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Building Emotional Awareness and Cultivating Opportunities for Nurturing (BEACON) Addressing Behavioral Challenges of Learners

*Paulo Martin M. Aquino**

Department of Education, Rizal, the Philippines

*Correspondence: E-mail: paulomartinaquino101515@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation of Project BEACON (Building Emotional Awareness and Cultivating Opportunities for Nurturing) in addressing behavioural challenges among elementary learners. It aims to enhance discipline and foster a supportive learning environment. Using a descriptive-evaluative method, 30 school personnel assessed the project's acceptability. Additionally, the study targeted 40 learners with identified behavioural concerns. Findings revealed that Project BEACON contributed to improvements in some classroom behavioural indicators and was rated as highly acceptable by school personnel. Experts rated the program as "very much acceptable," affirming its success and potential for sustained positive impacts on the school community.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Schools function as a second home for learners, offering a secure environment where they are expected to exhibit desirable behaviours and attain holistic growth (Lohmann *et al.*, 2021; El Zaatari and Maalouf, 2022). The educational landscape has continuously evolved, prompting curricula, teaching methodologies, and strategies to adapt to a rapidly changing world (Catacutan *et al.*, 2023; Anis, 2024). Consequently, shifts in learners' attitudes and classroom performance have introduced new behavioral challenges for educators. To navigate these complexities, teachers frequently participate in Learning Action Cells (LAC) sessions to refine their classroom management and pedagogical approaches (De Vera *et al.*, 2021; Osiesi *et al.*, 2024; Gading, 2024). These collaborative discussions are essential for aligning teaching strategies with the dynamic and diverse learning needs of modern students. Amid these pedagogical advancements, ensuring the safety and welfare of learners remains a cornerstone of educational practice. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7610, widely integrated into schools as the Child Protection Policy, underscores the legal and moral obligation of educational institutions to safeguard children from harm. This legislation reaffirms the commitment to nurturing learners' holistic development by cultivating a safe, secure, and supportive educational environment. Recent studies affirm that the effective implementation of child protection policies significantly bolsters learners' cognitive development, mental health, and overall academic success (Cho *et al.*, 2021). Aligned with Republic Act No. 7610, the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates the State to defend children's rights, encompassing their right to assistance, proper care, and absolute protection from all forms of neglect and harm. This constitutional mandate is operationalized through the Department of Education's (DepEd) policy guidelines, which reiterate the critical role of schools in establishing secure learning spaces. Research indicates that schools equipped with robust child protection measures yield superior student outcomes, as these policies dismantle barriers to learning and foster inclusive environments (DeJong and Love, 2020). Nevertheless, persistent gaps in policy compliance and execution highlight the urgent need for targeted capacity-building initiatives among educators and school personnel. Such initiatives must emphasize reflective practices, intensive training, and collaborative efforts to guarantee that child protection frameworks are actively enacted rather than merely documented.

Addressing these behavioral and safety challenges is integral to maintaining teaching effectiveness. Project BEACON (Building Emotional Awareness and Cultivating Opportunities for Nurturing) was developed with an emphasis on continuous safety, awareness, and protection, which inherently supports the continuous improvement of instructional practices. This holistic paradigm highlights the necessity of integrating behavioural support systems with teacher professional development to achieve successful educational program outcomes (Aquino, 2024). Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the current extent of compliance with child protection policies and the management of behavioral issues within the educational institution. Ultimately, the findings are intended to guide the design of a targeted capacity-building program aimed at bridging implementation gaps, thereby enhancing the safety and well-being of learners. Through such interventions, schools can genuinely fulfill their mandate as a nurturing second home where children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

2. METHODS

To evaluate the acceptability of Project BEACON, a researcher-developed questionnaire checklist was utilized, focusing on three core domains: protection, awareness, and safety. Additionally, pre-observation and post-observation assessments of the learners were

conducted and rated by their respective advisers and subject teachers. The research instrument comprised five specific statements for each category to measure project acceptability, as well as five statements designed to evaluate learner behaviour during the pre- and post-observation phases. The weighted mean was employed as the primary statistical tool to analyse the gathered data. To systematically interpret the results, a 5-point Likert scale was adopted. This scale was utilized to quantify both the teachers' observations of learner behaviour and the overall level of acceptability of Project BEACON. The detailed scoring scale, its corresponding numerical ranges, and the specific verbal interpretations are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Data

SCALE	RANGE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION (PRE AND POST OBSERVATIONS)	ACCEPTABILITY
5	4.20 - 5.00	Always	Very Much Acceptable
4	3.40 - 4.19	Often	Much Acceptable
3	2.60 - 3.39	Sometimes	Moderately Acceptable
2	1.80 - 2.59	Seldom	Slightly Acceptable
1	1.00 - 1.79	Never	Not Acceptable

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 illustrates the pre-observation data regarding learners' behavioural problems. The data show that "Talking with seatmates insensibly" ranked first (WX = 4.15), identifying it as the most frequently observed behavioural issue before the intervention. This was followed by "Dictating bad commands to their classmates" (WX = 4.11) and "Quarrelling with classmates" (WX = 4.08). Conversely, "Shouting inside the classroom" was observed least frequently, ranking fifth (WX = 3.45). The overall weighted mean of 3.92 indicates that these behavioural problems were "often" observed by teachers before the intervention.

Table 2. Computed weighted mean on the pre-observation of learners with behavioural problems observed by teachers.

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEM	WX	RANK
Talking with seatmates insensibly	4.15	1
Dictating bad commands to their classmates	4.11	2
Quarrelling with classmates	4.08	3
Bullying classmates and teachers	3.80	4
Shouting inside the classroom	3.45	5

The frequent occurrence of these behaviours suggests an urgent need for targeted interventions to manage classroom discipline and promote a positive learning environment. Behavioural issues, such as bullying and quarrelling, can induce psychological stress among learners, subsequently impairing their academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, teachers must employ proactive classroom management strategies and structured programs to mitigate these behaviours and cultivate a conducive learning atmosphere. Existing literature firmly supports the significance of directly addressing behavioural issues within the classroom. Disruptive behaviours, including shouting and bullying, can impede individual academic growth and affect the overall classroom climate (Lannie and McCurdy, 2021). Proactive behaviour management systems, such as positive

reinforcement and conflict resolution programs, are important in reducing behavioural problems (Smith and Sandhu, 2020).

Table 3 reveals the post-observation changes in the frequency of these behavioural problems following the implementation of Project BEACON. Although "Talking with seatmates insensibly" remained a prominent issue (WX = 4.27, interpreted as "Always"), "Dictating bad commands to their classmates" showed a slight shift (WX = 4.16, "Often"). Notably, "Shouting inside the classroom" (WX = 2.60, "Sometimes") and "Quarrelling with classmates" (WX = 2.41, "Sometimes") were observed significantly less frequently, ranking fourth and fifth, respectively. Overall, the composite weighted mean decreased to 3.34 ("Sometimes"), indicating a general reduction in the frequency of observed behavioural problems compared to the pre-observation phase. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) can help reduce disruptive behaviours while supporting a more productive learning environment (Simonsen et al., 2020).

The reduced overall weighted mean suggests an overall improvement in classroom behaviour management after the implementation of Project BEACON. However, the continued high ratings for "Talking with seatmates insensibly" and "Dictating bad commands to their classmates" indicate that some behavioural concerns remained after the intervention. Addressing these persistent issues may require refining classroom management techniques, strengthening peer interaction activities, and implementing more focused behaviour support strategies. Collaborative classroom management approaches that incorporate both teacher and student inputs can support reductions in behavioural challenges (Gregory and Fergus, 2021).

Table 3. Computed weighted mean on the post-observation of learners with behavioural problem observed by teachers.

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS	WX	VI	RANK
1. Shouting inside the classroom.	2.60	sometimes	4
2. Bullying classmates and teachers.	3.26	sometimes	3
3. Talking with seatmates insensibly.	4.27	always	1
4. Dictating bad commands to their classmates.	4.16	often	2
5. Quarrelling with classmates.	2.41	sometimes	5
Overall WX	3.34	Sometimes	

Table 4 assesses the extent of Project BEACON's implementation concerning the protection of learners with behavioural problems. The results indicate a robust adoption of protective measures, evidenced by an overall weighted mean of 4.61, interpreted as "Very Much Acceptable" (VMA). The highest-rated item, "Has developed the feeling that protection must always be felt" (WX = 4.91, VMA), demonstrates the school's strong emphasis on ensuring that learners consistently feel safe. Similarly, "Has developed a sense of need for protection" (WX = 4.88, VMA) and "There is an established system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm" (WX = 4.85, VMA) were highly rated. Conversely, "Adopted a conflict resolution mechanism that respects the rights of Indigenous people, gender, and religion" (WX = 4.12, Moderately Adopted [MA]) received the lowest rating among the indicators, pointing to a specific area requiring further improvement.

Table 4. Computed weighted mean on the extent of project BEACON to the learners with behavioural problems concerning protection.

PROTECTION	WX	VI
1. There is an established system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on physical, emotional, or behavioral signs.	4.85	VMA
2. Has information dissemination of the school-based child protection and/or anti-bullying.	4.28	VMA
3. Adopted a conflict resolution mechanism that respects the rights of Indigenous people, gender, and religion.	4.12	MA
4. Has developed a sense of need for protection.	4.88	VMA
5. Has developed the feeling of protection must be always felt.	4.91	VMA
Overall WX	4.61	VMA

These high ratings across most indicators confirm that the school has made substantial progress in enacting child protection measures that prioritize safety and emotional well-being. However, the relatively lower score for conflict resolution highlights a critical need for targeted programs that champion inclusivity and respect for diversity. To address this gap effectively, schools should enhance training programs for teachers and staff, focusing on culturally responsive conflict management strategies. This recommendation aligns with broader research underscoring the necessity of comprehensive child protection frameworks. School-based child protection systems are proven to significantly curtail instances of bullying and abuse, thereby creating safer educational spaces. Furthermore, cultivating a climate of safety and inclusion has a profoundly positive influence on students' emotional well-being and their subsequent academic performance (DeJong and Love, 2020; Cho *et al.*, 2021).

Table 5 illustrates the project's perceived contribution to awareness among learners and teachers. The overall weighted mean of 4.23, interpreted as "Very Much Acceptable" (VMA), suggests that Project BEACON enhanced awareness. The indicator "Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students" (WX = 4.39, VMA) obtained the highest rating, suggesting the important role of positive peer interactions in addressing behavioural problems. Likewise, efforts to "Encourage contact between learners and teachers" (WX = 4.28, VMA) and "Give prompt responses to every situation related" (WX = 4.26, VMA) emphasize the effectiveness of proactive communication and timely intervention.

Table 5. Computed weighted mean on the extent of project BEACON to the learners with behavioural problems concerning awareness.

AWARENESS	WX	VI
1. Encourage contact between learners and teachers.	4.28	VMA
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.	4.39	VMA
3. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.	4.09	MA
4. Emphasis encouragement in active learning.	4.13	MA
5. Give prompt responses to every situation related.	4.26	VMA
Overall WX	4.23	VMA

On the other hand, indicators such as "Emphasis encouragement in active learning" (WX = 4.13, MA) and "Respect diverse talents and ways of learning" (WX = 4.09, MA), though positively rated, suggest potential areas for further enhancement. These findings imply that Project BEACON successfully cultivates a supportive environment conducive to behavioural

reform by strengthening teacher-learner relationships and peer cooperation. However, the slightly lower ratings for active learning and diversity respect suggest a need for more tailored strategies that accommodate individual learning preferences and actively engage all students. Establishing inclusive and supportive learning environments can help reduce behavioural issues and foster positive student outcomes. Moreover, strong relationships between learners and teachers are important in promoting emotional well-being and academic success (El Zaatari and Maalouf, 2022; Gregory and Fergus, 2021).

Table 6 evaluates the enhancement of safety measures for learners under Project BEACON. The overall weighted mean of 4.03, categorized as "Moderately Agree" (MA), suggests that the project has moderately improved safety conditions. The highest-rated indicator, "Has a written school-based child protection and/or anti-bullying protection" (WX = 4.35, VMA), reflects strong consensus on the necessity of formalized safety policies. Furthermore, the presence of "immediate personnel in case of unsafety events" (WX = 4.26, VMA) indicates robust preparedness in managing immediate safety concerns. However, indicators such as "Adopted a conflict resolution mechanism that respects learners' rights, diversity, gender, and religion" (WX = 4.09, MA) and "Code of conduct has specific provisions to address potential risks to students" (WX = 3.89, MA) achieved only moderate agreement. The lowest-rated indicator, "Has developed and implemented a school-based referral and monitoring system" (WX = 3.57, MA), identifies a crucial area demanding structural improvement to ensure better safety protocols for all students.

Table 6. Computed weighted mean on the extent of project BEACON to the learners with behavioural problems concerning safety.

SAFETY	WX	VI
1. Has a written school-based child protection and/or anti-bullying protection.	4.35	VMA
2. The code of conduct has specific provisions to address potential risks to students.	3.89	MA
3. Adopted a conflict resolution mechanism that respects learners' rights, diversity, gender, and religion.	4.09	MA
4. Has developed and implemented a school-based referral and monitoring system.	3.57	MA
5. There are immediate personnel in case of unsafe events.	4.26	VMA
Overall WX	4.03	MA

These results indicate that while Project BEACON has advanced the creation of a safer learning environment, specific safety protocols require further refinement to achieve their maximum potential. Strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms, upgrading the school-based referral system, and expanding the scope of the code of conduct may improve the overall safety framework. Child protection policies, trained personnel, and school-based behavioural support systems can strengthen school safety and help reduce behavioural challenges (DeJong and Love, 2020; Simonsen *et al.*, 2020; Gregory and Fergus, 2021).

Table 7 presents the overall acceptability of Project BEACON as evaluated by school personnel across three key criteria: Protection, Awareness, and Safety. The composite mean score of 4.29, interpreted as "Very Much Acceptable" (VMA), indicates that the school personnel generally rated the project positively. Protection emerged as the highest-rated criterion (Mean = 4.61, VMA), reflecting a positive evaluation of the project's protective measures. Awareness also received a positive rating (Mean = 4.23, VMA), suggesting that the project helped promote awareness among the school community. Safety received a

comparatively lower, yet still positive, rating (Mean = 4.03, MA), indicating a moderate level of acceptability that highlights an opportunity for targeted enhancements.

Table 7. Composite table on the level of acceptability of Project BEACON for learners with behavioural problems as evaluated by school personnel.

CRITERIA	MEAN	VI
Protection	4.61	VMA
Awareness	4.23	VMA
Safety	4.03	MA
Overall	4.29	VMA

School personnel generally rated Project BEACON positively, particularly commending its protection and awareness components. However, the moderate rating for the Safety criterion suggests that continuous refinement of safety protocols is necessary to elevate the program's total acceptability. The evaluations underscore the importance of dynamically upgrading safety measures while sustaining the protection and awareness strategies currently in operation. Comprehensive protection and awareness programs are important in supporting student outcomes and improving behaviour management (Park *et al.*, 2021). The implementation and continuous assessment of safety measures can improve program acceptability and support positive outcomes for students with behavioural problems (Smith and Jones, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Project BEACON contributed positively to managing learners' behavioural problems and promoting a safer, more supportive learning environment. The findings show improvements in several disruptive behaviours, while protection and awareness components received strong approval. However, conflict resolution mechanisms, the school-based referral system, safety protocols, and behaviour management strategies still require further refinement to ensure long-term effectiveness.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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