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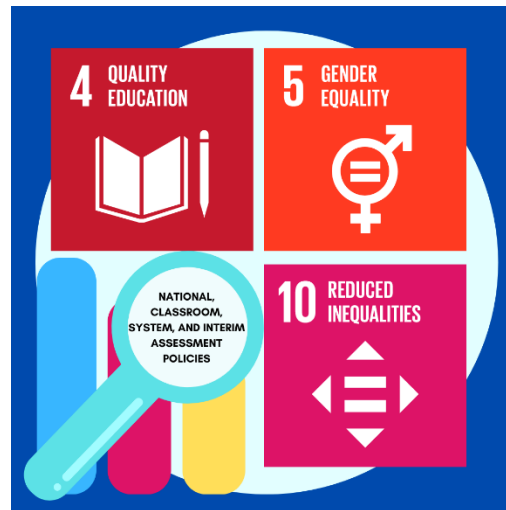
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Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policies to Relevant Indicators of Sustainable Development Goals on Quality, Equality, and Equity

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(Icons from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

The study examined the alignment of four assessment policies in the K to 12 Program by the Department of Education (DepEd) with the relevant indicators of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on quality, equality, and equity. The results show that not all the assessment policies issued by DepEd target the same SDG indicators. The K to 12 program assessment policy that captures the most SDG indicators is the national assessment policy, followed by the system and interim assessment policies, while the classroom assessment policy is the least. This policy analysis suggests articulation of the relevant quality, equality, and equity indicators in SDG 4.0, 5.0, and 10.0 to the purpose, process, practice, and target product of the national, system, and interim assessment policies, and most especially to the classroom assessment policy to ensure high-quality and inclusive basic education in the country.

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations advocate for quality, equality, and equity in basic education so that every child is equipped with essential and lifelong learning skills. In the Philippines, to address poverty through quality education, the basic education system has undergone a reform from its 10-year basic education into a K to 12 curriculum (Adarlo & Jackson, 2016). This reform was enacted through Republic Act (RA) 10533 also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act (Republic of the Philippines, 2013). The program aims to produce globally competitive and holistically developed Filipino learners with 21st-century skills for continuous learning and employment (Abragan et al., 2022).

According to reports, there are improvements in the enrollment of Filipino learners in basic education, however, the country's low performance on International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSAs) revealed gaps in the quality of education in the country (Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM II], 2024). The results from the above-mentioned assessments question whether the K to 12 reform transforms Filipino learners into globally competitive and holistically developed citizens with 21st-century skills. This underscores the need to further improve the country's educational system and examine the use of assessment policies in the K to 12 programs.

Assessment plays a pivotal role in the execution and achievement of curriculum goals (Magno & Piosang, 2016). The Department of Education (DepEd) issued assessment policies to ensure that the program's goals are met and that students have acquired 21st-century skills. These four policies are set to 1) monitor student's progress and adapt their teaching methods accordingly (i.e., Classroom Assessment Policy or DepEd Order [DO] No. 8, s. 2015); 2) ascertain if students are meeting the prescribed standards of the curriculum (i.e., National Assessment Policy or DO No. 55, s. 2016); 3) delineate the indicators and criteria of system performance that will offer insights to curriculum's effectiveness (i.e., System Assessment Policy or DO No. 29, s. 2017); and 4) provide alternative learning opportunities and evaluate learning progress amidst COVID-19 outbreak (i.e., Interim Assessment Policy or DO No. 31, s. 2020). As policies inform the purpose, process, practice, and outcomes of assessment, it is worth examining how these assessment policies contribute to achieving high-quality, equitable, and inclusive basic education in the country. Thus, in this study, document analysis was conducted on the four assessment policies in the K to 12 Program issued by DepEd from 2015 to 2020. These policies were analyzed to identify the indicators that could represent the 4Ps or the purpose, process, practice, and product of the K to 12 assessments categorized in terms of their representation of some quality, equity, and

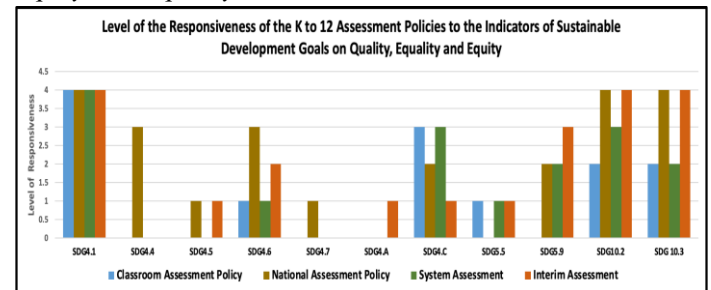
equality indicators of SDG 4.0, 5.0, and 10.0 (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Key Findings

The level of responsiveness of the four DepEd assessment policies in the K to 12 Program to SDGs 4.0, 5.0, and 10.0 were examined in this study (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

Level of Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policies to Indicators of Sustainable Development Goals on Quality, Equity, and Equality



The following are the results as shown in Figure 1.

1. All the four K to 12 assessment policies are responsive to a *very great extent* to the **quality** indicator of SDG 4.1 (relevant and effective learning outcomes).
2. The **classroom assessment policy** is also responsive to a *great extent* to one **quality** indicator on SDG 4.C (supply of qualified teachers). It is responsive to a *moderate extent* to two **equity** indicators of SDG 10.2 (social, economic, and political inclusion for all) and SDG 10.3 (elimination of discriminatory laws, policies, and practices). It is responsive to a *little extent* to SDG 4.6 (numeracy and literacy for all) and **equity** indicator of SDG 5.5 (ensure women's full participation in leadership and decision-making). This policy, however, does not explicitly respond to some **quality** indicators of SDG 4.4 (financial literacy), SDG 4.5 (eliminate gender disparities), SDG 4.7 (knowledge and skills on sustainable development), and SDG 4.A (upgrading educational facilities), as well as to the equality indicator of SDG 5.9 (enforce gender equality).
3. The national assessment policy is responsive to a very great extent to the two equity indicators of SDG 10.2 (social, economic, and political inclusion for all) and SDG 10.3 (elimination of discriminatory laws, policies, and practices). It is responsive to a great extent to two quality indicators of SDG 4.4 and SDG 4.6. It is responsive to a moderate extent to another quality indicator of SDG 4.C and equality indicator of SDG 5.9 but responsive to a little extent to two quality indicators of SDG 4.5 and SDG 4.7. This policy, however, does not explicitly cover the quality indicator of SDG 4.A.

4. The system assessment policy is responsive to a great extent to one quality indicator on SDG 4.C and one equity indicator on SDG 10.2. It is responsive to a moderate extent to another equity indicator of SDG 10.3 but to a little extent to SDG 4.6 and equality indicator of SDG 5.5. However, the policy does not explicitly respond to the quality indicators of SDG 4.4, SDG 4.5, SDG4.7, and SDG 4.A.
5. The interim assessment policy is responsive to a very great extent to two equity indicators of SDG 10.2 and SDG 10.3. It is also responsive to a great extent to one equality indicator on SDG 5.9 and to a moderate extent to another quality indicator of SDG 4.6. It is responsive to a little extent to SDG 4.5, SDG4.A, SDG 4.6, and SDG 5.5 but not to the quality indicators of SDG 4.4 and SDG4.7.
6. The system and interim assessment policies address both the two gender equality indicators of SDG 5.5 and SDG 5.9.
7. All four K to 12 assessment policies address three quality indicators of SDG 4.1, SDG 4.6, and SDG 4.C and the two equity indicators of SDG 10.2 and SDG 10.3.
8. Among the four assessment policies issued by the DepEd, the national assessment policy (i.e., DO 55, s. 2016) captures the greatest number of SDG indicators while the classroom assessment policy (i.e., DO 8., s. 2015) captures the least number of SDG indicators.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Analyzing the four assessment policies in the K to 12 programs in the context of the 2030 SDGs has revealed differences in their responsiveness to relevant quality, equality, and equity indicators in basic education. This study supports the EDCOM II suggestion for the utilization of assessment to monitor student learning and to provide input to quality reform efforts. It is imperative for DepEd policymakers to revisit the four assessment policies to ensure consistency in the articulated purpose, process, practice, and product of learning and responsiveness to relevant SDG indicators. K to 12 implementers, particularly the teachers in the classroom, should ensure that the assessment policies are used to enhance learning outcomes and to meet the national and international goals for quality, equity, and equality in basic education.

Lastly, there is a need to enhance quality education by integrating SDG 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.A, and 4.C in classroom assessments, and promote gender equality through reinforced classroom and national policies. Finally, to review classroom and system policies to foster inclusivity.

Key Recommendations of Policy and Practice

The policy advice to DepEd from the gaps found in the K to 12 assessment policies in terms of the need to respond to the relevant quality, equality, and equity indicators of the 2030 SDGs are as follows:

1. Revisit and reformulate its **classroom, national, system, and interim assessment policies** to ensure alignment in their target purpose, process, practice, and product of assessment.
2. Strengthen the **classroom assessment policy** to be responsive to relevant **quality** indicators of SDGs, particularly SDG 4.4, SDG 4.5, SDG 4.6, and SDG4.7, SDG4.A, as well as to the gender **equality** indicators of SDG 5.5 and SDG 5.9.
3. Leverage the **national assessment policy** to be responsive to relevant **quality** indicators of SDGs (SDG4.A, SDG 4.5, and SDG4.7).
4. Update the **system assessment policy** to be responsive to relevant **quality** indicators of SDG 4.0 particularly SDG 4.4, SDG 4.5, SDG 4.6, SDG 4.7, and SDG 4.A as well as the **equality** indicator of SDG 5.5.
5. Integrate the unique **interim assessment policy** guideline in the classroom, national, and system assessment policies which is responsive to the **quality** indicator of SDG 4.A that aims to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

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