



Parents' Sense of Parenting Competence and Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School of Early Childhood Learners

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ABSTRACT

With the crucial role of early childhood education in the formation and development of learners, parent involvement in this early stage of education is considered a significant component. This research study endeavored to determine the levels of parents' sense of competence, and their self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of early childhood education learners particularly the Kindergarten learners of Bayombong Central School and Special Education Center. Further, it aimed to identify any differences in the parents' competence and self-efficacy when grouped according to selected profile variables, and to identify relationship of the two competency areas. Results reveal that the Kindergarten parents are 'very highly competent' in fulfilling their parenting roles and in assisting Kindergarten learners in their transition to formal classes for the school year regardless of their profile variables. Interagency collaboration and provision of extended support services can be considered to help the Kindergarten parents in improving themselves to increase their sense of parenting competence, and self-efficacy in helping their child to transition to the next grade levels.

Keywords: parents' competence, parents' efficacy, parents' self-evaluation, early childhood education

Introduction

Regarded as a significant step toward preparing young learners for formal basic education, the early childhood care and development system has been strengthened by the Philippine government by enacting the Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013 which considers from zero to eight years old as critical stages for holistic development. As part of its provisions, it is necessary to institutionalize pertinent educational programs that are all-encompassing, integrative, and sustainable during these formative years for the young learners. Also, Republic Act No. 10157 or the "Kindergarten Education Act" institutionalizes Kindergarten education into the basic education system and is one of the salient features of Republic Act No. 10533 or the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013."

Cognizant of the parents' role in the education of the learners, the Department of Education considers the parental involvement as one of the features of the inclusive strategies in increasing the participation rate of the learners. DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 highlights parental involvement as one of the effective strategies to prepare the learners academically, morally and spiritually. The department then encourages the parents to take an active role in observing the learners' performance, volunteering to work in the classroom and providing support to the school community in general. The parents' active and collaborative engagement with the school community are crucial for safeguarding the wellbeing of the learners (DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2022). The department as a service provider in the field of education is committed then to see and provide appropriate programs for parents to intensify their involvement in the holistic development of learners. Available resources for parents are also provided for them to help their children succeed in school though their involvement (Llego, 2022).

In instance, this active role of the parents in partnership with the school community has been magnified when the educational landscape was challenged due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With its unfailing commitment to continue serving its community, the Department of Education has introduced the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for schools to find ways for learning to continue amidst the threat and uncertainties brought about by COVID-19, while ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of the school community especially the learners. With this sudden shift in the system of the implementation of education in the country, the role of the parents as the schools' partners in the implementation of learning continuity while the learners are at home has been highlighted. Parents in this time adapted to their child's education as they assumed the responsibility to co-teach and monitor their children while the learners are in alternative distance learning modality/ies (Saquing, 2024).

Magnifying the lens in early childhood education, the roles of parents are given premium in the start of the education ladder. The first years of a child's life build the foundations for their learning and development that allow them to succeed across settings (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2021), and they need their parents to guide them along the way. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization believes that the welfare of an early childhood learner in their emotional wellbeing and on their learning is significant in the childhood

care education and in their development as a whole (UNESCO, 2023). With this crucial role of early childhood education in the formation and development of learners, parental involvement in this early stage of education is considered a significant component. This plays a vital role in the early childhood learners in their holistic development to support the young learners during these learners' formative years. Parents and families have a major impact on the success of the process of education and the upbringing of the young learners. It begins when parents provide a place that is safe and healthy together with the provision of different learning opportunities, supports in their learning activities and positive attitude about the school (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017) and when parents show their interest in school activities, parents strengthen the idea of school's importance on the part of the learners (Naite, 2020).

Parental involvement is a positive variable and implies an important role on the academic and socio-emotional development on an early childhood learner (Lara & Saracostti, 2019) and encourages the young learners to value learning (Lawrence & Fakuade, 2021). Hence, parents help their children to grow from being dependent to becoming independent should be well understood by parents so they could be able to support their children in all possible way they can. Proper parenting then influences the development and the creation of the child's personality (Ceka & Murati, 2016) and academically prepares the young learners to master the fundamentals in academics (Kartal et al., 2016). Korkmaz and Duman (2014) also emphasize that parents play an important role in educating and structuring their children's learning at home. The role of the parents that they assume when learners are at home significantly contributes to the academic success of the learners. It is through the efforts of parents that learning continuity are best achieved (Baidi, 2019; Brooks, 2019; Lardizabal-Dado, 2020; & Myupchar, 2020).

Meanwhile, parents' decision regarding their involvement are influenced through how they perceive and believe what they can and should do (Walker et al., 2005). Their view on early childhood education has an integral contribution on how they would provide learning opportunities to the young learners. Their involvement may be a range of different practices on how young learners are taught at home which includes parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with community at large (UNESCO, 2023).

It is in this light that this research study is conducted. This study endeavored to identify the levels of parents' sense of competence and their self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of early childhood education learners particularly the Kindergarten learners of Bayombong Central School and SPED Center. Further, it aimed to identify any differences on the identified levels when grouped according to selected profile variables as well as the relationship of the two competency areas. Specifically, this study aimed to attain the following:

1. Identify the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners;
2. Determine if there is a significant difference in the levels of parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners when grouped according to the following variables: (a) parents' sex, (b) socio-economic status, and (c) birth order of the Kindergarten learner; and
3. Determine if there is a significant relationship between the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners.

Methodology

This research study utilized quantitative research design involving descriptive, comparative and correlational approaches. Specifically, the study sought to determine the levels of parents' sense of competence and their self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of early childhood education learners particularly the Kindergarten learners of Bayombong Central School and Special Education Center for School Year 2023-2024. Further, it aimed to identify any differences on the identified levels when grouped according to the selected profile variables as well as the relationship of the two competency areas. This study employed purposive sampling to identify the research participants. Specifically, there were 92 parents of Kindergarten learners who have expressed their voluntary participation in the study where 46 of them are mothers and 46 of them are fathers.

To answer the research problems, the following research instruments were administered: researcher-made profile survey questionnaire, Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) Scale and Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School Scale (PSMTSS). The researcher-made profile survey questionnaire aimed to gather personal information among the parents of Kindergarten learners about their sex, family income as basis for the Socio-Economic Status (SES), and birth order of the Kindergarten education learners. Also, the 17-item PSOC Scale developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978) was modified and used to determine each parent's level of self-esteem. Each item is rated on a six-point Likert scale where 1 is equivalent to "strongly disagree" and 6 is equivalent to "strongly agree." In addition, the nine-item PSMTSS was modified and was used to determine the parents' self-efficacy in managing their respective Kindergarten children's transition into primary school. Each item is rated on a six-point Likert scale where 1 is equivalent to "strongly disagree" and 6 is equivalent to "strongly agree."

In treating the data gathered, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were utilized. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the level of the parent's sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learner as well as describing the parents' profile variables (i.e., sex, socio-economic status, and learners' birth order). In terms of describing the parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school, mean scores were computed and were qualitatively described using the following legend: 1.0-1.4-extremely low, 1.5-2.4-very low, 2.5-3.4-low, 3.5-4.4-high, 4.5-5.4-very high, and 5.5-6.0-extremely high. For the profile variables, frequency counts and percent distribution were considered. Moreover, inferential statistics was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the levels of parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners when grouped according to the identified profile variables and on determining if there is significant relationship between the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to

school of the learners. Specifically, T-Test for Independent Samples was used for identifying if there is significant difference between the levels of parenting sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing transition to school when grouped according to sex and socio-economic status. Kruskal-Wallis Test (One-Way ANOVA on Ranks) was used when determining the difference considering the birth order of the Kindergarten learners whom the parents are attending with. Moreover, Pearson-r correlation was employed to determine if there is significant relationship between the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners.

Results

Objective 1

Identify the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners

Table 1: Kindergarten Parents' Level of Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC)

Indicators	Mean	SD	QD
1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.	5.11	.79083	Very High
2. Being a parent is rewarding and I am enthusiastic about my child at his/her present age.	4.64	.76434	Very High
3. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have accomplished a whole lot.	4.70	.75213	Very High
4. I always feel that I can control the situations in parenting a child.	4.78	.82310	Very High
5. I am a good father/mother to my child as my father/mother was to me.	4.64	.79257	Very High
6. I would make a fine model for a new mother/father to follow in order to learn what she/he would need to know in order to be a good parent.	4.57	.77466	Very High
7. Being a parent is manageable and any problems are easily solved.	4.51	.76308	Very High
8. I can personally reflect on assessing myself whether I am a good father/mother or not.	4.63	.72198	Very High
9. I always feel fulfilled in terms of giving my best to my child.	4.82	.70989	Very High
10. I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child.	4.76	.66909	Very High
11. If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.	4.46	.71734	High
12. I share the same interest in being a parent as with other interest areas.	4.51	.73372	Very High
13. Considering how long I've been a father/mother, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.	4.72	.81640	Very High
14. I find it interesting to be a mother/father to my child.	4.61	.81141	Very High
15. I honestly believe that I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother/father.	4.62	.83656	Very High
16. Being a parent makes me excited and optimistic about my child's future.	4.77	.86575	Very High
17. Being a good mother/father is a reward in itself.	5.65	.63652	Extremely High
Overall	4.71	.68801	Very High

The table above presents the parents' self-evaluation as to their parenting sense of competence in rearing the Kindergarten learners. In the overall, the Kindergarten parents have a 'very high' parenting sense of competence with a mean score of 4.71. Among the seventeen indicators, the parents exhibit an 'extremely high' sense of competence that being a good parent is a reward in itself (mean=5.65) while they exhibit 'high' sense of competence (mean=4.46) in figuring out on what troubles their child on their own. Meanwhile, the Kindergarten parents are within the 'very high' level of sense of competence in other indicators. Specifically, they exhibit 'very high' level of sense of competence in the following: perceiving that parents' actions affect their children's performance (mean=5.11); acknowledging that being a parent is rewarding and that they are enthusiastic about their children in their present age (mean=4.64); feeling that they accomplish a lot for their children (mean=4.70); feeling that they are in control of all situation (mean=4.78); staying as a good parent like their respective parents too (mean=4.64); becoming a fine model to their respective children (mean=4.57); managing well the problems as a parent (mean=4.51); personally reflecting on the competence as a parent (mean=4.63); feeling fulfilled in terms of

giving one's best to their respective children (mean=4.82); meeting personal expectations (mean=4.46); sharing the same interest in being a parent as with other interest areas (mean=4.51); being familiar with the roles as parents (mean=4.72); finding interest in being a parent (mean=4.61); believing that they have all the skills to be a parent (mean=4.62), and becoming excited and optimistic as a parent (mean=4.77).

Table 2. Kindergarten Parents' Level of Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. I have a clear understanding of what my child might experience as they move from Kindergarten to primary school.	4.98	.67901	Very High
2. I have a clear understanding of what this school is doing to help the transition to primary school.	4.87	.69878	Very High
3. I feel confident that I will be able to cope well with my child's moving up to primary school.	4.97	.63680	Very High
4. I feel confident that I can support my child well during this time.	4.95	.71659	Very High
5. I know how to get information about parenting a child during transition to school.	4.85	.75498	Very High
6. I can help my child adjust to his/her new school environment.	5.07	.69225	Very High
7. I am optimistic about my child's adjustment in a new environment.	4.95	.73176	Very High
8. I am optimistic about coping with changes in general.	5.01	.74855	Very High
9. I think that our current situation at home inspires my child at school.	4.98	.67901	Very High
Overall	4.97	.70245	Very High

The table above presents the parents' evaluation as to their self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the Kindergarten learners. In the overall, the Kindergarten parents have a 'very high' parenting self-efficacy in managing the transition to school with a mean score of 4.97. Likewise, the parents exhibit 'very high' sense of self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the Kindergarten learners in all of the nine indicators. Specifically, they have 'very high' sense of self-efficacy in having a clear understanding of what the learners might experience as they move from Kindergarten to primary school (mean=4.98); on the school's actions to help their children in the transition process (mean=4.87), and on being confident that their respective children will be able to cope well with their moving up to the primary school (mean=4.97). Further, they also exhibit 'very high' sense of self-efficacy in terms of feeling confident that they can support their children along the way (mean=4.95); having a wide access for parenting support (mean=4.85); helping a child to adjust in the new school environment (mean=5.07); being optimistic on the children's ability to adjust (mean=4.95) and coping with the changes (mean=5.01), and thinking that their current situation at home inspires their children in school (mean=4.98).

Objective 2

Determine if there is a significant difference in the levels of parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners when grouped according to the following variables (a) parents' sex, (b) socio-economic status, and (c) birth order of the kindergarten learner

The following tables show the analysis on the differences in the levels of parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the Kindergarten Learners when grouped according to parents' sex, socio-economic status, and birth order of the kindergarten learner.

Table 3. Kindergarten Parents' Level of Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) and Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School (PSMTS) according to Sex

Area	Parents' Sex	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parenting Sense of Competence	Male	46	4.7391	.68101	.453	90	.652
	Female	46	4.6739	.70093			
Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to	Male	46	4.9130	.75502	-.740	90	.461

School	Female	46	5.0217	.64941
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It can be gleaned on the table that the Kindergarten parents who participated in this study are both the mothers and fathers of the Kindergarten learners. Based on the data, a total of 92 respondents participated in the study with an equal distribution when grouped according to sex. In terms of the Kindergarten parents' level of parenting sense of competence, the group of fathers had a higher mean score (mean=4.7391) than those with the group of the mothers (mean=4.6739). However, the mothers' group had a higher mean score (mean=5.0217) than with the group of the fathers (mean=4.9130) in terms of their perceived level on self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the Kindergarten learners. Considering the differences in the two areas, no significant difference on the mean score of parenting sense of competence was observed when the parents are grouped according to their sex ($p=.652$; $\alpha=.05$). Likewise, no significant difference on the mean score of parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school was observed among the Kindergarten learners when they are grouped according to sex ($p=.461$; $\alpha=.05$).

Table 4. Kindergarten Parents' Level of Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) and Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School (PSMTS) according to Socio-Economic Status

Area	SES	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parenting Sense of Competence	Poor	36	4.6944	.62425	-.134	90	.893
	Low Income	56	4.7143	.73148			
Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School	Poor	36	5.0556	.71492	.965	90	.337
	Low Income	56	4.9107	.69483			

It can be gleaned on the table that the Kindergarten parents who participated in this study perceived that their socio-economic status fall within the ranges of poor and low-income categories. Based on the data gathered, 56 (60.9%) of the parents perceive that their socio-economic status falls within the low-income class while 36 (39.1%) of them perceive to be poor. According to the National Economic Development Authority (2020), families who are within the low-income class live between the poverty line and twice the poverty line (with a family income of PhP 19,040) while the families within the poor class are considered to live less than official poverty threshold (with a family income of PhP 9,520). The table above further shows the comparison of the mean scores of the parents in terms of their parenting sense of competence and parent self-efficacy in managing the transition to school when grouped according to their socio-economic status. In terms of the Kindergarten parents' level of parenting sense of competence, the parents who belong to the 'low-income but not poor' class have higher mean score (mean=4.7143) than those who belong in the 'poor' class (mean=4.6944). However, the parents who are in the 'poor' class had a higher mean score (mean=5.0556) in terms of parent self-efficacy in managing the transition to school as compared to those who are in the 'low income' class (mean=4.9107). Considering the differences in the two areas, no significant differences on the mean scores of parenting sense of competence ($p=.893$; $\alpha=.05$), and on the mean scores of parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school ($p=.337$; $\alpha=.05$) were observed when the parents are grouped according to their socio-economic status.

Table 5. Kindergarten Parents' Level of Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) and Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School (PSMTS) according to Learners' Birth Order

Area	Birth Order	N	Mean	SD	Test Statistic	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)
Parenting Sense of Competence	1 st	34	4.8235	.79661	.004	2	.998
	2 nd	38	4.9474	.65543			
	3 rd	20	5.2500	.55012			
Parent Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School	1 st	34	4.9674	.70245	.4819	2	.090
	2 nd	38	4.7353	.79043			
	3 rd	20	4.6842	.61973			

Based on the data, 58 (63.04%) of the Kindergarten parents have already an experience in managing their children in Kindergarten since the learners they are attending to for this school year are their second or third child who are in Kindergarten education. Specifically, 38 (41.3%) of them claim that it is their second time to send their children for Kindergarten education while 20 (21.7%) of them claim that it is their third time. Meanwhile, 34 (36.96%) of them claim that it is their first time to send a child in Kindergarten education. Further, the table above shows the comparison of the computed means on parenting sense of competence and parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school according to learners' birth order. In terms of parenting sense of competence, those parents with third time of experience in rearing a child has the highest mean score (5.2500). This is followed by those parents with second time experience in rearing a child (mean=4.9474) then by those in their first time experience (mean= 4.8235). In terms of parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school, the parents who are first timers in sending their child in Kindergarten education has gained the highest mean score (mean=4.9764). This is followed by the parents with second time experience in sending a child in Kindergarten

education (mean=4.7353) then those with the third time experience (mean=4.6842). Considering the differences in the two areas when grouped according to learners' birth order, no significant differences on the mean scores of parenting sense of competence ($p=.998$; $\alpha=.05$), and on the mean scores of parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school ($p=.090$; $\alpha=.05$) were observed when the parents are grouped according to the learners' birth order.

Objective 3

Determine if there is a significant relationship between the level of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners

Table 9. Correlation between the Kindergarten Parents' Levels of Parenting Sense of Competence and Parents' Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School

Correlation		Parents' Self-Efficacy in Managing the Transition to School
Parenting Sense of Competence	Pearson Correlation	.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.810
	N	92

The foregoing table shows the correlation between the Kindergarten parents' levels of parenting sense of competence and parents' self-efficacy in managing the transition to school. It can be gleaned from the table that the computed r-value is .025, $p>0.05$ which suggests that there is no significant relationship between the levels of the Kindergarten parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of the learners. The parents' sense of competence in rearing their Kindergarten learners at home is not associated with the parents' self-efficacy in managing the learners' transition to school.

Summary of Findings

This research study endeavored to identify the levels of parents' sense of competence and their self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of early childhood education learners particularly the Kindergarten learners of Bayombong Central School and SPED Center for School Year 2023-2024. Further, it aimed to identify if there exists any significant differences on the identified levels when grouped according to selected profile variables as well as the significant relationship of the two competency areas. Results of the study revealed that the Kindergarten parents have a 'very high' parenting sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the learners' transition to school. No significant differences were noted in the parents' parenting sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing transition to school when they are grouped according to the profile variables. Test on relationship between the parenting sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing transition to school reveals that there exists no significant relationship.

Conclusions

Based on the findings in this study, the following conclusions are advanced:

1. The parents are very highly competent in fulfilling their parenting roles and in assisting the Kindergarten learners in their transition to formal classes for next school year.
2. The parents exhibit the same level of parenting competence and efficacy on assisting their child in the transition process from Kindergarten to the next grade level regardless of their sex, socio-economic status and the birth order of their respective children.
3. The parents' self-reported competence in parenting their respective children is distinct with their self-efficacy on assisting their child in the transition process from Kindergarten to the next grade level. Their level of competence in parenting does not necessarily guarantee their efficacy in managing the successful transition to school of the learners.

Recommendations

Based on the summary findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced.

1. The parents must continue improving themselves through attendance to parenting seminars and parent-support services to increase their sense of parenting competence and self-efficacy in helping their child to transition to the next grade level.
2. The school can come up with a unified parent-support program to capacitate the Kindergarten parents in dealing with and giving support to their respective children appropriately.
3. Interagency collaboration and provision of extended support services can be considered to help the Kindergarten parents in improving themselves to increase their sense of parenting competence and self-efficacy in helping their child to transition to the next grade level.

4. Future researches may conduct similar studies considering other grade levels, research instruments and additional variables that may affect the parents' sense of competence and self-efficacy in managing the transition to school of early childhood education learners.

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