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**Management Practices of Early Education Programs of Australia and the
Philippines: Towards the Development of Kindergarten Management Framework**

Marianne D. Pineda

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management

Philippine Normal University

March 1, 2021

APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF AUSTRALIA AND THE PHILIPPINES: TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTEN MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**” prepared and submitted by **MARIANNE D. PINEDA** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management**, is hereby recommended for approval and acceptance.



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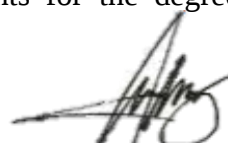
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ABSTRACT

Name	:	Marianne D. Pineda
Title	:	Management Practices of Early Education Programs of Australia and the Philippines: Towards the Development of Kindergarten Management Framework
Key Concepts	:	early childhood education, kindergarten, management practices, prep, management framework
Degree	:	Doctor of Philosophy
Specialization	:	Educational Management
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With the developments taking place after the institutionalization of the universal kindergarten in the Philippines in 2011, one crucial aspect is lacking – a management framework for the country’s kindergarten education program that will guide the decision-making process of ECE administrators and managers. This study sought to describe and compare Australia and Philippines’ management of early childhood education for five-year old children to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. It utilized a case study approach. Semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observation were employed in this study. Purposive sampling technique was used to recruit 12 kindergarten teachers, 2 parents and 4 ECE administrators as participants for the study. Document analysis included official documents such as Every Student Succeeding – State

Schools Strategy and School Improvement Hierarchy of Queensland, Australia and DepEd Orders and Memoranda. Observations were conducted in ECE public schools in both countries. Data gathered from these instruments went through content and thematic analysis.

The findings of this study reveal six themes - 1) successful implementation of an equitable and accessible kindergarten education; 2) collaborative partnership; 3) health, well-being, and safety; 4) leadership and performance; 5) kindergarten education program and curriculum; and 6) teaching quality. These identified themes served as the bases in identifying unique practices that were considered in the formulation of a Kindergarten Management Framework for the country. It is recommended that this framework be implemented and evaluated to assess its efficiency and effectiveness.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Background of the Study

The heaven's gate opened...the child is in the cradle waiting for the hand to rock it.

The importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) is central to lifelong learning as it is acquired at this stage in a child's life. Since the 1960s, studies have shown that intensive, high quality ECCE has direct effects on the holistic development of young children (Barnett & Nores, 2012). Its long-term benefits were established from the studies conducted from around the world (Whitebread et al., n.d.), citing Campbell's et al (2002) findings in his Abecedarian Project. Accordingly, the enrollment in ECCE significantly improved adult outcomes such as further education, employment and participation in health behaviors. American philanthropist Bill Gates agrees when he succinctly expressed that the first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 would turn out.

ECCE is defined by UNESCO (2016) as the extent of methods and practices that aim to advance the health and quality of life of young children through the support of the adults around them. Studies have confirmed that it has long term effects on children's sphere of growth and development (Claessens et al., 2014; Robinson & Mueller, 2014; Shepard, 2015). Children who participated in early childhood education exhibited higher school readiness skills and greater executive function skills than those who did not (Galindo, 2018). Those with kindergarten background outperformed those without in the subjects Writing, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (Donaldson, 2014). It likewise affected the attainment

of economic benefits and reduced delinquency and crime both in childhood and adulthood (Barnett 2008; Duran, 2005; García-Carrión & Villardón-Gallego, 2016; Moran & Senseny, 2016; Novella M . Washington, 2012).

The overall effect of ECCE in the development of children until later years in their life was asserted also by Nanney (2016) who posited that the concepts young children gain have remarkable effects on their readiness for school. She added that grown-ups support that the child receives has a fundamental effect in his/her performance in all levels of his/her years in school. The study of Cox (2016) and Jeon and Buettner (2015) supported Nanney's assertion. They proposed that children who have received ECCE have shown better inclinations to engage in and benefit from learning experiences that help develop their intellectual capacity and promote success.

Consequently, children unable to attend kindergarten are at a disadvantage even at an early age despite enrolling in a class under an ECCE program that prepares them for first grade (Department of Education, 2016; SEAMEO INNOTECH Regional Education Program, 2014). Children who have no kindergarten experience are behind in different areas of developmental domains such as “communication skills as well as behavior skills” (Soltero-Ruiz, 2013, p.3.), as compared to those who have kindergarten experience. Soltero-Ruiz (2013) also suggested that teachers regard as paramount the development of the social-emotional skills of children where awareness and self-regulation are given due importance.

Considering the impact of ECCE in a child's holistic development, it is recommended therefore that leaders employ and ensure effective early childhood programs (Cox, 2016; McCool, 2014) to avoid or at least minimize the propensity of children to have problems in the later years of their lives that may involve adjusting to society, cognitive delays, and risky behavior. UNESCO

(2012) further affirmed this claim, saying that children who have undergone high quality ECCE exhibited advance social, educational, health and intellectual spheres way above those who have not attended any ECCE programs.

The aim of this dissertation is to utilize a descriptive-comparative method of research in a case study approach of the two countries' management of early education schools for five-year old children in the hope of identifying the management practices of early education programs of both countries. The quality of managing early education schools is as crucial as the provision of early childhood care and development (Whitebread et al., n.d.). Positive developmental outcomes are attained by young learners deemed to be of high quality (Burchinal et al., 2009 in Trube, 2015). This study aims to contribute in the management of Philippine kindergarten by developing a contextualized management framework for kindergarten schools.

Literature Review

The importance of ECCE has put the system in the forefront of many educational reforms in the past years. In Asian countries, early education programs are guided by the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) to boost their efforts to aligning their ECCE directions with the Western philosophies (Tan, 2016). This has compelled many countries to diverge from a rigid scholastically centered early education programs and amend them into play-based, child-centered, inclusive curricula.

During the 45th Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council Conference in 2010, member countries have committed to quality ECCE transforming their efforts and programs to attain augmented early education programs in countries across Asia-Pacific region

that are accessible to all young learners. This was an unprecedented step in giving due recognition on the role of a quality ECCE in the overall development of children. This also impelled many nations to constantly assess and make vital changes in their ECCE programs to ensure an equitable and accessible program for young children (Morrison, 2007). Morrison added that children's holistic development provide a foundation on which later learning is constructed; and this is achieved when all those involved in the program have a shared foundation of knowledge and competencies related to child's growth and development across all the developmental domains – cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and physical.

Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand have government-mandated kindergarten as part of the basic education (Ng, 2010). ECCE in Singapore, on the other hand, is run by private sectors and is comprised of three-year programs for nursery, kindergarten 1 and kindergarten 2. While Singapore has not mandated compulsory kindergarten in their ECCE program, the government's Ministry of Education still manages it. Singapore circumvents formalizing kindergarten to avoid making it heavily structured for the young learners (Tan, 2017).

On the other hand, the Philippines is one of the countries that have embraced the National Association for the Education of the Young Children's (NAEYC) DAP. However, as stipulated in Tan's study (2017), despite the efforts of some Asian countries to align their curricula with NAEYC's DAP, they are not entirely applicable due to cultural differences and gaps in equity or access of young children in ECCE programs.

Countries of the Asia-Pacific region have a common vision of enhancing global competitiveness and development through education. Despite the differences in the forms and systems of government and political frameworks, historical background, philosophies and goals,

members of the Asia Pacific region adhere to a strong community through a closer educational cooperative that may contribute to competitiveness (UNESCO, 2014). Likewise, cultural exchange among nations inculcates empathy, knowledge sharing, and global thinking (Hardy et al., 2015). Equally important according to UNESCO (2014) is recognizing ECCE as vital in child development and early learning, therefore, management of early education programs must encompass all developmental domains.

Australia is one of the countries that have committed to an expanded and comprehensive ECCE during the World Education Forum in April 2000 (UNESCO, 2012). Established in 1907 by the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, kindergarten schools were formed for the children of the poor (*History of Kindergarten Schools in Queensland*, 2013). In 1911, Creche and Kindergarten Association launched its Kindergarten Training College as kindergarten by this time had been regarded as a separate institution, rather than just a philosophy and method of early childhood education. Kindergarten activities were subsidized heavily by the government. In 1972, the government committed to a policy that provided free kindergarten education for all 4- to 5-year old children. Buildings for kindergarten schools were constructed the following year, and these continued to expand over the years. Countries in East Asia and the Pacific including Australia, have shown increased in gross enrolment ratio in early education (UNESCO, 2012). Australia has been advocating play-based learning in their early education program (*Queensland Government: Kindergarten*, 2017). Through play, it aims to develop the physical abilities, self-confidence, and social skills of the learners.

In addition, Australia's educational system has ranked consistently as one of the highest performing in the world because of the country's standards on quality of schools and teachers and

the effectiveness of Australian teaching practice (Australian Department of Education and Training, 2017). In 2015, out of 142 countries that were evaluated by the London-based Legatum Institute, Australia ranked first in the world for education (*The Legatum Prosperity Index*, 2015). Australia earned the distinction as the best country in the world for education because of its superior performance on three key indicators: access to quality education, quality of education, and human capital. Furthermore, Australia placed third in the education index out of 189 countries and territories based on the 2018 Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 2018b). One of the dimensions of Human Development Index (HDI) is education which is measured by mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and above, and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age (United Nations Development Programme, 2018a). With this, Australia remains committed to raising quality education especially for the disadvantaged. In 2012, Australia and Philippines launched a collaboration to improving the quality of education in the country with Philippine Normal University (PNU), National Center for Teacher Education, opening its Research Center for Teacher Quality (RCTQ) in the university (Australian Embassy, 2012).

In the Philippines, kindergarten was pioneered in 1922 by a private institution – Harris Memorial School Manila. Interest in kindergarten expanded to religious schools both Catholic and Protestant and remained to be associated with Bureau of Private Schools until 1950s when training for preschool education was pioneered. After the establishment of National Coordinating Center for the Study and Development of Filipino Children and Youth in 1964, the Children's Village was opened to admit kindergarten (Yosores, n.d.). In 1989, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued D.O. 107 – Standards for the Organization and Operation of Preschools (Kindergarten

Level). In this DepEd Order, the need for early childhood development was recognized. It was in 2011, however, that Kindergarten officially became part of the basic education through Republic Act 10157 or The Kindergarten Education Act making it mandatory for 5-year old children.

The discussion on the importance of kindergarten and the comparison on how Australia and the Philippines manage their respective kindergarten programs are fundamental in crafting a management framework for Philippine kindergarten. Moreover, the need for a close collaboration and sharing of practices to improve the quality of ECCE including kindergarten was highlighted further during the regional forum organized by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) and the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) (SEAMEO INNOTECH Regional Education Program, 2014).

With the partnership of Australia and the Philippines, an Australian Ambassador emphasized that Australia shares the vision of the Philippine Government to bring the latter's school system closer to international standards through the proper implementation of the K to 12 program (Australian Embassy, 2012). Australia has been supporting the Philippines through the Australian aid program with an estimated amount of \$79.7 million Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the year 2020 (*Development Cooperation Fact Sheet: April 2019*, 2019). Education is one of the priority areas of the Australian aid program to assist the Philippines in attaining an economic and sustainable growth. This assistance is channeled through Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) program (Australian Government: DFAT, 2017) and the recently concluded partnerships with PNU's RCTQ which both prioritized teacher and curriculum development. The long bilateral relationship of the Philippines and Australia provides an

opportunity for the two countries to work together in regional fora such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the East Asia Summit with both countries sharing similar approaches to promote improved regional development and stability (Australian Government: DFAT, 2017).

Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) across the World

Early education is at the foreground of UNICEF's (2015) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 1990 to 2015. Data from the MDG report indicate that despite the significant decrease in the number of out-of-school children from 104 million in 1990 down to 58 million in 2012, children from the poorest families are still far less likely to achieve minimum learning standards than those from the richest.

Participants in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) consultations and dialogues likewise call for a management framework in early education that ensures equitable access to education along with the improvement of its quality (United Nations Development Group, 2013). In the UNDG report, participants underscore that the increase in enrolment rate does not translate automatically to quality education. Besides increasing the enrolment rate, citizens' panels during MDG dialogues call for a framework towards warranting that early education provides meaningful learning experiences that are critical in laying the foundation for later learning.

Quality of early education differs among countries not only because of each country's unique and distinct culture and history, but also because of the differences in policies, monitoring system, funding provided by the government, and whether it is a public or private provision

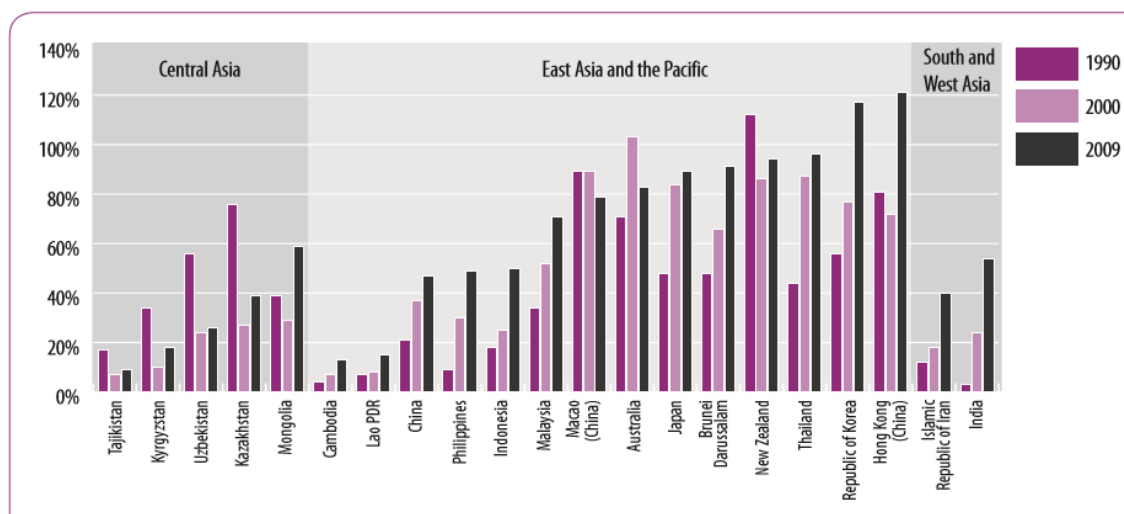
(Lokteff & Piercy, 2012 in Slot, 2018). Slot (2018) argues that countries organize their early education system based on whether a country has a public sector that provides universal access from a certain age, whereas other countries have a private sector for daycare provisions.

Status of Early Education in Asia-Pacific Region

Recognizing the importance of early education, UNESCO conducted a follow-up research on the 1990 World Conference on Education For All (EFA) which is a joint commitment of 155 countries and representatives of 160 government and non-government agencies that implore countries to strengthen efforts to deliver the basic education needs by 2000. The global assessment of EFA progress in 2000 revealed that the Initiative's goals were not met. Thus, the international community reaffirmed its commitment at the World Education Forum in April 2000, in which the expansion of the early childhood care and education was one of the goals. The End of Decade Notes (UNESCO, 2012) compiled progress reports from the Asia-Pacific Region which revealed that there was an increase in the gross enrolment ratios (GER) in kindergarten education in most countries between 2000 and 2009. As shown in Figure 3, East Asia and the Pacific have shown increased in enrolment in almost all countries.

Figure 1

Gross enrolment ratios in pre-primary education: 1990, 2000, and 2009



Note. Ranked by data for 2009. From “Asia-Pacific End of Decade Note on Education For All: EFA Goal 1 Early Childhood Care and Education”, by UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012. Copyright 2012 by UNESCO and UNICEF.

The figures indicate that most countries in the Asia-Pacific Region have given due importance to early education as indicated in the increase of enrolment in 1990 to 2009. Several countries, including the Philippines, have enacted laws governing early childhood. Republic Act No. 8980 (ECCD Act) decreed a comprehensive, multisector and inter-agency policy, and National System for early education. In compliance with the Education for All (EFA) goals which aim to meet the learning needs of all children by 2015 (UNESCO, 2012), Republic Act No. 10157 known as the “Philippine Kindergarten Education Act” was signed into law on January 20, 2012 making kindergarten an integral part of the basic education system in the country. In the same UNESCO (2012) report, Australia is identified one of the leading countries in East Asia and the Pacific in

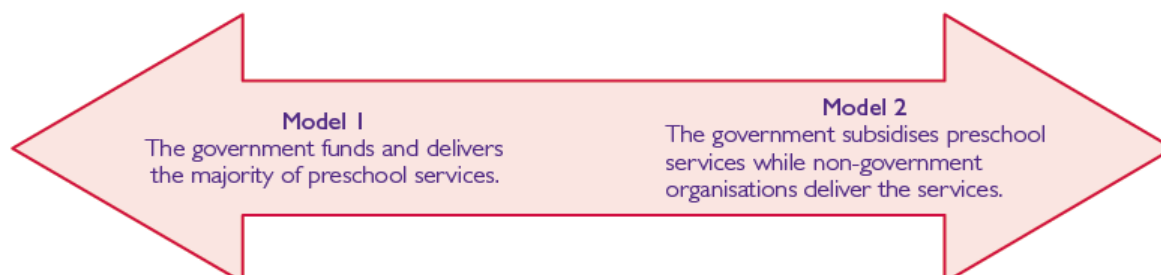
terms of gross enrolment ratios, notwithstanding that kindergarten in Australia remains non-compulsory (*Australian Government: Early Childhood*, 2019).

Australia's Management of Early Education

Early education for five year-old children in Australia is compulsory prior to Year 1 (*Australian Government: Early Childhood*, 2019). Children's education and care is ensured by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), an independent national authority that assists governments in administering the National Quality Framework (*Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority*, 2016). ACECQA's services encompass (a) the implementation of laws and policies that benefit children, from birth to 13 years of age, and their families; (b) monitoring and promoting the consistent application of the Education and Care Services National Law across all states and territories; and (c) supporting the children's education and care sector to improve quality outcomes for children.

In a policy brief about early education in Australia (Dowling & O'Malley, 2009), it was determined that at the time the report was made, Australia's proportion of national income spent on pre-primary education is among the lowest in the developed countries. However, it was envisaged that improvements are underway in compliance with the commitment made through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) that by 2013, all children would have equal access to high quality early education programs 15 hours per week, 40 weeks in a year, in public, private, and community-based early education schools.

In the same report by Dowling and O'Malley (2009), the structure of early education in the country is illustrated in two distinct models.

Figure 2*Structure of Australian Early Education*

Note. The figure shows two distinct models of preschool in Australia. From “Preschool in Australia,” by A. Dowling & K. O’Malley, 2009, *Policy Brief*, 1, p. 1-14. Copyright 2009 by the Parliament of Australia.

Table 1*Government and Non-Government Models in Early Education*

MODEL 1: GOVERNMENT MODEL (WA, SA, TAS, ACT & NT)	MODEL 2: NON-GOVERNMENT MODEL (NSW, VIC & QLD)
The vast majority of preschools are government owned and run. The State government funds these preschools in much the same way as they fund their government schools. The State may provide supplementary funding to community preschools but generally not to preschool programs in LDC.	Most preschools are non-government owned but are subsidized by state and/or local government. Government preschools are few in number and are explicitly targeted at disadvantaged communities, in contrast to government schools, which aim to be comprehensive rather than residual. Preschool programs in LDC are generally funded by the Commonwealth (through the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Tax Rebate) and by parents’ fees.

Note. Retrieved from “Preschool in Australia,” by A. Dowling and K. O’Malley, 2009, *Policy Brief*, 1, p. 1-14. Copyright 2009 by the Parliament of Australia.

Aligned with Model 1 are the following states and territories: Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, The Northern Territory, and The Australian Capital Territory; while the three largest states (New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland) are more aligned with Model 2, which is the non-government model.

The Australian Early Education System

The Australian, State and Territory governments have different but complementary roles in early education (Australian Government Productivity Commission (AGPC), 2019). The AGPC report suggests that the Australian Government provide funding to state and territory governments to support the achievement of universal access to early education through the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood (NP UAECE) in 2018. It likewise provides funding for the implementation of the National Quality Framework through the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (NP NQAECEC). The Australian government recently launched the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy to help reduce the fees paid by parents in kindergarten (*Australian Government: Child Care Package – for Families*, 2018). Financial assistance is provided to parents through the QKFS Plus Kindy Support (Queenslanders, 2018).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) reported that the commitment made with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2013 to improve access to kindergarten was achieved with more than 4 out of 5 four-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten programs.

In Australia, Prep and Kindergarten are used interchangeably depending on the state. It is required prior to Year 1 and the start of the early stage of learning. It is available in most non-state schools.

Philippine Kindergarten Education Act

Kindergarten in the Philippines is mandated by Republic Act No. 10157 known as “Kindergarten Education Act”, an act institutionalizing the kindergarten education into the basic education system in the country. In accordance with the Millennium Development Goals on achieving Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015, equal opportunities were provided to all 5-year old children to avail accessible mandatory and compulsory kindergarten education that effectively promotes physical, social, intellectual, emotional and skills stimulation and values formation to prepare them sufficiently for formal elementary schooling. Also, mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) method is used as medium of instruction.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is authorized by this law to regulate the organization, operation and/or implementation of the kindergarten education program of both public and private schools, through the creation of a new Division under the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE). DepEd, through the BEE, is tasked to exercise authority towards the successful implementation of kindergarten education to include increasing the number of kindergarten teacher positions with the required salaries and benefits, enhancing teacher training in early education, and providing the necessary allocations for classrooms and chairs, facilities and equipment, and textbooks. Likewise, it is commissioned to perform the following:

(a) Oversee and supervise the organization, operation and implementation of the kindergarten education program;

(b) Develop the curriculum for kindergarten education consistent with the universally accepted norms and standards;

(c) Develop teaching strategies using the unique feature of the MTB-MLE ;

(d) Provide a continuing professional development program for kindergarten;

(e) Stipulate the necessary qualifications for the hiring and accreditation of kindergarten teachers;

(f) Exercise authority over the operation of private kindergarten institutions;

(g) Supervise the establishment of various venues for early childhood education which may be institution-based, home-based, hospital-based or community-based, duly accredited by the DepEd; and

(h) Initiate innovative programs in kindergarten including educational technologies.

It is mandated also in this act that the funding for the operationalization of the free, mandatory and compulsory public kindergarten education is charged to the General Fund and included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) Organizational Structure

DepEd's organizational structure is stipulated in DepEd Order No. 52, s. 2015. Organizational strands common to all levels of the Department reflect the similarity of functions and objectives of offices and units:

a. Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary provides overall leadership and direction at the national level.

b. Curriculum and Instruction

This strand ensures the delivery of a relevant, responsive, and effective basic education curriculum around which all other strands and offices provide support.

c. Strategic Management

This strand enables the organization to focus on long-term directions and interface with the internal and external environment and stakeholders.

d. Governance and Operations

This strand ensures that the organization continuously improve and be strategic in managing the environment in which “teaching and learning” takes place.

e. Legal and Legislative Affairs

This strand enables the organization to deal with legal matters and to be proactive in moving forward its legislative agenda.

f. Finance and Administration

This strand ensures the attainment of the organization’s targets through the provision of finance and administrative services.

Research Problems

The 2014 Human Development Report (HDR) explicitly indicated that impediment in early childhood can cause serious ramifications throughout a person’s life, including the chances of holding onto a job, the uncertainties associated with growing older, and the transmission of

vulnerability to the next generation (UNDP, 2014). It emphasized the need for a continuous evaluation of ECCE to be able to craft apposite policy interventions. In addition, HDR 2014 underscored the need for attention and investment in quality ECCE, which advances employment opportunities for the youth and enhances life capabilities of older people.

Since the institutionalization of Philippine Kindergarten in 2011, DepEd has not developed yet a management framework for the country's kindergarten program. To date, the only policy document that consolidates and unifies the various early learning programs of the Philippine government and non-government organizations is the *Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education* (2016).

Thus, the researcher deemed it important to study another country's management of early education program for the advancement of the management program of Philippine Kindergarten. Chosen by the researcher for the study is Australia, a country with long cordial bilateral relations with the Philippines that started in 1946. This relationship has benefitted many sectors including among others cultural, economic, and education. Both Australia and the Philippines share the pursuit of improving Philippine educational system. This study aimed to explore the Philippines and Australia's management of early education programs for five-year old children in a case study approach.

The result was used as basis for crafting a management framework for Philippine kindergarten. Trube (2015) explained the importance of taking into account each society's characteristics so that local communities may be able to modify and adapt agenda, and thus embrace goals reflecting their collective voices. Trube (2015) further postulated that the same is true in the management of kindergarten.

Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. How does the Australian government manage its early education programs for five-year old children?
2. How does the Philippine government manage its early education programs for five-year old children?
3. What management framework is applicable to Philippine Kindergarten based on the management practices of Philippines and Australia in their early education programs for five-year old children?

The above-mentioned problems and research questions had great consideration for the safety and protection of the participants, the research locale, and the researcher. Data gathering imposed flexibility in relation to time, location, and information shared by the participants. The researcher was mindful of setting out the researcher and the participants' roles, including clear boundaries throughout the research relationship. All participants were informed that their views would be respected; that participation was voluntary to ensure informed consent; and that expectations about the outcome and impact of research for individual participants were discussed fully. Likewise, the researcher was mindful also not only of her own safety, the research subjects and the participants, but also of the community and the environment in the conduct of this research.

Theoretical Framework

Progressively, the world is banking on strengthening early childhood care and education to ensure the long term benefits it has on children especially those from disadvantaged society (Barnett & Nores, 2012). Early childhood is the period from birth to eight years old, a time when

brain development is at its peak (UNESCO). This is the time when children are highly susceptible of their learning environment and the people that surround them (UNICEF, 2015). Early education for the five-year old children varies in different countries. In Australia, it is called Prep (<https://education.qld.gov.au/schools-educators/ecec/about-prep>), while in the Philippines it is called Kindergarten (“Republic Act No. 10175,” 2012).

Defining ‘Management’

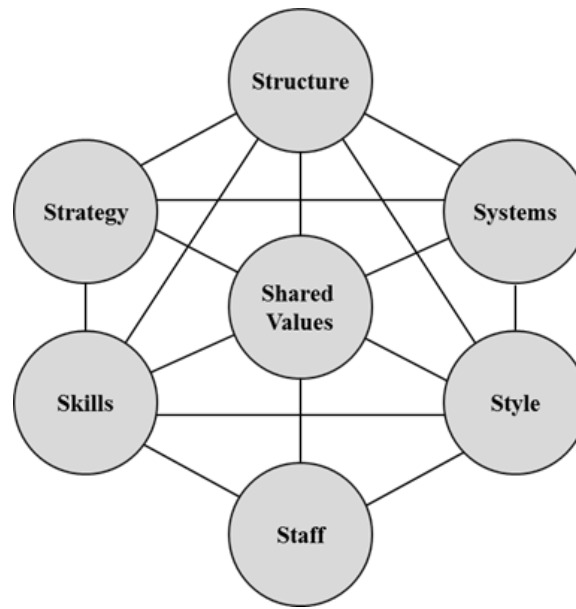
George Terry defines management as a process of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources (Tripathi & Reddy, 2008). This definition outlines the four factors of management: (1) planning; (2) organizing; (3) actuating; and (4) controlling.

Drucker’s (1954, as cited in Makura, 2016) seven conceptual foundations to management encompass Terry’s definition of management. These key elements to management include: (1) scientific management of work as the key to productivity; (2) decentralization as the basic principle of organization; (3) personnel management to fit people into organization structures; (4) manager development; (5) managerial accounting as the basis for decision-making; (6) marketing; and (7) long-term planning.

Likewise, Pascale and Athos’ Seven S Framework (1981, as cited in Kless, 2016) was used by several companies to define what an excellent management is. It comprises the following: (1) shared vision; (2) structure; (3) systems; (4) style; (5) staff; (6) skills; and (7) strategy.

Figure 3

Seven S Framework of Management



Note. The figure was created by Pascale, Athos, Peters and Waterman in 1978 and represents the system that made the Japanese industries successful (as cited in Kless, 2016). From “Overview of the 7S Model”, by E. Kless, 2016. Copyright 2016 by Kless.

Systems Thinking

Peter Senge’s Fifth Discipline called Systems Thinking interconnects all the elements that make an outstanding management system. Systems Thinking is a way of looking at the system in different dimensions and examining the linkages and interactions between the parts that comprise the whole system (Senge, 1994). According to Senge (as cited in Owens & Valesky, 2007), within educational organizations, there are different systems worth emulating: the governance process, impact of particular policies, the labor-management, curriculum development, student approaches,

and staff behavior. The whole system is composed of several entities (processes, practices, and people) and may be broken down into sub-systems (The Institute for Systematic Leadership, n.d.). The boundaries of the whole system may be defined for a chosen purpose such as the education system. Different levels of the system may be examined also on how they operate, such as the different programs of a country's education system.

Considering the current status of the ECCE programs in different countries, each country's improvement plans based on their social, political, cultural and contextual needs are essential. To establish these improvement plans, systems theory explains that every aspect of behavior and structures must be examined and assessed to determine the appropriate action to be taken. Senge stresses the importance of observing and noting how countries successfully implement their programs because they have the systems that are worth emulating. Shukla (2018) asserted in her study that this could lead to reformation of an educational system for its holistic growth and sustainability. Observing the diverse components of quality management's distinct levels is advocated by Systems Thinking Theory (Senge, 2003). This allows researchers to gain insights of the different standpoints in managing kindergarten. Furthermore, AlMusailleem (2012) postulates that equally important system to be managed is the efficient disposal of an organization's resources. A sound educational management, or management of any organization, competently utilizes both materials and human resources.

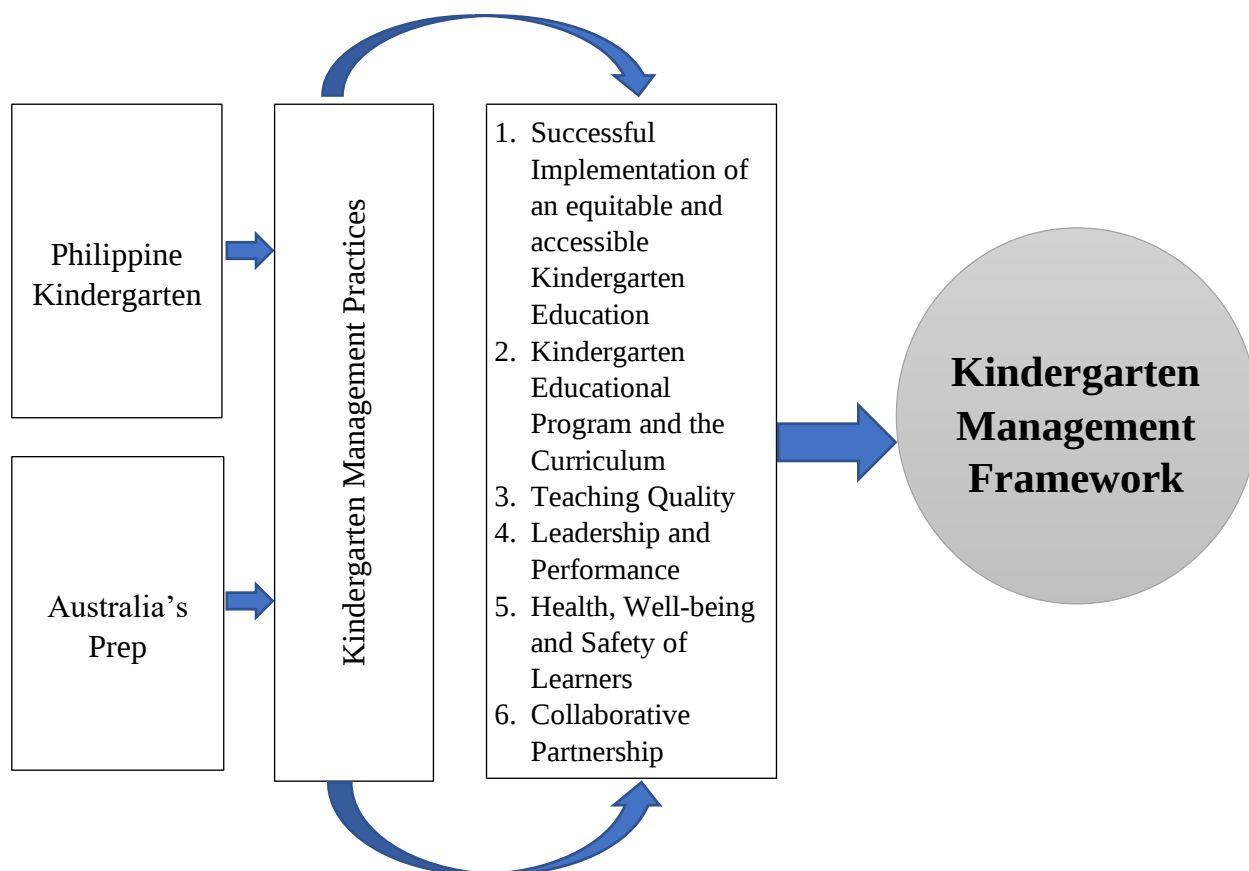
Conceptual Framework

The definition of management in this study is anchored on three management theories – Peter Drucker’s seven conceptual foundations, Pascale and Athos’ 7S Framework, and Peter Senge’s Fifth Discipline called Systems Thinking.

Figure 4 presents the schematic diagram illustrating the theoretical/conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 4

Diagram of the Conceptual Framework



The framework articulates the process on how management of early education in the Philippines and Australia was analyzed thematically that led to the development of a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. Illustratively, management practices of early education programs in Australia and the Philippines were compared to establish similarities and uniqueness and to identify what can be adopted based on the needs and the context of Philippine Kindergarten. The emergent themes for the Kindergarten Management Framework drawn from the management practices of the two countries included (1) Successful Implementation of an equitable and accessible Kindergarten Education; (2) Kindergarten Educational Program and the Curriculum; (3) Teaching Quality; (4) Leadership and Performance; (5) Health, Well-being and Safety of Learners; and (6) Collaborative Partnership. These themes were used as domains of the Kindergarten Management Framework.

Scope and Limitations

This study focused on the management practices of Australian and Philippine early education programs for five-year old children.

Since Australia's early education program varies among states and territories, this study focused on the Prep program of Queensland, Australia as it is one of the three largest states in the country.

Data gathered from the Philippines and Australia were compared and used to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten.

Definition of Terms

To provide common frame of reference, the following terms are defined conceptually and operationally.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). A scope of procedures and components that nurture development in the early years of life: it incorporates education, physical, social, mental and emotional care, including health care and nutrition (UNESCO, n.d.).

Kindergarten. A class or group of children between the age of four (*Queensland Government: Kindy Age Requirement*, 2018) and five years old that are being prepared for formal schooling (“Republic Act No. 10175,” 2012).

Prep. The start of the early stage of learning in Queensland, Australia, which is compulsory prior to Year 1.

Public Schools. Schools in the Philippines that are funded by the government and free to attend.

State Schools. These are government-funded primary schools throughout Queensland, Australia that provide free education from Prep to Year 6.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used in the conduct of this research. It includes the research design and methodology, the research site, the selection criteria and participants, the data collection and analysis, and the role of the researcher. It also includes the methods of validation and the potential ethical issues.

Qualitative Design and Methodology

This is a descriptive-comparative study. A descriptive study is defined by Calderon and Gonzales (1993) as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, trends and cause-effect relationships, and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without the aid of statistical methods.

The description of the management of early education schools for each country is a qualitative research in a case study approach. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research uses an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, gathers data about the study in the field at the site where the participants live, analyzes data in an inductive process, and establishes patterns or themes. He further explained that one of the approaches to inquiry used in a qualitative research is a case study research, which is used to describe the management of kindergarten of each country included in this study.

In comparative study, the case is not observed as a whole and its complexity, but rather a multiplicity of cases with regard to particular excerpts: the specific content of the expert knowledge of a number of people or biographies in respect of a concrete experience (Flick, 2009).

Comparative research is the term widely used to describe studies of societies, countries, cultures, systems, institutions, social structures and change over time and space, when they are carried out with the intention of using the same research tools to compare systematically the manifestations of phenomena in more than one temporal or spatial socio-cultural setting (Hantrais, 2009). It is a helpful approach to identifying similarities and differences between cases in a dataset (Harding, 2013). Harding also specified that a helpful approach to conducting a comparative research is to divide the process into three steps. These are: (1) making a list of similarities and differences between the first two cases to be considered; (2) amending the list as further cases are added to the analysis (the third step is done immediately after the first); and (3) identifying research findings once all the cases have been included in the analysis.

Research Site

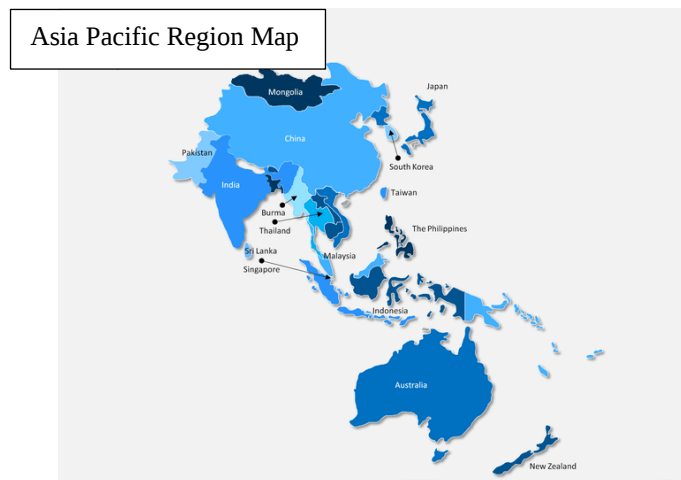
Philippines and Australia served as the locale of this study. Most data were collected from the Department of Education of each country. Both countries are located in the Asia-Pacific Region, which is made up of a collection of countries located in or near the Western Pacific Ocean. This region is known also as Asia-Pac, AsPac or simply APAC. Because there is no clear definition of the Asia Pacific region, the region varies by context. Generally, though, it is a term used to describe countries throughout East and South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania (World Population Review, 2019).

APAC countries are used to describe the region that includes the following nations in Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, British Indian Ocean Territory, Brunei, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Far East, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

In Oceania, APAC countries and regions include: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Easter Island, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wake Island, Wallis, and Futuna. (<http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/regioninfo.html>).

Figure 5

Map of Asia Pacific Region



Note. The map of the Asia Pacific Region shows the location of Australia and Philippines. (<https://www.sketchbubble.com/en/powerpoint-asia-pacific-map.html>). Copyright 2020 by SketchBubble.Com.

Selection Criteria and Participants

This study includes two countries from Asia Pacific region – Philippines and Australia. They were chosen because both countries reaffirmed their commitment to the World Education Forum in April 2000 (UNESCO, 2012) to improve their kindergarten programs. Moreover, Australia and the Philippines have a long bilateral partnership with Australian aid program committing Php235 million for research activities and policy recommendations on improving the quality of education in the country, particularly the K to 12 Program (Australian Embassy, 2012). The Philippine Government itself considers Australia as its preferred partner in bringing exceptional quality technical expertise to basic education reform (Australian Government: DFAT, 2017). This bilateral relationship and sharing of vision on Philippine education is the basis of the researcher in making Australia's Kindergarten Program a part in developing a Management Framework for Philippine Kindergarten. The officials and staff of the Departments of Education of the Philippines and Australia are the sources of data in addition to the data available in each ministry's website.

In Queensland, Australia, permission was sought to interview the manager of the curriculum and early years, Assistant Director-General of the Strategic Policy and Inter-Governmental Relations, a Filipino parent, an Australian parent, and a teacher; also, there were participants from the early years who were interviewed through email. In the Philippines, the Education Program Specialist in charge of Kindergarten from DepEd Central Office, the Education Program Supervisor for Kindergarten from one of the division offices of DepEd, teachers, and parents were interviewed. They were chosen because they are involved directly in the management of early education programs for five-year old children of each country and can comprehensively

discuss, address, and validate the two research questions. There were several interviewees from each country especially in the Philippines as it is more convenient and economical to reach out to the participants. According to Lichtman (2013), there are no hard rules about how many participants should be involved in a qualitative research. Most qualitative research studies use few number of individuals, and still cover material in depth.

Table 2

Number of Respondents from Australia

Respondents	Number of Respondents
DoE Officers	2
Parents	2
Teacher	1
Total	5

Table 3

Number of Respondents from Philippines

Respondents	Number of Respondents
DepEd ECE Administrators	4
Parents	2
Teachers	12
Total	5

Data Collection

Following Creswell's data collection procedure, the following stages were undertaken:

Phase I –Pre-Data Gathering, Selection Criteria, and Participants.

The researcher sought permission and endorsement from Philippine Normal University (PNU) to conduct this study. With the endorsement from PNU, she sought permission from the Department of Education of Queensland, Australia through Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI). Upon the review and approval of QERI of the researcher application, she was endorsed to the manager of curriculum and early years in Queensland and was given permission to go there for an interview. She also sought permission to visit and observe different schools. There were five interviewees in Queensland, including the manager of the curriculum and the early years, parents, and a teacher. Another participant from the early years, the Assistant Director-General of the Strategic Policy and Inter-Governmental Relations, communicated through emails.

For the Philippines, the researcher sought the permission of the Department of Education through the office of the DepEd Secretary to conduct interviews with the personnel involved in the management of kindergarten. A separate letter asking permission to interview teachers was submitted also; consequently, it was approved by the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of Angeles City.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify the participants of the study. According to Creswell, purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select intentionally the participants of the study. It also applies with the selection of sites where the study was conducted.

Phase II –Actual Data Gathering

Before the researcher went to Australia for the interview, she was already in communication through emails with different people involved in the management of the early years. Frameworks used for the management of the early years were sent already. Websites of the

DoE also provided important data. The interview with the participants lasted for 30 minutes to an hour with the permission of the interviewees. In Queensland, the manager of the curriculum and the early years and the teacher were interviewed together, and they explained the frameworks they are using.

In the Philippines, policies of Kindergarten Management are found in DepEd Orders. Curriculum specialists from DepEd were interviewed to explain how these DepEd Orders are implemented. Kindergarten teachers and parents were interviewed also to give their insights on how they perceived kindergarten management in the country. The researcher also observed how early years in public schools are managed.

The results of the observations, interviews and gathering of documents were organized to address the research questions:

1. How does the Australian government manage its early education programs for five-year old children?
2. How does the Philippine government manage its early education programs for five-year old children?

After the data organization based on the research questions, the researcher developed a description of the observations supported by forms of data including interviews, observations, and documents. Recording data is an essential part of a qualitative research. In using observations and interviews for data collection, the researcher used forms called data recording protocols that she designed.

Phase III –Data Analysis

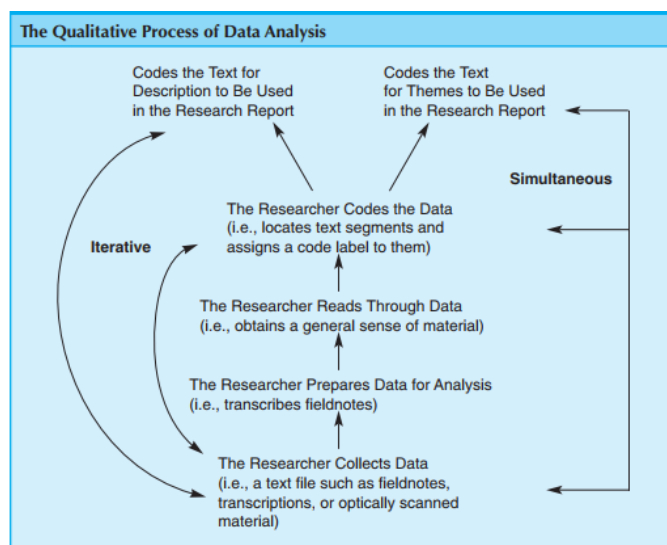
According to Creswell (2007), data analysis in a qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or discussion.

The researcher started the process with data management. This was done by organizing the data into file folders and computer files. In addition to the organization of the files, the researcher converted the files to text units for analysis. After the organization of the data, the researcher continued the analysis by looking at the database as a whole by writing short phrases, ideas, or key concepts in the margin of field notes, transcripts, and other documents. Major organizing ideas were then identified in this process by looking at the data gathered from interviews, observations, physical trace evidence, audio and visual images, and reflected on the wider perspectives presented in the data to form initial categories. The data gathered were analyzed further through coding. According to Creswell, coding process is dividing the text data into segments, and labeling these segments with codes. Then the codes are categorized into broad themes. Part of this process was selecting the data relevant to the themes that emerged.

Since this study used a case study approach in comparing the two countries, the researcher established patterns and looked for a correspondence between two or more categories in the form of a table to show relationship of the categories or display data from individual cases so that similarities and differences among the cases may be identified. Finally, the researcher developed naturalistic generalizations to apply to a population of cases.

Figure 6

The Qualitative Process of Data Analysis



Note. This is an inductive form of analysis, going from particular to general codes and themes. Reprinted from *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed., pg. 237) by J. Creswell, 2012, Pearson. Copyright 2012 by John Creswell.

Shown in Table 4 and 5 is the sample of thematic coding procedures employed in this study.

Table 4

Sample 1 of Themes/Patterns among Codes and Sub-Categories

THEME	SUB-CATEGORIES	QLD, AUSTRALIA CODING	PHILIPPINES CODING
Successful implementation of an equitable and accessible early education	Compulsory Equal access to quality education	Prep as pre-requisite to Year 1 Indigenous students can participate fully and acquire	Compulsory Kindergarten education No collection policy to ensure Education for All

Successful implementation of early education	the competencies in the curriculum Every student's success is the school's success	Equitable access to technology
	Early intervention to ensure success	Ensure a successful implementation of Kindergarten education

Table 5

Sample 2 of Themes/Patterns among Codes and Sub-Categories

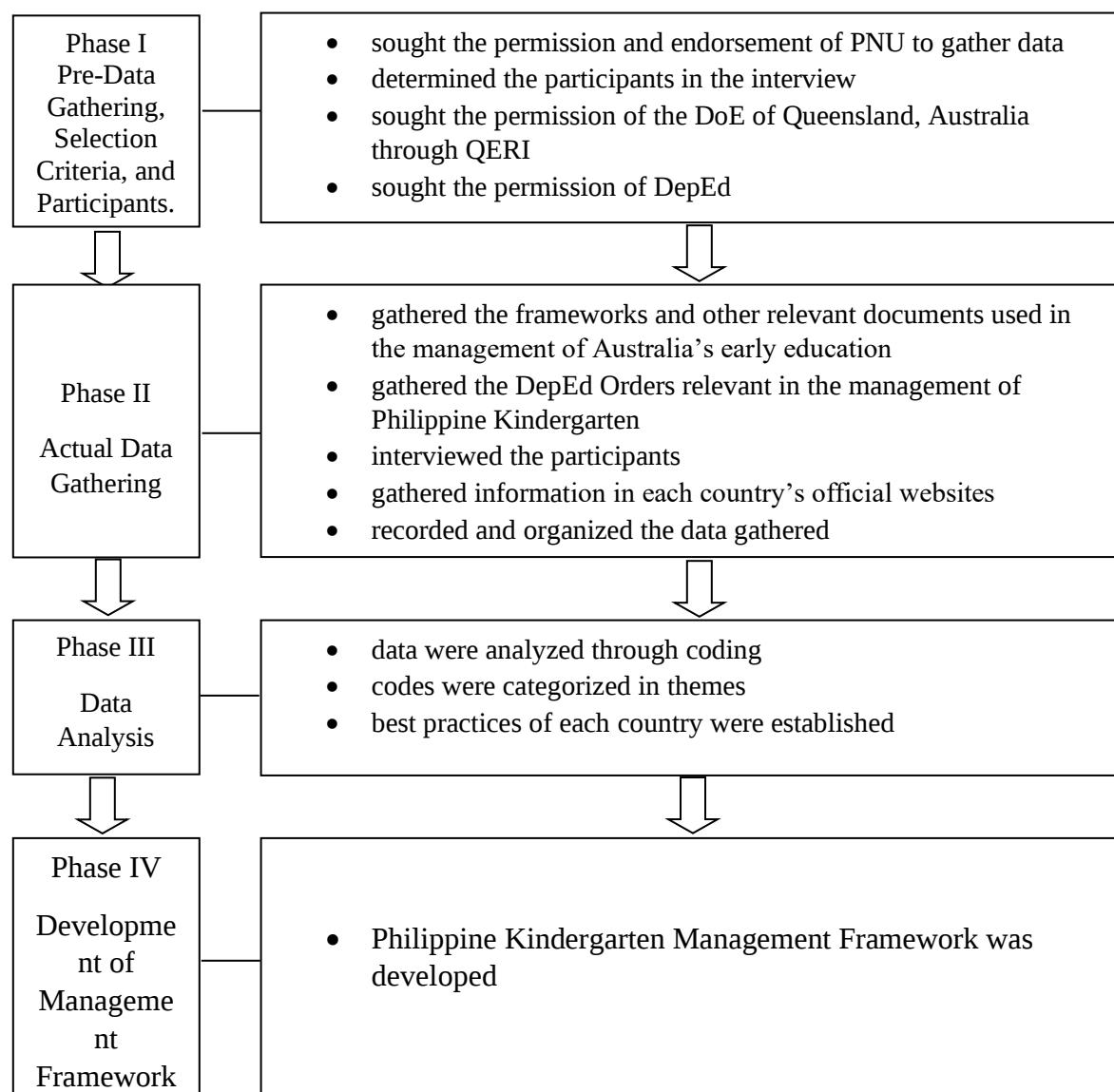
THEME	SUB-CATEGORIES	QLD, AUSTRALIA CODING	PHILIPPINES CODING
Collaborative Partnership	Parents and community engagement	Parents are trained to support learner's literacy and numeracy skills Community needs are basis of decision- making Parent and community engagements that cater to a diverse and respectful relationship among stakeholders Schools assess their parent and community engagement Parent/carer-teacher conversations are opportunities to update and reflect about the progress and diverse background of the students	Stakeholder's support Vital role of families and communities in child development

Phase IV – Development of Management Framework

Based on the data gathered, the researcher developed a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten.

Figure 7

Flow Chart of Data Collection Procedure



Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell (2007), the role of the qualitative researcher begins with making philosophical assumptions that the inquirers make in deciding to undertake a qualitative research. The researcher refers to his or her own worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs in conducting and writing a qualitative study. Good research requires making these worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs explicit in the study and that they influence the conduct of the study.

The researcher is the primary instrument of the data collection and analysis (Lichtman, 2013). Data and information are collected, settings are viewed, and realities are constructed through the eyes and ears of the researcher. Creswell (2007) added that the researcher uses interpretative and theoretical frameworks to shape further the study. The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, rather than handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer. During data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analyzing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied.

Being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in a qualitative research, the researcher is influenced by her experience, knowledge, skill, and background and biases of the human instrument that might influence the study (Lichtman, 2013). However, Lichtman (2013) argued that bias could be eliminated or controlled by careful work, triangulation, and multiple sources.

Methods of Validation

To assess the quality of this study, the researcher followed Creswell's criteria:

(a) The researcher employed rigorous data collection procedures such as gathering of documents, interviews, audio and visual materials, and emails. In Queensland, most of the important documents pertaining to their early education program for five-year old children are published in their websites. There were also several frameworks provided pertaining to the management of the early years. Also, data from interviews were validated through these frameworks and the content of websites. In the Philippines, mandates in the management of kindergarten are found in DepEd Orders. These DepEd Orders are published also in the website of the Department of Education.

(a)Two (2) experts in early childhood and two (2) experts in educational management validated the interview questions. The researcher conducted test runs using the interview questions to ensure that they would elicit the information and data essential in the study.

(b) The data derived from the interviews and documents provided were analyzed using multiple levels of abstraction – from particular to general. Thematic analysis was employed to find repeated patterns of meaning across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

(c) The researcher ensured that the research was ethical and was conducted according to the ethical standards of Philippine Normal University, QERI, and the Data Privacy Act of the Philippines. Informed consent was given before each interview and was explained to the participants. In Queensland, the interviewees from DoE did not allow the audio recording of the interview, but referred to their websites and frameworks for the validation of the data they provided.

(d) The results of the interview were organized and were presented to the participants for comments and suggestions. Members checking was employed to ensure the validity of the results.

Data were sent back to the participants to check for accuracy and significance based on their experiences. According to Birt et al. (2016), if participants are involved in the interpretation of data, trustworthiness of the results is enhanced.

The researcher then proceeded with writing the management framework, findings, and conclusions of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The main purpose in conducting this study was to determine the management practices of Philippines and Australia in their early education programs of five-year old children. The best practices of each country served as the basis for the development of a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. It was not the intention of the researcher to demean the management practices of any of the countries in this study.

Before commencing data collection, the researcher sought the approval from each country's Department of Education through a letter. In Queensland, Australia, the permit to conduct study was secured from Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI). In the Philippines, permit was sought from the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) with recommendations from the Office of the Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs, External Partnerships and Project Management Service.

In the letter, it was explained that primary and secondary data gathered for this study would be used to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. Consent from each respondent was obtained and appropriate permission was ensured for the use of their given data.

The respondents' identities were not disclosed and audio or video recordings were obtained only when given permission. All data were securely stored and were used only in accordance with the requirements of the study.

Since traveling to Australia was financially challenging, the researcher utilized the internet in conducting online data search. Management frameworks were provided already by the Department of Education (DoE) of Queensland even before the researcher went there. Online interview through emails to gather data not covered during the visit in the country was done as well.

The data gathering has been overtaken by the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, interviews with the DepEd personnel and some teachers were done also through emails to ensure the safety of everyone.

No child was involved in the conduct of this study. The visits in the schools were merely to observe. The researcher also consulted the Blue Card Services of Queensland, the regulatory agency that ensures the safety and protection of children from any harm, as regards any permit needed. Since the researcher did not interact with the children in the schools, the permit from this agency was no longer sought.

After the conduct of the study, the researcher planned to discuss and share to DepEd the findings and results of data gathered. A copy would be provided also to Queensland's DoE as part of the terms and conditions stated in the permit.

Chapter III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, interprets, and analyzes the results of the study. First, it discusses the policy framework and management practices of the two countries for the early education of five-year old children. Second, it presents the proposed management framework for Philippine Kindergarten.

I. Ensuring successful implementation of an equitable and accessible early education.

A. The Case of Australia

Five-year old children in Australia attend Prep as the first year of school. It serves as the foundation for young children's education. Prep is a full-time program and is compulsory prior to taking Year 1 (Queensland Department of Education, 2019).

Prep was introduced into Queensland Schools in 2007 and became prerequisite to Year 1 since then. It is the start of the early stage of learning which extends until Year 2. It is available in all Queensland State Schools and most private schools offering primary program.

“Policies are crafted based on the assessment of the school performances and research. There are seats across state for the people involved in crafting the policies. They are led by the Minister of Education, the Director General of the DoE and the Deputy Director General who handles the vision of the implementation and continuous improvement of the policies.”

Every student succeeding – State Schools Strategy is the shared vision of Queensland State schools (Queensland Department of Education, 2017). To realize this, every student is given the support to belong in the school community, to engage purposely in learning, and to experience academic success. The required support is identified in regional and school planning. Queensland aims to improve the performance of each State school student, teacher, and principal. The Every Student Succeeding State Schools Strategy is implemented starting in the Prep year in Queensland State Schools.

The strategy provides an overview of the improvement agenda and identifies the key elements schools are using to enhance improvement across the system to enable student to succeed (Queensland Department of Education, 2020b). To implement this strategy according to the local context, schools are guided with a school improvement model.

The focus of Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy includes:

Intentional collaboration. Stakeholders work together to address challenges encountered, measure impact, build expertise, and accelerate statewide improvement in student outcome.

Successful learners. Students engage in learning and achievement, and successfully transition from early childhood into schooling and from schooling to further education, training and employment. This is done by knowing the learners through a close monitoring of learners' progress, attendance, behavior, retention, and attainment strategies for continuous improvement. Early intervention is implemented if necessary. Guided by the Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework, Inclusive Education Policy and the Disability Standards for Education, 2005, an inclusive culture of engagement is created which responds to the students' needs and interests. Learners are provided also with opportunities to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills,

and critical and creative thinking across all curricula, which ultimately aim for the development of global citizens and entrepreneurs.

Teaching quality. Teachers employ high quality, evidence-based practices, and are focused on success for every student. They must possess an in-depth understanding of the Australian curriculum that aims to improve the literacy and numeracy achievement of the learners across all learning areas; and are committed to implement the P-12 curriculum, assessment, and reporting framework. Teachers are expected also to implement and monitor the school-wide use of a research-validated pedagogical framework. Professional development of teachers is based on collaborative enquiry-based professional learning, coaching, mentoring and feedbacking, and an annual performance review process.

Principals' leadership and performance. School leaders drive school improvement and student achievement. The qualities and qualifications of principals in Queensland are lifted from the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. Principals are expected to be instructional leaders that warrant an inclusive school-wide curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and instructional leadership model. They are expected to espouse professionalism and leadership of oneself and teachers by leading in evidence-based inquiries to improve professional practices in accordance with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. They also conduct student-centered professional learning communities that are focused on building inclusive and collaborative cultures and foster accountability.

School performance. The school's success is measured by the improvement and advancement of every student. This is determined using the School Improvement Planning Guide. Data and evidences are gathered and assessed as basis of improvement plan. Such improvement agenda is

accelerated using the School Improvement Model and School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework. Stakeholders of the school work within and across schools to improve student achievement.

Regional support. Regions focus in supporting performance and outcome in the early years and across the stages of schooling using a deep understanding of schools' needs to determine the kind of support they provide. The regional support provided to schools are initiated and periodically reviewed to determine its impact on student achievement. Participant A said, *"On a local level, schools are assessed based on the standards of DoE; in Queensland, the DoE collects data that will be evaluated as basis for improvement."* Participant also added, *"The School Improvement Unit conducts school reviews every four (4) years using the nine (9) domains of the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)."*

Local decision making. Schools ensure that community needs are the bases for the decision-making processes, autonomy and accountability. School governance groups work together to achieve this to be able to make better decisions, continually improve, and innovate.

"State Schools Improvement Strategy is critical in the management of Prep because it advocates inclusion and sense of belonging. If these are achieved, learners become more engaged and optimal learning and wellbeing is acquired. Consistency of the curriculum delivery is at the heart of the policies and management of the Prep including assessment."

"Policies are communicated through schools; website of the DoE and State schools."

“The DoE constantly strive to align programs to achieve its goals for the learners. Several guiding principles found in the State Schools Strategy are constantly reviewed to ensure continuous improvement through precision, alignment, intentional collaboration. The Every Student Succeeding Framework is the heart of this strategy.”

State schools have a commonly referenced procedures related to school management to meet all legal responsibilities and comply with relevant standards and procedures.

Class schedule. Prep is a full-time program that children attend from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. One parent said, *“Hindi pwede ang late pumasok sa school. Kapag late ka kahit five minutes, pupunta ka sa guidance para humingi ng late slip. Di ba ang galing parang college, tinetrain na talaga sila sa time management.”*

[“If a child comes in late for class, even for five minutes only, the child has to go to the Guidance office to secure a late slip. It’s a good way of training the child in time management.”]

The parent furtherly explained that the Guidance Office supports the school in training the learners on how to manage their time. She emphasized how happy she is that her children are now independent and are mindful of their responsibilities at their age.

School Dress Code. Dress codes are decided in each school in consultation with the community. They are based on community standards, affordability, and safety. Schools have the option to have a school uniform. The dress code guides the students and parents on what students must wear while attending or representing the school, which includes footwear, headwear and other items of personal appearance. All students are expected to comply with the dress code of the

school or they may not be allowed to join school activities due to safety reasons. Financial difficulty for paying school uniform is referred to the State school for assistance.

School Fees. Schools may charge fees for some activities including distance education programs. Schools may also charge fees for students who live outside the catchment area. In Queensland, catchment area is the geographical location where a State school's core intake of students must live. For some schools, parents pay for AUD 90/year to cover expenses for some school materials such as worksheets. For those having difficulty paying schools fees, they may contact their State school for assistance.

“Meron din sila binabayaran sa Prep, ako dahil working visa ako, I only pay AUD90, whole year, para sa mga stationeries, photocopies, wala na kc silang mga books, puro worksheets na lang.”

“Pero ang mahal dito ay ang uniform...aabot ng AUD500 for three sets kasama ang mga hats, kumpleto na yun, may bag, polo shirts, shorts...particular sila sa hat, lalo na summer, kailangan silang magsuot ng hat.”

[A Filipino who works in Australia and parent of a Prep pupil shared, *“There are fees to be paid in Prep also. Since I am on a working visa, I only pay AUS90, whole year, for stationeries and photocopying expenses since they no longer have books, only worksheets. What is expensive here are the uniforms. You spend around AUD500 for three complete sets that include bag, polo shirts and shorts. They are very*

particular on the hats especially during summer, students have to wear hats.”]

Voluntary Financial Contributions. To improve resources for student learning, recreation and comfort, schools may ask parents for voluntary financial contributions, provided that it is explained thoroughly to parents on how the funds are to be used. The amount for voluntary financial contributions is agreed on by the school principal, staff, and Parents and Citizens Association (P&C).

“Ang klase ng Prep ay 8:45 to 3:00pm, tapos may break sila, first is snack and lunch, they have Tuckshops, parang canteen, meron silang mga menu kung ano yung gusto mo na lunch, mag-order ka through online download mo lang yung app, kailangan kang mag-order 30 minutes before the cut-off, ako ang mag-oorder so control ko kung ano kakainin nila. Mahal din, ang isang meal AUD4.00 pero everyday iba-iba ang menu nila, pero healthy talaga. Dapat meron silang mga fruits na baon, bawal ang mga junk foods, pinakaimportante ang fruits, kailangan may dadalhin kang fruit sa school every day, kasi meron silang fruit break.”

“Pag may babayaran they will email you, example sa camping. They are more on physical activities, they will send you the choices like dancing, yoga, extracurricular ito na may bayad.

[“Prep class is from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. They have breaks for snacks and lunch. They have tuck shops similar to a canteen where they have a menu and one can order lunch online using an app. You have to

place your order 30 minutes before the cut-off. I place the orders for my kids so I control what they will be eating. It's also expensive. One meal costs AUD4. But everyday they have a different set of menus consisting of healthy food. The children are also required to bring fruits every day because they have fruit break. Junk foods are prohibited.

“If there are fees to be paid, the school will email you. For example, fee for camping. Since physical activities are encouraged, the school will send you choices for your child's extracurricular activities like dancing, yoga, etc. These are to be paid.”]

B. The Case of Philippines

Kindergarten in the Philippines is mandated by Republic Act No. 10157 known as “Kindergarten Education Act”, an act institutionalizing the kindergarten education into the basic education system in the country. It is mandatory for all five-year old children to avail of compulsory kindergarten education for entrance to Grade 1. It effectively promotes physical, social, intellectual, emotional and skills stimulation, and values formation to sufficiently prepare them for formal elementary schooling.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is authorized by this law to regulate the organization, operation, and/or implementation of the kindergarten education program of both public and private schools, through the creation of a new Division under the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE).

DepEd, through the BEE, is tasked to exercise authority towards the successful implementation of kindergarten education to include increasing the number of kindergarten teacher positions with the required salaries and benefits, enhancing teacher training in early education, and providing the necessary allocations for classrooms and chairs, facilities and equipment, and textbooks. Likewise, it is commissioned to perform the following:

- (a) Oversee and supervise the organization, operation, and implementation of the kindergarten education program;
- (b) Develop the curriculum for kindergarten education consistent with the universally accepted norms and standards; and
- (c) Develop teaching strategies using the unique feature of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).

The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) derives its legal basis from Republic Act No. 10523, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 enacted on May 15, 2013. Section 2 (c) of the law stipulates that it is the policy of the State to “make education learner-oriented and responsive to the needs, cognitive and cultural capacity, the circumstances and diversity of learners, schools and communities through the appropriate languages of teaching and learning, including mother tongue as a learning resource.”

With the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, learners start their education in their mother tongue or the first language learned by a child. The use of the mother tongue in the first years of a child’s schooling encourages the child to participate actively in the learning process—they articulate what they know. With the development of a strong foundation in the mother language, the medium of instruction transitions to Pilipino and English.

According to DepEd, research stresses the fact that children with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. The use of mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches in education is being promoted also by UNESCO as an important factor for inclusion and quality in education.

- (a) Provide a continuing professional development program for kindergarten;
- (b) Stipulate the necessary qualifications for the hiring and accreditation of kindergarten teachers;
- (c) Exercise authority over the operation of private kindergarten institutions;
- (d) Supervise the establishment of various venues for early childhood education which may be institution-based, home-based, hospital-based or community-based, and which shall be duly accredited by the DepEd; and,
- (e) Initiate innovative programs in kindergarten including educational technologies.

DepEd's Central Office is responsible for crafting the programs for Kindergarten education. Implementation of the programs in various schools is being monitored by the Schools Division Office.

Class schedule. Each class is for three hours where there is a 1:1 teacher-classroom ratio. For classrooms where 3-4 sessions of kindergarten classes are held, each class lasts for 2.5 hours.

School Dress Code. Pursuant to DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2008, wearing of school uniform is not required so as to remove all obstacles, specifically financial, to the enrolment of the learners. Existing school uniforms may be used still if desired. Likewise, school identification (ID) cards are provided by the school from the funds of the MOOE.

School Fees. DepEd Order No. 19, s. 2008 stipulates the implementation of no collection policy in all public schools to remove all obstacles to the enrolment of school-age children. In carrying out the mandate of the Philippine Constitution of free education to meet the targets of Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the removal of out-of-pocket expenses of families in sending their children to school is strictly implemented.

Voluntary Financial Contributions. Specified in the cited DepEd Order, voluntary contributions may be collected starting on the second month of classes for grade levels beyond Grade 4 for Boy/Girl Scouts membership, Red Cross Membership, Anti-TB Fund Drive, Parents, Teachers, and Community Association (PTCA), School Publication, and Membership in student organizations.

In an interview with a teacher, she opined that one of the best practices of DepEd is ensuring that even the marginalized have access to education. This is aligned with the target of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to wit: ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education.

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries in the Implementation of an Equitable and Accessible Early Education

Table 6

Implementation of Accessibility and Equity in Early Education in the Philippines and Australia

Country	Australia	Philippines
Age Requirement	5-year old	5-year old
	Mandatory	Mandatory
Fees	Free in State Schools	Free in Public Schools

Learners Policy Framework and Standards of Management	Prep Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy	Kindergarten Republic Act No. 10157 “Kindergarten Education Act”
	- Intentional Collaboration - Successful Learners - Teaching Quality - Principal Leadership and Performance - School Performance - Regional Support - Local Decision Making	- Implementation of Kindergarten Education Program - Development Kindergarten Curriculum - Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education - Professional Development for Kindergarten Teachers - Qualifications of Kindergarten Teachers - Innovative Programs

Both countries provide equitable access to early education for free in state and public schools. Although they differ in their strategies of implementation, they both endeavor to provide quality early education in terms of the success of the learners, professional development of teachers, and implemented programs.

Queensland, Australia is more specific in its target agenda to make the program successful. The Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy serves as a school improvement model in the implementation of programs involving all the stakeholders of the schools. One unique feature of this program is that digital equity is ensured where learners and parents have equal access to technology and thus communicate using different media platforms.

The Philippine Kindergarten Education Act and other issued DepEd Orders and Memoranda are the basis of program implementation of kindergarten. It is helpful, however, if

there is a unifying framework for all the programs of the government in terms of managing the Kindergarten program in the Philippines.

II. Kindergarten Educational Program and Curriculum

A. Essential Features of Prep Program and Curriculum

Prep provides the foundation for children's success at school by developing the knowledge, understanding and skills detailed in the Australian Curriculum for English, and Humanities and Social Sciences (history and geography), Health and Physical Education, Languages, Mathematics, Sciences, Technologies, and The Arts. All these learning areas are geared toward the development of literacy and numeracy skills as the general capabilities. A positive approach to learning is employed to develop every child's independence and confidence through the development of their creativity and problem-solving skills and physical abilities in a play-based and enquiry-based approach. The parent participant said, *"Definitely more on Arts sila, at nagpofocus sila particularly sa English at Mathematics. Meron silang EALD para sa mga anak ko na galing sa Pilipinas. Dalawa ang teacher sa Prep, isang teacher at isang assistant."*

["They are more on Arts and focus on English and Mathematics. They provide sessions on EALD for my children coming from the Philippines. There are two teachers in Prep, one an assistant teacher."]

In Prep, teachers support children's learning by making connections between school and their experiences at home, kindergarten or childcare. They provide opportunities to children to make decisions, solve problems, develop thinking skills, collaborate, communicate and develop a positive sense of self.

Children also learn about negotiating rights, roles and responsibilities, and developing social skills for working and playing with others. Inclusiveness is given emphasis where respect for diverse social and cultural practices of people in their community is taught to develop learners who have understanding of multiple perspectives and of other cultures. Prep children are trained to make healthy choices, are encouraged to experiment with materials in a variety of creative, imaginative and innovative ways, to appreciate music and movement and make technology part of everyday learning, all of which aim to develop children's global competency.

The Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum aims to develop students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The primary users of the curriculum are the teachers. It is written in simple language for easy comprehension and efficient implementation in and across learning areas. (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/structure/>)

The Australian Curriculum is described as a three-dimensional curriculum that consists of (a) disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; (b) general capabilities; and (c) cross-curriculum priorities.

Figure 8

The Three Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum



Note. Reprinted from *The Three Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum*.

(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/structure/>). Copyright 2010 by

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (**ACARA**).

Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding. Disciplinary knowledge, skills, and understanding are found in the eight (8) learning areas of the Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, and Languages. Content descriptions of what students will learn are specified in each learning area or subject. Content descriptions of each learning area or subjects stipulate what the students will learn and what skills and knowledge are expected of them at the end of each year level.

English Curriculum for the Foundation Year (Prep) (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016). The English curriculum is composed of three (3) strands: language, literature, and literacy. Language is acquiring knowledge about the English language, and how it has changed over centuries due to historical and geographical differences of its users. Acquiring knowledge and skills in spelling and grammar rules is part of aims of this curriculum. It likewise aims to help students develop their communication skills to become effective and coherent with well-structured sentences and texts. Language development also aims to make students understand certain characteristics of English. (1) Language variation and changes – students learn that language is evolving constantly due to historical, social, and cultural changes, immigration and technological advancement. (2) Language for interaction – students learn that language is used according to social setting and the relationship of individuals. (3) Text structure and organization – students learn that text structure and organization depends on the purpose and the goal that the communicator wants to achieve. It helps students understand that a texts present ideas that help their comprehension. (4) Expressing and developing ideas – students realize that texts are organized for specific purposes. (5) Phonics and word knowledge – students are trained to develop phonemic awareness which is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. Students' skills in connecting sounds (phonemes) and letters (graphemes) are developed to enhance their reading skills. Literature, on the other hand, helps students develop their understanding of other cultures, and awareness and understanding of cultural differences by reading extensive literary texts and by creating their own. It in turn helps students enhance their skills in using texts for different purposes that bring profound effects to the listeners or readers. The third strand, literacy, includes reading, writing, listening, and sounding with the purpose of

using these skills in their day-to-day life through different media and the information-rich environment. Students acquire literacy for different purposes – use for everyday and workplace texts; manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of information; design and share information for global communities; and hone language development for academic purposes.

The range of literacy texts for the Foundation year encompasses Australian literature including oral narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples, as well as contemporary world literature. Literary text supports the Prep students as beginner readers through decodable and predictable texts in books. Information texts contain familiar topics of interest, language features, both common and high-frequency vocabularies that can be decoded phonically, and combined with illustrations that support the printed texts.

By the end of the Foundation Year, Prep students are expected to perform simple analysis of texts. They are able to note explicit details from texts that are familiar to them. They can read simple words that are supported by images to advance comprehension. They are expected also to have acquired phonemic awareness, which is the basis for word reading and comprehension. They exhibit confidence as they retell events and experiences with peers and adults. They can write familiar words and phrases and draw images to convey ideas.

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum – My Personal World (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016b). The Prep HASS curriculum aims to develop Prep students' understanding for personal and family histories and their own places. They are encouraged to explore places that have connection with them and those that they awake their curiosity. They are encouraged also to compare places by identifying similarities and differences, taking special attention to how people take care of their own places. Through this

knowledge, it is the aim of the Australian Curriculum to develop active citizens who value their heritage and own identity as a nation.

The content of HASS provides opportunities for students to acquire key concepts on humanities and social sciences, which are found in two (2) strands: knowledge and understanding where the sub-strands history and geography are found; and inquiry skills. In the history sub-strand, Prep students develop historical understanding of their families and familiar people by comparing the past and the present, the significance of the past and the present in their lives, and how people differ in commemorating special events throughout the history. Furthermore, the geography sub-strand trains students to explore the place they live in to develop an appreciation of the place where they belong. They also learn to describe and determine its special features and foster a positive attitude towards it by identifying what makes it unique and special and how they can help preserve and care for the environment.

By the end of the Foundation Year, Prep students exhibit familiarity of important events in their lives and are able to describe why their places are special. They understand and participate in commemorating important events that have shaped the history of their country and sequence these events in correct order.

Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016b). The curriculum for Health and Physical Education trains students to live a healthy, safe, and active life. They are taught to become aware of their personal strength, name parts of their body, and tell how these parts change and develop as they grow. Students are trained also to be respectful of others when participating in different physical

activities, especially through play and structured movement activities that promote engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment.

The focus areas of Health and Physical Education in Prep include: (a) safe use of medicines; (b) food and nutrition; (c) health benefits of physical activity; (d) mental health and well-being; (e) relationships; (f) active play and minor games; (g) fundamental movement skills; and (h) rhythmic and expressive movement activities.

By the end of the Foundation Year, Prep students are expected to understand that as they grow, one's body is changing also. They are expected to recognize the role of Health and Physical Education on their own, of other people, and of society's well-being. They develop a positive and responsible attitude on themselves and of others in terms of safety and health as they perform fundamental movement skills and solve movement challenges.

“Atsaka more on sila sa physical activities, like first term, ang pinofocus nila ay swimming lessons. Importante sa kanila yung swimming lessons dito. Yung swimming talaga ang pinaka na amazed ako dito, kasisa atin sa elementary wala naman tayong swimming lessons, college nga pahirapan pa ang swimming lesson, dito focus talaga nila ang swimming lesson kahit Prep pa lang.”

[“They are more into physical activities. Like in the first term, they focus on swimming lessons. Swimming lessons are very important. I am amazed because in our country we do not have swimming lessons in elementary. Even in college, it is difficult to take swimming lessons. Here however, they focus on swimming lessons even if the child is only in Prep.”]

Mathematics Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016e). In the Foundation Year, Prep Mathematics has four (4) proficiency strands. First is understanding, which includes naming numbers, rote counting, counting objects, comparing quantities, sorting and concept of addition. Second is fluency, which includes creating connections to help discover relationships such as comparing characteristics. Third is problem solving, which includes the use of real-objects to build concepts and solve meaningful problems. Last is reasoning, which includes providing opportunities to analyze such as explaining comparisons and creating patterns.

By the end of the Foundation Year, Prep students have acquired proficiency in beginning number and algebra, measurement and geometry, and statistics and probability that allows them to perform simple mathematical skills on measurement, numeracy, patterns and shapes, and classifications. They are able to connect familiar events with the days of the week and perform inferencing to answer simple questions.

Science Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016g). The content of Science in Prep is composed of three (3) strands: (1) science understanding; (2) science inquiry skills; and (3) science as human endeavor.

In Prep, students are encouraged to develop their curiosity about the world around them. They are taught to use observation to answer questions they have and make sense of what is happening around them. Children are trained to develop analytical thinking to be able to solve problems using their senses in gathering information.

By the end of the Prep year, students are able to describe the properties of certain materials through movement, observation, and prediction.

The Arts (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016). The Arts is a learning area that comprises five subjects: dance, drama, media arts, music, and visual arts.

In Prep, students take The Arts according to their level of development. The Arts allows them to express and develop their ideas and emotions on how they view the world. Through The Arts, children develop their social skills as they learn to work with peers, and appreciate their own work and the work of others. They become aware of their surroundings and their culture and are encouraged to explore their interests of different cultures using safe practices.

Dance. Prep students develop a range of movements that improve their ability to work within different spaces. Through the process of learning movement, they become aware of their bodies and what they can do. Dance also improves coordination and kinesthetic memory that allows them to perform and choreograph dance sequences.

Drama. Prep students are provided with the opportunity to develop emotional intelligence because it promotes communication and socialization skills, creativity, and empathy through a broad spectrum of life situations. Drama encourages and inspires students to express themselves verbally using different voices and tones, and through facial expressions and body language that make them effective communicators.

Media Arts. Students learn to communicate effectively and creatively using technologies of visual and auditory communication. They develop the skill to control the images they see or the sound they hear that allows them to express their creative skills in media. They develop an understanding of personal, cultural, or historical contexts of different stories.

Music. Students are exposed to rhythm, pitch, dynamics, expression, form and structure, timber and texture. As children participate in music, they learn to share their music and to be

creative in a group environment. Music provides a platform for students to perform, to listen, and to appreciate other performances.

Visual Arts. The Visual Arts program is designed to introduce students to the joys of creating and viewing arts. They are provided with the opportunity to experience art making that includes different elements such as line, shape, color and texture. They are presented also with the opportunity to apply different principles of design and use critical skills to understand how different artists express their ideas through different visual representations.

Language Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016d). Language in the Australian Curriculum provides opportunities to learners to learn a language other than English. It is also an opportunity for many students whose first language is not English, which is the language of instruction in Australia, to learn through English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) program.

Whether Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education is used in teaching, one said, *“Yes, it is implemented but only if there is a need as part of inclusion. EALD is used. Resources for this are provided by the DoE but its implementation depends on the school.”*

Australia recognizes the varied languages used by the students due to migration to the country. Therefore, the Australian Curriculum accommodates the diversity of languages students bring in the classrooms. Learners of languages include second language learners, background language learners, and first language learners.

It is deemed important to teach other languages because students acquire skills in the language being learnt. They become open to other cultures that lead to an appreciation of others’

cultural background that allow them to see the world from different viewpoints, enhancing their ability to communicate in today's globally connected world.

Languages that may be taught in Prep to Year 2 include Arabic, Auslan (Australian Sign Language) for the deaf, Chinese, Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

Design and Technologies (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016a). Design and Technologies are developed through integrated learning in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) that covers Prep to Year 2. Within these years, students are given the opportunity to design and produce products and services and are encouraged to explore and investigate technologies which include materials, equipment and processes that are needed by the community and that support sustainability. Students are not only trained to produce products and services, but are encouraged also to evaluate the effects of their decisions on them and on the environment they create. They are trained to become conscious consumers and decision makers with responsibility for quality and sustainability. These are achieved through the integration of play-based lessons in different learning areas where they can exercise the above-mentioned practices.

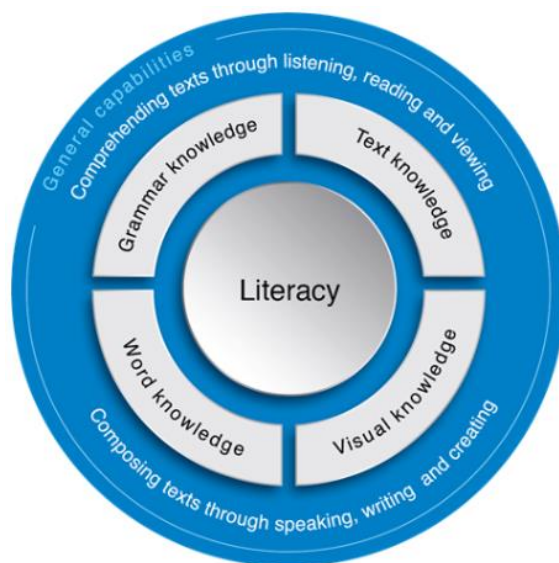
General Capabilities. The Australian Curriculum has seven (7) general capabilities: Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology Capability, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, and Intercultural Understanding. The general capabilities comprise a set of interconnected and integrated knowledge, skills, behavior and dispositions that apply across subject-based content to develop

life-long learners who are capable of adapting into a complex, information-rich, globalized world. A participant explained, *“Literacy and Numeracy are general capabilities that are integrated across all learning areas. Teaching and curriculum aligning is ensured.”*

Literacy. The Australian Curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, skills, and disposition of the students to speak and interpret the language used for class communication and be able to utilize this set of skills not only in the school but in the society. It recognizes the importance of becoming effective communicators who make their own learning, develop rapport with others, and are capable of understanding different opinions from and about diverse cultures.

Figure 9

Organizing elements for Literacy.



Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Literacy.

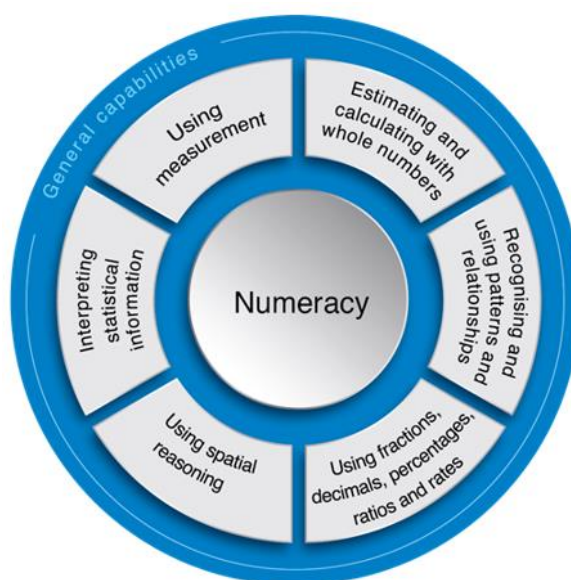
(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/>).

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Numeracy. The Australian Curriculum intends to develop students to become numerates who are capable of recognizing and understanding the role of Mathematics in the real world. As numerates, they must acquire the knowledge and skills that enable them to use their mathematical skills in a broader sense where they can transform their mathematical knowledge and skills in different contexts as they deal in their day-to-day activities and in the wider world.

Figure 10

Organizing elements for Numeracy.



Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Numeracy.

(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/numeracy/>).

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability. Students acquire the competencies in using ICT in all learning areas of the curriculum. To acquire the ICT Capability, students are trained to access, communicate, solve problems, and work collaboratively using ICT in and out of school. Likewise, they are trained to maximize its use to be abreast with the latest trend in education all over the world and become aware on how to protect themselves from the risks of the digital environment. The Australian Curriculum also recognizes the role of ICT in making teaching and learning more stimulating and engaging through global assignment, mobile learning, and inclusive education.

Figure 11

Organizing elements for ICT Capability.



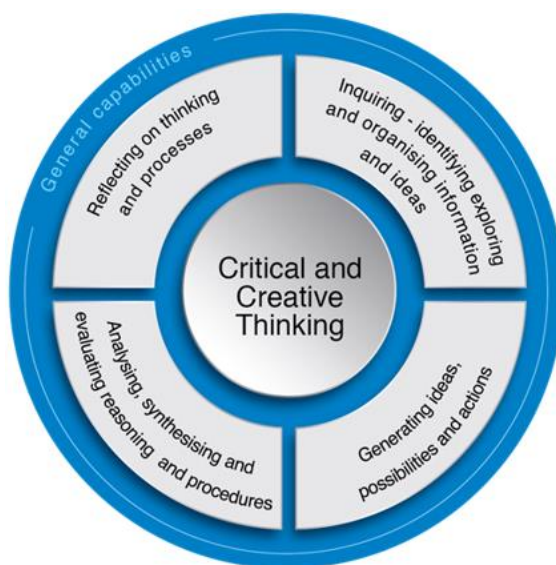
Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – ICT Capability.

(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability/>). Copyright 2010 by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Critical and Creative Thinking. Australia wants its learners to be 21st Century learners and thinkers through their curriculum that develops critical and creative thinking. Although these two are viewed differently, they are complementary and equally important. Creative thinking involves searching and generating varied possibilities that may be new or already existing to yield positive outcome through innovation and creativity. Critical thinking, on the other hand, involves the careful, fair, and constructive analysis of different possibilities by focusing thoughts and actions through an organization of different options, ranking of these options, and choosing the best. The Australian Curriculum trains learners who can do both; they are geared to become effective problem solvers of different setbacks through presentation of different courses of actions such as complex representation and images, digital outputs or even virtual realities.

Figure 12

Organizing elements for Critical and Creative Thinking.



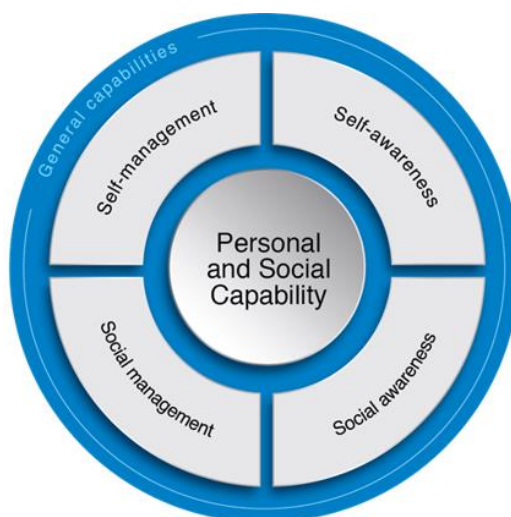
Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Critical and Creative Thinking.

(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/critical-and-creative-thinking/>). Copyright 2010 by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Personal and Social Capability. Students develop personal and social capability through the Australian Curriculum. Personal and social capability involves students in identifying, describing, regulating, and managing their emotions to develop a sense of personal strength and empathy towards others. Students are equipped to foster personal characteristics and interpret their own emotional states, needs, and perspectives that translate towards their positive relationship with others. They learn to participate in safe and respectful relationships that prepare them for their potential role as members of a family and the community.

Figure 13

Organizing elements for Personal and Social Capability.



Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Personal and Social Capability. (<https://www.ausaliancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>). Copyright 2010 by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Ethical Understanding. It is the aim of the Australian Curriculum to develop ethical understanding of students and to adhere to the principles of morality. Students have ethical understanding if they learn to respect and care about each other, and understand the importance of belonging and contributing to their community. Building ethical understanding is deemed imperative because of the exposure of the students in advanced technology that allows them to participate in global issues. Ethical understanding guides the students in responding to complex issues with ethical considerations concerning human and animal rights, environmental matters, and global justice.

Figure 14

Organizing elements for Ethical Understanding.

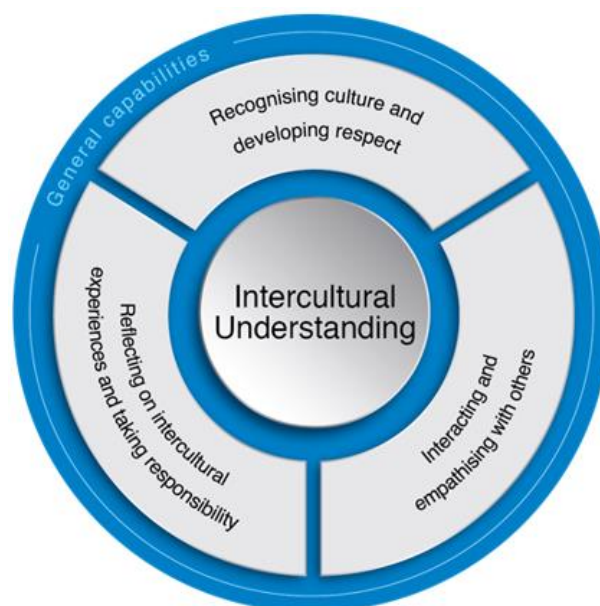


Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Ethical Understanding. (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/ethical-understanding/>). Copyright 2010 by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Intercultural Understanding. In the Australian Curriculum, students develop intercultural understanding needed to appreciate and respect their own culture and various forms of social and cultural diversity. Students develop an appreciation of learning through engagement with diverse cultures that foster self-awareness and awareness of a variety of cultural environments. They are encouraged to communicate across cultural differences and cultivate meaningful social relationships across culturally diverse groups.

Figure 15

Organizing elements for Intercultural Understanding.



Note. Reprinted from Australian Curriculum – Intercultural Understanding.

(<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/intercultural-understanding/>). Copyright 2010 by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Three Cross-Curriculum Priorities. There are three cross-curriculum priorities that are developed in the learning areas. These are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. They are integrated in different learning areas and do not constitute curriculum on their own.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures. Australia acknowledges that there is an existing gap in the learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

students and their non-Indigenous peers. Therefore, two (2) distinct needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education are given priority. One is that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can participate fully and acquire the competencies stated in the curriculum. Second is that all students recognize the world's oldest continuous living creatures by designing a cross-curriculum aiming to promote reconciliation and respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. All learning areas contribute to the achievement of these two (2) priorities. In English, students develop awareness and appreciation of their culture through literature, which includes storytelling. In Science and Mathematics, students engage in different scientific and mathematical procedures within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts. History of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is explored in Humanities and Social Sciences to develop in the students a deeper understanding of their culture and experiences for them to have an appreciation, respect, and empathy in the preservation and conservation of sites significant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia. Australia recognizes the great contribution of Asia in its economy, with Asia being the destination of 71 percent of the country's export products. To sustain and strengthen the cordial and vibrant relations between Asia and Australia, the latter recognizes the importance of Asian literacy among its student population. Thus, it initiated the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, guided by three (3) concepts-- (1) Asia and its diversity which highlights the culture, societies and traditions of its people; (2) achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia that recognize their contribution and influences in the world's aesthetic and creative pursuits; and (3) Asia-Australia engagement which explores the historical links between the two that strengthens future engagement. All learning areas of the Australian

Curriculum provide opportunities to integrate the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority.

Sustainability. Cross-curriculum learning supports and sustains human life by helping students understand, appreciate, and participate in sustainable ways of living. Through this priority, students become informed individuals who actively contribute to a sustainable way of life. The Sustainability cross-curriculum priority supports the needs of the present generation without compromising the resources for the future. Sustainability education focuses on the preservation of the environment for the future generation by making the present generation understand and conserve biodiversity. All Australian Curriculum learning areas contribute differently to Sustainability cross-curriculum. There are learning areas that advocate awareness locally and globally on sustainability. There are those that help students acquire knowledge and skills in helping preserve the environment.

“The kind of learners we want to develop [are] those who are critical and creative thinkers, who have acquired skills that fit them in the real world. They should have an understanding of multiple perspectives and other cultures and acquire global competencies. The ultimate goal is for them to acquire life-long learning.”

“These can be achieved through the 3-dimensional curriculum, 3 cross-curriculum priorities, and the 7 general capabilities, all can be downloaded through the website, that prepare students to real world.”

“The implementation of the curriculum is at the discretion of the school leader; however, if the performance of the learners decline, the school leaders must answer/explain to the Director General.”

“basta maganda sila dito, ayaw na nga bumalik ng mga anak ko”

“they are really excited to go to school. independent na ang mga anak ko, tinetrain sila ng mga teachers na maging independent, sila ang magpack na lunch nila, sila lahat, wala ka ng worry, so it’s nice.”

“Para sa akin wala ng dapat iimprove, thumbs up ako sa system nila...magkaiba lang tayo kasi sa atin more on academics, iba lessons nila dito, iba din dun sa atin, mas rigid sa atin sa academics, dito hindi...tinanong ko yung anak ko, mas gusto daw nya dito, kasi yung assignment nila hindi kagaya sa atin na may assignments everyday. Dito binigyan sila assignment for the whole week, to be answered and passed on the following week; pag hindi napasa, email na naman sila. Kailangan din nila yung 15 minutes reading sa bahay kasi very particular sila sa comprehension; meron ka pinipirmahan para malaman nila na nagbasa sila sa bahay, they focus the children para easy din sa kanila. Example ko yung anak ko, ang galing magbasa, kasi galing sa Pilipinas eh; pero pag tinanong sya tungkol saan ang binasa, hindi niya maintindihan, kaya comprehension talaga ang focus nila dito.”

[My children are okay here. They do not want to go back [to the Philippines].

They are really excited to go to school. My children are now independent. The teachers are training them to be independent. They pack their own lunch, you don't have to worry, so it's nice.

For me, I don't see the need to improve the system. I give them the thumbs up. We have different systems. [In the Philippines] we are more on academics. They have different lessons here [in Australia]; we also have different lessons [in the Philippines] which is more rigid in academics unlike here. When I asked my kids, they like it here more because they don't have many assignments unlike in the Philippines where they are given assignments every day. Here, they are given assignment for the whole week, to be answered and passed on the following week. If they fail to submit, you receive an email. They also have to spend 15 minutes reading at home because they are very particular in comprehension. You are required to sign something to validate that you child spent time reading at home. My child who was previously studying the Philippines could read well but could not understand when asked about it. Here, they focus on comprehension.]

B. Essential Features of the KE Program and Curriculum

The KE Program must be engaging, creative, child-centered, and follow developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) which immerse the learners in meaningful experiences for their holistic development. Learners' physical, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual development, including values formation, are fostered to ensure children's readiness to formal education with

the mother-tongue of the learner as the primary medium of teaching and learning. One teacher said, *“ang Kindergarten Festival of Talents...ang skills ng mga bata nadedevelop, socialization. Yung mga subjects din naman gaya na nagpapuzzle, ang mga materials naman available galing sa DepEd”*

[“The Kindergarten Festival of Talents for instance showcases the skills of the children. They also learn socialization. Materials needed in other activities such as puzzles are made available by DepEd.”]

Play-based learning is advocated in the KE Program. Play is natural on children enabling them to practice their newly acquired skills actively and understand their world. Through play, children build their self-confidence, problem-solving, and cooperative learning skills that prepare them for lifelong learnings.

“Gusto ko ang learner na madedevelop namin ay civic and socially responsible, mahalin ang bayan.”

“Strengthen ang core-values ng DepEd.”

[“We want to develop learners who are civic and socially responsible, who will imbibe love of country. We have to strengthen the core values of DepEd.”]

“For me, there is nothing to change in the program, it is play based, we use our mother tongue, we are provided with materials. The problem lies within how teachers will implement the program inside the classroom. There are still teachers who teach using paper and pencil activities most of the time, maybe because they are not ECE teachers.”

The Philippine Kindergarten Curriculum

Kindergarten became mandatory to all five-year old Filipino children through Republic Act 10157 known as “The Kindergarten Education Act.” DepEd explains that this is a transition period from informal to formal literacy acquired in Grades 1-12. The Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (KCG) stipulates the standards and competencies of a five-year old Filipino child (Department of Education, 2016). It is the primary goal of the KCG to guide teachers and parents on how to facilitate learning experiences to children at this age. It provides a learning environment that is engaging, play-based, child-centered with varied developmentally appropriate practices (DAP).

The DepEd personnel explained that, *“the Kindergarten curriculum has been crafted using the thematic or integrative approach in curriculum development and implementation. This approach employs integrative and interactive teaching-learning strategies as well as child-centered learning experiences. It is contextualized to address the specific circumstances of diverse learners with the curriculum enhanced in relation to their context.”*

Developmental Domains. Developmental domains refer to a range of elements of maturity centered on the individual that is related within general stages of development expectations. Major domains of development include:

Socio-emotional Development. This domain includes the child’s ability to control their own emotions, understand the feelings of others, and get along with their peers. They develop awareness of one’s unique set of experiences, abilities, and needs, and value the diverse cultures of each family and community.

Values Development. Children are expected to develop the ability to empathize, cooperate, and use moral reasoning as they view one's self and as they relate to others.

Physical Health and Motor Development. Children are expected to go through physical changes, growing in size and strength, and the development of both gross and fine motor skills. They also acquire the ability to make sound nutritional choices, self-care, and health and safety practices.

Aesthetic/Creative Development. Children are expected to develop their creativity and aesthetic sense by engaging their imagination and by providing activities on visual and performing arts. Aesthetic and creative development encompasses the development of physical, mental and emotional capabilities.

Mathematics. Children are expected to acquire mathematical methods, and language through a variety of appropriate experiences such as numeracy, measurement, pattern and shape, and classification. Early experiences in math create positive experiences that help children develop their imagination, flexibility, and inventiveness, which contribute in meaningful life experiences and future success.

Understanding of the Physical and Natural Environment. Children have a natural need to discover and construct their own ideas; therefore, it is expected that they discover the world around them through their own investigation. Children are expected to make sense of the world around them through predicting, observing, classifying, hypothesizing, experimenting, and communicating.

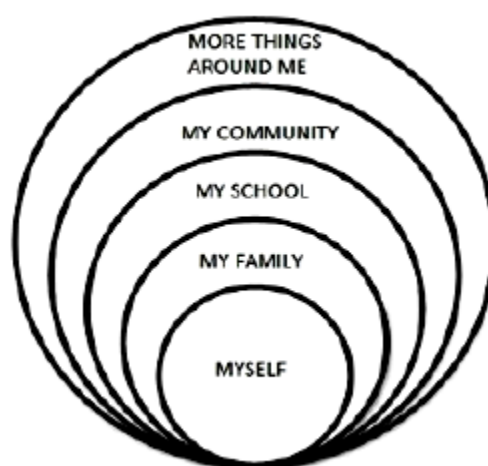
Language, Literacy, and Communication. In the early years, children's ability to understand, to process, and to produce language is expected to flourish using their mother tongue.

It is expected also that they acquire beginning reading and writing skills that allow them to develop positive attitude towards these skills.

Circular Themes. The bases of the Kindergarten Curriculum are the developmentally appropriate practices for a five-year old child and the interrelatedness of the learning domains. Therefore, the curricular themes of this curriculum adhere to Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Theory, which emphasizes how the inherent qualities of children are influenced by their environment as they grow and develop.

Figure 16

The Circular Themes



Note. Derived from *Standards and Competencies for Five-Year-Old Filipino Children* (p.6) by the Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education), 2016. Copyright 2016 by the Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education).

(1) *Myself.* This theme refers to concepts and ideas that help the child learn who s/he is and to form a sense of identity.

- (2) *My Family*. This theme refers to the concepts, ideas, practices, and situations that lead the child to be a responsible member of his/her family.
- (3) *My School*. This theme refers to the concepts, ideas, practices, and situations that guide the child how to develop personal relationships with classmates, teachers, and other school staff.
- (4) *My Community*. This theme refers to the concepts, ideas, practices, situations, and responsibilities that the learner acquires to become a responsible and positive contributor to the community.
- (5) *More Things Around Me*. This theme refers to concepts, ideas, practices, situations, and responsibilities that surpass themes 1 to 4, but have influence and effects on the development of the learner.

“Learning activities are organized into thematic units or teaching themes - Myself, My Family, My School, My Community, and Other Things Around Me. The Kindergarten Curriculum intends to develop holistic Filipino learners ready for the challenges of the subsequent grade levels,” added the Deped Senior Education Program Specialist.

She also explained that there are also areas that need improvement in the implementation of the program, *“In most cases, enabling support systems such as learning resources among schools nationwide need further support to optimized learning opportunities. This is especially true among last mile schools which usually receive scant resources.”*

“Nagagawa naman ang blocks of time pero I doubt kung nagagawa sya efficiently. Challenging ang efficiency ng curriculum...teachers’ guide itself, yung content at theme nya, hindi sila align, halo-halo sya.”

[Blocks of time can be done but I doubt if these can be done efficiently. The efficiency of the curriculum is challenging. Even the teachers’ guide, its content and theme are not aligned. They’re mixed up.]

“Hindi sila katulad sa curriculum ng mga private schools, may concentration ang mga learning areas.”

[It’s not the same with the curriculum of private schools where there is concentration on the learning areas.]

“Sa public schools hindi parepareho ang direksyon nila, iba-iba ang pag apply ng curriculum, yearly paiba-iba...dapat ayusin na ang curriculum.”

[In the public schools, there are different directions in the application of the curriculum yearly. The curriculum has to be fixed.]

“May problema ang curriculum management ng Deped.”

[There’s a problem in the curriculum management of DepEd.]

“Kasi sa private school may direksyon, may mga subjects kaya madaling mag intergrate; sa public schools, ikaw na ang bahala as a teacher kung saan ka magpofocus kaya naleleft behind ang ibang learning areas”

[In the private schools, there's a unified direction, there are subjects which are easy to integrate. In the public schools, as a teacher you are responsible on what you will focus on; that is why other learning areas are not taken up and left behind.]

“Kulang ang time para magawa ang mga activities pati na rin sa sobrang dami ng mga activities ng schools gaya ng feeding program, ang bata imbes na matuto, kailangan lumabas ng bata para kumain sa feeding program, may mga meeting ang mga teachers kaya lumalabas din sya sa gitna ng klase para pumunta sa meeting.”

[There's not enough time to do all the activities also because there are so many school activities like the feeding program. The children have to go out to participate in the program. Sometimes teachers have to leave in the middle of classes to attend meetings.]

“Ang blocks of time ay hindi sapat upang matuto ang mga bata.”

[The blocks of time are not sufficient for the children to learn.]

“Nakikita ko na importanteng makapagcontextualized at localized tayo ng curriculum dahil iba iba ang konsepto at pangangailangan ng mga bata.”

[It is important to conceptualize and localize the curriculum because of the different concepts and needs of the children.]

“Ang consistency ng program dapat tinitignan ng mga principals.”

[Principals need to look at the consistency of the program.]

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries' Early Education Programs and Curriculum

Table 7

Philippine's and Australia's Early Education Programs and Curriculum

Country	Australia	Philippines
Curriculum	Three-dimensional curriculum: 1. Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; 2. general capabilities; 3. cross-curriculum priorities	Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (KCG)
Priority Program	- play-based -inclusive education -Literacy and Numeracy -Sustainability and ethical consumerism -Global awareness	-play-based -inclusive education -Literacy and Numeracy -contextualized and localized lessons -DAP
Assessment	Standardized assessment	Standardized assessment

Clearly, both countries prioritize the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills in play-based approach. They also advocate inclusive education; for Australia, because the country is a melting pot for many cultures from all over the world; while in the Philippines, it is intended to accommodate learners regardless of economic, social or cultural background. Both are using non-numerical standardized assessment to track learners' progress.

In Australia, all states are using a three-dimensional curriculum where eight learning areas are found under the Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding dimension. The general capabilities dimension are a set of knowledge, skills, behavior and dispositions that are integrated across all learning areas and aim to develop life-long learners who are capable of adapting into a

globalized world. The third dimension, the three cross-curriculum, includes lessons on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories; Asia and Sustainability are also integrated in different learning areas. What is unique about the three-dimensional curriculum of Australia is that they integrate lessons on sustainability, ethical consumerism, and global awareness.

The Philippine Kindergarten Curriculum Guide advocates localized and contextualized way of teaching and learning using DAP. Global awareness is not a priority as it is believed that competencies are acquired faster if lessons are presented using learners' personal experiences and backgrounds.

III. Leadership and Performance

A. The School Improvement Hierarchy of Queensland, Australia

Queensland endeavors to improve continually the performance of their State schools, students, teachers, and principals using the School Improvement Hierarchy. The School Improvement Hierarchy assists schools in their improvement agenda using the three frameworks:

- 1. The P-12 curriculum assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF)** which stipulates the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements for all Queensland State schools in delivering the curriculum in Prep to Year 12. This framework ensures the academic advancement of every student by supporting their delivery of service.

Curriculum. Schools are required to teach, assess, and report on the Australian Curriculum Version 8 for Prep to Year 12 by the end of 2020. A whole school curriculum, assessment and reporting plan is developed with three levels of planning: provision of whole school curriculum; year or band plans for each learning area and/or subject; and unit

plans. The whole school approach shall be used to differentiated teaching and learning for students with special needs. An individual curriculum plan is provided for the small percentage of students who are identified as requiring a different year-level curriculum in some or all learning areas. Schools in Queensland are required to develop their own homework policy in consultation with the school community (Queensland Department of Education, 2018d). It is expected that the school homework policy is disseminated and reviewed in consultation with the school community. Monitoring of the implementation of the school homework policy ensures that such policy supports the development of the learners and is reliable and effective in terms of the amount of time students are expected to complete their homework. Homework should not be a hindrance to the amount of time families spend time together and that they still have time for different community and cultural activities and recreation. Homework should not deprive learners from doing these.

“Actually dito, they are just having fun, it is not more on academics, like, pinapabayaan lang sila sa classroom, play-based, tapos meron lang sila weekly assignments, gaya ng sa anak ko, every Tuesday, something na lesson lang na babasahin mo lang yun, mga verbs na simple action words... yeah more on literacy sila, yun ang ibig kong sabihin.”

[“School children here are just having fun; it is not more on academics. It’s more play-based. As for academics, they have weekly assignments. In my child’s case, the assignment is every Tuesday, an assignment in reading, simple verbs, action words. They are more into literacy,”] a parent stated.

Curriculum health and wellbeing. A health and wellbeing education is provided as part of the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, such as water safety and swimming program provided to Prep to year 6, or the school's pastoral care program in consultation of the school community. Historically, Australian pastoral care originated from the Christian religious philosophy of England in the 19th century (Edith Cowan University, 2006). On the onset of the 21st century, Pastoral Care in Australia focused on the general and moral welfare of the student, which supports the development of students' personal identity, self-esteem, and positive self-image. Guidance on planning personal future and career, and time management is provided likewise through this program.

In the same study by the Child Health Promotion Research Unit of Edith Cowan University, four (4) key components consistently emerged in the program. One is promoting health and well-being which addresses the optimal development of individuals with the use of mental abilities so that students can cope with the daily challenges they encounter and become positive contributors in the community. Second is building resilience, which refers to helping students develop coping mechanisms in the face of adversity, and use this opportunity to enhance their competence in formulating strategies to resolve these challenges. Third is enhancing academic care, which refers to the ability of the teachers and school staff to provide guidance and assistance to the students efficiently, through the establishment of organizational hierarchy and matrices that can capture the input about the well-being of the students in different perspectives. Fourth is assessing human and social capital, which refers to the assistance provided to students to develop their social skills where they feel that they are part of a safe community.

“Bawal dito ang bully. Never naka experience ang mga anak ko ng bullying dahil particular talaga si dito. One time ang anak ko na babae, dahil siya talaga ang strong, meron siyang naaway na bata, strict talaga sila dito kasi ang mananagot yung parents. Ipapatawag ka sa Guidance Office, ang anak mo irerefer sa Guidance Counsellor, tapos may one-on-one sa parents.”

[“Bullies are prohibited here. My children never experienced bullying here. One time, my daughter picked a fight with another kid. The parents are held responsible for their children’s actions. Parents will be called to the Guidance office and the child will be referred to a Guidance counsellor,”] a parent said.

The parent also explained that Australian schools are very particular about preventing bullying since they recognize the diversity of culture in the country. Parents work with the Guidance Office to ensure that bullying is prevented and that parents are aware of their children’s behavior in school so they can work together to protect the well-being of the learners.

Assessment. Student’s assessment and reporting data are used to determine an intervention program for a student for the continuous improvement of the learners.

Formative assessment is a monitoring task administered to gather information and track student progress vis-à-vis the relevant achievement standards. Diagnostics tools are

used also to gather further evidence of student learning progress and to inform teaching and learning.

Summative assessments are used to provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate their learning. It is administered for reporting to parents and for gathering evidence against the relevant achievement standard.

The grading system for Prep aligns with the Australian Government and Queensland's Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG) requirements for reporting practices for schools to promote consistency of twice-yearly reporting about student achievement using a five-point scale.

Table 8

P-2 Draft Reporting Standards Describing Children's Achievement Using a Five-Point Scale

Across the reporting period, the patterns of evidence typically demonstrate:

Applying (AP)

The child applies the curriculum content and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the required knowledge. The child demonstrates a high level of skills that can be transferred to new situations.

Making Connections (MC)

The child makes connections using the curriculum content and demonstrates a clear understanding of the required knowledge. The child applies a high level of skill in situations familiar to them, and is beginning to transfer skills to new situations.

Working with (WW)

The child can work with the curriculum content and demonstrate understanding of the required knowledge. The child applies skills in situations familiar to them.

Exploring (EX)

The child is exploring the curriculum content and demonstrates understanding of aspects of the required knowledge. The child uses a varying level of skills in situations familiar to them.

Becoming aware (BA)

The child is becoming aware of the curriculum content and demonstrates a basic understanding of aspects of required knowledge. The child is beginning to use skills in situations familiar to them.

Note. Reprinted from Reporting student achievement and progress in Prep to Year 10: Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum.

(https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/aust_curric/ac_p-10_reporting_achievement.pdf).

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The reporting standards of Prep are based on a planned collection of evidence or folio of student achievement collected over the course of study to show how well the child has achieved or progressed in relation to knowledge, understanding, and skills derived from the EYCG. These standards give parents/caregivers and teachers a consistent and common language to describe a child's achievement and progress.

In Prep, parent/carer-teacher conversations are an opportunity to update both parent/carer and teachers of the learning of the students. It likewise gives opportunity to the teachers to understand the diverse background of the students. Teachers may have the opportunity also to offer reflections on the child as a learner and relate this to the general capabilities stipulated in the Australian Curriculum. A parent participant explained, *“Schools communicate with us through email, once every three months, we have a meeting, one-on-one you are going to talk to the teacher for 15 minutes, ipafollow-up ka nila sa progress ng anak mo.”*

According to this parent whose child attends a school in Queensland, the school communicates with her through email once every three months. Each parent is allotted 15 minutes to confer with the teacher during which the parent is updated on the child's progress in school.

To align curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting, moderation procedures are used in Australia (Queensland Department of Education, 2018a). Moderation procedures ensure that teacher judgments of standards achieved by the students are consistent and comparable within schools and between schools by providing in-service trainings to teachers to develop their teaching expertise to meet the individual needs of their students. It also ensures the consistency of the delivery of curriculum and assessment. Through moderation, teachers develop shared understandings of the curriculum content and achieved standards so that the grades given to students are based on an accurate judgment of achievement, and that the report is meaningful, professional, and consistent.

“Ensure the use and implementation of the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) materials; assessment tasks (formative, summative, diagnostic) are based on the C2C materials.”

“Curriculum assessment report are based on the guidelines provided by the department.”

“Prep uses the 5-point scale grading system:

1. *Applying*
2. *Making Connection*
3. *Working With*
4. *Exploring*
5. *Becoming Aware*

Reporting of a learner’s school performance is at the end of each semester.”

2. The Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework ensures the following:

- a. Creating safe, supportive and inclusive environments that values diversity, and minimizes the risk of injury. Strong engagement of parents and the rest of the community is put forward, which in turn, creates positive relationship among all stakeholders. Social and emotional skills are taught explicitly and modelled through the creation of policies that are inclusive of the community's traditions, values, and cultures.
- b. Building the capability of staff, students and the school community by providing learning opportunities through a curriculum focused on mental health, physical health, and nutrition. Early intervention for students whose wellbeing is at risk is given priority. Staff's health and wellbeing are important too because of its resulting benefits to students. Evidence-based strategies are used continually to improve students' wellbeing.
- c. Developing strong systems for early intervention by planning and documenting school processes to support staff to respond appropriately to students whose wellbeing are at risk. Staff are encouraged to work together to be able to recognize the early signs of students at risk, and to provide support and encouragement to family to seek support services.

“Ang maganda din dito rin., yung anak ko may problema sya sa language, sineparate nila dahil concern sila sa anak mo, late sya kc nag-aadjust pa sila sa environment dito, ito yung sinasabi nilang may EALD, madami sila kc marami ang mga Chinese dito, may group sila or sometimes

mag-isa lang at meron silang speech pathologist, wala yung bayad ha, libre...kasi iaasses nila bakit ganon, free yun, ang laki na savings ko dito.”

Parent Z’s child who has a language difficulty is getting all the help she needs. *“My child is still adjusting to her new environment and the school is very supportive. There are many children including Chinese who are having problem with EALD. They are grouped together if possible, and have sessions with a speech pathologist. Sometimes the session is one-on-one. The sessions are free. I was able to save a lot,”* she said.

3. **The Parent and Community Engagement Framework** assists all the stakeholders of the school on their collaborative effort for the welfare of the learners. Parent and community engagement is given utmost importance because of the diverse community of Queensland where respectful relationship among all stakeholders of the school is modelled and nurtured.

Parent engagement is more than just volunteering at the school and having a direct involvement in improving the learning and wellbeing outcome of the learners. Parents are supported to understand ways to discuss learning goals and aspirations with their child. The schools are transparent with their child’s learning in the classroom and updates the parents on how they can support this at home. Parents are trained also to provide games that help develop the learners’ literacy and numeracy skills, to arrange effective learning spaces, and to develop strategies and techniques to enhance their child’s wellbeing.

“Policies are implemented based on the Federal level to ensure National alignment. Pedagogical approaches are implemented; P12 CARF

is used as assessment guideline for the implementation of programs for Prep-Year 12.”

“There is no particular program that is intended to be improved, however, the Director General and the Deputy Director General meet with the principals for feedback, and from there, programs are reviewed and improved.”

“Researches made are also sources of feedback and basis of program improvement.”

“Through the developed frameworks, there is a shared understanding of the vision for improvement. Policy documents are understood by all schools. There is a common goal of Every Student Succeeding.”

“Dito may catchment areas. Kung saan ka nakatira, doon ka sa state school mag-eeenrol. Ang mga policies lahat makikita sa websites at email kasama ang mga newsletters are at activities ng school. Meron din consent bago isalang sa computer ang anak mo.”

There are school catchment areas in Queensland and students enroll in the State school in their geographical area. Parent W shared, *“School policies and activities are available in the websites and email as well as newsletters. Parental consent is required before your child is allowed to use the computer.”*

“There is no need for us to enroll in our children in private schools and spend a lot of money. Our state schools are already providing high quality of education.”

School Budget Solutions of Queensland State Schools

The School Budget Solutions (SBS) is a secure online tool which has been developed for all Queensland State schools to enable the management of all school resources, including finance and staffing allocations (Queensland Department of Education, 2018b). It helps school leadership teams make decisions about the efficient use of all their resources to ensure smooth school operation and excellent student outcomes.

There is no particular amount allocated for Prep in each school. Decision on the allocation of the budget rests on the school leadership team. Such decisions depend on the needs and evidence-based priorities.

B. Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education in the Philippines

The Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education was issued through DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016. It sets the basic standard for an efficient and effective Kindergarten Education Program implementation nationwide.

The Kindergarten Education Program aims that all five-year old children acquire the standard and competencies expected of them, taking into account their diverse backgrounds, prior knowledge and experiences, skills, attitudes, personal traits, and interests.

The KE Program adopts the general principles of the National Early Learning Framework (NELF). These principles provide the philosophical and theoretical foundation for teaching and learning in the early years:

On child growth and development. Every child is unique; therefore, growth and development vary from each child. His/her desire to learn is nurtured through meaningful and real experiences. Children's growth is interrelated and interdependent; that is why, healthy, dependable, positive, and responsive relationship with adults and other children is equally important. Every child is a thinking, moving, feeling, and interactive human who needs to learn in the context of one's family and community, including cultural and religious beliefs; and as s/he acquire competencies, it is vital for him/her to practice them to develop a sense of accomplishment.

On learning program development. The learning program is child-centered where families and communities play a vital role in the holistic development of each child. Inclusiveness is given emphasis such that the learning program promotes diverse learning enhanced by the use of multimedia technologies. The mother tongue is used as the mode of instruction and learning (MOTL) and localized instructional materials are developed for them.

On learning assessment. Assessment is crucial to identifying a child's total developmental needs rather than determining academic achievement. It is conducted on a regular basis to monitor the progress of the child and to inform parents of the learning assessment and appropriate intervention if needed.

Curriculum. The Kindergarten Curriculum Framework (KCF) draws from the goals of the K to 12 Philippine Basic Education Curriculum Framework. The items in rectangles in Figure 15 show the theoretical bases for teaching-learning in the early years in play-based approaches with

application of the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). The circles signify the system of how KE is to be employed. The interlocked ellipses signify the learning domains that are holistically developed. The learning domains are enclosed by the learning areas to be developed for smooth transition to Grade 1. The outermost layer represents the Curricular Themes upon which the KCG is based.

Figure 17

The Kindergarten Curriculum Framework



Note. Derived from *Standards and Competencies for Five-Year-Old Filipino Children* (p.3) by the Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education), 2016. Copyright 2016 by the Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education).

“We want to develop holistic learners, we want them to be ready, intellectually, emotionally and physically,” says one teacher.

Classroom Assessment. The policy guideline on Classroom Assessment is based on DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, which sets the direction on how assessment in Kindergarten should be done. It prescribes the use of qualitative or non-numerical grading in measuring the performance, and tracking how a five-year old child learns. Assessment in the Kindergarten classroom helps teachers to determine if the curriculum standards set for five-year old Filipino learners have been met.

Formative Assessment. Formative assessment in Kindergarten starts with the administration of the Philippine Early Childhood Development (ECD) Checklist at the beginning of the school year. The Philippine ECD Checklist is a normed-development screening tool for three to five year old Filipino children. It has a standard protocol for administration and scoring.

Summative Assessment. The Philippine ECD Checklist is administered also at the end of the year along with teacher-made assessment tools including portfolio assessment, and performance-based tasks.

“We have our ECD checklist twice in a school year; we have it during the first month of the school year, and another one at the last month. We also have our Skills Verification checklist in Language and Numeracy Development. We use observation as the basis of these checklists; we also have our Anecdotal Records.”

Instruction: Teaching Methodologies and Strategies. The medium of teaching and learning in Kindergarten is mother tongue. The learning activities are organized into thematic units or

teaching themes following Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Theory – Myself, My Family, My School, My Community, and Other Things Around Me.

Blocks of Time. The class program of Kindergarten follows Blocks of Time where children are encouraged to work cooperative with others. The activities in the blocks of time may be contextualized in relation to the social and cultural realities in their community.

“The K to 12 system aims to improve Filipino students' skills in mathematics, science, and linguistics. Kindergarten aims to prepare the learners to adapt and be prepared to the rising expectations through a smooth transition to the content-based curriculum of grades 1 -12.”

“In Kindergarten, students learn the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors through games, songs, and dances, in their Mother Tongue. Parents are given orientation on what is expected in a Kindergarten class and why play-based activities are important in their child's development.”

The Quality Assurance and the School Governance and Operations Divisions at the Region and Schools Division levels are required to monitor, to provide technical assistance, and to gather best practices and feedback. This is to ensure compliance of policies for quality implementation of the KE Program.

“One of the monitoring program schemes being employed by the Department is the annual consultative workshops and meetings where filed implementers are being asked to report and discuss program

accomplishments and challenges in aid of policy formulation,” the senior education program specialist from DepEd said.

She added that, “policies and guidelines are crafted after series of monitoring and evaluation regarding the program implementation. Policies may be done by the different Bureaus from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, strand together with heads from different regions. The policy goes through the following steps – development, validation, enhancement, and finalization.”

“Sana ang mga taong ilalagay sa pwesto yung naiintindihan ang trabaho o may pagsisikap na matutuhan ang kanilang trabaho, dapat ang mga umuupo sa pwesto ay galing sa mga kinder teachers dahil mas naiintidihan nila ng pangangailangan ng mga learners...they should be hardworking, smart with a heart.”

“We have very good programs on paper, pero di sya nagagawa o naaapply...cguro dahil hindi sya makatotohanan, masyadong tinaasan, unrealistic.”

A Kinder teacher commented that those who are tasked to ensure compliance of policies in the KE program implementation must be knowledgeable about the program or must be diligent to learn what their responsibilities are. It is ideal that they should be Kinder teachers because they have a better grasp and understanding of what the learners need. *“They should be hardworking, smart with a heart.”* She added, *“We have very good programs but these*

cannot be done or applied, maybe because these are unrealistic. The set goals and standards are too high.”

School Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses of the Philippines

DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2019 contains the Revised Implementing Guidelines on the Direct Release, Use, Monitoring and Reporting of Maintenance, and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) Allocation of Schools, Including Other Funds Managed by School. This DepEd Order provides mechanisms, procedures, and standards for the release, utilization, liquidation, monitoring and reporting of MOOE of all public elementary and secondary schools nationwide, including funds managed by the schools.

The release of allotments is made by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Offices through the General Appropriations Act as Allotment Order (GAAAO). School MOOE is used to fund activities specified in the approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) for implementation in the current year and as specifically determined in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). It is intended also to finance expenses concerning graduation rites, moving up or closing ceremonies and recognition activities, to fund supplies, rental and minor repair of tools and equipment, and other consumables for teachers and students deemed necessary in the conduct of classes and learning activities. Additionally, school MOOE is used to finance minor repair of facilities, building and grounds maintenance necessary for the upkeep of the school, and to procure semi-expendable property items worth less than Php15,000.00.

Kindergarten has no direct allocation from the MOOE. It is the discretion of the School Head and the School Planning Team to determine how to utilize the MOOE each month.

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries' Leadership and Performance in Management of Early Childhood Education

Table 9

Australia's and Philippines' Leadership Performance

Country	Australia	Philippines
Policy Frameworks	1. The P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF) This framework ensures the academic success of every learner. 2. The Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework safeguards the positive relationship among all stakeholders to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for the learners. 3. The Parent and Community Engagement Framework creates a collaborative and respectful environment among all stakeholders.	1. The Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education
Budget Allocation	School Budget Solutions of Queensland State Schools	School Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses

The School Improvement Hierarchy of Australia has three (3) frameworks that ensure improvement and success of school programs in all year levels including Prep. Since there are

three frameworks that ensure continuous improvement, specific programs may already be found in these frameworks which can be the basis of program implementation.

Comparatively, Omnibus Policy in Kindergarten Education of the Philippines ensures the successful implementation of Kindergarten Education Program in the country; but it is equivalent to only one of the frameworks of the School Improvement Hierarchy – The P-12 CARF. Other programs of Kindergarten in terms of learners' well-being and stakeholders engagement are found in separate DepEd Orders.

These frameworks of Australia and the Omnibus Policy of the Philippine Kindergarten are used as basis of school leaders in assessing the performance of their schools. They provide the standards and competencies to determine whether the early education programs of the schools are being successfully implemented.

School leaders in both countries are expected to be excellent instructional leaders and use existing competencies for school leaders to lead positive changes in the schools. They are also expected to continuously seek professional development.

Both countries do not allocate specific budget for Prep or Kindergarten. Budget is given to each state or public school, and it is the discretion of the school principal on how it is spent. Parents in Australia affirmed that sufficient amount of financial support is given to state schools. This is evident with the kind of facilities they have in schools and the kind of support they provide to parents with financial difficulty. On the other hand, parents and teachers in the Philippines are aware of the scarcity of resources for public schools. As mentioned by one teacher-respondent, Philippines is only at par with Australia in terms of paper works; but in reality, public schools are far behind Australia's state schools in terms of program implementation due to lack of resources.

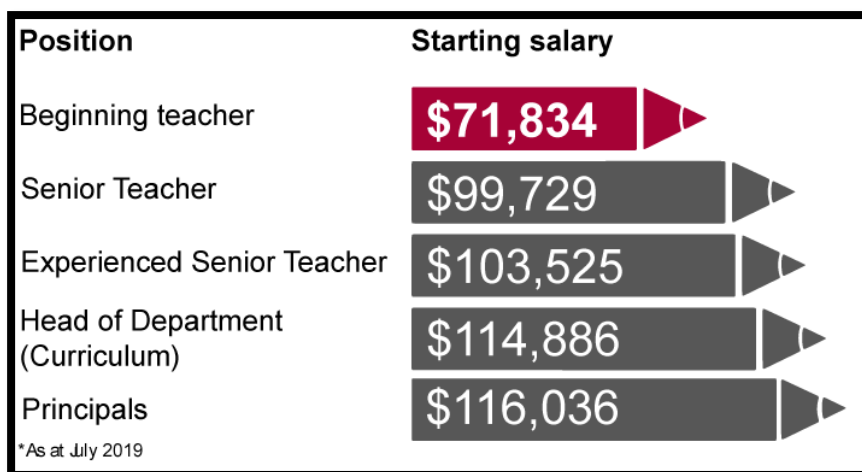
IV. Teaching Quality

A. Teacher Qualifications, Pay and Benefits in Queensland, Australia

Queensland believes that good investment in teachers is a good investment in students. A full-time beginning teacher salary in State schools is one of the highest in graduate starting salary in the country.

Figure 18

Salary of Teachers in Queensland



Note. Retrieved from *Teach Queensland*. (<https://teach.qld.gov.au/teach-in-queensland-state-schools/pay-benefits-and-incentives/pay-and-benefits>). Copyright 2020 by The State of Queensland (Department of Education).

State schools' teachers are also eligible for different leave entitlements to ensure a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives (Queensland Department of Education,

2020a). The major types of leave include sick leave, long service leave of 1.3 weeks for each year of continuous service (which can be accessed after seven years of service), parental leave, leave for study and examination purposes, special leave for absences of specific purpose, and seven years unpaid leave for family responsibility reasons.

To be qualified as a teacher, the teacher applicant must have an approved initial teacher education. This is at least a graduate of Bachelor of Education, or a dual or combine degree programs where the other degree is an Education degree; or it could be a post graduate degree in Teaching or Education for people who have completed academic degree in a non-education area (Queensland Government, 2019).

“Teachers who are graduates of Early Childhood are preferred as Prep teachers; however, there may be instances that those who did not graduate with Early Childhood degree may also be hired as Prep teachers, depending on the availability.”

To teach in Queensland State Schools, teacher applicant must hold also a teacher registration with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT).

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011) developed the Professional Experience: Participant Roles and Responsibilities document. It describes the roles and responsibilities of the key groups that share responsibility for the professional experience component of initial teacher education programs which include professional experience sites, supervising teachers, pre-service teachers, providers of initial teacher education, and education system (Australian Institute for Teaching and

School Leadership, 2011). Its key purpose is to support student teachers by developing programs that provide them opportunities to teach under supervision by a cooperating teacher. It also helps to put into practice what they learned in their education program and relate this knowledge for the development of student learning. AITSL validated and finalized the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) which serves as the basis for teachers to determine what they are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead. The standards and their descriptors are used all over Australia. These standards are a public declaration of what constitutes teacher quality.

“The expected competencies of the teachers are derived from the Australian Professional Standard for Teachers; professional training and mentoring depends on the experiences gained as teachers; strong guidance is provided for the newly hired teachers; continuum development training for teachers is also ensured.”

“The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) aids in the professional learning and development of the teachers based on the domains of teaching stipulated in the Australian Professional Standard for Teachers.”

The APST provides a framework containing the indicators of high quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools to improve educational outcomes for students. Through it, teachers are able to track their development using these indicators and are their basis for self-reflection and self-assessment. The standards in the APST contribute to the professionalization of teaching and

raise the status of the profession. They ensure that teachers demonstrate appropriate levels of professional engagement.

The four stages of the APST indicate the progression of the teacher's developing professional expertise from undergraduate preparation to being an outstanding teacher and a leader in the profession.

Table 10

Organization of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Domains of teaching	Standards
Professional Knowledge	1. Know students and how they learn 2. Know the content and how to teach it
Professional Practice	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning 4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments 5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Professional Engagement	6. Engage in professional learning 7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Note. Retrieved from https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/national-policy-framework/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers.pdf?sfvrsn=5800f33c_64. Copyright 2011 by Education Services Australia.

Domains of Teaching

Professional Knowledge. Teachers have the professional capacity to respond to the needs of the students. They exhibit awareness of their student's diverse background and experiences and therefore creating classroom practices that respond to their student's unique cultural and social background. They have a vast understanding of the content of their subjects and curriculum which is their basis for lesson preparation that is guided by developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) to make it meaningful to their students. The teaching strategies of teachers are aimed for the development of student's numeracy and literacy skills within their subject areas. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used by teachers also to expand the student's approach to learning.

Professional Practice. Teachers have a plethora of effective teaching strategies that are engaging, inclusive and challenging. They have established evaluation techniques on their classroom practices that they regularly use to ensure that the learning needs of their students are met. Assessment results are utilized also to determine gaps in teaching and learning and address these gaps by working efficiently in all stages of the teaching and learning process including planning, teaching, assessing, and feed-backing of student's performance.

Professional engagement. Teachers model effective learning by identifying their own learning needs, and analyzing and amplifying their professional development. They exemplify professional interactions with all the stakeholders of the school and values community engagement to enrich student's resources for learning.

Professional Capability at Four Career Stages

Graduate Teachers. Graduate teachers have met the Graduate Standards if they have acquired the qualifications of a nationally accredited program of initial teacher education. Graduate teachers have the knowledge and skills to plan and manage learning programs for students. They promote inclusiveness by devising differentiated teaching strategies to meet the individual learning needs of students. They have the knowledge of their subject/s, curriculum, and teaching strategies. They are capable of designing lessons that meet the requirements of the curriculum, assessment, and reporting.

Proficient Teachers. At this level, teachers demonstrate capabilities that meet the seven standards of the APST. They create effective, safe, and positive teaching and learning experiences that meet the individual needs of each student based on their diverse cultural, social, and linguistic attributes. Proficient teachers access a variety of resources such as results of assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom strategies. Through regular evaluation and assessment of teaching and learning, teachers acquire data that become a basis for their planning and implementation of learning programs to meet the needs of the learners.

Highly Accomplished Teachers. Highly accomplished teachers are highly knowledgeable and effective classroom practitioners who actively seek professional development for themselves and their coworkers. They guide other teachers to improve their teaching practices through sharing of their knowledge and expertise in the classroom. They are updated with the latest trends and have an in-depth knowledge of the curriculum and the subjects they are handling. They value the assessment results and use these to improve their teaching and learning process to meet the needs

of their students. They exhibit ethical behavior when dealing with all the stakeholders of the school.

Lead Teachers. Lead teachers have already gained the respect and trust of their colleagues, parents/carers and the community for being exemplary teachers who initiate and lead activities in and outside of school to maximize the learning opportunities of the students. They are esteemed members of the faculty that lead in the professional development of their colleagues by providing in service trainings and by spearheading activities that allow for professional engagement. They also lead in synthesizing assessment results, parents' feedbacks, and current research findings to initiate program review and revisions, if necessary, to make teaching and learning more effective.

The development of the APST is an assurance that Australia's educational system is one of the best in the world. The standards stipulated in the APST are fundamental component of the reforms agreed to in the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality to help achieve the goals of the Melbourne Declaration.

B. Pay Benefits, Teacher Hiring, and Development in the Philippines

Teacher 1 position for public school teachers is paid PhP22,316/month. All public school teachers may be promoted to Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Master Teacher, Head Teacher, or Principal.

Schools Division Superintendents must adhere strictly to the policy on the deployment of teacher items as stipulated in DepEd Order Nos. 7 and 22, s. 2015 which contain the hiring guidelines for Teacher 1 positions.

For kindergarten teachers, the following degrees must be obtained:

- Bachelor in Early Childhood Education

- Bachelor of Science in Preschool Education
- Bachelor of Science in Family Life and Child Development
- Bachelor in Elementary Education, with specialization in Kindergarten, Preschool or Early Childhood Education (ECE)
- Bachelor in Elementary Education, Major in Teaching Early Grades
- Bachelor of Arts/Science Degree in discipline allied to Education, such as Psychology, Nursing, Music and Arts, etc. with at least 18 units in Education content courses or subjects in ECE.

It is indicated also in the Omnibus Policy on KE that kindergarten teachers must attend the K to 3 Teacher Induction Program (TIP) organized by the School Head and/or the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS). A continuous professional development training must be in place where trained kindergarten teachers conduct in-service training through Learning Action Cells (LAC) sessions. Likewise, Kindergarten teachers are expected to pursue continuous professional development by attending teacher-training programs, seminars, and/or conferences on areas such as: developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), early intervention, child growth and development, early language, literacy, and numeracy (ELLN), mother tongue proficiency, and best practices in MTB-MLE implementation.

The Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers (PPST) is the basis for all learning and development programs for teachers to ensure that they are equipped to implement effectively the K to 12 Program. It articulates what is expected of them with well-defined career stages of professional development from beginning to distinguished practice.

The adoption and implementation of the PPST in lieu of the National Competency Based Teacher Standard (NCBTS) was pursuant to DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017.

The research development work for the PPST was led by Philippine National Research Center for Teacher Quality (RCTQ) based at the Philippine Normal University with support from the SiMERR National Research Centre in Australia. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which supports the Research Center for Teacher Quality, funded the PPST project. Its development and validation involved stakeholders nationwide with reference panels comprised of representatives from government and non-government organizations such as Professional Regulation Commission, Civil Service Commission, Philippine Business for Education, and Foundation for Upgrading the Standard of Education, among others.

Based on the PPST, teachers undergo four (4) career stages to ensure continuum development to achieve high quality teaching for the 21st century:

Career Stage 1: Beginning Teachers. Beginning teachers possess the qualification for entry to the teaching profession such as knowledge of the subject areas and teaching pedagogies to address the needs of their students. They are guided and assisted by their senior colleagues in the delivery of their teaching strategies.

Career Stage 2: Proficient Teachers. Proficient teachers have the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that enable them to design lessons and promote learning process. They constantly seek professional growth through self-reflection and collaboration with the professional community.

Career Stage 3: Highly Proficient Teachers. Highly proficient teachers demonstrate leadership by taking responsibility for the learning progress of their students and the class. They work

collaboratively with school personnel to create a professional learning community to support and mentor their colleagues. They participate in continued professional development by reflecting about student learning in their classroom and school, why learning happens, and what can be done to improve teaching and learning experiences.

Career Stage 4: Distinguished Teachers. Distinguished teachers bring richness and depth of understanding to their classrooms through the highest standard of teaching and learning experiences. They promote global awareness and its relevance to subjects they teach. They are leaders in the education community that bring about positive impact to their colleagues and stakeholders. They continuously participate in high quality professional development that reflects a global view of educational improvement in the Philippines.

Domains of Teaching

Teachers in the Philippines must manifest these seven (7) domains of teaching:

- (1) Teachers demonstrate an understanding and in-depth knowledge of content, and display the ability to convey this content to the learners through the application of theories and principles of teaching and learning. They interconnect knowledge, skills and beliefs, values, and perspectives on different content areas to provide learning experiences that are research-based and adhere to the developmentally appropriate practices. They are proficient in the use of MTB, Filipino, and English languages to make teaching and communication strategies and technology effective and consequently produce high-quality learning outcomes.
- (2) Teachers create learning environments that allow students to be active participants as responsible and active members of a collaborative group. They display effective and

efficient classroom management that promotes order and appropriate student behavior. They design lessons that allow students participation in empowering activities and provide equitable access to technology, space, and tools.

- (3) Teachers are promoters of multicultural perspectives. They recognize the value of diversity and promote cultural understanding by designing lessons based on the unique characteristics and cultural background of the learners. They train students to collaborate and communicate with the different cultures and backgrounds found in the 21st century environment.
- (4) Teachers develop lessons in accordance with local and national requirements. They prepare activities that allow students to engage in hands-on experiences and make meaningful connections that foster lifelong learning.
- (5) Teachers use multiple methods systematically to gather data about students' understanding, ability, and achievement. They use assessment as basis of planning and revising instructional strategies to improve students' participation and learning outcomes.
- (6) Teachers recognize the importance of school-community partnership in the education system to promote engaged interdependence and accountability among all stakeholders to support learners' educational journey and nurture their learning experiences. They uphold the highest professional ethics, accountability, and transparency in establishing cooperation between and among stakeholders to be able to adhere to the specific needs of each learner.
- (7) Teachers engage in meaningful and professional learning experiences aligned with their own needs and the needs of the learners. They build and implement plan for professional

growth by continuously seeking opportunities to draw upon current trends and research in education as source of professional reflection to improve practice that adheres to code of ethics; and that upholds the dignity of teaching to meet the needs of each learner.

“Passion and commitment in early childhood education is what I always hear from people whenever they learn that I’m a kinder teacher. The patience, the creativity, the perseverance, the flexibility of kinder teachers are beyond what an ordinary person can have.”

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries’ Teacher Quality Standards and Benefits

Table 11

Australia’s and Philippines’ Teacher Quality Standards and Benefits

Country	Australia	Philippines
Personnel Policy	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)	Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST)
Salary	AU\$71,834.00/month or Php 266,5340.60/month	Php22,316.00/month
Educational Attainment	Bachelor of Education (ECE degree is not mandatory)	Bachelor in ECE or any equivalent degree is mandatory

Both the APST and PPST are the basis for all learning and development programs for teachers. They both stipulate career stages for teachers that contain teacher standards articulating developmental progression as teachers refine their practice and respond to the complexities of educational reforms.

It is not surprising that most of the contents of the PPST are similar with that of the APST because the PPST was developed with the support of SiMERR National Research Center of Australia.

Unlike in Australia, it is a requirement in the Philippines to have an early childhood degree to become a Kindergarten teacher with permanent status. There is also a huge difference between the two countries in terms of teacher salary. Australia, particularly in Queensland, gives the highest salary for teachers. Australian teachers also have better working environment. Classrooms are spacious with limited number of learners with a teacher and an assistant teacher to assist. Yet, classrooms in Philippine public schools are still over-crowded with only one teacher to manage more or less 30 kindergarten learners.

V. Collaborative Partnership

A. Community Engagement Frameworks of Australia

Australia has crafted different frameworks to ensure the success of their program implementation. In these frameworks, community engagement is always part of the key elements to make any their endeavor successful.

Local decision making is one of the elements found in Every Student Succeeding – State School Strategy (Queensland Department of Education, 2020b). It ensures that community needs are basis of decision making.

Another framework used by Queensland, Australia that help in the collaborative partnership with stakeholders is the Parent and Community Engagement Framework, which is part of the School Improvement Hierarchy.

Community engagement refers to the establishment of sustainable relationships with the local community to help learners understand their role in the broader community. Community partners may include child and health services, community organizations, sporting clubs, education and training providers, government organizations, and local business and industry.

Figure 19

The Parent and Community Engagement Framework



Note. This figure outlines the five key elements of parent and community engagement to improve the learning and wellbeing outcome of the learners. Reprinted from *Advancing Partnerships: Parent and Community Engagement Framework*.

(<https://education.qld.gov.au/parents/community-engagement/Documents/pace-framework.pdf>).

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Schools may assess the strength of parent and community engagement by showing evidences on two-way communication between parents and school personnel providing the

opportunity for parents to be part of school improvement planning. Another evidence is on how parents are valued as part of the school community and are comfortable expressing their views that are received with respect. Further, they are encouraged to take a sincere and keen interest in the projects of the school and are engaged in their children's learning and wellbeing. Progress of the learners is communicated to the parents constantly and regularly, including intervention programs if necessary. In turn, parents must be familiar with the school's expectations for behavior, attendance and homework; and mechanisms to strengthen the relationship of the members of the community with the school is on hand.

B. Stakeholders Support in Philippine Education

Clearly stipulated in the Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education in the Philippines the importance of child-centered learning programs that involves families and the community in the holistic development of children. This has been supported by the different programs of DepEd such as the inclusion of stakeholders in the crafting of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is a roadmap that lays down specific interventions that a school, with the help of the community and other stakeholders, will undertake within a period of three consecutive school years.

Stakeholder's involvement is also supported by Republic Act 8525 or the Adopt-A-School Program (ASP) which aims to strengthen and sustain a mutual connection between DepEd and various school stakeholders. To intensify the Public-Private Partnership, DepEd tied-up with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to grant tax incentives to private partners of DepEd who imparted their financial or services to public schools.

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries' Programs for Collaborative Partnership

Table 12

Australia's and Philippines' Programs for Collaborative Partnership

Country	Australia	Philippines
Programs	- Local decision making found in Every Student Succeeding – State School Strategy - Parent and Community Engagement Framework,	- Omnibus Policy of Kindergarten Education Program - School Improvement Plan - Adopt-A-School Program

Australia has crafted different frameworks to ensure the success of the program implementation on collaborative partnership with parents and the community. In these frameworks, community engagement is always one of the key elements to make their programs successful. They have established communication strategies to parents through websites and emails. Parents are part of policy making in schools. Uniforms, home works, and voluntary contributions are decided in consultation with the community.

Similarly, Philippines has established already its community partnerships. Parents and other stakeholders are now part in the localization of policies to suit the needs of each school. They are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs. DepEd has also partnered with private sectors, through the ASP, to encourage them to support public schools with their available human and non-human resources.

VI. Health, Well-being, and Safety of Learners

A. Managing Health and Safety QLD

Establishing health and safety management processes and initiatives prevents or minimizes injuries or illness in schools. Health and safety issues are managed by implementing a risk management approach which provides a systematic framework for identifying hazards and controlling risks (Queensland Department of Education, 2019c). Safety and hazard alerts have been published in response to specific school issues and can be printed out and displayed. Schools are expected to schedule and document local activities:

a. Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Committee Meetings which shall be done every three (3) months (Queensland Department of Education, 2019b). The HSW Committee is formed in each school to identify and solve HSW problems and facilitate active consultation and participation between employees and management. It aims to prevent injury and illness in schools; increase awareness of HSW issues; report issues for action or resolution to higher office; and disseminate decisions and information. The school principal ensures that HSW Committee is formed in each school with 30 or more employees and will meet four (4) times per year.

b. Annual Safety Assessment (ASA) and development of associated action plan (Queensland Department of Education, 2018c). The ASA is conducted to monitor and evaluate all the risks to health, safety, and wellbeing associated with potential major incidents and explain how these risks are reduced and/or eliminated. Health and safety checklists are available in assessing the facilities of the schools such as the canteen, classrooms, playground, office and administration area, among others.

c. Hearing awareness week (Hearing Australia, n.d.). The World Hearing Awareness Week is an annual event which commences every 3rd of March. It aims to raise awareness of hearing loss prevention and promotes ear and hearing care. A toolkit for this celebration is published to guide

schools and other organizations who wish to participate in this annual event. The toolkit encourages organizations to use the recommended four-phase development plan: preparation, planning, implementation, and evaluation and reporting. Materials provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) may be adapted, including but not limited to tarpaulins, flyers, and other activities relevant to the needs of the community. These materials must be culturally sensitive and suitable to reach the greatest number of people.

B. Health, Nutrition and DRRM

It is the desire of DepEd to promote, protect, and maintain the health and nutritional status of Kindergarten learners as stipulated in the Omnibus Policy on KE. Through this policy, the provision of health services is ensured. This also includes inculcation of the healthy habits and behavior that bring about positive effects on learning and attendance in school.

In relation to this, Kindergarten is part of the Oplan Kalusugan (OK) of DepEd Order No. 28, s. 2018, which is focused on major school health and nutrition programs specifically the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools (WinS), and Medical, Dental, and Nursing Services.

“Kulang sa nutrition ang mga bata sa public school na nakakaapekto sa pagkatuto. Dito hindi lahat may pambili ng prutas, at ginagawa lang ang healthy food pag nutrition month lang.”

[“Many public school children are undernourished or malnourished. This affects their learning. Not everyone can afford to buy fruits. It is only during the observance of Nutrition month when healthy food is prepared,”] said a public school teacher.

DepEd Order No. 37, s. 2015 – The Comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) in Basic Education Framework contains the guidelines on the DRRM efforts in the basic education sector towards resilience-building in offices and schools, and to ensure that quality education is continuously provided and prioritized even during disasters and/or emergencies. DRRM operates in basic education under four thematic areas: Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery and Rehabilitation.

C. Comparative Presentation and Analysis of the Two (2) Countries' Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Programs

Table 13

Australia's and Philippines' Health, Safety, and Well-being Programs

Country	Australia	Philippines
Programs	- HSW Committee - Annual Safety Assessment - Hearing Awareness Week	-Oplan Kalusugan (OK) sa DepEd – DepEd Order No. 28, s. 2018 - SBFP, WASH, WinS - Medical, Dental and Nursing Services - DRRM – DepEd Order No. 37,s. 2015

Both countries have programs for the health, safety and well-being of the learners. In Australia, they have committees that convene on a regular basis to assess the health and safety of the learners. They also give special attention to the mental wellness of the learners. Similarly, DepEd has its own health and safety programs that are under the OK sa Deped and DRRM. It can be noted that when it comes to health, DepEd has a comprehensive program. School-based feeding programs

are established in each public school with an annual budget to support the nutritional needs of the marginalized learners who are underweight. Trainings for hygiene such as basic handwashing are also held in each public school in the Philippines to ensure health and safety of learners. Each learner in public schools has annual medical and dental check-ups; although this is limited in terms of coverage, it is still a provision for the recording of health status of learners.

Similarly, DRRM in schools is established also to provide earthquake and fire drills for all the stakeholders. It also ensures the safety of everyone during typhoons. Regular reporting is done during calamities to ensure the safety of all the learners.

VII. The Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework

Introduction

The Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework (PKMF) is a result of the research made on how Australia and the Philippines manage their early childhood care and education programs for five-year old children. The aim of this framework is to assist school leaders in public schools to interlink the existing programs and goals of the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippines with the practices of Queensland, Australia for the successful management of Philippine Kindergarten. It hopes to assist school leaders in planning, decision-making, implementing, and evaluating quality in the Kindergarten programs of public schools. In this way, the PKMF ensures the successful transition of children from informal to formal schooling through the provision of a positive, safe and enriching learning environment.

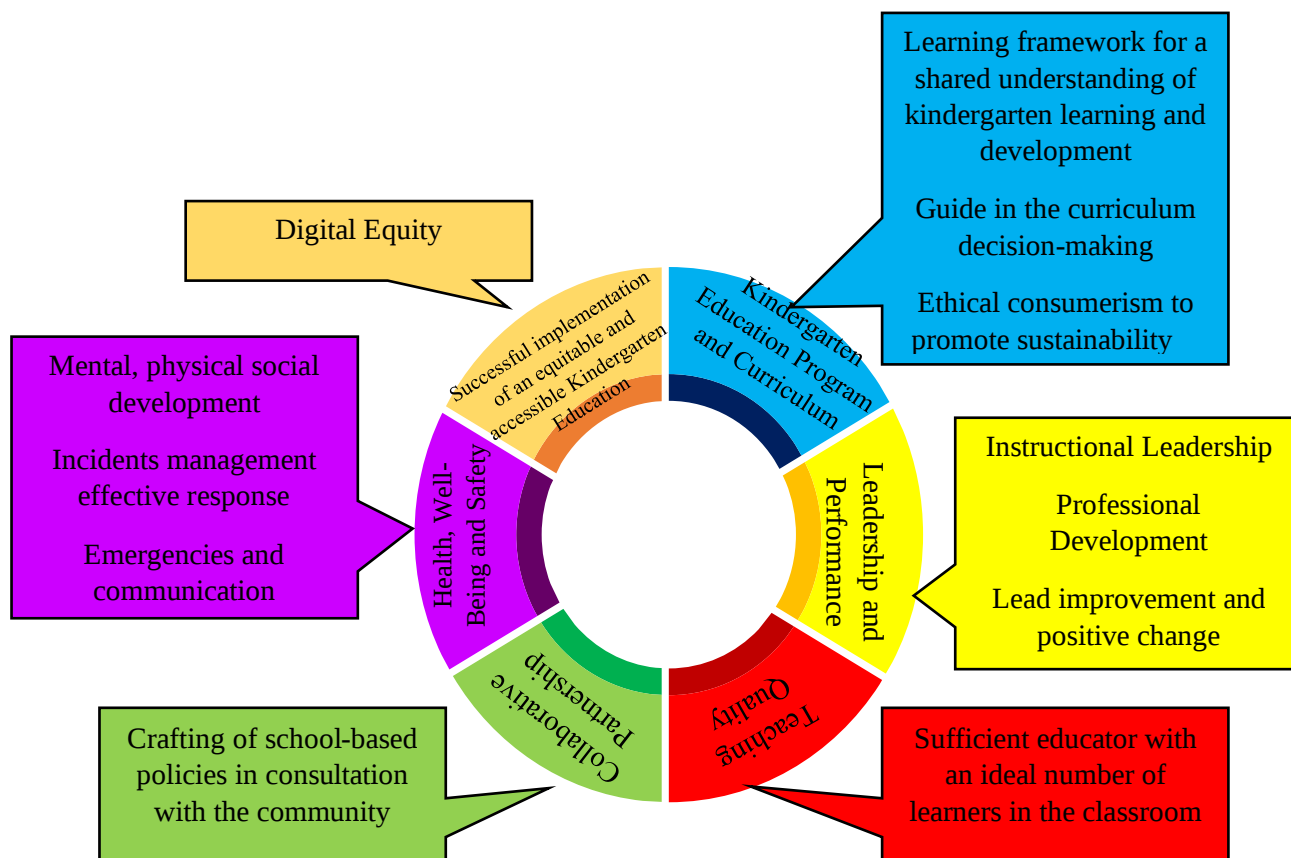
The objectives of the Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework are to:

1. ensure equitable and continuous improvement in the provision of Kindergarten and its different programs;
2. promote inclusiveness, sustainability, and global competitiveness;
3. improve the educational and developmental outcomes of learners in Kindergarten;
4. provide a unified standard of management practices in Kindergarten; and,
5. increase public knowledge and shared understanding in the implementation of Kindergarten programs.

Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework

The Kindergarten Management Framework (KMF) reflects the best management practices of Queensland, Australia and the Philippines in their early education programs for five-year old children.

It aims to improve the quality of Kindergarten programs in the Philippines through the integration of different elements of the KMF to the existing Omnibus Policy of Kindergarten Education.

Figure 20*Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework***Elements of the Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework****I. Ensure successful implementation of an equitable and accessible early education.**

DepEd must strengthen the Education For All through the Universal Kindergarten Program where five-year old children have an equal opportunity to take Kindergarten for free. DepEd also recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) which is clearly stipulated in DepEd Order No.

22, s. 2016 which aims to making the curriculum culturally responsive to the specific community context of IP learners. With this DepEd Order, full participation of the IPs in the Kindergarten Program must be indicated.

Aside from free access to learners' materials, there should be a supporting program for digital equity to ensure that learners are ready for different modes of learning, be it digital distance learning or face to face modality.

Regular monitoring of programs and curriculum must be done through technical assistance provisions of Education Program Supervisors and School Heads. Assessment must be conducted regularly and early intervention must be implemented.

II. Kindergarten Educational Program and the Curriculum

In support of the Omnibus Policy of Kindergarten Education Program and the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide , there should be a learning framework for a shared understanding of kindergarten learning and development that may guide implementors in the curriculum decision making. This learning framework must strengthen the child-centered curriculum through a regular analysis of learners' data to monitor progress and initiate intervention whenever necessary.

Learning should be towards the development of life-long learners who have analytical thinking skills to solve problems and a positive and responsible attitude on themselves and of others. Inclusive opportunities need to be given to all Kindergarten learners to improve learning experiences and achievements.

The content of the curriculum must include ethical consumerism that promotes local and global sustainability, developing conscious and responsible consumers. In addition to making all learning areas geared towards the development of literacy and numeracy, History and Geography must be

included to promote cultural awareness. Similarly, global awareness must also be developed among kindergarten learners through the integration of lessons on international influences. Lastly, there should be lessons on over-all health and well-being of learners that focus not only on physical well-being of learners but also on their mental and social abilities.

Assessment must be done using non-numerical grading to measure performance and track learners' total development.

III. Leadership and Performance

School leaders provide strategic direction of the school and ensure learners' achievement. They are Instructional Leaders who promote learning and success of all learners using research data for learning improvement and curriculum, assessment, and instructional alignment. They advocate Professional Development of self and others through attendance to group trainings and individualized coaching. They also mentor future leaders. They recruit, manage, retain effective teachers, and arrange professional development according to their needs. They promote collaboration and school responsibility with teachers and staff. They create opportunities for knowledge creation and sharing and exhibit efficient management of resources such as the MOOE and local funds.

They foster continuous improvement of the school through the support of division, regional and central offices of DepEd and all the stakeholders of the school. They lead improvement and positive change doing thorough planning, analysis of the existing data and monitoring of the implementation of School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the Annual Improvement Plan (AIP).

IV. Teaching Quality

Teaching quality is the most important influence in learners' experiences and outcomes. Hiring kindergarten teachers must be in accordance with guidelines of DepEd and the Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers (PPST). Kindergarten teachers must have gained student-teacher training or practicum with Early Childhood Education units.

Sufficient educators with an ideal number of learners in the classroom must also be given priority. Over-crowding and heavy teacher loads create stressful working conditions that affect quality teaching.

Professional Development must be provided such as the attendance to Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) trainings and early intervention as required by the law. There should be a systematic approach to collaborative professional learning, coaching, and mentoring to improve teaching practices and educational outcomes. Effective pedagogical practices must be implemented through monitoring of teachers' content knowledge of subject areas and teaching pedagogies and continuous provision of technical assistance in designing lessons, learning process and consistency of assessment and intervention programs to maximize acquisition of learning.

Kindergarten teachers must develop a deep understanding of the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (KCG) and the utilization of the Early Childhood Development Checklist as a form of assessment. They must acquire the teaching strategies to ensure literacy and numeracy achievement through the utilization of the blocks of time and DAP materials through play-based teaching-learning experiences.

V. Collaborative Partnership

Collaboration is a way of enhancing the delivery of services to learners and other stakeholders of school, as well as strengthening the links between schools and the communities in which they are situated. For public schools to become successful in the implementation of their programs, necessary support services from DepEd must be provided such as the improvement of physical facilities appropriate for Kindergarten, ICT laboratories to support digital equity, sustained school-based feeding program, and adequate learning materials for the implementation DAP.

Local support must also be strengthened through the Adopt-A-School Program of DepEd and the engagement of local stakeholders to support the needs of each public school. Parents must be the school's partners to promote higher learners' achievement. School-based policies must be crafted in consultation with the community. The school, families, and the community must actively work together to create a network of shared responsibility of learner success.

VI. Health, Well-Being and Safety of Learners

The provision of school health and nutrition of learners as support and preventive measure to improve health and well-being of learners is crucial in learners' health and well-being. Hygiene and safe food practices must be strictly observed. Protocols for the outbreak of infectious disease must be in placed. Sustained feeding programs must be instigated to ensure nutritional support for kindergarten learners who do not get sufficient nutrition at home. Schedules of school-based feeding must be incorporated in the kindergarten program to ensure that kindergarten learners will not miss them.

To improve the over-all health of Kindergarten learners, their mental, physical and social development must be given attention. The Child Protection Policy implemented in all public

schools must be implemented as well as the incidents management and effective response procedures.

Kindergarten learners and those involved with working with them must also be trained in times of emergencies. Such trainings must include the availability of emergency hotlines and evacuation plans and the crafting of policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies that involve kindergarten learners.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of findings including the conclusions and recommendations for future research endeavors. The flow of the presentation observes the order of research questions stated in the first chapter.

Summary of the Study

A wealth of studies have proven that early childhood care and education (ECCE) has a huge impact in a child's holistic development. Children who have undergone high quality ECCE have exhibited advance social, educational, health and intellectual domains way above those who have not attended any ECCE programs.

Many nations are constantly assessing their ECCE programs to incorporate vital changes that will ensure a quality, equitable, and accessible program for young children. The Philippines, like Australia, is committed to an expanded and comprehensive ECCE program. Both countries have early education for five-year old children that is compulsory prior to first grade. However, in the Philippines, since the institutionalization of the Universal Kindergarten in 2011, a management framework for Kindergarten education program is lacking. This is a crucial aspect that will guide the decision making process of Kindergarten administrators and managers. This study provides a description and comparison of Australia and the Philippines' management of early education for five-year old children. This thus identified the best practices that were used as guide in the development of a Kindergarten Management Framework for the Philippines.

Summary of Findings

This study on comparing the management of early education for five-year old children in Queensland, Australia and the Philippines aimed at determining the best practices of both countries. The identified best practices are the bases for proposing a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. This study utilized a descriptive-comparative method of research in a case study approach.

Both countries provide equitable access to early education. Education of five-year old children is free both in state and public schools. Australia is specific on their target agenda to make the program successful as they are indicated in the framework “Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy.” This framework serves as a school improvement model in the implementation of their programs and contains the following elements: (a) intentional collaboration of stakeholders; (b) successful learners who successfully transition from early childhood into schooling; (c) teaching quality that ensures high quality, evidence-based practices, focused on the success of every student; (d) principal leadership and performance that drive school improvement and student achievement; (e) school performance which is measured with the improvement of every student’s advancement; (f) regional support which is focused in supporting performance in the early years and across stages of schooling; and (g) local decision making that fosters collaboration and accountability. To ensure efficiency in the use of all resources in each State school, Queensland developed an online tool, School Budget Solutions (SBS), which is a streamlined process to help school leaders make decisions about the best use of all their resources.

The Philippine Kindergarten Education Act and other issued DepEd Orders and Memoranda are the basis of program implementation of kindergarten. However, many people are

not aware of the programs of DepEd in Kindergarten because unlike in Australia, the Philippines does not have a unifying framework that states all the programs for Kindergarten. There are many programs stipulated in different DepEd Orders; but one must be familiar with where and what to look for when searching for these DepEd Orders.

Both countries prioritize the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills in play-based approach. They both advocate inclusive education because they recognize that learners are coming from different economic, social or cultural background. They are also using non-numerical standardized assessment to track learners' progress.

In Australia, all states are using a three-dimensional curriculum in which general capabilities and the three-cross curriculum are integrated in eight learning areas found in the Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding dimension. What is unique about the three-dimensional curriculum of Australia is that they integrate lessons on sustainability, ethical consumerism, and global awareness.

The Philippine Kindergarten Curriculum Guide advocates localized and contextualized way of teaching and learning using DAP. Learning domains of kindergarten learners are developed using learners' personal experiences and backgrounds.

The School Improvement Hierarchy of Australia has three (3) frameworks that ensure improvement and success of school programs in all year level including Prep. These frameworks serve as guide on what needs to happen in the schools' improvement journey:

(a) **The P-12 curriculum assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARE)** which contains the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements for all Queensland State schools in delivering the curriculum in Prep to Year 12. It is stated in this framework also that State schools

must use the whole school approach where every member of the school community works together to ensure that all students have the opportunity to maximize their learning experience. Part of the whole school approach is the development of school homework policy, which is disseminated and reviewed in consultation with the school community. Health and wellbeing are provided as well as part of the delivery of the curriculum. Water safety and swimming program is provided to Prep students; and a pastoral care program is formed, in consultation with the community, which focuses on the general and moral welfare of the students. Assessment and reporting data are used to determine an intervention program for a student. The grading system for Prep aligns with the Australian Government and Queensland's Early Year Curriculum Guide (EYCG) using a five-point scale: Applying (AP), Making connections (MC), Working with (WW), Exploring (EX), and Becoming aware (BA). Biannually, Prep students are assessed based on their folio of achievement collected over the course of study. Likewise, parent/carer-teacher conversations are an opportunity to update both parent/carer and teachers of the child's achievements and progress.

(b) **The Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework** ensures the provision of a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that values diversity, and minimizes the risk of injury; the provision of a curriculum focused on mental health, physical health and nutrition through capacity building of the schools' stakeholders; and the development of strong systems for early intervention to respond appropriately to students whose wellbeing are at risk.

(c) **Parent and Community Engagement Framework** assists all the stakeholders of the school on their collaborative effort for the welfare of the learners by nurturing diversity in the community and being transparent in the learning goals and aspirations of the schools for the learners. Parents are supported to understand ways to discuss learning goals and aspirations with

their child. Trainings are provided to parents also to capacitate them to provide games that help develop the learners' literacy and numeracy skills, to arrange effective learning spaces, and to develop strategies and techniques to enhance their child's wellbeing.

Since there are three frameworks that ensure continuous improvement, specific programs may already be found in these frameworks which can be the basis of their program implementation.

Comparatively, Omnibus Policy in Kindergarten Education of the Philippines ensures the successful implementation of Kindergarten Education Program in the country. However, it is equivalent to only one of the frameworks from the School Improvement Hierarchy – The P-12 CARF. Other programs of Kindergarten in terms of learners' well-being and stakeholders engagement are found in separate DepEd Orders.

These frameworks of Australia and the Omnibus Policy of the Philippine Kindergarten are used as basis of school leaders in assessing the performance of their schools. They provide the standards and competencies to determine whether the early education programs of the schools are being successfully implemented.

Both countries do not allocate specific budget for Prep or Kindergarten. Budget are given to each state or public school and it is the discretion of the school principal on how it is spent. Parents in Australia affirmed that sufficient amount of financial support is given to state schools. This is evident with the kind of facilities they have in schools and the kind of support they provide to parents with financial difficulty. On the other hand, parents and teachers in the Philippines are aware of the scarcity of resources for public schools. As mentioned by one teacher-respondent, Philippines is only at par with Australia in terms of paper works; but in reality, public schools are far behind Australia's state schools in terms of program implementation due to lack of resources.

Both the APST and PPST are the basis for all learning and development programs for teachers. They both stipulate career stages for teachers that contain teacher standards that articulates developmental progression as teachers refine their practice and respond to the complexities of educational reforms.

Australia invests well in their teachers. They are provided with the highest starting salary in the country and are eligible for different leave entitlements to ensure a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. To qualify as a Prep teacher, it is preferred to acquire a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and be a holder of a teacher registration with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT). Teachers who are not graduates of Early Childhood may also teach Prep if no Early Childhood teacher applicant is available. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) serves as the basis for teachers to determine what they are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead. The APST provides a framework containing the indicators of high quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools to improve educational outcomes for students. Teachers are able to track their development using these indicators and are their basis for self-reflection and self-assessment.

Unlike in Australia, it is a requirement in the Philippines to have an early childhood degree to become a Kindergarten teacher with permanent status. Newly-hired kindergarten teachers are required also to attend the K to 3 Teacher Induction Program (TIP) organized by the School Head and/or the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS). They need to participate in continuous professional development training such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions, developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), early intervention, child growth and development, early language, literacy, and numeracy (ELLN), mother tongue proficiency, and best practices in MTB-MLE

implementation. The Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers (PPST) is the basis for all learning and development programs for teachers to ensure that they are equipped to implement effectively the K to 12 Program. There is also a huge difference between the two countries in terms of teacher salary. Australia, particularly in Queensland, gives the highest salary for teachers.

Australia has crafted the community engagement framework to ensure the success of their program implementation on collaborative partnership with parents and the community. Communication strategies to parents through websites and emails have been established. Important policies on school uniforms, home works, and voluntary contributions are decided in consultation with the community.

Similarly, Philippines has established already its community partnerships. Parents and other stakeholders are now part in the localization of policies to suit the needs of each school. The adopt-a-school program has been part of public schools engagement with the private sectors to seek support in the different school projects.

Both countries have programs for health, safety, and well-being of the learners. In Australia, they have the Health, safety and well-being (HSW) committee in each school that convenes on a regular basis to assess the health and safety of the learners and solve problems and facilitate consultation and participation between employees and management. Similarly, DepEd has its own health and safety programs that are under the OK sa Deped and DRRM. It can be noted that when it comes to the health, DepEd has a comprehensive program. School-based feeding programs are established in each public school with an annual budget to support the nutritional needs of the marginalized learners who are underweight. Trainings for hygiene such as basic handwashing are also held in each public school in the Philippines to ensure health and safety of learners. Each

learner in public schools has annual medical and dental check-ups. Similarly, DRRM in school is established also to provide earthquake and fire drills for all the stakeholders. It also ensures the safety of everyone during typhoons. Regular reporting is done during calamities to ensure the safety of all the learners.

Limitations

This study focused on the practices of Australia and the Philippines in the management of their early education programs for five-year old children.

In Australia, participants of the study only involved selected officials from the Department of Education of Queensland, the teacher and parents of prep learners.

Likewise, there are data included in this study that only pertain to Queensland.

With the data already available in the website of Australia and the Philippines' respective Department of Education even before the conceptualization of the dissertation, the researcher admits the limitation in terms of the control on the data. Published materials and data contained in the websites are deemed official data of both countries' Education Department.

Lastly, the researcher was also constrained by economic factors during the conduct of this study. She was only able to travel once to one state of Australia, Queensland. The trip provided her the opportunity to observe and interview participants of the study.

While the trip did not cover all data gathering, internet connectivity made possible online data search for additional materials.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, there were more than enough data for analysis and conclusions. The limitations did not significantly affect the findings of the study. Moreover, data

provided by both countries led to the development of the Philippine Kindergarten Management Framework that incorporates the best practices applicable in the country.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are forwarded:

Both Australia and the Philippines provide free early childhood education for the five-year old children. It is mandatory prior to formal schooling in both areas. Early childhood education forms part of the basic education, and therefore is covered by the different policies that govern the entire basic education.

It is the aim of both countries to provide equitable and accessible education for young children including digital equity and free access to learners' materials by removing financial obstacles for them to enroll. In Australia, specifically in the State of Queensland where the research was conducted, AUD90 is charged per student every school year for miscellaneous expenses, which parents find very minimal compared to the quality of education their children receive.

The Philippines, on the other hand, strictly implements the "No Collection Policy." With the no collection policy, all expenses are shouldered by the schools, which do not have enough financial resources to be able to provide the materials needed to properly implement play-based learning and DAP. Teachers in the Philippines feel that although there are very good programs, these are not implemented well in classrooms due to limited resources, dearth of classrooms and teachers resulting in overcrowded classes, and too much class interruptions because of other programs of DepEd.

Australia developed the School Improvement Hierarchy, which consists of three (3) frameworks, and a State Schools Strategy. The School Improvement Hierarchy and the State Schools Strategy are considered as their best practices because everyone knows the direction they are taking. In the data collection in Queensland, teachers and department heads of the Department of Education alike refer to the same frameworks when discussing about the goals, vision, and objectives of the department.

Both countries advocate play-based learning. They have learning framework for a shared understanding of the developmental stages of 5-year old learners. They aim to inculcate positive and responsible attitude towards self and of others and develop learners' analytical thinking skills for life-long learnings. Inclusive opportunities are provided to cater to diversity to support individual needs of learners.

All learning areas are geared toward the development of literacy and numeracy skills of the learners. In Queensland, they use a three-dimensional curriculum, which includes the eight learning areas, the seven general capabilities, and three cross-curriculum priorities. The three cross-curriculum supports the intention of Australia to recognize diversity and to promote inclusiveness. It is integrated in different learning areas to bridge the gap in the learning outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and their non-Indigenous peers, to recognize the contribution of Asia in the country through Asian literature, and to promote sustainability through ethical consumerism. Global awareness is fostered by integrating lessons on international influences. Moreover, they also promote cultural awareness through their lessons in history and geography. The Philippines' KCG adapted the Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Theory to develop its circular themes, which emphasize how the inherent qualities of children are influenced by their

environment as they grow and develop. However, it does not emphasize international influences that promote global awareness, but more of influences within the community that contribute to the development of the learner. This is because Philippine Kindergarten has adopted the DAP. Although history and geography are not learning areas in Kindergarten, cultural heritage is taught through the implementation of Mother-tongue based teaching and learning. Historically, the Philippines was colonized by different nations and therefore their influences have helped shape its cultural heritage. Teaching History in Kindergarten will not only foster global awareness, but will also promote good and responsible citizenship.

School leaders provide strategic direction of the school and ensure learners' development. They take the role of Instructional Leaders that promote learning and success of all learners. They are expected to enrich themselves and the school personnel through professional development. They manage the teaching and non-teaching staff and promote a culture of collaboration; and they exercise accountability in their actions and decisions. They are expected also to manage school funds efficiently and invite stakeholders to support and participate in the different school projects and programs. In addition, they are expected to lead improvement and effect positive change through strategic planning. There is a need for a reskilling of school principals in the management of kindergarten programs in schools especially in the implementation of the curriculum.

The two countries share common competency standards for teachers. The PPST was crafted based on the APST through the partnership of PNU's RCTQ, which prioritized both teacher and curriculum development. Although DepEd started increasing the salaries of public school teachers with an entry pay of Php312,424/year, compared to Queensland, teachers receive the highest starting salary in Australia in the amount of AUD71,834/year or approximately Php2.5 million.

This has resulted in the migration of teachers from the Philippines to other countries, including those in Southeast Asia such as Singapore and Indonesia, and United States of America.

Both countries value the importance of community and stakeholders' engagement in schools. One of the three frameworks of Queensland is the Parent and Community Engagement Framework, which assists all stakeholders on their collaborative effort for the welfare of the learners. This shows how Queensland values parent and community engagement because it recognizes the diversity of its communities and ensures that all races are accommodated and recognized. Consultations with the community are done in crafting homework policies, school uniforms, and giving of trainings to parents to provide games that help develop the learners' literacy and numeracy skills, to arrange effective learning spaces, and to develop strategies and techniques to enhance their child's well-being, and the formation of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. Schools in the Philippines have strengthened community and stakeholders' support by including them in crafting the School Improvement Plan (SIP). In public schools, though, it is very difficult to involve parents in different activities and trainings, especially in the development and enhancement of different learning areas. Most parents from public schools prioritize their work to support the family or they have a lot of children to attend to.

Health, wellbeing, and safety of learners is given priority also by the two countries where the mental, physical, and social development of young children are given emphasis. In Queensland, all young children are given swimming lessons and water safety trainings in State schools and health lessons are integrated in different learning areas. They are required also to bring fruits everyday for their fruit time snacks. Pastoral care for the early years is composed of stakeholders of the school; however, not all parents are aware of this existing provision.

It will be very difficult for public schools in the Philippines to provide swimming lessons due to budgetary limitations and lack of facility. With the country's congested public schools, all spaces are used for classrooms. Fruit time may be very difficult to implement also in Kindergarten classes as most of the learners cannot afford to buy them every day. However, there are feeding and milk programs for the undernourished learners. This is where the conflict arises. Most learners who are not performing well in the class are the same learners who are beneficiaries of the feeding program; and they either miss classes during the duration of the feeding program or they miss the lessons.

Although Philippine policies and programs are patterned mostly from Australia, there is a gap in the implementation of such policies and programs between Queensland and the Philippines. This gap is very apparent when it comes to budget allocation. In reality, the Philippines can be at par with Queensland only in terms of policies and programs on paper; but in terms of implementation, it is way behind.

The Proposed Philippines Kindergarten Management Framework

There is a need to propose a management framework for Kindergarten. Although there are many programs for basic education that include kindergarten, a management framework solely for Kindergarten will help in prioritizing the needs of young children who have different learning styles and developmental needs compared to older children.

The Kindergarten Management Framework should guide school leaders in their decision-making and assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating quality in the Kindergarten programs of public schools.

The framework should respond to the current needs of kindergarten, which lays the foundation for lifelong learning, and its quality has far-reaching impacts as proven by many studies. It should also contain best practices from Australia and Philippines that are applicable and needed in Philippine Kindergarten programs.

Recommendations

After considering the above findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following to:

1. DepEd

1.1.The management framework developed in this study does not intend to replace the policies of DepEd in the Kindergarten Education Program; but it may be used as guide for school leaders in their decision-making and assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating quality in the Kindergarten programs of public schools.

1.2.The management framework may be used also by DepEd in evaluating the Kindergarten Programs of private schools.

1.3.Invest well in teachers to include better compensation, taking into consideration the challenges of being an Early Childhood Education practitioner. Number of learners in a classroom must be reduced and that teacher assistants must be provided.

1.4.Ensure that education leaders and teachers alike are trained properly in the implementation of Kindergarten programs.

1.5.Provide a dedicated budget for Kindergarten to ensure that recommended facilities and

materials are provided, which include appropriate classroom size with play area, art materials, manipulative toys, and other learning materials enough for all learners.

1.6. With the advent of technology, there should be a provision of equitable access to technology where learners will be taught not only on its proper use but also on its accessibility.

1.7. Strengthen stakeholders' engagement for Kindergarten so that other programs will be implemented efficiently; and that other facilities, equipment, or materials needed that are not provided through the school MOOE may be funded. Parents' training on intervention programs may also be considered as they play a big and important part in the education of kindergarten learners.

2. Graduate Schools

Strengthen the competencies expected of graduate programs to hone skills on significant contribution of school leaders.

3. Future researchers

3.1. The proposed management framework may be evaluated regularly to identify its strengths and weaknesses in the implementation, and enhanced when necessary, by including further details of the different key elements.

3.2. Future researchers may explore the kindergarten management of other states in Australia as each state differs in terms of budgetary allocation and management style.

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Philippines

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Government Documents

D.O. 107, s.1989 – Standards for the Organization and Operation of Preschools (Kindergarten Level)

Republic Act 10157 - The Kindergarten Education Act

Appendix A
Letters Asking Permission to Conduct Research

January 17, 2020

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Department of Education
Queensland, Australia

Sir/Madam:

Greetings!!!

The undersigned is a graduate student taking up Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management at the Philippine Normal University (PNU), Manila, Philippines. I am presently conducting a research study entitled "Management Practices of Queensland, Australia and Philippine Early Education Programs for 5-year old children."

Currently, I am at the data gathering phase of this study. In view of these, I would like to ask your permission to allow me to observe, gather documents and interview appropriate individuals involved in the management of Queensland's Prep Program. The interview will be for at least 30 minutes depending on the availability of the interviewee/s. Rest assure that the disclosure of the respondents' identity will be based on their permission where if they are not willing to disclose identity, it will not be revealed and all data will be securely stored and will only be used in accordance with the requirements of the study.

I sincerely hope that you allow me to conduct this study. It will help me complete the last phase of this research which is to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. Thank you very much for your attention and your support.

Very truly yours,


MARIANNE D. PINEDA
Student, Ph.D. maj. in Ed.M.

Noted:


LEONORA P. VARELA, Ph.D.
Adviser

October 5, 2019

HON. LEONOR BRIONES

Secretary

Department of Education

Madam:

Greetings!!!

The undersigned is a graduate student taking up Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management at the Philippine Normal University (PNU), Manila, Philippines. I am presently conducting a research study entitled "Management Practices of Australian and Philippine Kindergarten Programs."

Currently, I am at the data gathering phase of this study. In view of these, I would like to ask your permission to allow me to observe, gather documents and interview appropriate individuals involved in the management of Philippine Kindergarten Program. The interview will be for at least 30 minutes depending on the availability of the interviewee/s. Rest assure that the disclosure of the respondents' identity will be based on their permission where if they are not willing to disclose identity, it will not be revealed and all data will be securely stored and will only be used in accordance with the requirements of the study.

I sincerely hope that you allow me to conduct this study. It will help me complete the last phase of this research which is to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. Thank you very much for your attention and your support.

Very truly yours,

MARLANNE D. PINEDA

Student, Ph.D. ~~prog.~~ in Ed.M.

Noted:

LEONORA P. VARELA, Ph.D.

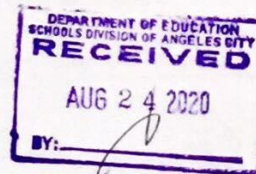
Advisor

RONALD ALLAN MABUNGA, Ph.D.

Dean, GJEF

August 17, 2020

MA. IRELYN P. TAMAYO PhD, CESE
 Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
 Officer-in-Charge
 Office of the Schools Division Superintendent



Madam:

Greetings!!!

The undersigned is a graduate student taking up Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management at the Philippine Normal University (PNU), Manila, Philippines. I am presently conducting a research study entitled "Management Practices of Queensland, Australia and Philippine Early Education Programs for Five-Year Old Children."

Currently, I am at the data gathering phase of this study. In view of these, I would like to ask your permission to allow me to interview five Kindergarten Teachers. The interview will be for at least 30 minutes depending on the availability of the interviewee/s. Rest assure that the disclosure of the respondents' identity will be based on their permission where if they are not willing to disclose identity, it will not be revealed and all data will be securely stored and will only be used in accordance with the requirements of the study.

I sincerely hope that you allow me to conduct this study. It will help me complete the last phase of this research which is to develop a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten. Thank you very much for your attention and your support.

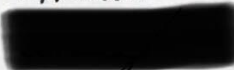
Very truly yours,


MARIANNE D. PINEDA
 Head Teacher I/OIC
 Air Force City ES
 Student, Ph.D. maj. in Ed.M.

Noted:


LEONORA P. VARELA, Ph.D.
 Adviser

Approved:


 08/25/2020

Appendix B
Approval Letters



Department of
Education

31 January 2020

Ms Marianne Pineda
Philippine Normal University
Marianne.pineda@deped.gov.ph

Dear Ms Pineda

Thank you for your application titled *Management Practices of Queensland, Australia and Philippine Early Education Programs for 5-Year Old Children* seeking permission to conduct research in Queensland state schools (Ref. 550/27/2257). I wish to advise that your application has been supported.

This letter gives you permission to approach the principals of the schools nominated in your application to seek their final approval for the research to be administered at their school.

Please provide principals with a copy of the attached letter that contains important information to inform their decision about whether they wish to participate in this research project. Your permission to approach schools is conditional upon the provision of this letter to each of the principals you have nominated.

As detailed in the Department of Education's (Department) [Guidelines for Conducting Research](#), the following conditions apply to your research:

- You must obtain consent from each principal of the schools nominated in your application before you can commence your research or invite research participants to participate in the project.
- Principals have the right to decline participation if they consider the research will cause undue disruption to educational programs in their schools.
- Principals have the right to monitor any research activities conducted in their facilities and can withdraw their support at any time.

This permission to approach schools has been granted on the basis of the information you have provided in your research application and supporting documents. Permission to approach is subject to the conditions detailed below:

- Adherence to the Department's [Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research](https://education.qld.gov.au/about/Documents/terms_conditions.pdf), https://education.qld.gov.au/about/Documents/terms_conditions.pdf.
- No comparisons are to be made between the various Queensland state schools, between Queensland state schools and schools in the Queensland non-state sector, or between Queensland state schools and schools in other state and territory jurisdictions, in publications or presentations.
- Any changes to the project required by your institution's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) must be submitted to the Department for consideration before you proceed with the research. Conversely, any changes required by the Department must be submitted to your institution's HREC for consideration and approval before commencing the research.

Research Showcase **2020**
Evidence for Impact

Education House
30 Mary Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15033 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone (07) 303 45929
Website www.qed.qld.gov.au
ABN 76 337 613 647

2

- Variations to the research proposal, as originally described in the application to the Department, should be submitted to Research Services via email, researchservices@qed.qld.gov.au. Variations may include:
 - changes to the research team;
 - changes to data collection or the methodology;
 - additional analysis or research with the research data;
 - changes to the level of sensitivity or imposition associated with the research; and/or
 - changes that alter the initial information provided to participants or parents/caregivers or provide new information that can reasonably be considered to influence participants' willingness to continue with the study.
- Significant variations will require the submission of a new application.

As detailed in the Department's [Terms and Conditions for Conducting Research](#):

- Papers and articles based on data collected from Queensland state schools and/or departmental sites must be provided to the Department for comment at least three weeks before publication.
- Publications must not disclose the names of individual participants or Queensland state schools.
- You must notify the Department if you are contacted by the media about research activities conducted on departmental sites, or if you intend to issue a media release about your research.
- At the conclusion of your research, you must provide Research Services and principals of participating schools with a summary of your research findings and any associated publications.
- You must also submit a summary of your findings to the Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI) at <https://research.def.qld.gov.au>. **Failure to provide a summary of your research may preclude you from undertaking any future research in Queensland state schools.**

Please note this letter constitutes permission to approach principals to participate in the research project outlined in your research application only. It does not constitute ethics approval or support for the general and/or commercial use of an intervention, curriculum program, software program or other enterprise you may be evaluating in your research.

Research Services values your input into the research application process and would like to seek your feedback through a short survey: <https://survey.qed.qld.gov.au/anon/1777.aspx>. Your valued feedback enables Research Services to improve our existing processes and assess whether they are streamlined and transparent to all stakeholders.

Should you require further information on the research application process, please contact Research Services, Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations, on (07) 3034 5929. Please quote the file number 550/27/2257 in all future correspondence.

I wish your research project every success.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Libke
A/Director, Research Services
Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations

 PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY The National Center for Teacher Education Taft Ave. Cor. Ayala Blvd., Ermita, Manila 1000 Philippines Trunkline: +63-2-317-1768 loc 750/751 eprdc@pnu.edu.ph www.pnu.edu.ph	Index No.	PNU-MN-2016-EPR-FM-016
	Issue No.	01
	Rev. No.	01
	Date:	09-24-2018
	Page	1 of 1
	QAC No.	CC-09242018-023
EPRDC	CLEARANCE TO PROCEED	

BASIC INFORMATION

REC Code:	111519-447
Research Proposal Title:	Management Practices of Australian and Philippine Kindergarten
Researcher / Project Leader and Designation/Affiliation:	Marianne D. Pineda

The following items [✓] have been received and reviewed in connection with the above study to be conducted by the above researcher.

- [✓] Research Proposal in prescribed format
- [✓] Informed Consent Form/s /Assent Form
- [✓] Data Collection Tools

and hereby approved:

- [✓] To proceed to the validation of the data gathering tools
- [✓] To proceed to data collection, organization and write-up

Date of Issuance: **November 15, 2019**


TERESITA T. RUNGDUIN, Ph.D.
 Secretary
 Research Ethics Committee

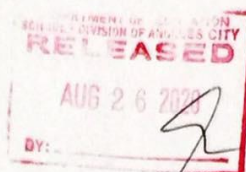

RENE R. BELECINA, Ph.D.
 Chair
 Research Ethics Committee



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
 REGION III
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF ANGELES CITY

August 25, 2020

MS. MARIANNE D. PINEDA
 Researcher
 Philippine Normal University



Dear Ms. Pineda:

Please be informed that this Office is granting your request to conduct your study titled "*MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA AND PHILIPPINE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR FIVE-YEAR OLD CHILDREN*" among kindergarten teachers of Pampang ES and Gueco Balibago ES, in the Division of Angeles City. Likewise, your request to conduct an interview among the respondents shall be coordinated to the school head.

In the observance of the community quarantine and as per DOH guidelines, the researcher may distribute the assent letter through varied platforms such as e-mail, private message, and the like and coordinate with the school head of the participants involved in the study. Likewise, the letter of request with the attached approval letter duly signed shall be presented to the participants.

Moreover, the following shall be completely observed during the actual conduct of the activity; non-utilization of government funds and stationeries, and adherence to ethical considerations.

Please provide this Office a copy of the results of your study for future reference.

Very truly yours,

MA. IRELYN P. TANAYO PhD, CESE
 Asst. Schools Division Superintendent
 Officer-In-Charge
 Schools Division Superintendent

mlvr/seps/par

Control No. 2020-032



Address: Jesus Street, Pulungbulu, Angeles City
Telephone No. (045) 322-4101



Appendix C
Informed Consent Letter

 PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY The National Center for Teacher Education Taft Ave. Cor. Ayala Blvd., Ermita, Manila 1000 Philippines Telephone: +63-2-317-1768 loc. 750/751 epcdc@pnu.edu.ph www.pnu.edu.ph	Index No.	PNU-MN-2016-EPR-FM-037
	Issue No.	01
	Rev. No.	01
	Date	09-24-2018
	Page	1 of 1
EPRDC	INFORMED CONSENT FORM	
	QAC No.	CC-09242018-041

Title of the Study: **MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA AND PHILIPPINE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR 5-YEAR OLD CHILDREN**

Proponent:

Name: Marianne D. Pineda
 Address: Angeles City, Philippines
 Phone: 0426128009 (Queensland)
 +63 9175560297 (Philippines)
 E-mail: marianne.pineda@deped.gov.ph

I. Invitation to Participate:

You are invited to take part in a 30-minute interview as part of the data gathering phase of this research study. It is likewise requested that a follow up question and answer session via video chat shall be conducted as the researcher of this study is from the Philippines.

Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Please ask the proponent of this study if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

II. Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to explore Philippines' and Queensland, Australia's management practices of early education programs for 5-year old children. The result will be a basis for crafting a management framework for Philippine kindergarten.

III. Number of Participants

The maximum number of participants who will be interviewed for this study is five from each participating country.

IV. Risks and Inconveniences:

The risks of this study is minimal. These risks are similar to those you experience when disclosing work-related information to others. You may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

(All documents without the PNU QM Stamp or Control Identifier are uncontrolled)

 PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY The National Center for Teacher Education Taft Ave. Cor. Ayala Blvd., Ermita, Manila 1000 Philippines Trunkline: +63-2-317-1788 loc. 750/751 enrds@pnu.edu.ph www.pnu.edu.ph	Index No.	PNU-MN-2016-EPR-FM-037
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	Rev. No.	01
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V. Safeguards

- The gathering of documents, interviews, or observations will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you at a place that is private.
- You can skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering during the interview.

VI. Confidentiality:

For the purposes of this research project, all respondents will be assigned a pseudonym or code name/numbers unless you consent that your name or identity be revealed. You may also request that all or part of your responses be kept anonymous at any time.

Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all researcher notes and documents, if the participant requested that his/her identity be kept confidential.
- Notes, interview transcriptions, and transcribed notes and any other identifying participant information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.
- The researcher and the members of the researcher's committee will review the researcher's collected data. Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. Any final publication will contain the names of the public figures that have consented to participate in this study (unless a public figure participant has requested anonymity); all other participants involved in this study will not be identified and their anonymity will be maintained.
- Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a transcribed copy of their interview. Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired.

VII. Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time and without giving a reason. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

(All documents without the PNU QM Stamp or Control Identifier are uncontrolled)

 PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY The National Center for Teacher Education Taft Ave. Cor. Ayala Blvd., Ermita, Manila 1000 Philippines Trunkline: +63-2-317-1768 loc. 750/751 eprdc@pnu.edu.ph www.pnu.edu.ph	EPRDC	INFORMED CONSENT FORM	Index No.	PNU-MN-2016-EPR-FM-037
			Issue No.	01
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			Date:	09-24-2018
			Page	1 of 1
			QAC No.	CC-09242018-041

VIII. Benefits of Taking Part in the Study:

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, the information obtained from this study will be a basis for crafting a management framework for Philippine Kindergarten.

IX. Payment or Incentive:

There is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study.

X. Contact Information:

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

XI. Consent:

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the study. Please check the option that applies to you before signing with the following options:

☒ I give permission for my interviews to be audio/video taped.

☐ I do not give permission for my interviews to be audio/video taped.

Name of the Participant: Cristine Mijares

Signature of the Participant: [Signature] Date: 20/02/2020

Appendix D

Interview Guide and Sample Transcript of Interview

I. Interview Guide



Questions
1. What are the special characteristics of your early education program for 5-year old children that help you achieve the program goals?
2. What kind of learners/citizens do you intend to develop with these programs?
3. Is prep part of the Basic Education in your country? Why/Why not? Who manages these programs?
4. How are your policies crafted? Who are the people involved in crafting these policies?
5. Which of these policies are critical in the management of kindergarten/prep? How do you communicate these policies to the parents and other stakeholders?
6. Which of your prep programs you think needs to be improved? Why?
7. How do you ensure program accountability? Continuous program improvement? And enhanced outcomes for children?
8. What competencies are expected from the teachers and staff? How are they compensated and additional work benefits?
9. What is your system of monitoring program performance? How was the system developed?

1. What are the special characteristics Kindergarten that help you achieve the program goals?

- The Kindergarten curriculum has been crafted using the thematic or integrative approach in curriculum development and implementation.
- This approach employs integrative and interactive teaching-learning strategies as well as child-centered learning experiences.
- Kindergarten Curriculum is contextualized to address the specific circumstances of diverse learners with the curriculum enhanced in relation to their context.
- Mother Tongue is the primary Medium of Teaching and Learning (MOTL) in Kindergarten.
- Learning activities are organized into thematic units or teaching themes – Myself, My Family, My School, My Community, and Other Things Around Me.

2. What kind of learners/citizens do you intend to develop with these programs?

The Kindergarten Curriculum intends to develop holistic Filipino learners ready for the challenges of the subsequent grade levels. It prepares their socio-emotional, communication, logical-mathematical, cognitive and other relevant behavioral skills relevant to the acquisition of key stage 1 standards.

3. Is Kindergarten part of the Basic Education in your country? Why/Why not? Who manages these programs?

By virtue of RA 10157 also known as Kindergarten Education Act, all Filipino children are mandated to avail and access compulsory kindergarten education that effectively promotes their physical, social, intellectual, emotional and skills stimulation and values formation to sufficiently prepare them for formal elementary schooling.

4. How are your policies crafted? Who are the people involved in crafting these policies?

Policies and guidelines are crafted after series of monitoring and evaluation regarding the program implementation. Policies may be done by the different Bureaus from the Departments Curriculum and Instruction strand together with heads from different regions. The policy goes through the following steps – development, validation, enhancement and finalization.

Appendix E
Kindergarten Blocks of Time

Philippine Kindergarten Blocks of Time

Block of Time	No. of minutes	Description of Learning Activities	Sample competencies linked to daily routine
Arrival Time	10 minutes	Period of individual, peer or group exploration of the different play areas or activity centers in the classroom while waiting for other children to arrive.	Fine motor skills such as scribbling, drawing, building with blocks, molding figures using playdough Language literacy and communication skills such as using greetings and polite expressions Socio-emotional skills such as autonomy, working with others self-regulation
Meeting Time 1	10	Introductory or preparatory activities for the day which include: • class circle for teacher-guided recitation • teacher-led physical exercises	Language, Literacy, and Communication Skills such as following instructions, expressing ideas, participating in conversations or discussions
Work Period 1	45	Children work in small groups, in pairs, or individually on either teacher-assigned or child-initiated activities.	Numeracy skills such as recognizing and writing numerals, comparing, quantities, etc. Work and study skills such as ability to accomplish tasks within allotted time, ability to stay focus
Meeting Time 2	10	The children are gathered once again	Language, Literacy, and Communication

		by the teacher as a whole group. Also, it is a time to prepare for washing hands before eating snacks.	Skills such as following instructions, recalling information
Recess	15	Nourishing break for the learners. Proper etiquette for eating is part of the teacher's instruction as this break is facilitated.	Personal Autonomy or self-help skills (feeding self, use of utensil, etc.) Fine motor skills
Quiet Time	10	During this time, children can rest or engage in relaxing activities.	Following instructions
Stories/Rhymes/ Poems/Songs	15	This is a teacher-guided interactive read-aloud activity for stories, rhymes, poems, or songs.	Language, Literacy, and Communication Skills such as recalling story details, relating personal experience to story events, etc. Cognitive skills
Work Period 2	40	Children work in small groups, in pairs, or individually on either teacher-assigned or child-initiated activities.	
Indoor/Outdoor Games	20	Activities include sports, simple athletics, movement activities, and outdoor games.	Gross fine motor skills Receptive and Expressive Language Skills
Meeting Time 3	5	Children are given time to pack away. Teachers synthesize the children's learning experiences. Reminders and learning extensions are given also during this period.	Language, Literacy, and Communication Skills such as expressing feelings, describing experiences, following instructions, etc. Self-help skills such as packing own things, return things

to the proper place,
etc.

TOTAL 180 minutes

Note. Reprinted from *Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education* by the Department of Education, 2016. Copyright 2016 by the Department of Education.

Appendix F

Turnitin Authenticity Result



Philippine Normal University
The National Center for Teacher Education
PUBLICATION OFFICE
 Taft Avenue, Manila 1000, Philippines



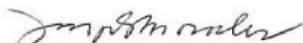
AUTHENTICITY RESULT

Date of Release: November 18, 2020
 Result Code: 2020-0736
 Submission ID: 1449657054
 Title of Output: Management Practices of Queensland, Australia
 and Philippine Early Education Programs for
 Five-Year Old Children
 Author (s): Marianne D. Pineda

Authenticity Report:

Similarity Report: 24%

- Interpretation: A similarity of 24% means that 24% of the entire paper is similar to sources in Turnitin's (authenticity software) online repository. The colored bibliographical references denote the sources of similarity to previously published work which maybe from internet sources (20%), publications (4%), and student papers (16%) for the remaining similarity percentage.
- Highlighted text in the Manuscript:
 - Red marks and highlights are set of texts directly or exactly copied from online sources.
 - Other color marks and highlights are set of text exactly copied from other sources (student papers and publications).


 Marie Paz E. Morales, Ph.D.
 Director



Appendix G
Language Editing Certificate

Philippine Normal University
The National Center for Teacher Education
College of Graduate Studies and Teacher Education Research
Taft Avenue, Manila

26 November 2020

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This certifies that I have edited the dissertation titled “**Management Practices of Early Education Programs of Australia and the Philippines: Towards the Development of Kindergarten Management Framework**” by **MARIANNE D. PINEDA**, a candidate for the degree Doctor of Philosophy with specialization in Educational Management.

MERRY RUTH MORAUDA GUTIERREZ (SGD)

CGSTER Faculty

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A Department of Education Head Teacher I and School Head of Air Force City Elementary School with a degree in Master of Arts in Education with specialization in Early Childhood Education and has completed the academic requirements for Ph.D. in Educational Management from Philippine Normal University. Has a 12-year teaching experience in Kindergarten and grade school both in private and public schools and has effectively worked and dealt with people of different race and culture.

WORK EXPERIENCE

October 2018 to present
Head Teacher I

Department of Education
Angeles City

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Spearheads the development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) along with the Annual Improvement Plan (AIP)
- Ensures adherence to DepEd Orders and other issuances
- Ensures the implementation of school projects and programs
- Monitors the teaching-learning process
- Motivates and supports teachers to attain peak performance through awards, recognition and incentives
- Establishes and ensures support and cooperation of stakeholders

May 2013 to October 2018
Kindergarten Teacher III

GUECO BALIBAGO ELEM. SCHOOL
DepEd Angeles City

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Implements the Kindergarten Curriculum
- Prepares daily lesson log
- Makes monthly accomplishment report
- Handles special assignment as coordinator and teachers club officer

June 2006 to March 2013

Kindergarten Teacher

Grade School Teacher – English

MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SCHOOL

Mabalacat, Pampanga

Teaches in Kindergarten and grade school, acts as coordinator for the English Department.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Prepares daily plantilla
- Updates subject matter budget for the whole school year
- Makes weekly reports of the lessons covered for the week
- Conducts remedial classes for non-readers
- Handles special assignments such as advisory class and liturgical committee

June 2002 to May 2006

Executive Secretary to the

President and Chairman

HIDDEN VALE SPORTS CLUB INC./

AUSWORLD CONSULTANTS LTD.

Angeles City

Supports the company President and Chairman in his day-to-day work.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Acts as Secretariat for the Board of Directors and stockholders
- Takes meeting minutes and distribute them in timely manner
- Manages confidential files
- Keeps the President and Chairman informed of important events and activities in the club

January 2002 to June 2002

Program Assistant

BATO BALANI FOUNDATION, INC.

Makati City

Handles the Scholarship Program and Special activities of the foundation

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Manages photo exhibits of the foundation
- Assists on other programs of the foundation such as book donation program, seminars for teachers and school heads, and tree planting activities
- Does administrative tasks

April 1999 to December 2001

Tournament Coordinator

MIMOSA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Clarkfield, Pampanga

Handles Golf Tournaments (Club-Sponsored, Inter-Club and Private Tournaments)

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate all golf events with the different inter-linked departments
- Oversee the tournament proper, awarding ceremonies and fellowship
- Prepare tournament action memo
- Do telemarketing for the promotions of new programs and other activities

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

<i>Graduate School</i>	Philippine Normal University Taft Ave., Manila	2016 - 2021 Ph.D. in Educational Mgt.
		2014 Master of Arts in Educ. with specialization in Early Childhood Education
	Angeles University Foundation Angeles City, Pampanga	1999-2001 Master in Public Admin.
<i>Spanish Language Course</i>	Instituto Cervantes de Manila	2007 - 2009 Level 7
<i>Diploma Course</i>	University of the Philippines Open University	2006 Lang. Studies for Teachers
<i>Education Units</i>	Holy Angel University Angeles City, Pampanga	2003-2004 Teaching Methods
<i>College</i>	Angeles University Foundation Angeles City, Pampanga	1995-1999 BA in Mass Communication

CERTIFICATION:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • Professional Board Examination for Teachers | August 2005 |
| • Civil Service Sub-Professional Examination | August 1997 |

SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Proficient in Windows, MS Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook), Internet Explorer
- Driving

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS ATTENDED:

- Project MODULAR in Distance Learning
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, January 11-12, 2021
- Orientation in the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (Luzon 2 Cluster)
Department of Education Central Office
via Zoom Video Communications, December 8-9, 2020
- Webinar on Special Education Program
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, November 18-19, 2020
- Webinar on School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) SY 2020-2021: Nutritious Food Product (NFP)
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, November 17, 2020
- Project SHEEP
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, October 21-23, 2020
- Online Division Orientation on Interim Guidelines for Assessment and Grading in light of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (D.O. No. 31 s. 2020).
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, October 20, 2020
- Division-Writeshop on New Normal in School Management: A Training/Workshop on the Provision of Online/Virtual Technical Assistance to School Heads
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, September 16-17, 2020
- Child Protection Seminar for Elementary School Teachers
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, August 11-13, 2020
- Provision for Psychosocial Support Services
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, July 15, 2020
- Webinar for Activity Sheets and Learners' Materials Making

Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, July 9-10, 2020

- IPCRF Data Collection System for SY 2019-2020
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, June 30, 2020
- PADAYON: A Well Being Webinar for DepEd Angeles City Personnel
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Live Streaming, June 19, 2020
- Google Drive and Google File Stream
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 13, 2020
- Google Docs and Sheets
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 12, 2020
- Google Forms and Gmail Account
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 11, 2020
- Meet Google Meet
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 6, 2020
- Google Classroom: Beyond the Four Walls
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 5, 2020
- Introduction to Google Suite
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
via Google Meet, May 4, 2020
- Division Seminar on National School Building Inventory (NSBI) for Public School
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
Sta. Teresita Elementary School, January 21, 2020
- Division Training on Partnerships Management and Negotiation Skills for School Heads and Adopt-A-School Program Coordinators
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
NEAP, September 13, 2019
- One-Day Lecture on Security Awareness and Orientation for Government Executives on the CTG Problems for DepEd
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
Sta. Teresita Elementary School, August 27, 2019

- Division Orientation on the Policy Guidelines on the Collection of Data Requirements for Beginning of SY 2019-2020 in the BEIS and LIS
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
Azurro Hotel, Angeles City, August 29-30, 2019
- 2019 Project SHEEP: Version 3.0 (School Heads' Educational Enhancement Program)
Grace Crown Hotel, Angeles City, July 31-August 2, 2019
- Division Strategic Planning for School Heads
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
Widus Hotel, Angeles City, July 3-5, 2019
- Division Orientation on Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS)
Department of Education, Division of Angeles City
Grace Crown Hotel, Angeles City, June 20-21, 2019
- Orientation on K to 12 Transition Curriculum for Learners with Disabilities (LWDs)
Department of Education, Regional Office
Olongapo City, May 29-31, 2019
- 38th Principals Training and Development Program and National Board Conference (PTBD_NBC)
Philippine Elementary Schools Principals Association
Fontana Convention Center, Clark Freeport Zone, Angeles City, May 3-5, 2019
- Division Orientation on the Policy Guidelines on the Collection of Data Requirements for Beginning of SY 2019-2020 in the BEIS and LIS
Azurro Hotel, Angeles City, September 16, 2019
- National Training of Trainors on Kindergarten Pedagogies, Child-Centered Approaches, DAP-ELLN and Classroom-Based Assessment
Department of Education Central Office
Xenia Hotel Clark, Clark Freeport Zone, September 14-18, 2017
- 2017 International Seminar-Workshop in School Leadership and Management
Saint Louis University
Baguio City, May 10-14, 2017