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K to 12 Assessment Policies Vis-a-vis Relevant Sustainable Development Goals: Towards Quality, Equality, and Equity in Basic Education

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This policy research examined the articulation of relevant quality, equality, and equity indicators of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) in the four assessment policies in the K to 12 Program of the Philippines. It identified crucial areas for improvement in the basic education program to address equal access to quality education and the global competitiveness of Filipino learners. The results show the responsiveness of the four assessment policies to some indicators under SDGs 4.0, 5.0, and 10.0, underscoring the importance of these indicators in the educational landscape. However, gaps appear in the consistency of SDG articulation across the four assessment policies and the policy dimensions of purpose, process, practice, and product. The national assessment policy articulates SDG indicators the most, while the classroom assessment policy articulates them the least. The results suggest the improvement of assessment policies to vigorously address relevant quality, equality, and equity indicators.

Keywords; policy research; K to 12 assessment; Sustainable Development Goal 4.0, Sustainable Development Goal 5.0, & Sustainable Development Goal 10.0

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Introduction

In 2013, the Philippine basic education curriculum was enhanced to improve its quality following the passing of the Basic Education Act or Republic Act (RA) 10533 (Republic of the Philippines, 2013). The law extended the country's 10-year basic education to 12 years (Adarlo & Jackson, 2016; Republic of the Philippines, 2013) for it to be comparable with the basic education programs in other countries (Dizon et al., 2019). Extending the basic education curriculum to K to 12 also hoped to provide enough time for students to master new concepts and skills (Sarvi et al., 2015). The K to 12 Program started with kindergarten in School Year (SY) 2011-2012 through the Kindergarten Education Act or RA 10157 (Republic of the Philippines, 2012) and completed one program implementation cycle in SY 2023-2024. The second quarter of 2024 should already show indicators of the attainment of the reform goal of producing globally competitive and holistically developed Filipino learners equipped with 21st-century skills for lifelong learning and employment (Abragan et al., 2022). At this point, assessment plays a role in informing the achievement of curriculum goals (Magno & Piosang, 2016; Balagtas et al., 2020).

To ensure that the K to 12 Program goals have been met and that students have acquired the needed 21st-century skills, the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) has issued various assessment policies. The four assessment policies have been set to 1) monitor student's progress and adapt 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). Moreover, as the Philippines continuously strives to improve the quality of its basic education program, several policies and plans were reviewed as to their use and effectiveness in informing education reforms. For example, the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 integrates the 2030 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to give Filipinos equal opportunity to gain skills and participate in an innovative and globally competitive economy (National Economic and Development Authority, n.d.). Included among

these SDGs are those related to quality (SDG 4.0), equality (SDG 5.0), and equity (SDG 10.0) in basic education so that every child can be equipped with essential and lifelong learning skills.

Meanwhile, the national assessments that can aid in gauging the effectiveness of the K to 12 Program showed Filipino learners' poor learning outcomes, indicating the program's failure to improve the quality of basic education in the country. The country's National Achievement Test (NAT) includes Math, Science, Filipino, English, and Social Studies, taken by Grades 3, 6, 10, and 12 (DepEd, 2016). In 2017 and 2018, the NAT results showed low proficiency for Grades 6 and 10 (Reyes et al., 2019). In 2021, results again showed low proficiency levels in Math, English, Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), and Science (EDCOM II, 2024). Although Cuajao (2024) reported no correlation between NAT scores and students' actual academic performance, policymakers still use the national assessment results as a proxy indicator of curriculum effectiveness and efficiency (DepEd, 2016).

Likewise, system assessment has also been conducted to have further basis in determining the effectiveness of the K to 12 Program. Hence, the Philippines participated in International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSAs) such as the 2018 and 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM). The performance of Filipino learners in these ILSAs reported low scores in Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, Science, and even in Creative Thinking. Particularly, findings from ILSAs have shown a disparity between students' performance in senior high school and junior high school, rural and urban locations, and private and public schools (Cordon & Polong, 2020). Studies also show gaps in the Philippine basic education curriculum and what ILSAs assess (Balagtas, 2020; Balagtas & Montealegre, 2020; Balagtas et al., 2020) and gaps in the Philippine assessment policies compared with international assessment benchmarks (Lapinid et al., 2024). Lastly, the Philippine teacher education curriculum only covers some aspects of the ILSA frameworks (Balagtas, 2021), although it addresses the requirements of the K to 12 Law (Gonzales et al., 2024). All of these cited studies and assessment results post issues on education quality that resulted in low learning outcomes; on equality, as females performed significantly higher than males; and on equity, as those in private schools performed better than those in public schools (DepEd, 2019) and those

with access to more learning resources performed better than those with fewer resources (DepEd et al., 2021). Thus, as the Second Congressional Commission on Education confirms, assessment results indicate a learning crisis (EDCOM II, 2024) or learning poverty in the Philippines (World Bank & UNESCO, 2022).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) advocate for quality, equality, and equity in basic education to equip every child with essential skills and become lifelong learners (UN General Assembly, 2015). However, the aforementioned national and international assessment results beg the question of whether the Philippine K to 12 reform has indeed attained the intended quality, equity, and equality in basic education. As national policies on education state the general principles and guidelines that curriculum and assessment implementers follow or use (Medula et al., 2024), it is worth examining how these policies reflect the SDGs. Hence, this study specifically examined the responsiveness of the four K to 12 assessment policies (classroom, national, system, and interim assessment policies) in terms of their purpose, process, practice, and product to the quality indicators in SDG 4.0, equality indicators in SDG 5.0, and equity indicators in SDG 10.0. The study hopes to identify policy gaps as input to assessment policy reformulation to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs in the Philippines by 2030.

Materials and Methods

The study used document analysis, a qualitative research method involving a systematic document review or evaluation (Morgan, 2022). The four assessment policies in the K to 12 Program issued by DepEd from 2015 to 2020 served as the documents for analysis.

Policy analysis was done by four teams of educators led by program assessment experts. Through coding, statements in each policy were categorized into purpose, process, practice, and product or 4Ps. The policy indicator for "Purpose" refers to guidelines that capture what the assessment intends to gather and communicate to its target audience. "Process" covers the method, strategies, or ways of gathering, organizing, interpreting, and using assessment data to attain its targets. "Practice" focuses on the specific tools or activities needed to gather the data for the assessment. Lastly, "Product" refers to the outcome of the assessment, such as the acquired knowledge, skills, products, attitudes, or

values. Every assessment policy was examined if its purpose, process, practice, and product (or 4Ps) articulate the seven (7) quality indicators of SDG 4.0 (4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.A, 4.C), two (2) equality indicators of SDG 5.0 (5.5, 5.6), and two (2) equity indicators of SDG 10.0 (10.2, 10.3). Then, the extent of responsiveness of each assessment policy to the SDG indicators on quality, equality, and equity was analyzed using a 5-point scale where 5 means responsive to a very great extent if there are indicators in the policy representing all 4Ps that are aligned to the target SDG indicators; 4 for responsive to a great extent if there are indicators representing any 3 of the 4Ps; 3 for responsive to a moderate extent if there are indicators representing any 2 of the 4Ps; 2 for responsive to a little extent if there is any indicator representing any 1 of the 4Ps; and 1 for not responsive if no indicator in the 4Ps is aligned with the SDG indicators.

Two independent validators validated the analysis of codes. Both were doctorate degree holders with at least 10 years of experience in a teacher education institution. One validator specializes in educational assessment, while the other is a licensed psychologist, teacher, and psychometrician. The validators retained the analysis if there was no error in the coding and categorization of indicators, revised it if there was an error in either the coding or categorization, and rejected it if both the coding and categorization were wrong. The validation resulted in 14 revised indicators; the rest of the assessment policy (n=290) indicators were accepted. Subsequently, the evaluative findings identified from the document analysis were represented in a graph to illustrate the level of responsiveness of the policy indicators to SDG indicators (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Results

Extent of Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policy Guidelines to SDG 4.0 Quality Indicators

Quality indicators highlight education as a fundamental human right that must be provided with the utmost quality. Seven (7) SDG 4.0 indicators under equity have been identified as integral in educational policies: SDG 4.1 (free quality primary and secondary education), 4.4 (students equipped with relevant skills), 4.5 (accessible education), 4.6 (youth achieving literacy and numeracy), 4.7 (promotion of sustainable development), 4.A (upgrading educational facilities), and 4.C (substantially increasing the supply of qualified teachers). As shown in Figure 1, the national

assessment policy is the most responsive to SDG 4.0 quality indicators, while the classroom assessment is the least responsive.

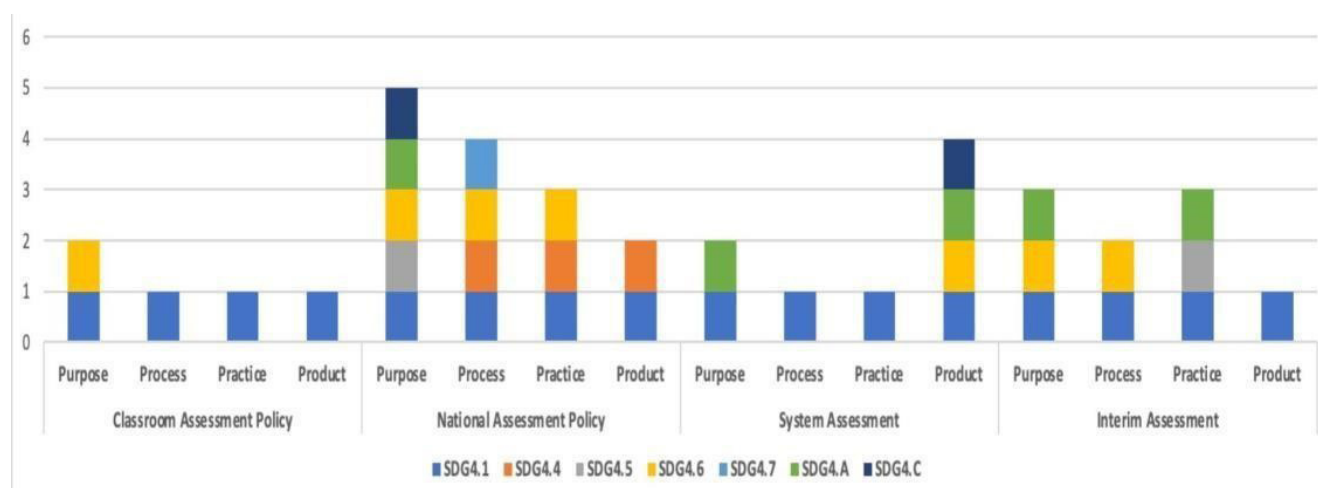


Figure 1. Level of Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policy Guidelines to Relevant SDG 4.0 Indicators

By 2030, the UN (n.d.) SDG 4.1 targets for a complete and free access to equitable and quality education for all girls and boys in the primary and secondary levels. As Figure 1 shows, all four Philippine K to 12 assessment policy guidelines target SDG 4.1 to a very great extent as it is consistently articulated in the assessment purpose, process, practice, and product. This strong and consistent articulation reveals that the Philippines is committed to ensuring access to quality education as mandated in RA 10533.

Meanwhile, SDG 4.4 envisions a substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. As shown in Figure 1, only the national assessment policy responds to this indicator to a great extent. All other assessment policies do not show any statement relevant to such an indicator.

Moreover, in SDG 4.5, the UN hopes to eliminate gender disparities in education and provide support to persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and children in vulnerable situations by ensuring that access to education and vocational training is equal and equitable. Figure 1 shows that SDG 4.5 is articulated in the national and interim assessment policy guidelines to a little extent. According to the 2022 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) report, the parity indices for all education indicators ranged from 0.9 (for primary education) to 1.1 (Senior High School) in 2020 (PSA, 2022). The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2024) explains that a value that is exactly 1 indicates parity between the two groups

with the disadvantage that is usually the numerator. The indices, therefore, suggest that the Philippines has six years to work for the desired parity index of 1.0 until 2030. Hence, assessment policies should ensure that all groups, including the vulnerable, are given equal access to quality education.

By 2030, the UN SDG 4.6 targets in for nations to strengthen literacy and numeracy for the youth and a substantial proportion of adults. It can be gleaned from Figure 1 that this indicator is articulated in all assessment policies from a little extent (classroom and system assessment policies) to a moderate extent (interim assessment) and to a great extent (national assessment).

In SDG 4.7, the UN hopes for nations to develop skills and knowledge crucial to promoting sustainable development, including, among others, educating students on social equality, sustainable lifestyles, human rights, peace, and global citizenship. Figure 1 shows that this indicator is articulated to a little extent in the national assessment policy and not in the other assessment policies. In the ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Assessment and Certification explained in the national assessment policy, the purpose of assessment includes sustainable use of resources, a sense of community, and expansion of one's world vision. No other policy guidelines explicitly target SDG 4.7, and no report in the PSA could explain the attainment of this indicator. Thus, the results reveal that knowledge and skills promoting sustainable development must be explicitly articulated in the statement of purpose, process, practice, and product of assessments.

By 2030, SDG 4.A aims to build and upgrade more education facilities. These facilities should be safe for children and persons with disability and gender-sensitive to ensure an inclusive and effective learning environment for learners. Looking at Figure 1, this indicator is explicitly addressed in the national, system, and interim assessment policy guidelines but only to a little and moderate extent. There is no guideline in the classroom assessment policy that targets such an indicator.

Lastly, in SDG 4.C, the UN targets an increase in the number of qualified teachers, emphasizing teacher training in far-flung areas and developing countries. Figure 1 shows that only the national and system assessments provide guidelines on this indicator, but only to a little extent. Thus, assessment policies

need to address SDG 4.C more by promoting a substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers.

Extent of Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policy Guidelines to SDG 5.0 Equality Indicators

SDG 5.0 highlights gender equality, seeking to empower women and girls and ending all forms of gender discrimination. Two (2) SDG 5.0 indicators under equity have been identified as integral in educational policies: SDG 5.5 (guaranteeing the full participation of women in matters concerning leadership and decision-making) and SDG 5.9 (enacting and strengthening policies that promote gender equality). Figure 2 shows the responsiveness of the four assessment policies to SDG 5.0 indicators on gender equality.

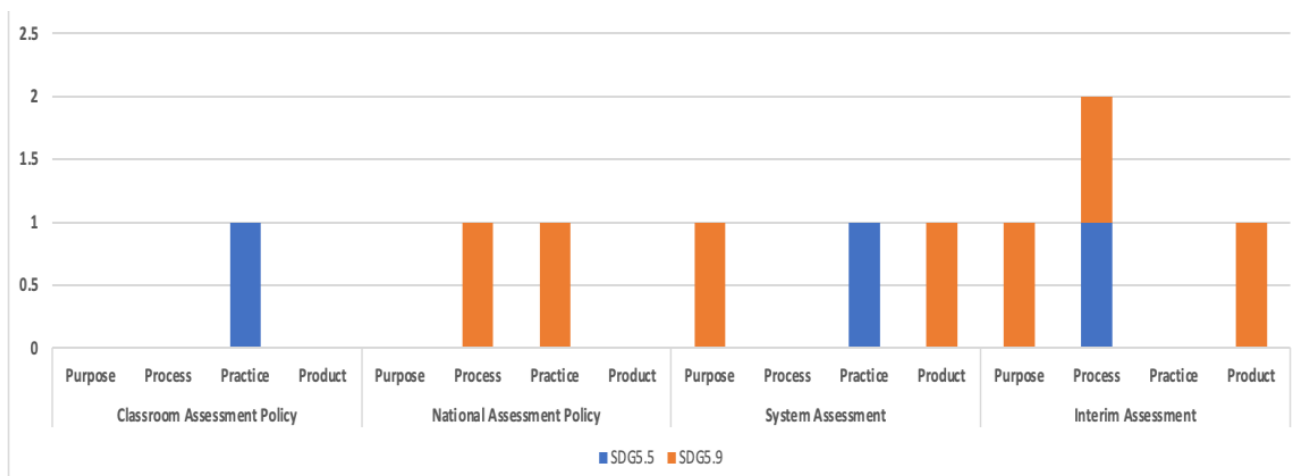


Figure 2. Level of responsiveness of the K to 12 assessment policy guidelines to relevant SDG 5.0 indicators

In SDG 5.5, UN targets that by 2030, nations will have ensured the full participation of women in leadership and decision-making at all levels in political, economic, and public life. As shown in Figure 2, the national assessment policy is not responsive to this indicator, while the classroom, system, and interim assessment policies are responsive, but only to a small extent.

Meanwhile, SDG 5.9 states that policies and enforceable legislation on gender equality should have been adopted and strengthened to empower all women and girls at all levels. As shown in Figure 2, both the national and system assessment policies are responsive to SDG 5.9 to a moderate extent; the interim evaluation is responsive to a great extent, whereas the classroom assessment policy is not responsive at all.

Extent of Responsiveness of the K to 12 Assessment Policy Guidelines to SDG 10.0 Equity Indicators

Equity indicators underscore providing students from all backgrounds, circumstances, or characteristics equal opportunities to access education. Two (2) SDG 10.0 indicators under equity have been identified as integral in educational policies: SDG 10.2 (promoting inclusivity in society, economics, and politics) and SDG 10.3 (eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and actions). A comprehensive overview of the alignment of K to 12 assessment policies to SDG 10.0 appears in Figure 3.

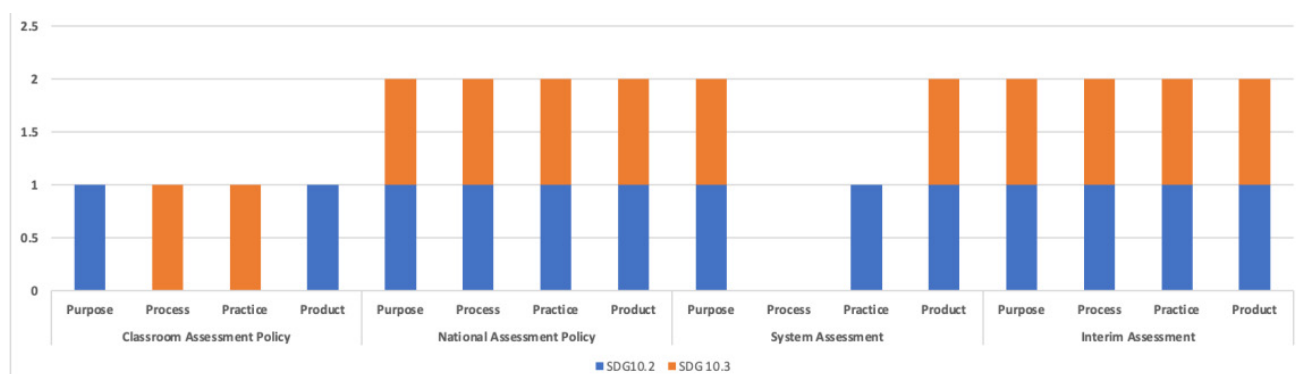


Figure 3. Level of responsiveness of the K to 12 assessment policy guidelines to relevant SDG 10.0 indicators

In SDG 10.2, the UN (n.d.) targets that by 2030, social, economic, and political inclusion for all must have been empowered and promoted, regardless of age, gender, religion, or social background. As shown in Figure 3, the SGD 10.2 indicator has been reflected in the assessment policies' purpose, process, practice, and product dimensions. Four assessment policies address the indicator, with the national and interim assessment policies being responsive to a very great extent, system assessment responsive to a great extent, and classroom assessment responsive to a moderate extent.

The UN (n.d.) also envisions in SDG 10.3 that by 2030, equal opportunities and reducing inequalities must have been ensured by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices. Figure 3 shows that the goals in promoting universal, social, economic, and political inclusion for all are significantly aligned with the assessment policies. Specifically, the national and interim assessment policies were found to be responsive to a very great extent, although the system assessment policy was found not responsive to SDG 10.3. Results also reveal moderate responsiveness of classroom assessment policies to SDG 10.3 as they ensure fairness in educational opportunities by using various assessment methods to accommodate different learning styles, providing multiple career pathways and access to education, promoting language inclusion in assessments, and using fair, inclusive assessments during crisis situations.

Discussion

The analysis of the four assessment policies for the K to 12 basic education program has revealed differences in their responsiveness to SDG indicators related to quality, equality, and equity. The study provides evidence that the classroom assessment policy is the least responsive compared to the

national, system, and interim assessment policies of the K to 12 Program in ensuring quality, equality, and equity in basic education.

Findings have shown that the national assessment policy is the most responsive to SDG 4.0 quality indicators, while the classroom assessment is the least. This finding supports Scoular's (2020) conclusion that the Philippine national assessment practices integrate 21st-century skills well, but its classroom assessment practices do not. System assessment policies are geared towards DepEd's continuous improvement of its education system to make sure that all Filipino learners have access to quality basic education (DepEd, 2017). Meanwhile, interim assessment policies were put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to focus on the assessment of students and grading scheme in SY 2020-2021 (DepEd, 2020). These assessment policies were meant to address specific assessment areas and issues; hence, they do not adhere to SDG 4.4.

However, it is essential to underscore that the achievement of SDG 4.0 is reflected in all assessment policies in the Philippine educational system. One SDG indicator worth noting is 4.1, which all four assessment policies have consistently articulated in their purpose, process, practice, and product. Such finding proves that the Philippines is committed to ensuring that the youth get free access to quality education from the primary to secondary levels as mandated in RA 10533. However, according to the PSA Report in April 2022, only 23.2% of the children in Grades 2 and 3 achieve at least the minimum proficiency level in mathematics for both sexes (i.e., SDG 4.1.1) based on the National Assessment Test (NAT) that the Department of Education administered in 2017 (PSA, 2022). The PSA also reports that in 2016, 40.4% of Filipino children showed at least the minimum proficiency level in reading and 34.8% in mathematics for both sexes

by the end of primary level. At the end of lower secondary, 46% attained at least the minimum proficiency in reading and 37.3% in mathematics for both sexes. The results of the ILSAs confirmed these national assessment results. A much lower percentage of Filipino learners showed at least the minimum proficiency level based on the results of the 2018 and 2022 PISA (OECD, 2019; 2023), 2019 TIMSS (IEA, 2020), and 2020 SEA-PLM (UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2021). Thus, despite articulating the SDG 4.1 target in the K to 12 assessment policies, the Philippines needs to work hard at realizing this target for quality. Nevertheless, the completion rate in elementary in 2020 was 82.5%, 82.1% in junior high school, and 69.3% in senior high school, with more females than males completing their education across levels (PSA, 2022).

It appears that only a few assessment policies in the K to 12 Program articulate gender and inclusion, but this could be attributed to the fact that education in the Philippines is accessible to all citizens, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, religion, and other classifications. Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution enshrines the rights of every Filipino citizen to have access to quality education at all levels, with the state taking appropriate means to ensure this right. This constitutional mandate could be the reason why gender and inclusion are not explicitly stated in the assessment policies; the constitution itself specifically stipulates that the country shall not discriminate against students based on any classifications.

However, a conscious effort to address gender and inclusion in learning assessments remains. According to Razak and Lamola (2019), to design assessments for equity, it is necessary to increase efforts to anticipate how individuals, groups, and societies will be affected. As such, they recommended the following: 1) enacting policies that strengthen gender equality in education and assessment, supported by frameworks and guidelines in the pursuit of gender equality; 2) developing curricula and pedagogy that is gender-responsive, free of gender bias and negative stereotypes; 3) conducting capacity building programs among pre- and in-service educators in creating inclusive learning environments; 4) offering different approaches to, strategies for, and types of assessments to effectively and fairly evaluate student learning outcomes; 5) leveraging assessment to inform policy formulation and revisions in strengthening gender equality. The K to 12 Program can incorporate these recommendations from Razak and Lamola (2019) to ensure more gender-responsive assessments,

eventually leading to achieving equity and equality in basic education.

Compared to other SDGs in this study, SDGs 10.2 (inclusivity in society, economics, and politics) and 10.3 (elimination of discriminatory laws, policies, and practices) have the highest number of indicators aligned with the assessment policies, showing that equity is translated into the policies and is reflected in assessment practices. The findings suggest that the inclusive educational assessment points outlined by Sibanda and Mathwasa (2020) are somewhat included in the assessment policies such as focusing on capability, recognizing the varying circumstances of diverse students, and understanding the cognitive development of students of special populations. Moreover, the results support the recommendations of Abragan et al. (2022), which highlighted that no learning must be sacrificed, and assessment must be based on knowledge and skills acquired with values. This specifically underscores efforts to empower and promote inclusivity in society, economy, and politics regardless of age, sex, or social background. In addition, SDGs 10.2 and 10.3 highlight equal access to opportunities and resources to improve students' lives. In the educational context, inclusive education is gradually making its way into regular classrooms to give students a chance to learn and develop in a safe and supportive setting, prepare them for working with various kinds of people in the real world, and break down barriers between individuals with and without disabilities to promote acceptance and understanding (Llego, 2022).

The alignment of the national assessment policies demonstrate that educators can determine each student's needs and strengths through assessment. According to CEEDAR or the Council for Exceptional Children and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform Center (2019), assessment in an inclusive learning environment is the process of gathering, combining, and analyzing information on each student's learning to support the educator's judgment. The teaching-learning cycle is a sequence of activities that is also informed by assessment throughout time. All these components rely on best practices in evaluation and meticulous examination of the classroom's contextual factors and the students' requirements in terms of learning (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2020). The use of SDG 10-sensitive assessment policies trains teachers to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms (Llego, 2020). However, given these, the reality of inclusive classrooms in the Philippines

still needs to catch up. In a recent article posted by Chi (2024) from Philstar, DepEd still faces several problems in supporting students with special needs. First on the list is that they need more money and other resources to provide students with the necessary instructional support. Second, there needs to be more qualified educators and therapists to assist the children. Third, many schools lack special facilities for children with special needs, such as inclusive setup classrooms and ramps. The policies and procedures in place may also be insufficient to guarantee that children with special needs receive the assistance they require. Despite the goal of Republic Act 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022 to provide equal access to education, DepEd still needs adequate funding, experts in special education, as well as inclusive classrooms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Among the four assessment policies issued by DepEd, the national assessment policy captures the greatest number of SDG quality, equality, and equity indicators, while the classroom assessment policy captures the least number. All four assessment policies address SDGs 4.1, 4.6, 10.2, and 10.3, suggesting areas where the policies might benefit from further reforms.

Considering the findings of the study, policymakers in the Philippine education system should revisit the four assessment policies in the K to 12 Program to ensure consistency in the articulated purpose, process, practice, and product of learning and responsiveness to relevant SDG indicators of quality, equality, and equity. K to 12 implementers, particularly the classroom teachers, should ensure that the assessment policies are used to enhance learning outcomes and meet the national and international goals for quality, equity, and equality in basic education.

The following SDG indicators should also be targeted particularly at the classroom level: SDG 4.4, to raise the number of youth and adults equipped with relevant knowledge and skills for financial success; SDG 4.5, to end disparities in education related to gender and promote equal access to all levels of education; SDG 4.7, to guarantee learners' acquisition of knowledge necessary for sustainable development and lifestyles, equal rights, peace, and global citizenship; SDG 4.A, to construct and improve effective learning environments for all types of learners, and; SDG 4.C, to increase the supply of qualified teachers, especially in far-

flung areas and developing countries. DepEd may focus on improving assessment and quality by addressing SDG 4.4 and SDG 4.6 to promote financial success by equipping youth and adults with relevant skills and to promote universal literacy and numeracy in the purpose, process, practice, and product of the K to 12 Program. For assessment and equality, DepEd may also look into promoting gender equality in educational assessment (SDG 5.9) to guarantee the full participation of women in matters relating to leadership and decision-making (SDG 5.5). On assessment and equity, DepEd may address SDGs 10.2 and 10.3 to promote inclusivity in universal, social, economic, and political matters to ensure equal opportunities and end discrimination. Moreover, it is also suggested that they develop a crisis-ready assessment policy that should integrate learnings from the experiences of conducting assessments during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, hybrid assessment techniques and other mechanisms that will reach as many students as possible should be crafted (e.g., assessment toolkits in ALS aligned with the Philippine Qualifications Framework or PQF requirements). Also, classroom and assessment policies must ensure that continuity in learning and assessment practices are observed to make education more resilient and equitable. Lastly, there is a need to design teacher development programs that integrate inclusive assessment practices. Their understanding of inclusive education and how to provide equitable access to learning will help them acknowledge students' diversity and promote inclusion.

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Ethics statement

This study was conducted in accordance with institutional policies and was granted clearance to proceed by the Philippine Normal University Research Ethics Committee.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Author contribution

Conceptualization: Balagtas, Lapinid, Medula, Gonzales. Literature Review: Balagtas, Rungduin, Pagliawan. Methodology: Balagtas, Lapinid, Medula, Gonzales. Data Collection and Analysis: Balagtas, Lapinid, Medula, Gonzales, Rungduin, Palomar, Barba. Report writing: Balagtas, Rungduin, Barba, Pagliawan. Editing: Balagtas, Papango, Pagliawan. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of this manuscript.

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