

Some Findings of Research on Implementation of Child-Friendly Kindergarten's Conception in Mongolia

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An essential part of kindergarten management is outcome based planning. Purposeful planning, effective organization of activities, and reflection the outcome in the future planning can help us to implement above principle in our job. Using of verified methodology and making substantial assessment of the providers' educational service are the main factor of eternal and real planning. The main objective of this study is to prove the effectiveness and validity of the self-evaluation methodology by pre-test method. As a result of the pre-test, we could know that the self-evaluation criteria are the main data of the real activity based evaluation and outcome based planning of the kindergarten.

Keywords: child-friendly kindergarten (CFK), child development, self-evaluation, planning

Introduction

The State Policy on Education of Mongolia is defined that comprehensive education system and its operation and content must be stable, eternal, open, based on technology progress, and integrated. Nowadays, there are many new fresh ideas and activities are thriving throughout the world to implement the goal to improve the access, quality, and outcome of early childhood education (Batdelger, Davaa, & Oyunbileg, 2015). It preferred children's right based on the goals of education for all statement by developing environment and service. As a result, there are many achievements, such as rise of number of children involved in kindergartens, improvement of curricula, innovation of training content and methodology, and improvement of kindergarten environment, which supports children's learning and development.

However, the evaluation and screening tool approved by Minister of Education in 2003 is used in kindergartens today. There are still needs to improve assessment and result-based planning (Batdelger, Davaa, & Oyunbileg, 2015).

Therefore, we assume that the usage of research-based and definite self-assessment are the basics of improvement of significant evaluation and optimal planning. We introduce the test results of new revised self-assessment tool for kindergartens.

Many effective factors are influencing child's development and this idea is attracted in bio-ecological theory of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1992). This theory is used as a basic perception in the improved self-assessment. This tool is a questionnaire, which consists of 114 questions and divided into five aspects, such as result-based

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management, early childhood education access, preschool education service's quality, developing child-friendly environment, and involvement of family and community. This self-assessment tool will be used not only as main tool in self-evaluation of Mongolian kindergartens, but also planning of future strategic and other planning procedures (Batdelger, Davaa, & Oyunbileg, 2015).

Background

The idea of child-friendly kindergarten (CFK) has been developed since 1997 in Thailand (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2006) and its main rationale was the concept of inclusion all children in early childhood education despite of their national origin, race, culture, economic situation, and ability. From its inception, child-friendly school (CFS) was perceived as a means of transporting the concept of child rights into classroom practice and school management. Nowadays, CFS is being identified by the following five dimensions (Shapiro, 2007):

1. Proactively include seeking out and enabling participation of all children, especially those who are different ethnically, culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, and in terms of ability;
2. Academically effective and relevant to children's needs for life, livelihood knowledge, and skills;
3. Healthy and safe for and protective of children's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being;
4. Gender-responsive in creating environments and capacities fostering equality;
5. Actively engaged with and enabling of, student, family, and community participation in all aspects of school policy, management, and support to children.

In principle, all programs recognize these five dimensions as necessary and mutually reinforcing conditions of CFS success. A school is child-friendly where all of the elements are addressed and the ability to be child-friendly on each dimension is enhanced by action on the others. The five dimensions guide us in choosing the criteria for CFK's evaluation and pre-test of the methodology.

What is more, there are many theories, such as behaviorist that determine child development features, social learning, and cognition. One of these theories is the bio-ecological theory of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1992). He had determined that many factors interact in child development, and therefore, in order to develop criteria indicator for child development and factors influencing on it, we should ground on his conception.

Some of the common reasons given to the question, "Why assess CFS?" and by extension, "Why assessment tools are needed?" include the following:

1. Assessing achievement so that we can see if we are making any differences or if we are having an impact (positive or negative) on children's learning;
2. Measuring progress based on the objectives of the CFS program in that school (Are we meeting our objectives?);
3. Determining and improving upon effectiveness, that is, the extent to which CFS activities are achieving specific objectives (For instance, if a school sets out to improve the qualifications of all teachers in a particular area, did it succeed?);
4. Identifying problems and their causes;
5. Encouraging action by suggesting possible solutions to problems;
6. Improving monitoring and efficiency for better management (For instance, whether the inputs, such as money, time, staff, equipment, etc. we are putting into CFS activities are appropriate in terms of outputs, are the costs/cost-benefit reasonable?);

7. Identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to push you to reflect on where you are going and how you are getting there;

8. Better planning and management of activities based on identified strengths and weaknesses (More in line with the needs of the children, teachers, parents, and communities, and with their full participation);

9. Sharing experiences: To prevent others from making similar mistakes, or to encourage them to use similar methods.

Research Methodology

The main aim of the methodology pre-test is to probe an alternative tool for self-evaluation of CFK and estimate its result. The coverage of the survey was limited by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) target provinces: Hubsugul aimag¹, the district², Nalaikh of Ulaanbaatar, and six kindergartens were selected by random. Principals, methodologists, teachers, doctors, chefs, and accountants who implemented CFK programmes (see Table 1). In order to provide a representation of local government for the survey, specialists who are responsible for children's health, nutrition, and development were involved.

Table 1

Sampling of the Target's Kindergartens

Province/city	Coverage		Participants
	District	Kindergarten	
Ulaanbaatar	Nalaikh	152	Kindergarten principal, manager, five teachers, two assistant teachers, stock keeper, and chef
		153	Kindergarten principal, manager, six teachers, three assistant teachers, accountant, chef, and nurse
		2	Kindergarten principal, manager, six teachers, four assistant teachers, accountant, chef, and nurse
Hubsugul	Murun	12	Kindergarten principal, four teachers, three assistant teachers, one chef, accountant, and nurse
		Local kindergarten	Kindergarten principal, five teachers, two assistant teachers, one chef, and stock keeper
	Tunel	Local kindergarten	Kindergarten principal, five teachers, two assistant teachers, one chef, and stock keeper
	Ikh Uul	Local kindergarten	Kindergarten principal, five teachers, two assistant teachers, one chef, and stock keeper

In the study, we collected data by using focus group discussion. Participants were divided into the three groups: (a) Group 1: Local agency; (b) Group 2: Direct service-staffs; and (c) Group 3: Indirect service-staffs (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participants Involved in the Survey

No.	Focus groups	
1	Group 1	Local provincial or district educational specialists, kindergarten principals, and managers
2	Group 2	Kindergartens teachers and assistant teachers
3	Group 3	Doctor, accountant, chef, and stock keeper

Results

The study was held in November in 2016 for 15 days. The analyses on the data collection and correcting work stretched for a month.

¹ Aimag: A province (Mongolia has 21 aimags).

² Districts: The capital city (Ulaanbaatar has nine districts).

Findings of the Focus Group 1 Discussion

As shown in Table 3, the Focus Group 1 discussions of local provincial or district educational specialists, kindergarten principals, and managers involved in the pre-test all assumed that the indicators reflected in the self-assessment tool are measurable, covered all aspects and activities in the kindergarten and the method of summarizing scores is vivid. As is observed, nearly 10% of participants of the Focus Group 1 regarded that the self-assessment can be influenced by lateral affect. The provided data in Table 3 illustrates that we should make some wise changes in the score scale. Because 18.2% of attendances regarded that the score scale is not significant. As is observed from the above table, almost third of attendants (36.4%) assumed that indicators are not formulated accordingly and understandable.

Table 3

Findings of the Focus Group 1 Discussion

Indicators	Dimensions													
	Yes	No	Undefined	Understandable	Should be arranged	Uncomprehending	Is significant	Insignificant	Yes	No	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Yes	No
Local provincial or district educational specialists	2			1	1		2		2		2		1	1
Principals	6			2	4		6		6		6		6	
Managers	3			1	2		1	2	3		3		3	
Total sum	11			4	7		9	2	11		11		10	1
Percentage (%)	100			36.4	63.6		81.8	18.2	100		100		90.9	9.1

There is a case from Manager of kindergarten of Murun district as the following.

I am a manager of the local kindergarten and I must arrange self-assessment procedure. As is given in the self-assessment tool, the guidelines of self-assessment are too short and makes hampered assessment process. It is would be effective if the guideline is more concrete and explained step by step. For instance, if the removed area is unavailable in the kindergarten as asked in 7th indicator of the Focus Group 1, where and how we can note it and it will reflect on the evaluation. It is not clear.

Findings of the Focus Group 2 Discussion

Table 4 shows the information about participants in the Focus Group 2 and it is the group with maximal people. The majority (83%) of early childhood educators and assistant educators assumed that the significance

of score scale, the easiness, and vividness of the score sum-up method are acceptable and simply. However, almost one fifth of participants (17%) of early childhood educators see that these indicators are unacceptable. The issue of lateral affect in self-assessment early childhood educators also were not satisfied. They see that assistant educators lie down under early childhood educators whom work with and do not express their own opinion directly. However, the early childhood and assistant educators assumed that the indicators are not clearly formulated. The much greater numbers of them (34%) think that we should improve formulation of indicators. This number of indicators is stable in both Focus Groups 1 and 2.

Table 4

Findings of the Focus Group 2 Discussion

Indicators	Dimensions													
	Yes	No	Undefined	Understandable	Should be arranged	Uncomprehending	Is significant	Insignificant	Yes	No	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Yes	No
Kindergarten teachers	25		6	21	10		31		22	9	31		28	3
Assistant teachers	14		2	10	6		16		12	4	16		10	6
Total sum	39		8	31	16		47		34	13	47		38	9
Percentage (%)	83		17	66	34		100		72	28	100		81	19

Findings of the Focus Group 3 Discussion

The persons who involved in the Focus Group 3 interact with early childhood not directly and circumstantially. However, they work for protect children's health, provide with nutritious food, and set up the pleasant and supportive environment for children. As is observed from Table 5, viewable number (33.4%) is seen also in formulation of criteria and it is same as in Focus Groups 1 and 2.

Based on the findings of the study of self-assessment tool we have made some improvements as following:

1. Regarding to design: In order to reflect the result of internal control and assessment each chapter was separated into the individual folder from order chapters and all chapters were collected in one main cover.

2. Regarding to content:

(a) According to the pre-test result, 16 indicators of 102 were rearranged to be understandable. This innovated version also had been tested again and approved by principals and managers of kindergartens of Ulaanbaatar;

(b) The score scale is circumstantiated from three to five;

(c) The score calculating and noting method of some indicators that unavailable in some kindergarten are redefined.

Table 5

Findings of the Focus Group 3 Discussion

Indicators	Dimensions													
	Yes	No	Undefined	Understandable	Should be arranged	Uncomprehending	Is significant	Insignificant	Yes	No	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Yes	No
Doctor	2		1	1	2		3	0	2	1	3		3	
Accountant	3		0	2	1		3	0	2	1	3		3	
Chef	6		0	5	1		5	1	6	0	6		6	
Stock keeper	3		0	2	1		3	0	3	0	3		3	
Total sum	14		1	10	5		14	1	13	2	15		15	
Percentage (%)	93.4		6.6	6.6	33.4		93.3	6.7	86.6	13.3	100		100	
			Are the indicators of each dimension measurable?											
			Are the indicators of each dimension understandable?											
			Is the score scale of criteria and indicators significant?											
			Can the selected indicators overall all aspects of valued activity?											
			The score sum-up procedure of self-assessment tool is easy to calculate and summarize.											
			Are focus group discussions interview held without lateral affect?											

Discussions

The self-assessment tool's structure is: (a) planning; (b) implementation; (c) monitoring; (d) evaluation and conclusion; (e) contemplation and adaptation; and (f) planning. These six elements are systematic and continuous activities, and therefore, we have worked by following principles in order to improve self-assessment tool:

1. Keep the concept, dedication, and criterial indicators as in previous tool—self-assessment tool (2013);
2. Involve only those people who are taking part personally in planning, organizing, and assessing activities of the kindergarten in order to staffs can evaluate their own activities;
3. The main aim of the self-assessment tool is to reflect the result of evaluation into the kindergarten's activity and point to improve it. Therefore, this assessment tool should be easy and vivid to use and should not be tiresome and with additional expenses;
4. The minimum lateral affects in self-assessment;
5. The indicators of the self-assessment must not be coincided.

Self-assessment procedure should be open, easy, and fair. Hence, the type arrangement of the self-assessment was group open interview and all staffs of the kindergarten were divided into three groups: (a) local provincial or district educational specialists, kindergarten principals, and managers; (b) kindergarten

teachers and assistant teachers; and (c) doctor, accountant, chef, and stock keeper.

We have collected data by observing and recording frequencies, and summarizing data. During the observation, we have recorded the following data:

1. Are indicators of each dimension measureable?
2. Are indicators of each dimension understandable?
3. Is the score scale of criteria and indicators significant?
4. Can selected indicators of overall all aspects of valued be active?
5. Is the score sum-up procedure of self-assessment tool easy to calculate and summarize?
6. Is the group interview organized without later al affect?

Above dimensions are recorded as the following:

1. Are the indicators of each dimension measurable? ("Yes," "No," or "Undefined");
2. Are the indicators of each dimension understandable? ("Understandable," "Should be arranged," or "Uncomprehending");
3. Is the score scale of criteria and indicators significant? ("Significant" or "Insignificant");
4. Can the selected indicators overall all aspects of valued activity? ("Yes" or "No");
5. The score sum-up procedure of self-assessment tool is easy to calculate and summarize ("Acceptable" or "Unacceptable");
6. Are focus group discussions interview held without lateral affect? ("Yes" or "No").

Conclusions

The self-assessment is the vital resource to make the future's plan. Nowadays, planning, implementation, and evaluation are elements of cycled and spiroid process. In educational institutions, the planning should begin from effective assessment, especially from self-assessment. A self-assessment, to be effective, must take into account an individual's work-related values, interests, personality type, and aptitudes. For as much as self-assessment is quite new for Mongolian education, UNICEF (2009; 2014) in Mongolia had tried to develop an approach to make self-assessment for early childhood institutions and faced with some difficulties. To eliminate these difficulties and naturalize self-assessment approach, we have developed an innovated self-assessment tool and test it in two regions, such as Hubsugul and Nalaikh. The main conclusions from the research (findings) are the following:

1. The usefulness and measurability of the indicators of self-assessment approach are proved by 91% and this self-assessment tool can be main tool of internal control and evaluation of kindergartens;
2. Objective self-assessment is the validated factor to make next year or strategic and long term planning of the kindergarten. This self-assessment tool is providing with opportunities to make outcome based planning;
3. The planning, arrangement, implementation, monitoring, and result analyze are the components of continuum, cycled, and systematic process, and self-assessment is one component of this system.

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