The Effect of Public Preschool Parent Education Programs

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Abstract – The focus of this study is on the effect of public preschool parent education programs implemented in selected public preschools of Bayambang District I, Division of Pangasinan I. These parent education programs are those being implemented by public preschools and being attended and participated by parents. Specifically, it determines the extent of implementation of programs and the effect of these programs to learners' development. It is delimited to learners' school attendance, attitude/behaviour, development of social and emotional skills, and academic performance, as shown by the result of this study that this parent education programs were found to have an effect to pupils' development.

Keywords – effect, parent education, programs, public, preschool

INTRODUCTION

Parents are, without a doubt, their children's first teachers. Even in ancient times, as evidenced by Aristotle's belief that children under the age of six should be educated at home and nurtured by the mother or wet nurse. It is believed that parents' influence on their children's lives extends beyond childhood. While day care and child development centers play important roles in the development and early learning of children, what happens in the child's home under their parents' eyes contributes significantly to his/her development and education. According to Jesse (1997), parental involvement in their children's education has been identified as a significant predictor of student achievement. Similarly, Clark (1990) asserts that because seventy percent of a student's waking hours, including weekends and vacations, are spent outside of the school setting, and are usually spent with their parents, parental involvement in their child's education is critical for their success.

Given the importance of involving parents in their children's education, countries all over the world began to empower and prioritize parent education programs before the twenty-first century. The American Congress, for example, mandated the formation of partnerships between families and schools in its 1994 "Goals 2000: Educate America Act." The goal states that by the year 2000, every school will encourage partnerships that increase parents' involvement and participation in promoting children's social, emotional, physical, and academic growth (Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education). Thus, in America, parents formed the National PTA, which believes that strengthening the bond between families and the nation's schools is critical. For this reason, they have advocated for it to be included as one of America's National Education Goals. Even during President Obama's presidency, there was a focus on early childhood education and parental involvement. This commitment is exemplified by Obama's Early Learning Initiative, which focuses on a continuum of high-quality early learning for every child in America from birth to age five, with the goal of "levelling the playing field" for children from low-income families.

In the Philippines, the importance of parents' involvement is also recognized. As provided in section 2 of the Republic Act 10410 series of 2012, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council is mandated to provide service delivery not only for children from age 0 to 4 years but also includes educating parents and caregivers, encouraging the active involvement of parents and communities in ECCD programs, raising awareness about the important efforts that will improve the quality of life for young children and families. Moreover, the country supported the development and printing of parent education materials as part of the overall strategy of enhancing parental/caregiver involvement in the care, development, and growth of young children. The initiative is part of the overall country program strategy, which is embedded in the ECCD, Health, Child Protection, and Gender and Development (GAD) programs, (UNICEF, 2009).

Jordan's recognition of the value of parent involvement was anchored on the results of the study conducted by UNICEF in 1996. It started supporting the Better Parenting Program (BPP). This program which was implemented with the help of UNICEF, aimed at

empowering parents and caregivers to provide a stimulating, loving, and protective environment at home by equipping them with skills and information to enable them to promote the psychosocial, cognitive, and physical development of their children aged 0 – 8 years (UNICEF 2007).

As an offshoot of the findings of the study conducted by UNICEF, Indonesia launched a national parent education program entitled "Family Development Program for Families with Children under Five." The program provides home visits and conduct of parents' group meetings.

The belief that success in a child's early learning is not the sole responsibility of the school or a child development center leads to the idea of enhancing/strengthening engagement of parents in the education and development of their children. At, present, different schools and child development centers organize their parents at the start of the school year. In the Philippines, we had the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) which later became Parents-Teachers-Community Association (PTCA). This is because school administrators recognized the value of community involvement in the development and education of children.

Through the Parents – Teachers – Community Association, parent education programs are conducted. Usually, these programs are in the form of conferences, general and homeroom meetings, and home visits. Topics on the importance of making follow-ups on their children's learning gained in school, pupils' behavior and how to reinforce the good and help curb the negative ones, and their involvement or participation in school activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted with the aim of determining the effect of parent education programs in selected public preschools of Bayambang District I. Specifically, it sought answers to the problems which are on the: 1) extent of implementation of parent education programs of public kindergarten in Bayambang District I, Division of Pangasinan I; 2) impact of these parent education programs to kindergarten pupil's; school attendance, attitude, social and emotional development and academic performance; and 3) the significance of the relationship of the extent of implementation and the impact of parent education programs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher made used of the descriptive-survey method of research. Documentary analysis was also used since the researcher obtained the GPAs and school attendance of pupils from Grade 1 to 4 from the pupils' records found in the Office of the principal or Records Officer.

The respondents of this study were the 22 public kindergarten teachers and 250 kindergarten pupils of Bayambang district I, Division of Pangasinan I. To obtain the answers to the main and specific problems of this study, two sets of questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire was on the extent of implementation of the parent education programs and the other was on the development of pupils' socio-emotional skills and attitude towards school. The data gathered were submitted to appropriate statistical tools.

CONCEPTS ON PARENT EDUCATION AND PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS (PEPS)

It is a fact that cannot be denied that being a parent is not an easy job. Parenting is both extremely important and extremely difficult especially that nowadays parent faces a lot of challenges due to technological advancements. Children of today are greatly different from their counterparts of yesteryears. It is in this regard that parents be equipped with adequate knowledge on who the 21st century children are. Thus, schools with the help of other agencies must conduct parent education programs so as to promote awareness of parents about these children. It is only when they know their children are that they can guide them and provide what activities and materials which are developmentally appropriate. Through parent education programs, parents will be guided on how to deal with their children's behavior.

Parent's attitude towards their children's education and school do have a great effect on them. As stated by Kelly (2017).

> "*If parents are indifferent to the best interests and proper training of their children, if they elect unfit men as school officers, if they permit petty quarrels and jealousies to interfere with the administration of the school, if they try to run the schools on the cheapest basis, if they encourage tardiness, irregular attendance, and*

insubordination in their children, then the schools may be little better than training places in shiftless habits, incompetence, disregard for law, and even positive immorality."

She further argued that it is not much about parents understanding the materials and helping students when they have difficulties that are of utmost importance. Rather, it is the way that parents talk about school and education. If they make comments that support the teacher, the school, and learning in general, then the students will have a greater chance of success (http://thoughtco.com).

Additionally, research on parenting shows that parents who are supportive of their children and provide reasonable controls are more likely to have socially competent children. Social competence includes confidence, independence, responsibility, and achievement. Low levels of parental support are related to low self-esteem, deviance, and risk-taking behaviors (http://family.jrank.org).

With the above lines of thinking about the importance of parents' attitude and involvement on their children's development and learning, there is a need to conduct parent/parenting education. Parent education is referred to as the training designed to provide parents knowledge and skills on how to become their children's primary teachers and as full partners in the education of their children. It is designed purposely to provide opportunities for parents to discover their own strengths, to enhance their parenting skills and life competencies, and to learn more about children's cognitive, literacy and developmental growth.

Parent education may happen in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. Teachers serve as role models for parents who are learning new concepts. It is important for teachers, too, to be explicit in their instruction, which is designed to help parents help their children. It is argued that no matter where or when services are delivered, parents should learn new information, new ideas, and new skills; receive encouragement and support; and learn to advocate for themselves and their families (http://www.cal.org).

On the other hand, parenting education refers to any deliberate effort to help parents be more effective in caring for children. The different processes for educating parents may include group meetings, resource centers, newsletters, radio programs, home visits, mentoring, Internet resources, support groups, and books. Parenting education is conducted in many settings such as school,

health and religious organizations, and the community. It may be conducted by people with different backgrounds including human development, nursing, psychology, social work, and education (https://www.encyclopedia.com).

Group meetings, as a process of parenting education, is a traditional way of teaching parents' new skills. Meetings may include lectures, discussions, videos, role playing, and opportunities for practicing skills. In conducting group meetings, leaders should remember, that if group meetings are to help parents be more caring and understanding, they must be conducted by leaders who are caring and responsible (Orgel, 1980 and Cassidy, 2001). While it is through that group meetings may be difficult for parents to attend regularly, the group can offer much-needed social support (https://www.encyclopedia.com).

Many parents turn to books to get them informed of child-rearing efforts. The Internet is also becoming an increasingly important avenue for delivering parenting education. Courses, articles, and parenting tips are available at many sites. It has not only become a significant source for parenting resources, but it has also created opportunities for virtual conferencing and training. Resource centers are another way of providing parenting information. A community center, library, or public school sometimes develops a special collection of books, tapes, or other materials to help parents. Newsletters make an important contribution also in parenting education. These are commonly used with parents of new-borns and include information about development, feeding, and caring for young children. They can be educational, supportive, and affordable (https://www.encyclopedia.com).

Some communities provide *radio programs* to reach parents who might not otherwise receive parenting information. Radio programs to become effective should provide a series of carefully planned and related messages. *Home visit* is a process used to monitor a child's environment, teach highly relevant skills, and provide support to isolated families. *Mentoring Programs* include such models as: 1) *Godparent Program* where trained volunteers visit mothers of new-born in the hospitals; 2) *Big Brother or Big Sister Programs* where mentors work directly with children and youth, and indirectly with parents, and 3) *Grand Mentor Programs* establish a grandparent figure in the lives of children and youth. Support groups, as a process, provide an opportunity for parents to meet and share experiences and information. Specialized parent-support

groups can gather parents with a common challenge to learn from each other and to provide support for each other. Lastly, *Family Resource Programs* attempts to provide variety of services so that families do not need to go from one agency to another. They allow families to become comfortable with staff and maintain better access to services such as parenting education, latchkey programs, childcare, and social welfare programs (https://www.encyclopedia.com).

To enhance parenting practices and behaviors, it is a must that parent education programs be designed and implemented by schools or other agencies of the government tasked to implement programs on children's welfare. The parents' practices and behaviors may include developing and practicing positive discipline techniques, learning age-appropriate child development skills and milestones, promoting positive play interaction between parents and children, and locating and accessing community services and supports.

Parent education programs are an effective venue where parents and caregivers are provided with activities in which they participate in variety of ways to acquire information, to exchange views/insights, and learn how to contribute time and energies that will enrich the children's experiences (missionministriesphilippines.org). Another view states that family support and parent education programs help parents build their skills and confidence in providing a nurturing environment. These programs offer, information, education, and support to families in the community through structured groups, childcare (children's programming provided while parents attend selected adult programs), as well as over-the-phone and drop-in support (http://www.familyfutures). Similarly, parenting education programs teach parents how to keep their children healthy, safe, and ready to start school with the cognitive, social, and emotional skills needed to learn.

Parent education programs should be open to all parents, families, and guardians/caregivers for free and it should be voluntary in nature. These programs for parents, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Education (2016), should have as their goal the strengthening of the capacity of parents to be effective first teachers in providing children the best possible start in life, maximize a child's overall development during those first three years, lay the foundation for school success, and minimize developmental problems that interfere with the child's learning.

A parent education program is considered successful if parents participate and remain in the program. When there is low participation and retention rates, then benefits gained by parents and families is reduced. Thus, it is of essence that a program should be carefully planned and well-designed.

According to Popkin (2019), there are five steps in starting a parenting education program. These are: 1) Be ready for the question "Why", 2) Choosing a Parenting Education Program; 3) Identifying who is needed to begin the process; 4) Organizing a support system, and 5) Promoting the program to parents. He further reiterated that the following points are to be emphasized when planning and starting a program, to wit: 1) Parent-school partnership; 2) Parenting as prevention; 3) Parenting challenges in today's society; 4) Need for positive influences, and 5) Positive impact on behavior.

CONCEPTS ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact is a measure of the changes made. It is seen as the positive and negative, intended, or unintended long-term results produced either directly or indirectly. On the other hand, impact assessment seeks to establish a causal connection between inputs and changes in terms of magnitude or scale or both. It is a means of measuring the effectiveness of organizational activities and judging the significance of changes brought about by those activities (http://www.ifrc.org)

Impact assessment is an integral part of Monitoring and Evaluation and should be incorporated into the design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. To consider the full extent of impact, questions have to be raised internally and externally. The questions to be raised internally are: 1) Assess the relevance of the strategies – Are current strategies contributing to the overall goal? 2) Evaluate the effectiveness of organizational structures and management systems – Are there areas where structures impede the realization of the overall goal? 3) Evaluate communications – Are messages effectively communicated throughout the organization? Is information being fed to appropriate places at the right times? Is everyone aware and informed? Is the need to ensure significant and positive impacts embedded within the culture of the organization? Are we doing all that we can to ensure that we are effective?

When conducting an important assessment, the following are to be done externally: 1) show donors the

impact of their contributions – make the link between donation and changes in the lives of beneficiaries; 2) Show the wider public the effectiveness, relevance, and efficacy of operations – impact can generate wider support; 3) Demonstrate to potential funders the focus of the organization – that is on realizing change as opposed to a focus on process; 4) Increase advocacy – be an effective voice for the vulnerable in ensuring that their "voices" are heard; 5) Embrace transparency – to show an effective and well-functioning organization, able to mobilize support and realize the overall goal, and 6) Open up to scrutiny – for independent verifications (http://www.ifrc.org).

Conducting an impact assessment is not at all an easy job. Partidario (2012) puts emphasis on the five important things to know or remember when assessing the impact of a project or program. These are: 1) The social contract between impact assessment professionals and civil society and decision-makers is that (a) impact assessments will be conducted with integrity and will be free from misinterpretation or deliberate bias, and (b) impact assessments will respect citizen rights to participate in decisions that affects them; 2) An impact assessment priority is the assessment of alterative development options to ensure more sustainable and low environmental and social risk solutions are given full considerations; 3) The aim of impact assessment is to optimize positive and minimize residual negative effects. Mitigation measures to reduce the magnitude of negative impacts must be adopted where it is not possible to avoid impacts through appropriate design; 4) It is not professional to produce impact assessment report solely to meet a legal requirement when an impact assessment must be summited. Ticking boxes is not a good practice. A genuine effort must be made to evaluate and properly evaluate a range of development options, 5) It is desirable to integrate the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of impact assessment unless the jurisdiction for which the assessment is being prepared constrains impact assessment to an analysis of specific types of impacts (http://www.iaia.org).

Partidario (2012) likewise emphasized the five important things to do when conducting an impact assessment, to wit: 1) Promote impact assessment to address and incorporate into strategic and project development decision-making important challenges; 2) Ensure that impact assessment makes a positive contribution to the environment and the well-being of the people living in it, by suggesting way to avoid, or reduce, risks and enhance benefits of actions; 3) Promote

transparency, participation, and the full engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including the public, in decision making; 4) Ensure good quality information in impact assessment and evaluation of the impact assessment process and its outcomes, to enhance impact assessment effectiveness, and 5) Shift impact assessment thinking away from the licensing stage and closer to the key decisions on future development options to increase impact assessment influence on concept and design (http://www.iaia.org).

In implementing an impact assessment, there are six steps to be followed (http://www.marketlinks.org). These steps are as follows:

1. ***Select the project/s to be assessed.*** Impact assessments are carried out because someone needs to know what results particular projects or intervention approaches are achieving;

2. ***Conduct an evaluability assessment.*** An evaluability assessment is an initial appraisal of whether an impact assessment should be conducted on the project and, if so, what is the most appropriate methodology to do. The evaluability assessment is conducted prior to conducting the baseline impact assessment. It is also important, however, to conduct a modified evaluability assessment prior to conducting the follow-up impact assessment. The purpose in this case is to determine (a) whether it is worthwhile to invest in the follow-up assessment at all, or (b) whether to reduce the scope of the impact assessment light of events that have occurred since the baseline;

3. ***Prepare a research plan.*** The research plan should include the causal model of the impact assessment and a practical plan for carrying out the study. The causal model is used to generate a set of hypotheses about outcomes and impacts that will be tested in this study. The plan should also include detailed specifications for the questions to be asked on the survey questionnaire and guidelines for the interviews and focus group discussions;

4. ***Contract and staff the impact assessment.*** After a research plan is drawn, decide to carry out the field research. Typically, a local research firm is contracted to carry out the field research under

the guidance of the sponsoring organization and external advisers it may have hired;

5. ***Carry out the field research and analyze results.*** Under the supervision of sponsoring organization and its external advisers, the local research partner carries out the baseline field research which includes the impact assessment survey and complementary qualitative data collection activities, principally key informants' interviews and focus group discussions. After this is done, the local partner organizes the data and summarizes the findings, and

6. ***Disseminate the impact assessment findings.*** Since the impact assessment is likely to generate information that has value beyond the particular project assessed, it is vital that the lessons learned through be disseminated effectively to all those who are in a position to use them. Dissemination can be through web postings, seminar or conference presentations, workshops, or published papers.

According to Lemiere (2019), the five parts of an impact assessment process are: 1) **Get started.** Apply the Theory of Change and Logic Model; 2) **Dimensions of Impact Assessment.** Time and budget requirements, standardization versus customization, qualitative and quantitative indicators, comparison, and aggregation; 3) **Learn from Existing Frameworks.** Indicator selection and performance management; 4) **Implementation.** Convincing grantees, handling technology, interpreting results, and 5) **Presentation.** Communicating results effectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent of implementation of the parent education programs parent – teacher conferences was found **very much implemented** as shown by the computed weighted mean 4.41. The different parent education programs were perceived by the respondents to be **very much implemented** as shown by the computed over-all weighted mean of 4.45.

In terms of pupils' social development, the obtained over-all weighted mean of 4.33 indicates that the skills are **very much developed.** The pupils' emotional skills have developed very much as shown by the computed over-all weighted mean which is 4.36. The

attitude towards school of the pupils is **highly favorable** as indicated by the computed over-all weighted mean of 4.43. The number of pupils with perfect attendance increased each year as evidenced by these data: Grade 1- 175; Grade 2 – 181; Grade 3 – 250, and Grade 4 – 250. As to pupils' academic performance, the mean GPAs of the pupils from Grade 1 through Grade 4 which are 86.86,86.92,87.30 and 88.35, respectively, indicate that it is increasing yearly. The programs leadership Trainings and Home Visitations, as indicated by the computed r-values of 0.519and 0.488, respectively, are significantly related to socio-emotional development and academic performance of the pupils. The parent education programs conducted may have impacts on pupils' school attendance, attitude towards school, social and emotional development, and academic performance as shown by the computed weighted means and statistical representations have shown that these apparent education programs were found to have an impact to pupils' development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the researcher highly recommends the following: 1) Parent Education programs be conducted by the schools regularly. Resource speakers who are experts on chosen topics be invited. 2) School administrators and teachers should craft a more specific and comprehensive parent education program to be conducted in a year-round basis. 3) provide incentives to parents who attend parent education programs regularly to be awarded at the end of the school year.

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