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Assessing School Readiness in Early Childhood: A Multidimensional Framework for Elementary School Age-Exemption Decisions

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Abstract

The exception of the age limit for elementary school entry requires a basis for decisions that are able to distinguish chronological age from child developmental readiness, while regulations have not operationalized in detail the psychological readiness construct, assessment standards, and professional authority. This study aims to analyze the constructs of psychological readiness, relevant assessment approaches, and the implications of psychologists' authority in recommending age exemptions. The research uses a qualitative literature review with a conceptual-juridical approach. The data is sourced from scientific articles, regulations, professional organization documents, and academic books that are thematically analyzed through three themes: psychological readiness constructs, assessment capacity and limitations, and psychologist authority. The results of the synthesis show that psychic readiness is a multidimensional profile that includes cognitive-language, social-emotional, self-regulation and executive function, motor, independence, and approaches to learning. Assessments need to be multi-methodical, multi-informant, and contextual, with psychologists integrating and interpreting evidence professionally. The research produces a conceptual framework that places decision validity on construct suitability, assessment quality, professional competence, evidence integration, and procedural accountability. Practically, operational guidelines regarding psychological readiness, clarity on the division of roles between psychologists and educators, as well as referral mechanisms and transitional support are needed so that age exclusion does not stop at administrative decisions, but remains oriented to the best interests and readiness of child development.

[*Pengecualian batas usia masuk sekolah dasar (SD) memerlukan dasar keputusan yang mampu membedakan usia kronologis dari kesiapan perkembangan anak, sementara regulasi belum mengoperasionalkan secara rinci konstruk kesiapan psikis, standar asesmen, dan kewenangan profesional. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konstruk kesiapan psikis, pendekatan asesmen yang relevan, serta implikasi kewenangan psikolog dalam rekomendasi pengecualian usia. Penelitian menggunakan kajian literatur kualitatif dengan pendekatan konseptual-yuridis. Data bersumber dari artikel ilmiah, regulasi, dokumen organisasi profesi, dan buku*

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akademik yang dianalisis secara tematik melalui tiga tema: konstruk kesiapan psikis, kapasitas dan keterbatasan asesmen, serta kewenangan psikolog. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan bahwa kesiapan psikis merupakan profil multidimensional yang mencakup kognitif-bahasa, sosial-emosional, regulasi diri dan fungsi eksekutif, motorik, kemandirian, serta pendekatan terhadap pembelajaran. Asesmen perlu bersifat multi-metode, multi-informan, dan kontekstual, dengan psikolog mengintegrasikan serta menafsirkan bukti secara profesional. Penelitian menghasilkan kerangka konseptual yang menempatkan validitas keputusan pada kesesuaian konstruk, kualitas asesmen, kompetensi profesional, integrasi bukti, dan akuntabilitas prosedural. Secara praktis, diperlukan pedoman operasional mengenai kesiapan psikis, kejelasan pembagian peran antara psikolog dan pendidik, serta mekanisme rujukan dan dukungan transisi agar pengecualian usia tidak berhenti pada keputusan administratif, tetapi tetap berorientasi pada kepentingan terbaik dan kesiapan perkembangan anak.]
Keywords: Psychological Readiness; Age Exclusion; Multidimensional Assessment; Early Child Professional Psychologist

Introduction

The reform of the New Student Admission System through the Regulation of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Number 3 of 2025 opens the exemption for the age limit for entering grade 1 of elementary schools to a minimum of 5 years and 6 months for prospective students who have special intelligence and/or talents as well as psychological readiness. The provision requires a written recommendation from a professional psychologist as proof of fulfillment of the requirements. If a professional psychologist is not available, recommendations can be made by the teacher council in the relevant educational unit (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). This policy is not fully adequate as a basis for school entry decisions because children at the same age can have different levels of cognitive, social-emotional, self-regulation, and adaptability. Thus, the policy issue lies not only in whether children can enter elementary school early, but also in how psychological readiness is defined, assessed, and used as a basis for valid recommendations and who has the authority to determine it.

Conceptually, School Readiness It is a multidimensional construct that includes physical and motor health, language, cognitive, approach to learning, and social-emotional. In Indonesia, religious and moral values are also relevant as part of child development (Pangestuti et al., 2019; Ramadhini & Nasution, 2022). Self-regulation and parental involvement contribute to school readiness (Vatamaniuk et al., 2024; Pangestuti et al., 2026), while holistic assessments that include academic, linguistic, social-emotional, and motor domains can help predict academic achievement while identifying children's readiness needs (Atkinson et al., 2021). Psychic readiness is positioned as the psychological aspect of School Readiness related to cognitive maturity, social-emotional, self-regulation, approach to learning, and adaptability to school demands. Therefore, the decision to exclude age should be based on a comprehensive developmental profile, not solely academic or intellectual ability.

In assessment practice, Nijmegen School Aptitude Test (NST) is one of the instruments used to assess school readiness in Indonesia, including cognitive, concentration, language, motor, and emotional regulation (Fajariyah, 2022; Izzah et al., 2025). However, the limitations of time, cost, differences and uniqueness of children's characteristics as well as cross-cultural validity issues indicate that one instrument is inadequate as the sole basis for recommendations (Widianti et al., 2023). Instruments such as Prescreening Developmental Questionnaire (PDQ) and the Maternal and Child Health Book (CHB) can also be used for more affordable pre-screening. While Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) can complement the identification of emotional and behavioral aspects (Hapni Madini et al., 2025; Widianti et al., 2023). Therefore, assessments for age exclusion decisions need to use a multidimensional and multi-informant approach, consider the child's

developmental context and characteristics, and distinguish the screening function from professional psychological assessments.

Thus, there is a gap between the normative demands of regulation and the readiness of its implementation. Permendikdasmen Number 3 of 2025 requires "psychological readiness", but does not specify dimensions, indicators, procedures, or assessment standards that can be used uniformly. These conditions have the potential to cause variations in the interpretation of constructs, the selection of instruments, and the basis for making recommendations. The problem is even more complex if a professional psychologist is not available, recommendations can be made by the teacher council. The government's official Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) emphasized that the regulation does not regulate the criteria for teacher councils or the mechanism to prove the absence of psychologists and provides regulatory space to local governments. This provision is an administrative solution and alternative to limited access, but at the same time raises problems regarding competency standards in psychological assessment and interpretation of the results. As a result, there is a risk of variation in the quality of decisions, objectivity, and fairness in the application of the age exemption.

Based on these gaps, previous studies on school readiness and the validity of instruments have not fully integrated the conceptual, methodological, and governance dimensions of authority in the context of exempting the age limit for elementary school admission. Therefore, a conceptual synthesis is needed regarding the dimensions and principles of psychological readiness assessment as well as the limits of the authority of professional psychologists in providing recommendations for exemptions for elementary school entry age. Through this review, the study is directed to identify relevant dimensions and assessment approaches to assess children's psychological readiness, as well as analyze the implications of limited access to psychologists and the delegation of recommendations to the teacher council on the validity, objectivity, and fairness of the decision to admit students below the regular age limit.

Method

This study uses a qualitative literature review with a conceptual-juridical approach to analyze children's psychological readiness in the exception of the age limit for elementary school admission, the characteristics and limitations of school readiness assessments, and the authority of psychologists in providing professional recommendations. The literature is positioned as the main data that is analyzed interpretively to produce a conceptual synthesis through the integration of developmental psychology perspectives, psychometrics, educational regulation, and professional ethics (Bandara dkk., 2015).

Secondary data were obtained from national and international scientific articles, government regulations, documents of psychology professional organizations, and relevant academic books. Sources were selected based on their relevance to school readiness, PAUD-SD transition, age exclusion, psychological assessment, and the professional authority of psychologists. The unit of analysis includes the construct of psychological readiness, empirical findings, characteristics and limitations of assessment instruments, normative provisions, and the principle of professional authority. The literature search was carried out iteratively through an academic database using a combination of the keywords "school readiness," "school readiness," "elementary school entry age exemption," "psychological assessment," and "psychologist authority".

Data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis through in-depth reading, categorization, and synthesis of findings patterns (Christou dkk., 2025; Najmah dkk., 2023; Peters dkk., 2021). The analysis was directed at three main themes: (1) the construction of children's psychic readiness; (2) capacity and limitations of school readiness assessment; and (3) the authority of psychologists in the assessment and recommendation of age exemptions. The validity of the synthesis was strengthened through triangulation of documents by comparing evidence of developmental psychology,

psychometrics, educational regulation, and professional ethics so that the conclusions represent a convergence across perspectives.

Result and Discussion

The exception of the age limit for elementary school entry is not just an administrative issue, but a decision that brings together child development, assessment validity, professional competence, and educational governance. Permendikdasmen Number 3 of 2025 sets the age of 7 years as a priority and a minimum of 6 years for grade 1 of elementary school, with exceptions of up to 5 years and 6 months for children who meet special requirements, including intelligence and/or special talents as well as psychological readiness. The regulation requires a written recommendation from a professional psychologist, with an alternative recommendation from the teacher council if a psychologist is not available. Age serves as a normative boundary, while psychological readiness becomes the substantive basis for determining the eligibility of exceptions.

Psychological readiness cannot be determined solely on the basis of age or initial academic ability. School readiness is multidimensional which includes cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, self-regulation, executive function, and approach to learning (Ghandour dkk., 2021; Rodriguez-Rabassa dkk., 2025). Specifically, psychic readiness is reflected in the ability to manage emotions, adapt, follow rules, interact, and engage in learning (Atkinson dkk., 2021; Denham, 2006). Low/weak readiness can increase the risk of academic difficulties and social adjustment at the next level (Garon-Carrier dkk., 2024).

Therefore, readiness assessments need to be carried out holistically and multidomainally to identify the capacity as well as the needs of child support (Rodriguez-Rabassa dkk., 2025). However, the results of the assessment should not be treated mechanically because the validity of the instrument, the source of information, and the cultural context may affect its interpretation (Russo dkk., 2019). Triangulation of information from psychologists, teachers, and parents is important to get a more complete picture.

Within this framework, psychologists act as professional assessors who integrate assessment results with developmental information and educational context to produce appropriate recommendations based on empirical and factual data. Recommendations must be within the limits of professional competence and oriented to the interests of child development. Thus, the age exclusion is more accountable because it is based on multidimensional psychic readiness, data triangulation, critical interpretation of assessment limitations, and professional recommendations of psychologists (Macy dkk., 2022; Rodriguez-Rabassa dkk., 2025).

Children's Psychic Readiness as a Multidimensional Construct

Psychic readiness is not properly understood as a single state that can be represented by chronological age, Intelligence Quotient (IQ), or early academic ability. Psychological readiness in the context of age exclusion as a child's multidimensional capacity to face the demands of formal learning and adaptation to the elementary environment, which includes cognitive and language maturity, self-regulation and executive function, social-emotional competence, motor skills, independence, approach to learning, and the ability to follow the rules and demands of the school environment. The formulation is in line with the conception of school readiness as a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical/motor domains.

Psychic readiness cannot be reduced to the question of whether the child is "smart" or "able to read". Children with high intellectual abilities may not have sufficient self-regulation, frustration tolerance, sustained attention, interaction skills, or independence to cope with formal learning rhythms. In contrast, children with early academic abilities that have not yet stood out can have good social-emotional competence and self-regulation. School readiness profiles almost always include

cognitive and social-emotional dimensions simultaneously, and the combination of these two domains is associated with the risk of academic achievement and social adjustment in the next school term. Executive functions are also related to the academic and social-emotional aspects of school readiness, so the ability to control attention, behavior, and response to the demands of the situation is an important component.

Children's readiness includes cognitive and language skills, social-emotional, executive function, and motor functions; Parental involvement and the learning environment contribute to the development of self-regulation and children's readiness (Atkinson dkk., 2021; Hidayati dkk., 2023; Pangestuti dkk., 2026; Ramadhini & Nasution, 2022). This research takes a critical position on an approach that places readiness as an individual characteristic of children alone. Because, School Readiness It is also the result of the interaction between the child's capacity and the environment in which he or she will enter; Family support, the quality of educator-child interaction, and socio-economic conditions can affect the transition to school experience.

In Indonesia, the dimensions of religious and moral values found in local literature can be considered as part of the child's developmental context, but should not replace the core psychological domain or be a single indicator of readiness. This position is important so that the concept of "psychic readiness" remains a basis for development that can be accounted for, as well as sensitive to the socio-cultural context of Indonesia. As a result, this study does not simply expand the indicators of readiness, but rather places psychological readiness as a multidimensional construct that must be explicitly translated when used to produce decisions that have administrative and educational consequences.

Capacity and Limitations of School Readiness Assessment

Assessment has an important function as the basis for objectification of decisions, but it is not the only instrument that can measure the entire construct of psychic readiness in a final way. The literature reviewed shows the use of various instruments, including Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST), Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) IQ, Preschool Developmental Questionnaire (PDQ), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Tromsø Intervention Study on Preterms (TISP), International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2), Early Development Instrument (EDI), and School Readiness Index (SRI). Each has a different focus, ranging from intellectual ability, development, language, motor, executive function, to social-emotional. Therefore, the equivalence between the score of one measuring tool and the decision "ready to enter elementary school" contains the risk of construct underrepresentation, that is, part of the readiness construct is not represented in the decision.

NST, for example, has a relatively wide scope and is widely used in the Indonesian context, but the literature reviewed also notes limitations in the form of time, cost, and comfort requirements for children as well as the issue of suitability for the context of use (Fajariyah, 2022; Izzah et al., 2025; Widianti et al., 2023). The PDQ can be used as a simpler pre-screening, while the SDQ provides information about emotional difficulties, behavior, hyperactivity, peer relationships, and prosocial behavior. These differences in function suggest that instruments should be selected based on the construct to be assessed, not because a tool is universally considered the "final standard".

On that basis, the results of the synthesis lead to the principles of multi-method and multi-informant assessment. Decisions should be made through a combination of direct assessment of children, results of appropriate measuring instruments, behavioral observation, parental information, and educator information. This approach is more consistent with the multidimensional nature of school readiness. School readiness uses a combination of standardized tests, teacher reports, parent

reports, and in some cases direct observation. Test results are not positioned as an automatic decision, but rather as one of the bases that have factual evidence in the data integration process.

The next issue is ecological and cultural validity. Instruments developed in one cultural context do not necessarily have identical measurement meanings when applied to children with different languages, parenting patterns, educational experiences, and social environments. Instruments that are sensitive to cultural context have the potential to provide more valid and reliable results than instruments that are only adapted from other cultures (Pangestuti et al., 2019; Sirin et al., 2024). Therefore, the use of instruments must be accompanied by consideration of norms, values, culture, evidence of validity, characteristics of children, and user competence.

Therefore, understanding is needed in conducting assessments. Readiness assessments should not be a mechanism for labeling children "worthy" or "unworthy", but rather an empirically data-driven decision-making process to map a child's strengths, vulnerabilities, support needs, and suitability to formal education demands. This conception is in line with the view that school readiness includes children's readiness as well as the environment in which children enter school. If the child shows cognitive strength but social-emotional vulnerability, recommendations should not stop at the admissions decision, but also require the identification of various supports as the child transitions into the elementary school environment.

Psychologist Authority in Age Assessment and Exclusion

Permendikdasmen Number 3 of 2025 explicitly places the recommendation of a professional psychologist as proof of readiness for age exemption. The regulation replaces Permendikbud Number 1 of 2021 and takes effect from February 28, 2025. In the implementation of SPMB, the government also emphasized that if professional psychologists are not available, recommendations can be made by the teacher council in the education unit concerned. However, the regulation does not necessarily specify the criteria for teacher councils or formal evidence of the absence of psychologists and provides regulatory space to local governments.

Substantively, the placement of psychologists in the process can be understood as a professional safeguarding mechanism. Psychologists are not just test administrators, but those who have the competence to choose assessment methods, assess data quality, integrate various information, consider the characteristics of child development, and prepare professional interpretations. Because age-exclusion decisions can affect a child's educational experience in the long run, psychologists' recommendations should be professional conclusions based on an overall developmental profile, rather than simply the results of a single score.

However, this condition raises a paradox between the clarity of authority and the unclarity of operational standards. Regulations have defined who can make recommendations, but have not yet operationalized the construct of "psychological readiness," established a minimum domain of assessment, established standards for the integration of evidence, or provided a uniform threshold for decision. The involvement of psychologists in school readiness assessments still requires clear standardization and capacity through training related to children so that it will produce standardized and consistent recommendations (Albritton dkk., 2018; Hojnoski & Missall, 2006; Subhan, 2025).

This issue is even more important when the authority of recommendations can be transferred to the teacher council. In policy, the clause can be read as a pragmatic response to the limited access to professionals. However, epistemicly, teacher recommendations and psychological assessments are not two identical procedures. Teachers have an advantage in naturalistic observation because they interact with children in the context of education, while psychologists have special competencies in psychological assessment and interpretation of measuring instruments. Therefore, the problem is not to choose a psychologist or teacher, but rather to ensure a differentiation of the teacher's role in

providing contextual developmental and behavioral information, while psychologists (when available) integrate such evidence into professional psychological assessments.

This position expands on previous research that has largely discussed "what is measured" in school readiness, such as the validity of the measuring tool, the developmental dimension, or the role of families and teachers. This research adds the dimension of "who is authorized to interpret the measurement results into decisions that have educational consequences". The validity of the decision depends not only on the validity of the measuring instrument, but also on the suitability of the construct, the competence of the assessor, the integration of evidence, and the legitimacy of the procedure.

Psychological Readiness Assessment Model for Age Exclusion

Age-exclusion decisions cannot be built from a single indicator, one instrument, or one source of information. The psychic readiness construct is multidimensional, while the assessment faces the limitations of the instrument, context, and validity of interpretation. At the same time, the recommendation of age exclusion has educational consequences so it requires the integration of evidence and accountable professional considerations. The research findings point to the need to construct assessments as a tiered decision-making process, rather than as a single test that results in the label "ready" or "unprepared".

Based on this synthesis, this study develops a conceptual model that connects normative age limits, identification of exclusionary conditions, multidimensional assessment, integration of evidence, contextual interpretation, professional consideration of psychologists, and recommendations and transitional support. This model places psychic readiness as a developmental profile that must be interpreted in relation to the demands of the school and the context of the child's life. The structure of the model is presented in Figure 1.

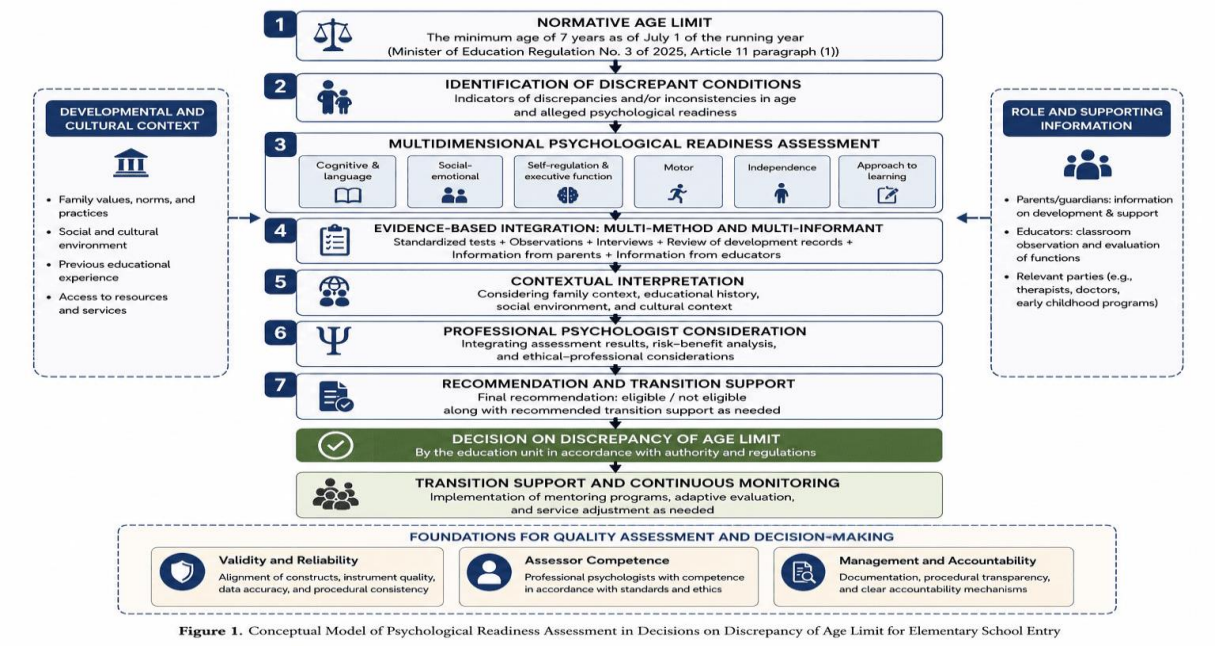


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Psychological Readiness Assessment for Age Limit Exclusion

Figure 1 shows that the process starts with the normative age limit as an administrative framework, then moves towards the identification of conditions that allow exceptions. Once these conditions are met, psychological readiness is assessed multidimensionally through cognitive and language domains, social-emotional, self-regulation and executive function, motor, independence, and approaches to learning. Findings from various domains are not further treated separately, but are integrated through a multi-methodical and multi-informant approach that blends tests, observations, and information from parents and educators. This stage is important to reduce the risk of construct underrepresentation that arises when decisions are based on only one measuring tool.

The model that has been developed places contextual interpretation as a link between assessment results and professional considerations. The child's readiness profile needs to be understood by considering previous educational experiences, family environment, social conditions, and cultural contexts because the meaning of scores or behaviors is not always identical in different developmental environments. In the next stage, psychologists integrate the overall evidence and consider the risks and benefits and ethical-professional aspects before making recommendations. Psychologists are not positioned simply as test administrators, but as parties responsible for the integration and interpretation of assessment evidence. Another important point is that the results of the assessment do not stop at "feasible" or "unfeasible" recommendations. If children are recommended to enter elementary school early, the results of the assessment also need to identify the need for support for the transition that will be experienced by the child. This position shifts the assessment function from a mere selection instrument to a mechanism to map the strengths, vulnerabilities, support needs, and suitability between the child's developmental profile and the demands of formal education.

The more consequential an educational decision is to a child's development, the more inadequate a decision that relies on only one indicator or one source of information. Therefore, the validity of the decision is the result of the conformity between the defined construct, the instrument used, the context of child development, the competence of the assessor, the integration of evidence, and the decision-making procedure. Psychic readiness is not treated as a "graduation score", but rather as a developmental profile on which professional consideration and subsequent support planning is based.

As a result, the developed model clarifies the conceptual-juridical contribution of this research. Studies on school readiness generally focus on the measured dimensions and validity of the instrument, while this study expands the analysis on the question of how assessment evidence is translated into decisions that have administrative and educational consequences, and who has the authority to interpret them. The quality of age-exclusion decisions is determined not only by the quality of the measuring instrument, but also by the accuracy of the construct, professional competence, information integration, context of interpretation, and procedural accountability.

Practical Implications, Limitations, and Further Research Directions

Theoretically, this study expands the concept of school readiness into a conceptual-juridical framework by placing psychological readiness not only as a characteristic of child development, but also as a construct that has administrative consequences when used as a basis for the exclusion of the age limit for elementary school admission. Therefore, school readiness needs to be integrated with the principles of professional measurement and decision-making so that the results of assessments are understood according to the purpose and consequences of their use. The validity of a decision is determined not only by the quality of the instrument, but also by the precision of the construct, professional competence, information integration, the context of the child's development, and procedural accountability.

Practically, these findings show the need for operational guidelines regarding psychological readiness in SPMB which include the minimum domain of assessment, the principle of instrument selection, the use of multi-method and multi-informant approaches, basic documentation of recommendations, and referral mechanisms for children with unbalanced readiness profiles. Psychologists' recommendations should not be based on IQ, early academic ability, or one instrument, but on the integration of assessment results with observations, information from parents and educators, and the context of the child's development and culture. Thus, the assessment not only determines the feasibility of early elementary school admission, but also identifies the strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs of children's transition support.

These implications also demand clarity on the division of roles between actors. Governments, especially local governments, need to ensure access and referral mechanisms to psychologists and provide implementation standards when professional psychologists are not available. Psychologists play a role in selecting methods, integrating evidence, and providing professional interpretations, while teachers play an important role as a source of information about children's behavior and development in a naturalistic context. If recommendations are made by the teacher council due to limited access to psychologists, training, supervision, documentation, and referral mechanisms are needed so that administrative flexibility does not cause disparities in the quality of decisions between regions.

For schools, assessment results should not stop at "feasible" or "unfeasible" decisions. Children who are recommended to enter elementary school early need to receive transition support according to their developmental profile, especially if there is an imbalance between cognitive abilities and social-emotional aspects, self-regulation, independence, or adaptation. Thus, the assessment serves as the basis for support planning, not just a selection mechanism.

This study has limitations because it uses a qualitative literature review with a conceptual-juridical approach so that the resulting model has not been empirically tested. Instrument heterogeneity, population characteristics, cultural context, and evidence of long-term outcomes also limit generalization. Therefore, further research needs to test the model through multisite and longitudinal studies by assessing the reliability of decisions between assessors, the validity of the culture of the instrument, the consistency of psychologists' recommendations, the equality of implementation between regions, and the effectiveness of psychologist-teacher collaboration.

As a result, the exception of the age limit for elementary school entry needs to be understood as a developmental decision that requires psychological and procedural justification, not just administrative leniency. Where exceptions are possible, decisions need to be based on a clear psychic readiness construct, multidimensional and contextual assessments, integration of various sources of information, as well as accountable professional recommendations. Thus, the authority of psychologists functions as a professional safeguarding mechanism to ensure that policy flexibility remains oriented to the best interests, justice, and readiness of child development.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that the exclusion of the age limit for elementary school entry is a developmental decision that cannot be determined by chronological age, academic ability, or one test result, but requires an assessment of psychological readiness as a multidimensional profile that is interpreted contextually. The main contribution of the research lies in the integration of readiness constructs, assessment principles, and professional authority into a decision-making framework that places psychologists not just as test implementers, but as integrators and interpreters of evidence to ensure validity, fairness, and accountability of decisions. The resulting conceptual framework suggests that assessment needs to use a multi-method and multi-informant approach taking into account the child's developmental and cultural context.

The results of the assessment should also not stop at "feasible" or "unfeasible" decisions, but are used to identify the strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs of the child's transition support. The practical implications of the study show the need for clearer operational guidelines regarding the domain of psychological readiness, assessment principles, documentation of recommendations, referral mechanisms, and the division of roles between psychologists, teachers, and educational units. When access to psychologists is limited, training, supervision, and referral mechanisms are needed so that regulatory flexibility does not cause disparities in the quality of decisions between regions. However, because the research is based on a qualitative literature review with a conceptual-juridical approach, the resulting model has not been empirically tested and cannot explain the long-term impact of age exclusion. Future research needs to test the model on a multisite and longitudinal basis, including the cultural validity of the instrument, the reliability of decisions between assessors, the consistency of recommendations, the equivalence of implementation between regions, and the effectiveness of psychologist-teacher collaboration. Thus, the authority of psychologists does not only function as a regulatory requirement, but as a professional safeguarding mechanism to ensure that policy flexibility remains oriented to the best interests, justice, and readiness of child development.

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