



Teachers', School Heads', and Supervisors' Understanding and Use of K to 12 Assessment Policies

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This study examines the comprehension and application of K to 12 assessment policies among educators and supervisors. Findings highlight disparities in understanding and usage across policy dimensions and respondent categories. While supervisors consistently exhibit strong comprehension, teachers and school heads display lower levels, particularly regarding national and system policies. Noteworthy associations emerge between respondent characteristics and policy understanding/use, alongside discrepancies in comprehension across Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recommendations advocate for tailored training, enhanced communication, and mentorship initiatives to address these gaps and enhance policy implementation. Priority is given to empowering supervisors as mentors, addressing equity-related challenges among school leaders, and fostering inclusive policy development processes. By identifying key intervention areas, this study contributes to advancing educational policy and practice, aiming to improve assessment policy comprehension and utilization.

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Introduction

The enactment of the Republic Act (RA) 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013, is the most massive education reform in the Philippines. It is popularly known as the K to 12 Program, which enhances the old 10-year basic education to meet global standards. The first batch of students to complete the K to 12 program will graduate in SY 2023-2024. RA 10533 mandates continuous program evaluation, leading the Department of Education to issue classroom, national, system, and interim assessment policies. Despite these efforts, national and international assessments consistently reveal low proficiency among Filipino learners, calling into question the effectiveness of the K to 12 reform in equipping them with 21st-century skills.

Understanding policy involves grasping its goals, objectives, detailed provisions, and underlying rationale and responsibilities to diverse stakeholders. Policy use, on the other hand, involves implementing the policy in real-world situations to achieve its intended outcomes. There's a strong correlation between policy understanding and use, which is critical for effective implementation. When a gap exists between understanding and use, it highlights the need to align policy intent with its practical application in real-world contexts.

Policy formulators aim to improve intended outcomes, yet data and policy implementation research highlight inconsistencies between formulated policies and their actual application, often leading to unmet goals. Implementing policies faces numerous challenges, including diverse stakeholders, interpretation issues, resource constraints, and varying capacities among policy operators. Recognizing that policy success relies on effective implementation rather than inherent merits alone, there's a growing focus on navigating complex systems and enhancing the implementation phase to prevent policy failure. To improve comprehension of how to strengthen policy support, it is initially insightful to logically appreciate the reasons behind failures, as this understanding can guide the search for potential solutions. The investigation findings can provide additional insight into potential inconsistencies in policy and practices aimed at elevating the standards of quality, equality, and equity in basic education within the country, aligning with the intended outcomes of the policies.

The research methodology utilized in this study is a descriptive survey with 662 teachers, 171 school heads, and 74 supervisors who participated as respondents. The following Likert Scale served as the framework for data analysis.

Table 1. Criteria for Level of Policy Understanding and Use

Scale	Category	Category Description	
		Understanding	Use
1	Very Low Level	Heard/read the idea but did not actually understand what it requires	Never or very rarely put the idea into use in the performing's role.
2	Low Level	Heard/read the idea with a slight understanding of what it requires.	Not so frequently put the idea into use in performing one's role.
3	Medium Level	Heard/read the idea with a somewhat clear understanding of what it requires.	Has quite frequently put the idea into use in performing one's role.
4	High Level	Heard/read the idea with a clear understanding of what it requires.	Has frequently put the idea into use in performing one's role.
5	Very High Level	Heard/read the idea with a very clear understanding of what it requires.	Has very frequently put the idea into use in performing 's role.

Key Findings

1. The level of policy understanding is highest in classroom assessment across the three categories of respondents. Additionally, supervisors consistently had the highest level of understanding regardless of the policy issuance.
2. Teachers and school heads consistently show lower levels of policy use for national and system assessment policies.
3. Teachers consistently have lower levels of policy understanding and use for non-classroom assessment policy issuances.
4. School heads' policy understanding and use levels are highest regarding classroom-oriented assessment.
5. Supervisors' policy understanding and use levels are very high regardless of the policy issuance.
6. The levels of understanding and use of policy assessments across SDGs and all the categories of respondents are very high level, except for school heads in terms of equity, which is high level.
7. School system type, location, gender, and respondent category are significantly associated with moderate to strong effect size with either policy understanding, policy use, or both.
8. Teachers and school heads have lower levels of policy understanding and use regarding policy dimensions across sustainable development goals (SDGs) than supervisors.

9. There is a below-moderate significant association between teachers' policy understanding and use of classroom assessment.

Key Recommendations for Policy and Practice

In light of the comprehensive analysis conducted in this study on the understanding and utilization of assessment policies among educators, the following key recommendations for policy and practice emerge.

- a. Implement tailored training and support initiatives for teachers and school leaders to bolster their understanding and utilization of national and system assessment policies, particularly those concerning assessments beyond the classroom.
- b. Foster better communication channels between policymakers, supervisors, educators, and school leaders to facilitate the effective dissemination of assessment policies. Regular updates, workshops, and interactive sessions can bridge the policy comprehension gap and foster improved policy implementation.
- c. Provide professional development opportunities tailored to the unique needs and obstacles faced by each respondent group.
- d. Harness the substantial policy comprehension and utilization levels among supervisors by empowering them to serve as mentors and guides for educators and school leaders.
- e. Tackle the discrepancy in policy comprehension and utilization among school leaders, particularly regarding equity-centered policies. Develop targeted programs and resources to raise awareness and build capacity among school leaders to effectively execute equity-driven assessment policies.
- f. Institute mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy execution across different groups and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- g. Examine the underlying systemic influences impacting policy comprehension and utilization, such as school system variations, geographical location, and gender dynamics.
- h. Offer specific assistance to teachers and school leaders to improve their grasp and utilization of policy dimensions related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in line with the strong comprehension seen among supervisors.
- i. Place greater emphasis on enhancing teachers' comprehension and application of policies regarding classroom assessment, acknowledging the noted correlation between teachers' understanding and use in this area.
- j. Promote inclusive policy development processes that actively involve representatives from diverse backgrounds, including educators, policymakers, researchers, and community members.

Conclusions

Teachers, school heads, and supervisors nationwide typically express a high to very high level of understanding and use of the K to 12 assessment policies. However, a potential disconnect between policy understanding and use in the classroom setting is detected as an opportunity for improvement. Hence, the Department of Education must strengthen policies and practice of assessment policies.

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