



Public School Teachers' Perception on The “No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Policy

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Abstract. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy has imposed considerable demands on educators, potentially stretching their responsibilities to unprecedented limits. Critics contend that NCLB exerts a pervasive influence over all aspects of the teaching-learning process, encompassing classroom dynamics and assessment methodologies. This research aims to assess the perceived impact of NCLB on instructional and assessment practices among public school teachers within the Valencia Division during the 2022-2023 academic year. The study surveyed a representative sample of 40 randomly chosen public school teachers. Employing a questionnaire comprising 20 items, the researchers utilized descriptive statistical analyses involving frequencies, percentages, and means. The research results uncovered that the NCLB Policy has led to modifications in teacher evaluation and classroom pedagogies; as indicated by interview responses, students advanced to higher grade levels even when they exhibited deficiencies in critical competencies like reading and comprehension. Notably, classroom evaluations highlighted a prevalence of test-focused instruction. The respondents also expressed concerns that meeting NCLB requisites necessitated the redesign of instructional methods and assessment strategies. This research underscores the substantial influence of the NCLB policy on both instructional practices and assessment approaches among public school teachers. It highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the policy implications and multifaceted effects on the education landscape.

Keywords: teachers' perception, NCLB Policy

1 Introduction

Amidst transformative changes within the Philippines, the education landscape underwent a significant transformation with the implementation of Republic Act 10533, widely recognized as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, in the Philippines. However, the nation encountered a rude awakening when confronted with underwhelming outcomes on the global stage, as evidenced by its performance in the 2018 Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA) [1],[2]. These disappointing results were further substantiated by the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) [3].

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These international assessments cast a glaring spotlight on the pressing need for substantial educational enhancements. As researchers and policymakers grapple with this challenge, their attention has converged on exploring the intricate nexus between student achievement and the seminal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy.

States were obligated to get every student to the "proficient level" on state assessments by the 2013-14 school year, while each state was free to define "proficiency" and choose which tests to employ. By early 2015, the deadline had passed, but no state had gotten all its students to pass the competence test [4].

Within the Philippine context, a legislative initiative titled the "No Filipino Child Left Behind Act of 2008," by Senator Manny Villar, was introduced to compel equitable education opportunities [5].

This Policy's far-reaching impact has brought forth tangible shifts in the teaching landscape, warranting a comprehensive exploration. The present study investigates the intricate interplay between the No Filipino Child Left Behind Act and educators' practices, investigating their perceptions of their teaching efficacy, self-assurance, and classroom autonomy. Amidst the ongoing discourse, some voices express concerns that the Policy's implementation might have inadvertently skewed educational priorities toward test-centric pedagogies, potentially overshadowing a holistic educational experience [6],[7]. However, despite these valid concerns, a comprehensive understanding of educators' perceptions within their daily instructional endeavors still needs to be explored. This study endeavors to bridge this gap, illuminating the intricate dynamics between educators' perceptions and the Policy's impact, thereby contributing to a nuanced understanding for educational leaders and policymakers alike.

This study captures educators' perspectives on the No Filipino Child Left Behind Act, analyzing its impact on their understanding of the Policy's foundations, pedagogical practices in the classroom, and student assessment methodologies. In this vein, the notion that NCLB has been the topic of heated discourse since the Policy enacted in early 2002 accentuates the significance of this study. By meticulously examining these facets, the study seeks to unveil the multifaceted ways this Policy shapes educators' professional lives. This endeavor aspires to furnish a comprehensive portrait of educators' interactions with the Policy, spotlighting their perspectives, challenges, and beliefs and ultimately contributing to a more holistic comprehension of the Policy's ramifications.

2 Methodology

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study's framework, encompassing its design, geographical context, participants, data collection methods, and the analytical tools harnessed for investigation. In employing a survey research approach, the study engaged participants by distributing questionnaires to gauge their viewpoints. The investigation unfolded within educational institutions under the purview of the Department of Education Division of Valencia, situated in Bukidnon Province, Philippines. The research randomly selected 40 teachers from diverse public schools in this region.

The survey instrument employed by the researchers consisted of 20 questions to identify the teachers' perceptions of the NCLB Policy. Respondents were required to express their level of agreement, ranging from "strongly disagreed" to "strongly agreed," with each provided statement. Notably, before the commencement of the study, the research team diligently secured formal authorization from the relevant institution and the Department of Education. Researchers informed teachers that the survey's completion would consume approximately 10 minutes and assured them of the confidentiality of their responses. After selecting participants, the chosen teachers were administered the survey questionnaire for completion. The data is subsequently subject to rigorous analysis.

The researchers adopted descriptive statistics as a powerful analytical tool to interpret respondents' reactions to individual questions. This approach facilitated the comprehension of prevailing sentiments, including the number of individuals who agreed or disagreed with specific statements. Central to this analytical method were numerical metrics such as frequencies, percentages, and averages, which encapsulate and convey the essence of the collected data.

3 Results and Discussions

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the participants. Tables were also presented in this chapter to analyze the data.

Table 1. Percentages of Teachers' Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations for items appearing on the survey questionnaire.

Item	MEAN (SD)
Their knowledge about NCLB	
I believe that I know a lot about the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Policy	3.20 (0.60)
I feel more pressure and stress as a result of the increased testing mandates in the Philippines and the related need to improve student performance.	2.05 (0.71)
In my school, I believe that most teachers are carrying on their work much as they did before NCLB.	1.90 (0.58)
In my school, I believe that NCLB has forced teachers to divert their attention away from more important issues that can better improve teaching and learning	2.18 (0.70)
I do not care to know any more about NCLB and its effect on my work as a classroom teacher than I do right now.	2.75 (0.62)
I believe that the overall effect of NCLB on my school has been positive.	2.70 (0.71)
NCLB has forced me to change the focus of my classroom instruction	1.95 (0.67)
Classroom Instruction	
NCLB has changed the nature of academic motivation for students and has placed more stress on students.	2.33 (0.72)

Item	MEAN (SD)
NCLB has changed the nature of instructional motivation for teachers and has placed more stress on teachers.	1.88 (0.75)
I have substantially DECREASED the amount of time spent on instruction of content NOT tested on the state -mandated tests.	2.60 (0.62)
I have NOT let NCLB or the state -mandated testing program in the Philippines influence what or how I provide instruction to my students.	2.48 (0.59)
I have substantially INCREASED the amount of time spent on instruction of content that I know is covered on the state - mandated tests	3.05 (0.55)
I spend much more time throughout the year preparing my students for the state - mandated tests.	2.83 (0.59)
As a result of NCLB, I now spend more time teaching test-taking skills to my students	2.80 (0.64)
Classroom Assessment	
NCLB has forced me to change the ways in which I assess my students' academic performance.	1.95 (0.55)
As a result of NCLB, I create a greater number of my classroom tests such that they mirror the same format and types of questions on the national achievement test.	2.85 (0.53)
I use multiple -choice classroom tests more frequently than I have in the past.	3.05 (0.74)
I have NOT let NCLB affect how I assess the academic achievement and progress of my students.	2.45 (0.59)
I have used sample test items from the state tests, approved by the Department of Education, to help prepare my students to take the tests.	3.00 (0.550)
As a result of NCLB, I use standardized test data to help guide and improve my instruction.	3.10 (0.54)

(Adapted from Mertler, Craig Alan, (2010). Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of No Child Left Behind on Classroom Practices. *Current Issues in Education*, 13(3).

The table provided insights into Teachers' Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations for items featured in a survey questionnaire. These items pertain to knowledge about the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy. Notably, two specific statements within this category have garnered noteworthy attention: "I believe that I know a lot about the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Policy," which holds the highest mean of 3.20, and "I do not care to know any more about NCLB and its effect on my work as a classroom teacher than I do right now," with a mean of 2.75. These statistics suggest that teachers possess a substantial awareness and understanding of the NCLB policy. Their knowledge implies that this Policy is not merely theoretical but has been effectively implemented in the given locale, as reflected in their motto. "No Valencianos left behind.

Conversely, the second statement reveals that while teachers know the Policy, they need more enthusiasm for delving deeper into its intricacies. This sentiment could stem from their prioritization of honing their teaching practices over gaining additional policy-related knowledge.

In terms of the impact of NCLB, the statements "I feel more pressure and stress as a result of the increased testing mandates in the Philippines and the related need to improve student performance" and

"In my school, I believe that most teachers are carrying on their work much as they did before NCLB" have garnered the lowest means of 2.75 and 1.90, respectively. These results indicate that teachers acknowledge that the NCLB policy has introduced heightened pressure regarding assessing student performance. Compared to the pre-NCLB era, the workload has intensified since the Policy's implementation. Additionally, there is a perceived expectation from building administrators to maintain or elevate mandatory test scores, even if their school is not at risk of failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards.

Shifting the focus to the influence on classroom instruction, the statements "I have substantially INCREASED the amount of time spent on the instruction of content that I know is covered on the state-mandated tests" and "I spend much more time throughout the year preparing my students for the state-mandated tests." They have garnered the highest means within this category. The result indicates a consensus among teachers that they prioritize instruction on content aligned with state-mandated tests due to the NCLB policy.

Conversely, the statements with the lowest means in this category are "NCLB has forced me to change the focus of my classroom instruction" and "NCLB has changed the nature of instructional motivation for teachers and has placed more stress on teachers." These results suggest a need for more agreement among teachers that the NCLB policy has driven substantial changes in the focus of their classroom instruction and instructional motivation, as well as an increased burden of stress.

Shifting to the "Influence on Classroom Assessment" category, the statements "I have used sample test items from the state tests, approved by the Department of Education, to help prepare my students to take the tests" and "As a result of NCLB, I use standardized test data to help guide and improve my instruction" have secured the highest means. These results underscore that teachers predominantly employ standardized tests to aid students in preparation and to reinforce instructional strategies.

On the contrary, the statement "NCLB has forced me to change how I assess my students' academic performance" and "I have NOT let NCLB affect how I assess academic achievement and progress of my students" possess the lowest means. While some teachers believe that NCLB has influenced their assessment methods, others maintain that it has yet to substantially alter their approach to assessing students' academic progress. To comprehensively gauge the viewpoints of public high school educators concerning the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy, Researchers conducted a series of interviews. The responses to the question "What do you know about the NCLB Policy?" are outlined below:

Respondent 1: The No Child Left Behind policy is committed to inclusive education. It is centered on students, emphasizing that all learners, regardless of race, culture, social standing, or intellectual capabilities, should be accepted within the education system.

Respondent 2: From my perspective, the Policy's fundamental objective is commendable – to enhance students' academic achievements and hold

educational institutions accountable for their students' progress. However, there appears to be a disconnect between this well-intentioned goal and the actual implementation of the Policy.

Respondent 3: While recognizing the positive intentions of the program as designed by the Department of Education, the NCLB policy has harmed learners' reading proficiency, which is a cause for concern.

Respondent 4: Understanding of the No Child Left Behind Policy is that it aims to deliver fair and high-quality education to all students, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, capabilities, or learning requirements.

Respondent 5: I perceive the No Child Left Behind Policy as an initiative addressing students failing to progress to the next academic level. Nevertheless, there have been instances where teachers have felt compelled to promote students even if they fall short of the necessary qualifications for advancement.

Based on the insights provided by the interviewees, it is apparent that the NCLB policy will designed with inclusivity and equal access to education in mind. These educators demonstrate a solid grasp of the Policy's underlying principles and its intended achievements. This observation aligns with the findings of Tidwell [7], who emphasizes that the accountability aspects of the No Child Left Behind Policy will designed to ensure that every student will afford a high-quality education.

Table 2. Level of teachers' perception on the impact of NCLB in terms of their knowledge about the policy, influence on classroom instruction and classroom assessment.

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge about NCLB	2.46	0.80	High
Influence of NCLB in classroom instruction	2.49	0.75	High
Influence of NCLB in classroom assessment	2.73	0.72	High

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
1	1-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
2	1.76-2.50	Disagree	Low
3	2.51-3.25	Agree	High
4	3.26-4	Strongly Agree	Very High

Table 2 offers a comprehensive perspective on teachers' familiarity with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy. The data reveals a notable mean of 2.46 and a standard deviation of 0.80, suggesting a high level of knowledge among educators regarding the Policy's fundamental principles. It implies that a majority of teachers possess a substantial understanding of NCLB. However, Lowery [9] has articulated an opposing viewpoint, indicating that some teachers need more proper guidance on effectively implementing the standards, thereby leading to potential misuse of these standards within the classroom context.

Furthermore, the table outlines the teachers' perceptions of NCLB's influence on classroom instruction, showcasing a robust mean of 2.49 and a standard deviation of

0.75. This result signifies a widespread agreement among teachers that the NCLB policy significantly shapes their classroom instruction. This finding resonates with the insights of Husband and Hunt [6], which emphasized the significant impact of NCLB on teachers' daily routines and teaching practices. Nonetheless, Fusarelli [10] presented a differing standpoint, asserting that while NCLB may not have significantly altered her teaching approach, it mandated specific responsibilities and obligations.

Examining teachers' perception of NCLB's impact on classroom assessment also yields intriguing results, displaying a high mean of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 0.72. This data underscores the consensus among teachers that NCLB influences how classroom assessments will be conducted. Interviews were conducted with the same four participants, eliciting further insights on the matter:

- Respondent 1: The NCLB policy holds promise in promoting increased school attendance and decreasing the number of out-of-school youth. However, it strains teachers due to the imbalance between student numbers and available classrooms. Inclusive education is encouraged, yet teachers often lack the training to accommodate students with disabilities. Consequently, classroom assessment becomes centered on achieving a 100% pass rate.
- Respondent 2: NCLB's emphasis on standardized tests pressures teachers to conform their instruction to the confines of the test format, a practice commonly known as "teaching to the test." This inclination affects classroom assessment, as students, reassured by the Policy, may not take assessments as seriously. The answers provided by the respondents above relate to the study findings of Fusarelli [10]. A respondent stated that while she did not think NCLB greatly impacted her instruction; it significantly impacted what she was required to do to fulfill her obligations as a teacher. Even though they failed the final exam, students who did not pass were moved on to the next grade because "you cannot keep everyone who did not pass back."
- Respondent 3: The Policy's impact is evident in promoting students who struggle with reading, leading to comprehension gaps. This distinction between proficient and struggling readers influences assessment outcomes, indicating a link to the Policy's influence.
- Respondent 4: NCLB shifts focus to student-centered learning, prioritizing individualized support. Standardized testing gains prominence in assessing student progress.
- Respondent 5: NCLB necessitates simplifying instruction delivery to cater to all students and prompts adjustments in grading systems for performance tasks. Assessments demand patience and understanding.

The collective responses highlight the palpable influence of NCLB on classroom instruction and assessment. Notably, the Policy's impact becomes apparent when students, despite comprehension challenges, are promoted. Additionally, teachers' instructional approaches and reviews must align with NCLB guidelines. Fusarelli [10] echoed this perspective and identified the law's role in heightening awareness of stu-

dents' academic progress and necessitating meticulous documentation for promotion, even if students do not meet standard test proficiency.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the study, public school teachers understand the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy and how it affects classroom instruction and assessment techniques. According to the survey's mean scores and standard deviations, teachers have a strong view of how NCLB has affected their instructional strategies. The interview excerpts provide evidence of NCLB's wide-ranging effects on teachers, including promoting students to higher grade levels despite their lack of fundamental abilities like reading and understanding.

Overall, the survey indicates that, while teachers support the ideas of NCLB, they are concerned about the practices and their detrimental effects on instructional and curricular approaches.

In light of these insights, it is imperative to disseminate the unintended ramifications of NCLB to various stakeholders. Policymakers should understand how this law impacts teachers, as they bear heightened stress to elevate student academic achievement. By recognizing these dynamics, policymakers can make informed decisions to facilitate the system's functioning.

Administrators also play a crucial role in this scenario. Administrators must sensitize teachers to the potential adverse effects of NCLB and equip them with strategies to alleviate heightened stress levels among educators. Professional development initiatives are invaluable in offering coping mechanisms. Moreover, administrators should be vigilant about the possibility of unscrupulous exam preparation methods, underscoring the importance of ethical teaching practices.

As a forward-looking recommendation, a broader study encompassing a wider range of respondents is encouraged. A more comprehensive understanding of educators' perspectives across diverse contexts and regions would offer richer insights into the intricate interplay of NCLB's effects on teaching practices and student assessment. This expanded scope could enhance the policy discourse and inform evidence-based interventions for more effective education reform.

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