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BARANGAY DAY CARE CENTERS: EMERGENCE, CURRENT STATUS AND IMPLICATIONS TO TEACHER EDUCATION

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BACKGROUND

In the last three decades, preschool education had become a boom and a lucrative business in the country. Parents became aware of the value of early childhood education and it motivated them to apportion part of their hard-earned money for their children's pre-school education. The cost of sending a child to school ranged from as low as fifty pesos to as much as seven to eight thousand pesos per month.

Adams (2008) stressed that early childhood education is the key to building a strong foundation for a child's educational success. Young children learn habits and form patterns that are not easily changed in later years. If parents and educators establish good habits and develop productive patterns of behavior among children in their charge, the children are likely to achieve great educational success (www.helium.com). Local educators would certainly agree to such statement.

Philippine Normal University (PNU), the country's National Center for Teacher Education (NCTE), has for its main pillars the honing of skills and talents by teaching the very young. The bachelor's degree in early childhood education under the College of Education provides pre-service teachers with knowledge and skills to teach toddlers to grade three pupils. With the nationwide establishment of barangay day care centers, it would be a

challenging route for the graduates to work as teachers at these centers.

Thus, this research was initiated to provide the PNU BCED graduates a knowledge of the emergence of the day care center phenomenon, the current status of the day care centers in selected barangays in the National Capital Region (NCR) and in Cavite province in terms of the existing facilities, academic and non-academic activities, profile of the teachers, how the teachers described a typical day at the center including the problems they usually encountered, and the teachers' level of satisfaction while working at the centers.

The study further aimed to draw implications from the emergence of day care centers and from their current status to teacher education.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive in nature, the study utilized documentary analysis of the existing legislative literature as well as local research literature to present how the phenomenon emerged. Survey was conducted to find out the current status of the day care centers. Assistance from the third year BCED students in the second semester of SY 2008-2009 was sought during the data gathering phase. Observations during actual classes and interviews with day care center teachers were undertaken to gather data.

Data from the survey were analyzed through frequency count and computation of percentage. Answers to open-ended questions were content analyzed and ranked according to the most frequent responses. Mean was calculated to generate the typical job satisfaction among the respondents.

Forty-eight (48) barangay day care centers were conveniently sampled for this study. The distribution of the centers by location is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Distribution of the Day Care Centers by Location

Locality	Frequency	Percentage
Caloocan – NCR	5	10.4
Malabon – NCR	1	2.1
Manila – NCR	11	22.9
Marikina – NCR	1	2.1
Muntinlupa - NCR	1	2.1
Pasay – NCR	4	8.3
Parañaque – NCR	2	4.2
Pasig - NCR	2	4.2
Quezon City - NCR	9	18.7
Valenzuela - NCR	1	2.1
Bacoor - Cavite	6	12.5
Dasmariñas - Cavite	5	10.4
Total	48	100.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Emergence of Barangay Day Care Centers

The beginning of early childhood education in the Philippines was reflective of the colonizer's view of the child. The Spaniards, during their time, exerted all efforts to keep the Filipinos uneducated. The Americans, on the other hand, tried to establish a public school system but eventually introduced a new language. As an outcome, it was only a few years after the country's liberation from the Japanese occupation in the 1950s that the public system and other government agencies intensified their effort in preschool education. The Philippine Republic then

was one of the signatories in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Philippine Constitution also stated that education should always be prioritized.

Presidential Decree 1567 of 1978 or the Barangay Day Care Law mandated that a day care center be established and maintained in every barangay with at least 100 families. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was given the task to be the lead agency for early child care and education services. This government agency developed the day care program which put its thrust toward values formation and socialization for children aged three to six years old.

This presidential decree was then amended to become the Republic Act 6972 of 1990 which strengthened the capabilities of the day care centers—making them more responsive to the needs of the majority. The amendment was geared toward the total development and protection of children up to six years old. Aside from nutritional care and provision of a safe environment, these centers were expected to provide intellectual and mental stimulation activities to children as well as wholesome recreation to further values formation and development of social skills among children.

Section 6 (c) of this law further granted an allowable monthly allowance of Php500.00 to be charged to the annual appropriations of the DSWD for the day care center workers.

The passage of Republic Act 8980 otherwise known as the Early Childhood and Care Development Act (ECCD Act) on December 5, 2000 facilitated a comprehensive policy and a national system for children from zero to six years old. It further intensified the operational system of day care centers. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) through its local councils from the city, municipality, down to barangay level was tasked for the establishment and maintenance of day care

centers and other facilities necessary for child development. On the other hand, the DSWD, through its local units, was directed to undertake the accreditation of the day care centers, other private center-based programs and service providers. The Department of Education (DepEd) with the DSWD was given a collaborative role in regulating the delivery of programs and services on ECCD.

Statistics from the DSWD report for the year 2000, before the issuance of R.A. 8980 (www.dswd.gov.ph), showed that out of the targeted 41,924 barangays in the country, only about 32,787 established their respective day care centers. This was equivalent to 72% of accomplishment based on the mandates of the 1978 Day Care Law and the 1990 amendments mentioned above. Statistics further showed that more than one million children were served by these centers during that period.

House Bill 5367, which was approved on its third and final reading in the first quarter of 2009, aimed to incorporate preschool education to basic education with the DepEd at the frontier of its implementation all over the country. This bill was in consonance with the state's policy to provide equal opportunities for all children to avail of free and compulsory preschool education that effectively promotes physical, social, intellectual, emotional stimulations as well as values formation to adequately prepare them for formal elementary schooling.

This bill also pushed for the increase in the monthly compensation of the day care workers from Php500.00 to a salary equivalent to salary grades 6, 8 and 9 in the Salary Standardization Law depending on the teachers' qualifications. Non-monetary benefits like leave, insurance and retirement benefits were also part of the package for the day care center workers.

Day care workers perform multiple tasks. In one of the featured article supporting the House Bill 5075 in February 2009

(www.journal.com.ph), the day care workers are regarded as modern-day heroes who spend their own hard-earned money just to meet the needs of children at day care centers. Thus, it is high time to alleviate their economic condition.

Corollary to the goals of House Bill 5367 was the issuance of the Executive Order No. 585 in January 2008 which directed the expansion of the preschool coverage to include children enrolled in barangay day care centers. In this light, the DepEd should provide existing day care center workers with teacher training on the curriculum, competencies for pre-school education and necessary instructional materials. Moreover, the DepEd became the lead agency to supervise the educational programs, curriculum and instructions at day care centers.

Simultaneous to the efforts at the lower house via House Bill 5367, there are two senate bills (Senate Bills 2200 and 2306) which are still for deliberation and approval. Both bills aim to grant a “magna carta” for day care teachers. Once enacted into law, qualification standards would be set for the hiring of day care teachers. Existing day care teachers would be given due salary commensurate to their qualifications. Basic training and other non-monetary benefits should also be in place for these teachers.

As of February 2009, the DSWD data (www.dswd.gov.ph) showed that 42,000 barangay day care centers operated across regions in the country with beneficiaries of about 1.2 million children. From the 2000 data (72% accomplishment), it can be noted that a hundred percent accomplishment was already reached in establishing day care centers in all barangays with at least 100 families.

Scholarly Pursuits from the Academe

Santos-Laurel (1988) found out that there were two general classifications of day care centers: those that offered a

very uneven services ranging from purely feeding centers and those with full time teachers and complete classroom facilities. Moreover, the study showed that there were non-governmental organizations that also organized early childhood education and care services as part of their community organizing projects.

In another study she conducted, Santos (1990) found out that preschools followed any of these five curriculum models: 1) subject matter-oriented models; 2) child-oriented models; 3) school specific curriculum models; 4) eclectic curriculum models; and 5) religion-oriented curriculum models. She likewise discovered that although most preschools stated objectives from the humanist perspective, most of their activities and programs showed that mastery of subject matter still dominated the daily plan of activities.

In an attempt to provide day care centers with a structured reading program in the country's urban poor communities, Ocampo (1996) conducted a three-phase research program. The first phase, the needs assessment, revealed the literacy level of the children and priority areas of instruction as perceived by parents. The second phase that called for the development of the early reading program brought forth a child-oriented curriculum model complete with scope and skills to guide the teachers in conducting the lessons. The third and the last phase was the implementation of the program with an experimental setup to measure its effectiveness.

This study concluded that the children who underwent the proposed three-month early reading program exhibited significant gains in more areas of early literacy than those in the control group who took the regular day care program. At the end of the three months, the children in the experimental group proved to have gained the prerequisite reading readiness skills necessary for learning to read. Many of these children showed that they could read short passages already.

Favenir (2002) explored on the contribution of the barangay day care centers to the child as well as community development. Her study revealed that day care center services contributed very extensively to the mental development along the effective communication through listening, speaking, writing and reading. Services along physical development contributed extensively in terms of physical fitness, body care and respect. Services on the social development aspect contributed extensively in the development of attitudes like being cooperative. Along parent-community partnership, the extensive contribution was most perceived on the education of parents and caregivers in giving proper care and attention to children. Extensive contributions were perceived along the enhancement of mothers' productivity at work and their relief from worries.

Gleaning from this brief literature review, the emergence of day care centers in the local setting fostered the importance of educating the young. The political will had steadily taken its place to foresee the rewarding results when parents invested in early childhood education. Several scholarly pursuits, as cited above, further proved emerging interests in the crucial effects of early childhood education on the later success in education.

Status of Day Care Centers

1. On current status of facilities available at barangay day care centers

The results of the survey showed that all of the 48 day care centers had at least one (1) classroom to conduct morning and afternoon classes. Of the 48 day care centers, only 34 had comfort rooms for use of students alone. Other centers utilized the common comfort rooms within the barangay hall premises. There were seven (7) centers which had their own canteen while only five (5) centers had separate libraries for exclusive use of the children. Two (2) centers had a multi-purpose hall for the big

group activities and cultural programs and six (6) centers maintained a separate small kitchen. Only three (3) centers had a clinic for first aid services in cases of medical emergency.

2. On academic and non-academic activities done at selected barangay day care centers

It can be gleaned from Table 2 that teaching the children to read both in Filipino and in English ranked first among the daily activities at day care centers. This daily activity reflected the goal of early childhood education toward early literacy for the Filipino children. As cited earlier, the study of Ocampo (1996) proved that early literacy training at day care centers provided the children with the necessary reading readiness skills for formal education. Counting came second in rank and teaching the children to write ranked third. Storytelling time ranked fourth while singing ranked fifth. Singing was usually done as a starter activity. Supervised play or games ranked sixth in the survey. According to the teachers, play time harnessed motor coordination and developed social skills and teamwork among children.

When asked how they prepared for these academic activities, about 10 teachers responded that lessons were patterned from that of the previous classes while about six (6) said they used a guide or handbook for the lesson implementation.

Table 2
Ranked Responses on the Daily Activities

Activities	Frequency	Rank
Reading	36	1
Counting	28	2
Writing	27	3
Story-telling	19	4
Singing	10	5
Play/Games	10	6

As regards weekly activities, the top three activities done at the centers, as depicted in Table 3, were gardening, arts and crafts, and other fun outdoor activities. It can be noted that only three (3) activities were found most common among the 48 day care centers. The data further present other activities done on weekly basis but most activities were particular to only one or two centers. Cooking, for instance, was done only at centers with a kitchen. Movie viewing requires equipment thus only a center or two could have it.

Table 3
Ranked Responses on Weekly Activities

Activities	Frequency	Rank
Gardening	10	1
Arts and Crafts	8	2
Outdoor Activities	6	3

Table 4 exhibits once-a-year activities done or celebrated at day care centers. These activities depicted the importance of Christmas season, family bonding usually done on weekends, nutrition in July, national language in August, and global community relationships in October. Table 4 further reveals that conducting field trips in which children were accompanied by parents ranked first.

Table 4
Ranked Responses on Activities Done Once a Year

Activities	Frequency	Rank
Field trip	15	1
Christmas Celebration	13	2
Family Day	10	3
Nutrition Month	9	4
Buwan ng Wika	8	5
U.N. Celebration	7	6

The activities presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 were found to be consistent with the legal mandate (R.A. 6972) of the establishment of the day care centers specifically in providing the children with mental stimulation exercises as well as wholesome recreation and socialization activities. Establishing reading habit among children at these centers conformed to what Adams (2008) claimed that such productive pattern of behavior contributed in achieving educational success in later years of life. Likewise, the study of Favenir (2002) concluded that reading, listening and writing were activities that extensively contributed to the mental development of the children.

3. On profile of teachers at selected day care centers

The teachers included in the survey were all female and majority of them were within 31-50 age bracket (Table 5).

It can also be noted in Table 5 that there were four (4) teachers who were in their mid-life stage already. They had the longest period of stay at day care centers (26 to 35 years) or they should be considered “pioneers” of day care center in their respective barangays. Responses of these workers to open-ended questions revealed that sense of fulfillment in teaching children made them stay in the job. To quote the response of the eldest worker (aged 60), *“kahit ako high school graduate lang, binigyan ako ng pagkakataon maging isang guro (though I am just a high school graduate, I was given the opportunity to teach).”* Nevertheless, most of the teacher-respondents belonged to the 41-50 age bracket (39.58%).

Table 5
Distribution of Teacher-Respondents according to Age

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
21 - 30	8	16.67
31 - 40	17	35.42
41 - 50	19	39.58
51 - 60	4	8.33
TOTAL	48	100.00

It was found that majority or 35.42% of the teacher-respondents were working at the day care centers for one to five years and about 27% of them chose to work at day care centers for 6 to 10 years (Table 6). Worthy to note again are the four (4) “pioneers” who opted stay teaching for 26 to 35 years at their respective centers.

Table 6
Distribution of Teacher-Respondents according to Length of Service in Teaching at Day Care Centers

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
1–5	17	35.42
6–10	13	27.08
11–15	7	14.58
16–20	5	10.42
21–25	2	4.17
26–30	3	6.25
31– 35	1	2.08
TOTAL	48	100.00

In terms of highest educational attainment, more than a half of the teachers finished college. Further analysis of the data on this variable shows that out of the 37 college graduates, 13 earned their bachelor’s degree in Education. Out of these 13 Education graduates, only one (1) specialized in childhood education, seven (7) took up Bachelor in Elementary Education

(BEED), five (5) took up Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSE) and only one passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET).

The 24 non-education graduates finished courses in office administration, business administration, computer science, arts and agriculture. Among the six (6) teachers who did not finish college, only one pursued Education course particularly industrial education.

Table 7
Distribution of Teacher-Respondents according to
Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
With M.A. units	1	2.08
College Graduate	37	77.09
College Undergraduate	8	16.67
Vocational Course	1	2.08
High School Graduate	1	2.08
TOTAL	48	100.00

Gleaning from the profile of the teacher-respondents, the age and length of stay variables cannot be underestimated. Considering the meager amount of salary and benefits from the local government units, these teachers, however, chose to stay and work at the centers. Proximity to the job site was the common reason for staying in the job since they did not need to spend on transportation. The passing of House Bill 5075 promises proper compensation for their hard work.

The educational preparation of day care center workers is of paramount concern of the education sector. With the issuance of Executive Order No. 585 and the assumed passing into law of the House Bill 5367, the DepEd has an additional responsibility for

training teachers of the existing day care centers. With this development, the day care centers must follow a standard pre-school curriculum with corresponding expected competencies of teachers.

4. On description of a typical day at day care centers

Table 8 presents the most frequent responses of teachers when asked to describe their typical day at the day care centers.

Table 8
Frequency Distribution and Rank of Teachers' Responses
on Their Typical Day at Day Care Centers

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Productive	19	1
Fun-filled	14	2
Challenging	10	3
Tiring but rewarding	5	4

Having a productive day at the center by following a schedule or routine, learning to facilitate and dealing with various problems ranked first (Table 8). Having a fun-filled, enjoyable and exciting day with children ranked second, while regarding the day a challenge ranked third. For these teachers, a day became challenging when moods and tantrums had to be dealt with, individual needs in daily activities had to be met and facilities and instructional material needs of the children had to be provided. One teacher emphasized that "they had to rise above the situation." A tiring but a rewarding day ranked fourth as the teachers exerted physical and psychological energies in teaching the children. Teachers said fatigue factor was easily overcome once they thought they were active agents of learning and at the same time, learning too.

The data presented in table 8 is found to be consistent with the view of the majority as reflected in the aforementioned journal article written by Panluis (2009). The said article further emphasized that the majority could now see how the country's day care center workers had been overworked but underpaid despite playing a very crucial role in molding the character and personality of the youth. House Bill 5075 and the senate's proposed bills in granting "magna carta" for the day care workers would be a threshold to a new beginning for these workers.

5. On common problems encountered by teachers at day care centers

Table 9 depicts the most common problems encountered by the teachers in doing their daily activities at the center. Inadequate instructional materials such as books, workbooks, papers, radio with vcd player and other materials needed for the teaching and learning was identified to be the main problem encountered. Two (2) teachers said they even spent their own money to procure materials needed for teaching.

Parental involvement ranked second among the problems cited. This involvement was referred to attending regular meetings and assisting the children in their homework assignments.

Table 9
Most Common Problems Encountered
at Day Care Centers

Problems	Frequency	Rank
Inadequate instructional materials	29	1
Lack of involvement among parents	22	2
Inadequate facilities / space for teaching and learning	11	3
Difficulty in handling children with behavioral problems	4	4

Relative to this particular concern of teachers was the study of Favenir (2002). The study revealed that barangay day care centers extensively contributed or enhanced the productivity of mothers at work. While parents became more productive at work due to their dependence on the day care workers, they should have recognized that their involvement in day care centers was of paramount importance. However, one of the teachers lamented: "*Madalas walang pakialam ang mga magulang kung ano ang nangyayari sa mga anak nila dito* (Usually, the parents do not care about how their children do at the center)."

Since most of the centers included in the sample utilized the facilities within the Barangay Captains' Office, 11 teachers complained about a very limited space for the conduct of the morning and the afternoon sessions. In this particular aspect, it is clear that the establishment and maintenance of the facilities of centers are the responsibility of the local government units (as per Republic Act 8980).

Four (4) teacher-respondents reported their difficulty in dealing with children with behavioral problems. Proper assessment of such children was not undertaken as these teachers did not have the capacity to do such task. One teacher said that she found a suspected case of ADHD in her class so that the management of the whole class became sometimes difficult.

6. Level of satisfaction while working at day care centers

When the 48 teachers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction while working at day care centers along the 10-point scale, with 10 as the highest, a mean of 8.06 was calculated.

The calculated mean was relatively high as regards level of job satisfaction considering their meager allowance allowed by the law. However, it was elicited during interviews that most of the day care teachers received other monetary benefits depending on

the barangay council's recommendation to the barangay chairman.

Implications to Teacher Education

The legislative literature that summoned the establishment and sustenance of the barangay day care centers fosters the concern of the state on early childhood education. The continuing efforts of the executive and legislative branches of the government are evidently pragmatic to the needs of time. Certain implications to teacher education are apparent in the existing legislative literature reviewed and more importantly in the data gathered on current status of day care centers.

Implications to Teacher Preparation

The findings of the documentary analysis and the survey result on the current status of the day care centers revealed certain discrepancies between the mandate and the practice. Since their inception in 1978, these centers were expected only to provide activities on values formation and socialization of children aged three to six. Even with the amendments made in 1990, the mandates were modified to implement mental stimulation activities aside from the worthwhile recreation and socialization. The survey data revealed that sessions were held very similar to formal pre-school classes. Although there was no curricular model strictly followed, academic activities such as reading, counting, writing, etc. called for appropriate teacher preparation. Based on the educational background of the teachers, majority obtained college diploma but less than a half of them had background in teacher education hence they could only be offered allowances for their services. There was no standard amount prescribed other than the five-hundred-peso allowance as per

R.A. 6972. Also, it can be noted that it was the DSWD that was tasked to recruit workers to teach the children.

House Bill 5367 as well as the senate bills that are hoped to grant “magna carta” would soon become a milestone for the day care center workers. These bills when enacted into laws would help resolve the disparity between the original purpose and the actualities in the operation of day care centers especially in the aspect of teacher preparation and selection.

House Bill 5367 aimed, among others, to alleviate the plight of day care center workers by providing them salaries equivalent to salary grades 6, 8 and 9 of in the Salary Standardization Law, depending on their qualifications. With this, day care centers could recruit qualified teachers to ensure quality teaching for the children. While the proposed “magna carta” for the day care primarily aims at providing a just compensation for the day care center workers as well as facilitating established centers nationwide for a more responsive early childhood education.

Continuing Professional Education and Training

Based on the legislative literature cited above, there had not been any legal mandate geared toward continuing education and training among the day care center workers until 2008 when the Administrative Order 685 was issued. With this order, the DepEd was given the responsibility to expand preschool program to include pre-school children enrolled at day care centers. Moreover, the DepEd was instructed to provide day care center workers with teacher training on the curriculum and competencies of preschool education and needed materials. With this much welcomed development, the day care workers could expect skills enhancement programs to keep themselves updated and responsive to the needs of the children.

The survey results highlighted the most common problem encountered by the teachers which was the apparent lack of teaching materials. The DepEd could now also be expected to provide books and workbooks that are curriculum-based. The reading program developed by Ocampo (1996) could also be a document to reckon with. The program which proved effective could be incorporated in the teaching-learning process provided that the teachers would first undergo appropriate orientation and training.

The PNU as the NCTE was mandated to collaborate with the DepEd on matters of teacher training. The University through its Department of Early Childhood Education could serve as a training arm for the day care center workers.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The emergence of the day care centers in the country proved the deepening commitment of the state toward early childhood education. However, it is clear that the long saga that spanned for almost four decades is still wanting in terms of systematic administration of the centers' academic programs as well as appropriations of ample budget to cope with the demands of the growing target beneficiaries nationwide. Political will to enact the pending bills at the two houses of the congress is yet to manifest to ensure standard operations of day care centers as pre-schools and fair employment for the workers.
2. The conditions of the centers surveyed in terms of facilities need attention from the local government units who are responsible for the maintenance of the physical facilities like classrooms, space for outdoor activities, comfort rooms and others.

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3. The academic and non-academic activities implemented by the teachers are at par or comparable to pre-school operation. However, there is no standard academic curriculum followed.
 4. Though evidently underpaid, majority of the workers expressed satisfaction with their work. Day care center teachers manifest resiliency in facing the most commonly encountered problems like inadequate teaching materials.
 5. Inadequate pre-service as well as in-service training of the teachers at day care centers have crucial implications to teacher education. The passage of the pending bills at the congress on day care operation could address the issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Immediate passage of the pending bills that would systematize the operation of day care centers should be lobbied by day care center workers at the congress.
2. The need for ample space and regular maintenance of facilities of day care centers should be addressed by the local government officials at the barangay level.
3. Needs assessment in teaching materials and in-service training for the existing teachers at day care centers should be undertaken by the concerned offices under the DepEd.
4. The PNU as the NCTE should serve as one of the partners of the DepEd in conducting training programs on curriculum and competencies of pre-school education.

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5. The PNU Department of Early Childhood Education should conduct regular off-campus or field study program at different barangay day care centers to acquaint students with the multiple roles performed by day care center teachers which could be their future job as early childhood educators.

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