

The Moderating Role of Teachers' Efficacy on the Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and Learners' Developmental Progress in Rizal and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro

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Abstract

This study investigated the moderating role of teachers' efficacy on the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and learners' developmental progress in Rizal and San Jose Districts, Occidental Mindoro. Employing a descriptive correlational design, data were gathered from kindergarten teachers using adapted survey instruments anchored on a 5-point Likert scale administered through Microsoft Forms. Policy implementation was assessed across five dimensions: learning assessment, instruction, teaching methodologies and strategies, learning resources and instructional materials, learning space and environment, and monitoring and evaluation, while teachers' efficacy was measured in terms of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Learners' developmental progress was evaluated in five domains: health and motor development, socio-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, and understanding of the environment. Results revealed that policy implementation was generally high, though gaps persisted in resources and learning spaces. Teachers demonstrated moderate to high efficacy, particularly in instructional strategies and classroom management, which positively influenced learner engagement. Learners' developmental progress was likewise rated high, affirming that effective policy implementation supports holistic growth. Correlation analysis showed mostly negligible relationships among policy implementation, teacher efficacy, and learners' progress, with only weak but significant link between monitoring and evaluation and language and literacy. Regression analysis confirmed that teacher efficacy did not moderate the relationship between policy implementation and learner outcomes, suggesting that other contextual or professional factors may shape how policy translates into developmental progress. These findings highlight that policy frameworks alone are insufficient; their effectiveness depends on multiple interacting elements within the teaching-learning environment. The study underscores the importance of continuous capacity building, resource provision, and responsive leadership to sustain quality kindergarten education, offering insights for DepEd, school heads, and teacher training institutions in refining support systems and professional development programs to ensure equitable and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for Filipino children.

Keywords: Kindergarten Education, Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education, Teachers' Efficacy, Learners' Developmental Progress, Policy Implementation, Descriptive-Correlational Research, Early Childhood Education, Occidental Mindoro

1. Introduction

Kindergarten education is positioned in the study as a foundational stage of lifelong learning and holistic child development. The study argues that early childhood education supports cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, and moral growth, and that quality early learning experiences shape later academic, social, and equity outcomes. Within this context, the paper situates the Philippine kindergarten system under Republic Act No. 10157 and DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, while emphasizing that uneven implementation, especially in resources and learning spaces, continues to affect the quality of delivery. It further frames teachers' efficacy as a potentially important factor in how policy is translated into actual learner development. On this basis, the study examines the moderating role of teachers' efficacy in the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and learners' developmental progress in Rizal and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Kindergarten education is widely recognized as a critical foundation for lifelong learning and holistic child development. UNESCO (2015) emphasizes that early childhood education fosters cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, and moral skills that shape future success and well-being. Many countries have institutionalized kindergarten as part of basic education, acknowledging that quality early learning experiences influence academic trajectories, social integration, and equity outcomes. In the Philippine setting, kindergarten education is formalized through Republic Act No. 10157, with DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016 providing the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education. This framework covers curriculum

standards, learning environment requirements, assessment practices, and teacher qualifications, while promoting developmentally appropriate and play-based learning approaches.

The reviewed literature in the research highlights three major themes. First, early childhood education is consistently presented as essential to long-term learner success, particularly when instruction is play-based, inclusive, and developmentally responsive. Second, while the policy framework for kindergarten education is already established, implementation remains uneven, with recurring concerns in resources and learning spaces that may weaken readiness and learning experiences. Third, teacher efficacy emerges as a significant professional factor in effective classroom delivery. Bandura (1997) explains through Social Cognitive Theory that self-efficacy influences behavior, motivation, and resilience. Teachers with high efficacy are more likely to persevere, adapt, and innovate, thereby enhancing instructional quality and learner engagement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Empirical studies further indicate that high teacher efficacy is associated with improved classroom management, instructional strategies, and student achievement (Klassen & Chiu, 2015; Duan, Bissaker, & Xu, 2024), and in early childhood settings it is linked to developmentally appropriate practices, positive teacher-child interactions, and inclusive learning environments (Denham et al., 2015).

Globally, the study places kindergarten education within broader efforts to improve child well-being, educational quality, and social equity, consistent with UNESCO (2015). Nationally, the Philippine government has institutionalized kindergarten through Republic Act No. 10157 and strengthened its implementation through DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, which prescribes standards for curriculum, assessment, learning environment, and teacher qualifications (DepEd, 2016). Locally, the study is anchored in Rizal and San Jose Districts, Occidental Mindoro, where the realities of school resources, classroom environments, and teacher practices provide a concrete setting for examining how policy implementation and teacher efficacy relate to learners' developmental progress. The paper thus connects global principles, national mandates, and local implementation realities within one analytical frame.

The study is primarily anchored in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) explains that efficacy beliefs shape how individuals act, persist, and respond to challenges. Applied to the kindergarten context, this suggests that teachers' confidence in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management may influence how effectively they implement policy requirements in the classroom. Conceptually, the study also rests on the assumption that the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education provides the standards for delivery, while teachers' efficacy may strengthen or weaken the relationship between policy implementation and learners' developmental progress. In this way, the policy serves as the structural basis and teacher efficacy serves as the possible moderating condition linking implementation to learner outcomes.

The study identifies a clear gap in the literature by noting that limited research has explored how teaching efficacy interacts with policy implementation in the Philippine kindergarten context. Few studies have examined how teacher efficacy influences the delivery of mandated policies like DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, or how this dynamic relates to learners' developmental progress across domains such as health, socio-emotional development, literacy, numeracy, and environmental awareness. This gap justifies the present study, which seeks to determine whether teachers' efficacy moderates the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and learners' developmental progress. The rationale is both practical and scholarly, as the findings are intended to inform policy refinement, teacher professional development, and more equitable early childhood education delivery.

The study aligns most directly with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on strengthening kindergarten education through effective policy implementation, developmentally appropriate teaching, and support for learner progress. It also relates to SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being because the developmental outcomes considered in the study include health and motor development as well as socio-emotional development. In addition, the study connects to SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions in the sense that it examines how policy implementation, monitoring, and educational support systems can improve institutional responsiveness and delivery in public education. These SDG links arise naturally from the study's emphasis on early childhood learning quality, learner development, and policy-based educational support.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by examining factors that support consistent, developmentally appropriate kindergarten delivery. It contributes to institutional and policy sustainability by generating evidence that may guide DepEd, school heads, and teacher training institutions in refining support systems, policy implementation, and professional development. It also has relevance to community and socio-economic sustainability because stronger early childhood education can improve school readiness, long-term learning outcomes, and equity in underserved settings. Finally, the study supports human development sustainability by addressing multiple domains of learner progress rather than limiting educational success to academic performance alone. In this sense, the research is multidisciplinary because it engages education, child development, policy implementation, teacher development, and equity concerns within a single framework (UNICEF, 2019).

Consistent with the rationale of the paper, the study focuses on the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and the developmental progress of kindergarten learners, while also examining the moderating role of teachers' efficacy in this relationship. Specifically, it seeks to determine the extent of policy implementation in terms of learning assessment, instruction and teaching methodologies, learning resources and instructional materials, learning space and environment, and monitoring and evaluation; assess teachers' efficacy in terms of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management; determine learners' developmental progress across health and motor development, socio-emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematics, and understanding the environment; examine the relationship between policy implementation and learner progress; and determine the moderating effect of teachers' efficacy on that relationship.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to assess the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education in terms of learning assessment, instruction and teaching methodologies, learning resources and instructional materials, learning space and environment, and monitoring and evaluation for the standard of delivery. The correlational component was used to examine the relationship between policy implementation and learners' developmental progress, while regression analysis was used to determine whether teachers' sense of efficacy moderated this relationship. Teaching efficacy was examined across classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement, while learners' developmental progress was evaluated using domain-based indicators aligned with the kindergarten progress report system.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in the Division of Occidental Mindoro, particularly in the districts of San Jose and Rizal. These districts were selected because of their accessibility and their active implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education as mandated by DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016. Their varied classroom contexts and instructional environments made them appropriate settings for examining policy implementation, teacher efficacy, and learner progress in rural and semi-urban schools.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were kindergarten teachers in Rizal and San Jose Districts, Occidental Mindoro. The study focused on regular and permanent kindergarten teachers and considered learners' developmental progress through domain-based indicators aligned with the DepEd Kindergarten Progress Report Card during School Year 2025–2026.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Random sampling was employed to ensure representation from central, rural, Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities, and island schools. Approximately 85–90 percent of kindergarten teachers were selected, resulting in a minimum of 89 respondents. This sample size was considered adequate for descriptive-correlational analysis because it met the requirements for correlation testing and captured variation in experiences and perceptions related to policy implementation, teacher efficacy, and learner progress.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used validated and adapted instruments aligned with its objectives. The extent of policy implementation was measured through a structured survey developed by Alvarado and Lopez (2020), organized into five domains and rated using a 5-point Likert scale. Teachers' efficacy was measured using the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Short Form) by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), covering student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Learners' developmental progress was assessed through a teacher-rated checklist anchored on the DepEd Kindergarten Progress Report Card and interpreted using the B–D–C scale, which corresponds to Beginning, Developing, and Consistent.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering commenced with the preparation of the adapted survey instruments, which were reviewed by experts to ensure their clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Formal letters were subsequently sent to the Schools Division Superintendent and District Supervisors to secure the necessary permission to conduct the study, followed by the approval of the respective school heads. Prior to the administration of the instruments, informed consent was obtained from the teacher-respondents to uphold ethical standards in the conduct of the research. The survey questionnaires were then administered through Microsoft Forms, with a total of 89 kindergarten teachers participating in the study. Data on the learners' developmental progress were collected using descriptors from the Kindergarten Progress Report Card across two quarters in order to capture observable changes in the different developmental domains.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were encoded and summarized using frequency, mean, and standard deviation. Kendall's Tau-B correlation was applied to test the associations among variables, while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine predictive contributions and the moderating effect of teacher efficacy. Paired samples t-tests were also performed to compare learners' developmental progress between quarters. All statistical analyses were conducted at a 95% confidence level.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed strict ethical standards throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose, scope, and objectives of the study through a clear consent process. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by excluding personally identifiable information and reporting data only in aggregate form. The study also complied with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring that personal and sensitive information was handled with transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Main Findings

3.1.1 Extent of Implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education

The findings showed that the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education was implemented at a generally high level. Instruction, teaching methodologies, and strategies obtained the highest overall mean of 4.82 and was interpreted as very high, followed by curriculum and assessment at 4.73 and monitoring and evaluation at 4.66, both also interpreted as very high. Learning resources and instructional materials posted a mean of 3.97 and learning space and environment recorded 3.64, both interpreted as high, although activity corners and play area received only a moderate rating of 3.23. Overall, implementation of the Omnibus Policy obtained a mean of 4.36, interpreted as high. These results indicate that the policy was strongly observed in classroom delivery, especially in instruction, curriculum, and monitoring practices. At the same time, the relatively lower ratings in learning resources and classroom environment suggest that implementation was stronger in pedagogical compliance than in material and spatial support. This implies that while teachers were generally able to translate the policy into practice, limitations in facilities and materials may still constrain the full quality of kindergarten delivery.

3.1.2 Level of Teaching Efficacy of Kindergarten Teachers

The data further revealed that kindergarten teachers demonstrated a generally high level of teaching efficacy. Student engagement obtained the highest mean of 4.53 and was interpreted as very high, while instructional strategy had a mean of 4.45 and classroom management had 4.36, both interpreted as high. The overall mean for teaching efficacy was 4.45, likewise interpreted as high. These findings suggest that kindergarten teachers were generally confident in motivating learners, using effective instructional strategies, and maintaining classroom order. The particularly strong rating in student engagement points to teachers' perceived ability to encourage participation and sustain learner interest, while the slightly lower classroom management rating suggests an area where continued professional support may still be beneficial.

3.1.3 Learners' Developmental Progress

The results showed significant improvement in learners' developmental progress from the first quarter to the second quarter across all measured domains. Health and motor development increased from 19.26 to 21.34, with a 10.80 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000. Socio-emotional development increased from 24.03 to 26.44, with a 10.03 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000. Language, literacy, and communication improved from 57.73 to 65.13, reflecting a 12.82 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000. Mathematics rose from 44.89 to 50.29, with a 12.03 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000. Understanding the environment increased from 15.94 to 18.28, with a 14.68 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000. Overall developmental progress improved from 2.12 to 2.38, with a 12.62 percent increase and a significant p-value of .000, interpreted as moderate. These findings indicate that learners showed measurable progress across physical, socio-emotional, language, numeracy, and environmental domains over time. The results support the view that kindergarten education contributes to holistic child development, although progress was not uniform across domains. In particular, socio-emotional development appeared slower than the other areas, suggesting the need for more sustained reinforcement of emotional regulation, empathy, and social interaction both in school and at home.

3.2 Relationship Between Policy Implementation and Learners' Developmental Progress

3.2.1 Correlation Between Implementation and Learner Outcomes

The correlation analysis showed that most relationships between the extent of implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and learners' developmental progress were negligible. Curriculum assessment, instruction and teaching methodologies, learning resources and instructional materials, and learning space and environment all showed negligible relationships with the different developmental domains. The only significant association reported was between monitoring and evaluation and language, literacy, and communication, which showed a weak positive relationship with a

coefficient of .189 and a p-value of .022. Overall, the relationship between policy implementation and learners' developmental progress was negligible, with a coefficient of .060 and a p-value of .411. These results suggest that although policy implementation was generally high, it was not strongly associated with learners' developmental progress in most domains. The single weak but significant relationship involving monitoring and evaluation and language and literacy implies that systematic supervision and feedback may have some contribution to communication-related outcomes. However, the broader pattern indicates that learner development may also depend on other factors beyond policy implementation alone, such as home conditions, nutrition, and socio-economic circumstances.

3.2.2 Moderating Effect of Teachers' Efficacy

The regression analysis showed that teachers' efficacy did not significantly moderate the relationship between implementation of the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education and learners' developmental progress. Centered implementation had a beta coefficient of -.032 with a p-value of .815, centered efficacy had a beta coefficient of .135 with a p-value of .311, and the interaction term had a beta coefficient of -.118 with a p-value of .288. All were interpreted as not significant. This indicates that teachers' efficacy, although generally high, did not significantly alter the relationship between policy implementation and learner outcomes in this study. The finding suggests that the effects of policy implementation on developmental progress may not be explained by efficacy alone and may instead be shaped by multiple interacting contextual and professional conditions within the teaching-learning environment.

3.3 Overall Synthesis of the Findings

Taken together, the findings show that the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education was implemented at a high level, teachers demonstrated high efficacy, and learners posted significant developmental gains across all assessed domains. At the same time, resource adequacy, learning spaces, and socio-emotional development remained weaker areas relative to the other indicators, while the statistical relationships among policy implementation, teacher efficacy, and learner outcomes were mostly negligible. Overall, the chapter suggests that effective kindergarten delivery is supported by strong instructional practice and teacher capability, but that these alone do not automatically produce strong measurable relationships with all learner outcomes. The findings therefore point to the importance of strengthening material support, classroom environments, and broader contextual conditions in order to improve the quality and inclusivity of kindergarten education.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education was highly implemented in Rizal and San Jose Districts, Occidental Mindoro, particularly in curriculum, instruction, and monitoring practices, although learning resources and classroom environment remained areas needing improvement. Kindergarten teachers demonstrated high teaching efficacy, especially in student engagement, and learners showed moderate but significant developmental progress, with stronger gains in language, literacy, mathematics, and understanding of the environment than in socio-emotional development. Despite these positive conditions, the correlation analysis revealed mostly negligible relationships between policy implementation, teacher efficacy, and learners' developmental progress, with only monitoring and evaluation showing a weak but significant link to language and literacy, indicating that other external factors may also influence learner outcomes.

Based on the findings presented in the paper, greater attention should be given to improving learning resources, instructional materials, and classroom environments to better support exploratory and play-based learning in kindergarten. Continued professional development should also be sustained to strengthen teacher capability, particularly in areas related to classroom management and inclusive practices, while additional support may be directed toward socio-emotional development among learners. The study further implies that policy refinement, resource provision, and responsive leadership should remain central in strengthening the quality and inclusivity of kindergarten education.

The study was limited to regular and permanent kindergarten teachers and their learners in Rizal and San Jose Districts, Occidental Mindoro, during School Year 2025–2026. Its findings were also bounded by the use of self-reported measures, variability in documentation practices across schools, and time and connectivity constraints during data gathering, which may have affected the consistency of the data. The paper therefore suggests that future research may expand to other districts, use longitudinal designs, or examine additional moderating factors such as parental involvement and community support.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards and with formal permission from the appropriate educational authorities. Participation of the kindergarten teacher-respondents was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was secured after they were clearly informed of the purpose, scope, and objectives of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed by excluding personally identifiable information and presenting all results in aggregate

form only. The handling of all personal and sensitive information complied with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, following the principles of transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality.

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