scores ranged from 2.80 to 4.20.

Table 8: Simulated distribution of self-efficacy levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	9	75.0
High	3	25.0
Total	12	100.0

Nine participants, representing 75.0% of the group, were classified at the moderate level. Three participants, or 25.0%, were classified at the high level. None were classified at the low level. These simulated findings answer Research Question 2 by indicating moderate overall self-efficacy. They describe participants' hypothetical confidence in undertaking Tamil teaching responsibilities. They do not establish whether participants performed those responsibilities successfully in practice.

Findings for Research Question 3

What is the level of self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among pre-service preschool teachers?

The simulated results for self-reported teaching competence are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Simulated descriptive statistics for self-reported Tamil language teaching competence

Construct	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation
Self-reported teaching competence	12	3.65	0.42	3.00	4.40	Moderate

The simulated mean was 3.65, with a standard deviation of 0.42. Under the specified criteria, the overall score falls within the moderate category. However, the mean is close to the upper category boundary and should be interpreted alongside the distribution.

Table 10: Simulated distribution of self-reported teaching-competence levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	6	50.0
High	6	50.0
Total	12	100.0

The participants were evenly distributed between the moderate and high categories, with six participants in each. None were classified at the low level. The moderate classification of the group mean is compatible with this equal distribution because the mean depends on the numerical scores within each category, not simply on the number of participants assigned to it. In answer to Research Question 3, the simulated group demonstrated a moderate overall level of self-reported Tamil language teaching competence, with scores approaching the high-category threshold. This finding represents perceived ability and does not constitute evidence from classroom observation or external assessment.

Summary of Findings Across Research Questions

Table 11 brings together the descriptive findings while retaining separate scores for all four constructs.

Table 11: Summary of simulated findings aligned with the research questions

Research question	Construct	Mean	SD	Low, n (%)	Moderate, n (%)	High, n (%)	Overall interpretation
RQ1	Teaching readiness	3.80	0.37	0 (0.0)	5 (41.7)	7 (58.3)	High
RQ1	Pedagogical knowledge	3.60	0.37	0 (0.0)	7 (58.3)	5 (41.7)	Moderate
RQ2	Self-efficacy	3.43	0.43	0 (0.0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	Moderate
RQ3	Self-reported teaching competence	3.65	0.42	0 (0.0)	6 (50.0)	6 (50.0)	Moderate

Teaching readiness produced the highest numerical mean, while self-efficacy produced the lowest. Pedagogical knowledge and self-reported competence occupied intermediate positions. These comparisons provide a descriptive overview only. The constructs have different meanings and response anchors, so their numerical ordering should not be interpreted as a validated ranking of professional strengths and weaknesses. No low-level classifications occurred in the simulated dataset. This feature should not be assumed to occur in the actual study, and no explanation for these patterns can be established from the descriptive figures alone.

Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrates how the study's findings may be presented using a simulated dataset of 12 participants. Under the stated illustrative criteria, teaching readiness was classified as high, whereas pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-reported Tamil language teaching competence were classified as moderate. The presentation used frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and ranges to answer the three descriptive research questions. The

next chapter would discuss actual findings in relation to the literature, consider implications for teacher preparation and practicum support, and address the study's limitations.

Discussion of Research Question 1

What are the levels of teaching readiness and pedagogical knowledge among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?

The simulated results indicate a high level of teaching readiness ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.37$) and a moderate level of pedagogical knowledge ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.37$). Seven of the twelve simulated respondents fall within the high-readiness category, whereas five fall within the high-pedagogical-knowledge category. These classifications illustrate how perceived preparation and perceived pedagogical understanding can present different descriptive patterns within the same group. If this pattern were observed in actual data, one possible interpretation would be that preservice teachers feel prepared to undertake teaching responsibilities while remaining less certain about aspects of pedagogical decision-making. Feeling prepared to organise a lesson does not necessarily establish that a teacher can explain why a particular activity meets children's language-learning needs. However, the present descriptive analysis cannot demonstrate a statistically meaningful difference between readiness and pedagogical knowledge. Recent research offers a relevant perspective on the connection between teacher preparation and classroom practice. Sato and Ma (2025), in their study of initial teacher education in New Zealand, found that confidence in using learner-centred practices was positively associated with personal teaching efficacy. Their discussion emphasised opportunities to understand, observe and practise learner-centred teaching. Although their study examined efficacy rather than Tamil-specific readiness, it supports considering how preparation programmes connect pedagogical understanding with opportunities for practical application. Applied to preschool Tamil instruction, this perspective suggests examining whether trainees can connect lesson activities with explicit language-learning purposes. Nevertheless, the moderate pedagogical-knowledge classification should not be interpreted as evidence that respondents lack essential knowledge. The questionnaire measures perceived knowledge, and the composite score does not identify particular strengths or weaknesses. Item-level results, lesson-plan analysis or practical assessment would be needed before recommending support for specific pedagogical skills.

Discussion of Research Question 2

What is the level of self-efficacy among pre-service preschool teachers in teaching Tamil?

The simulated results indicate a moderate level of self-efficacy ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.43$). Nine simulated respondents fall within the moderate category and three within the high category. Within this illustrative dataset, confidence in carrying out Tamil teaching tasks is therefore concentrated in the moderate range. If replicated in actual responses, this result would suggest that confidence is present but may not be consistently strong across the teaching situations represented in the questionnaire. It would not establish that trainees perform poorly. Equally, the result would not identify whether uncertainty concerns classroom management, language instruction or responding to individual children unless the relevant item-level findings supported those interpretations. Tan's (2026) mixed-methods study provides a recent comparison from preschool education in Singapore. Drawing on surveys of 253 teachers and interviews with nine teachers, the study found that experience educating children with disabilities predicted higher self-efficacy for differentiated instruction, whereas years of

teaching experience and prior differentiated-instruction training did not. Higher self-efficacy was also associated with more frequent reported use of differentiated instruction. These findings suggest that the nature of teaching experience deserves attention alongside its duration. For the present research, this provides a rationale for examining the quality of practicum learning opportunities. A possible response to moderate confidence would be to provide supervised opportunities to teach a short Tamil activity, receive specific feedback and repeat the activity with appropriate adjustments. For example, trainees could practise adapting an oral-language activity for children with different levels of familiarity with Tamil. This is a proposed application of the literature, rather than an intervention evaluated by the present study.

The comparison with Tan (2026) also requires contextual caution. That study concerned differentiated instruction and practising preschool teachers in Singapore, whereas the present research concerns preservice teachers' perceptions of Tamil teaching. Its findings help frame possible explanations and professional-development options but cannot explain the simulated scores or establish that the same relationships exist in this sample.

Discussion of Research Question 3

What is the level of self-reported Tamil language teaching competence among preservice preschool teachers?

The simulated results indicate a moderate level of self-reported teaching competence ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.42$). Six simulated respondents fall within the moderate category and six within the high category. This distribution illustrates why the group mean should be considered alongside individual classifications: the overall category does not describe every respondent. The mean of 3.65 also lies close to the high-category boundary of approximately 3.67. Consequently, the moderate classification should not be treated as evidence of a substantial professional shortcoming. It reflects the selected scoring convention, and a small numerical change could alter the category without representing a meaningful change in teaching capability. A relevant recent study is Mizyed and Eccles's (2025) investigation of professional development for in-service early-years teachers in the United Arab Emirates. Their mixed-methods study examined a model incorporating collegial peer coaching and reflection to support the application of pedagogy informed by the learning sciences. The authors highlighted the importance of coherence in professional development and the need to understand how coaching and reflection support teachers' acceptance and application of knowledge. This research provides a basis for considering structured reflection in Tamil teaching practicum. Most importantly, self-reported competence must remain distinct from demonstrated competence. Questionnaire responses describe how capable trainees perceive themselves to be; they do not directly establish the quality of their explanations, interactions, assessment practices or children's learning. Classroom observations, assessed lesson plans and mentor evaluations would provide complementary evidence. Accordingly, the defensible interpretation of this illustrative result concerns perceived competence only.

Reference

- Abraham, J., & Sickel, A. J. (2025). Testing the associations among pre-service teachers' sense of preparation, readiness to engage in the profession, and self-efficacy for teaching: Validation of a causal framework. *Education Sciences*, 15(9), Article 1215. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15091215>
- Arumugam, S., & Mohamed, S. (2025). The relationship between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and pedagogical content knowledge in Malay language. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 15(3), 1344–1355. <https://doi.org/10.46886/IJARBSS/v15-i3/16627>
- Bauml, M., & Kyzar, K. (2025). "I can do this!" How early childhood teacher education influences preservice teachers' confidence for teaching. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 46(2), 345–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2024.2439869>
- British Educational Research Association. (2024). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (5th ed.). <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024>
- Chien, C.-W., & Sun, L.-C. (2025). A study of Taiwanese early childhood pre-service teachers' (PSTs) growth mindset, English pedagogical competence, and readiness for integrated English curriculum. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2449143>
- Chung, F., & Ho, Y. L. (2026). Self-efficacy of preschool teachers in content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge for implementing musical play. *International Journal of Music Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614251412644>
- Ferrando, P. J., Morales-Vives, F., Casas, J. M., & Muñoz, J. (2025). Likert scales: A practical guide to design, construction and use. *Psicothema*, 37(4), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.70478/psicothema.2025.37.24>
- Figueiredo, R. G., Patino, C. M., & Ferreira, J. C. (2025). Cross-sectional studies: Understanding applications, methodological issues, and valuable insights. *Jornal Brasileiro de Pneumologia*, 51(1), Article e20250047. <https://doi.org/10.36416/1806-3756/e20250047>
- Guo, Y., Wang, C., Xu, J., Gao, R., & Yang, Y. (2025). Preschool teachers' sense of teaching efficacy: Scale development and validation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2025.2452604>
- Mizyed, H., & Eccles, C. U. (2025). Improving early year teachers content knowledge and self-efficacy through peer-coaching and reflection: A professional development model. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 46(4), 684–712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2025.2518289>
- National Center for Health Statistics. (2024, April 1). *Methodological research*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ccqder/question-evaluation/methodological-research.html>
- Sato, M., & Ma, T. (2025). Preservice teachers' efficacy: Insights from New Zealand initial teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2025.2473083>
- Siipi, H., & Uusitalo, S. (2024). Ethical challenge of student-participants using a research survey for giving course feedback. *Discover Education*, 3, Article 216. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00254-z>
- Stefana, A., Damiani, S., Granziol, U., Provenzani, U., Solmi, M., Youngstrom, E. A., & Fusar-Poli, P. (2025). Psychological, psychiatric, and behavioral sciences measurement scales:

- Best practice guidelines for their development and validation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, Article 1494261. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1494261>
- Stratton, S. J. (2024). Purposeful sampling: Advantages and pitfalls. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 39(2), 121–122. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X24000281>
- Susilowati, N., Utami, N., Pujiati, A., Prasetyo, P. E., & Santoso, A. (2026). Pre-service teacher teaching readiness: The mediating role of field experience. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 13, Article 102615. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.102615>
- Syazreena, M. B., Suziyani, M., & Syawal, A. M. (2024). Exploring preschool teachers' obstacles in helping children teaching Malay reading skills. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(10), 207–225. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.10.10>
- Tan, J. H. L. (2026). Understanding preschool teachers' self-efficacy in differentiated instruction for inclusive pedagogy: Insights from Singapore. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 26(1), Article e70061. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.70061>
- Veliz, L., Zhang, Z., & Ba Akhlagh, S. (2025). Early childhood educators' pedagogical knowledge for effective practice in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 53, 2909–2919. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-025-01912-z>
- Webster, A., Fog, L. S., Hall, E., van Rossum, P. S. N., Nevens, D., Montay-Gruel, P., Franco, P., Joyce, E., Jornet, N., Clark, C. H., & Bertholet, J. (2025). ESTRO guidelines for developing questionnaires in survey-based radiation oncology research. *Clinical and Translational Radiation Oncology*, 51, Article 100895. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctro.2024.100895>