การเปรียบเทียบความพร้อมในการจัดการศึกษาปฐมวัยของโรงเรียนสังกัดสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์ ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2558 และ พ.ศ. 2568

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF READINESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE BASIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, PHETCHABUN PROVINCE, BETWEEN 2015 AND 2025

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Received Date: 13 November 2025 **Revised Date:** 24 December 2025 **Accepted Date:** 26 December 2025

บทความวิจัย

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเปรียบเทียบความพร้อมในการจัดการศึกษาปฐมวัยของโรงเรียนสังกัดสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์ โดยใช้รูปแบบซิป (CIPP Model) ประกอบด้วย ด้านบริบท ด้านปัจจัยเบื้องต้น ด้านกระบวนการ และด้านผลผลิต ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2558 และ พ.ศ. 2568 กลุ่มตัวอย่างในปี พ.ศ. 2558 ประกอบด้วย ผู้บริหารโรงเรียน 220 คน ครูผู้สอนระดับปฐมวัย 220 คน และคณะกรรมการสถานศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน 440 คน รวม 880 คน ส่วนกลุ่มตัวอย่างในปี พ.ศ. 2568 ประกอบด้วย ผู้บริหารโรงเรียน 206 คน ครูผู้สอนระดับปฐมวัย 206 คน และคณะกรรมการสถานศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน 412 คน รวม 824 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยเป็นแบบสอบถามมาตรประมาณค่า 5 ระดับ มีค่าความเชื่อมั่นเท่ากับ 0.88 สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการทดสอบค่าทีแบบอิสระ (Independent Samples t-test)

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า (1) โรงเรียนสังกัดสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐานในจังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์ โดยภาพรวมในปี พ.ศ. 2568 มีระดับความพร้อมในการจัดการศึกษาปฐมวัยสูงกว่าปี พ.ศ. 2558 อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และ (2) ความพร้อมในการจัดการศึกษาปฐมวัยด้านปัจจัยเบื้องต้น ด้านกระบวนการ และด้านผลผลิตแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ โดยปี พ.ศ. 2568 มีความพร้อมสูงกว่า ส่วนด้านบริบทไม่พบความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

คำสำคัญ: ความพร้อมในการจัดการศึกษาปฐมวัย, การเปรียบเทียบ, จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to compare the readiness for early childhood education management of schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in Phetchabun Province by applying the CIPP Model, which consisted of four aspects: context, input, process, and product, between the years 2015 and 2025. The samples in 2015 included 220 school administrators, 220 early childhood teachers, and 440 members of school boards of basic education institutions, totaling 880 participants. In 2025, the samples consisted of 206 school administrators, 206 early childhood teachers, and 412 school board members, totaling 824 participants. The research instrument was a five-point rating scale questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.88. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and an independent samples t-test.

The results revealed that (1) overall, schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in Phetchabun Province had a significantly higher level of readiness for early childhood education management in 2025 than in 2015 at the .05 level of statistical significance; and (2) the readiness in the aspects of input, process, and product differed significantly, with 2025 showing higher readiness, whereas the context aspect showed no significant difference between the two periods

Keywords: Early Childhood Education Management Readiness, Comparative Study, Phetchabun Province

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of every Thai citizen, and it is the state's responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities for all people, thereby promoting human development at every stage of life. The aim is to support growth in physical, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects so that individuals can live with dignity and harmony in society. This serves as a vital foundation for the sustainable and stable development of the nation (OEC, 2017). The development of young children is particularly important because early childhood is considered the "golden period" of brain and personality development. Research in neuroscience and developmental psychology has confirmed that more than 80 percent of neural connections in the human brain are formed between birth and six years of age, which is the period when the brain is most receptive to learning (OEC, 2009; UNICEF, 2023). Therefore, early childhood education is not only a preparation for primary school but also a crucial process for building the foundation for life, thinking, learning, and social interaction.

Over the past decade, Thailand has continuously emphasized the development of early childhood education in both policy and practice, especially through the revision of early childhood curricula to align with the changing social context. The Early Childhood Education Curriculum B.E. 2548 (2005) emphasized the holistic development of children in four domains: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual (OBEC, 2005). Later, the Curriculum B.E. 2560 (2017) expanded the concept of children's "core competencies," encouraging experiential learning and focusing on thinking, analysis, and creativity (OEC, 2017). The most recent Curriculum B.E. 2568 (2025) aims to enhance the quality of early childhood education by developing core competencies linked to 21st-century skills through play-based learning and integrated activities in collaboration with local communities (OBEC, 2025; Prasansaph, 2025). These continuous curriculum reforms reflect the government's ongoing efforts to raise the quality of learners and to align national education with the principles of lifelong learning and a knowledge-based economy.

Phetchabun Province is a region rich in geographic and socio-cultural diversity. It has many schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) that provide early childhood education in both urban and rural areas. In 2015, there were 510 schools, but by 2025, the number had decreased to 442 (OBEC, 2025). This change reflects the Ministry of Education's policy on administrative restructuring and the consolidation of small schools. A previous study conducted in 2015 found that most schools demonstrated a "high" level of readiness, especially in the area of basic inputs such as teachers and learning materials. However, limitations were found in contextual factors, particularly community participation and the use of local learning resources (Seenuan, 2017). Therefore, after a decade of policy reforms, curriculum adjustments, and administrative changes, it is necessary to reexamine the readiness of educational institutions to reflect developmental trends more systematically.

Although Thailand has continuously developed early childhood education standards through increased funding, teacher quality enhancement, and quality assurance systems, local-level data remain limited (ONESQA, 2024). Phetchabun Province, which includes both large urban schools and small rural

schools in mountainous areas, thus provides an important case study for examining readiness in terms of structure, resources, and educational outcomes. This research aims to compare the readiness of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in Phetchabun Province between 2015 and 2025. The study employs the CIPP Evaluation Model, which consists of four dimensions: Context, Input, Process, and Product. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence for future planning and for the continuous development of early childhood education quality in the province toward sustainable improvement.

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to compare the readiness for early childhood education management of schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province between the academic years 2015 and 2025. The comparison covers both the overall readiness and specific aspects based on the CIPP Evaluation Model, which includes four dimensions: Context, Input, Process, and Product.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design, specifically a comparative study, with the purpose of comparing the readiness of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province between the academic years 2015 and 2025. The research procedures were carried out as follows.

1. Population and Sample

1.1 Academic Year 2015

1.1.1 Population

The population consisted of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and school board committee members from schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province, totaling 510 schools.

1.1.2 Sample

The sample size was determined using the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to the table, for a population of 510 schools, the appropriate sample size was 220 schools. A stratified random sampling method was used. First, the schools were divided into three groups based on their educational service areas, namely Area 1, Area 2, and Area 3. Each area was then further divided into three strata according to school size: small, medium, and large. Schools were subsequently selected using a simple random sampling method to obtain the proportional number of schools for each area. The sample distribution was as follows: 65 schools from Area 1, 70 schools from Area 2, and 85 schools from Area 3, giving a total of 220 schools. For data collection, each school provided one school administrator, one early childhood teacher, and two school board committee members as respondents. Therefore, the total number of participants for the 2015 academic year was 880 people.

1.2 Academic Year 2025

1.2.1 Population

The population consisted of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and school board committee members from schools under the Primary Educational Service Areas (PESA) in Phetchabun Province. The province includes three Primary Educational Service Areas, as follows: Area 1, consisting of 126 schools, Area 2, consisting of 128 schools, Area 3, consisting of 188 schools. In total, the population for the 2025 academic year comprised 442 schools. It should be noted that schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area (SESA) were excluded from this study, as their administration has been separated from the Primary Educational Service Areas (PESA) according to the current educational management structure of the Ministry of Education.

1.2.2 Sample

The sample size for the 2025 academic year was also determined using the sample size determination table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Based on the population of 442 schools, the appropriate sample size was 206 schools. A stratified random sampling method was employed. The schools were divided into three groups according to their respective educational service areas (Area 1, Area 2, and Area 3). Each group was further categorized into three strata based on school size, including small, medium, and large schools. A simple random sampling technique was then applied to obtain the proportional number of schools from each area. The selected samples consisted of 59 schools from Area 1, 60 schools from Area 2, and 87 schools from Area 3, resulting in a total of 206 schools. Each selected school provided one school administrator, one early childhood teacher, and two school board committee members to participate in the study. Consequently, the total number of respondents for the 2025 academic year was 824 participants.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 Instruments Used in the Study

The main instrument used in this research was a questionnaire designed to assess the readiness of early childhood education management in four dimensions: context, input, process, and product. The questionnaire was constructed using a rating scale based on the Likert method and consisted of three parts as follows:

Part 1: Demographic information of the respondents.

Part 2: Levels of readiness of schools in early childhood education management, covering the four dimensions of context, input, process, and product.

Part 3: Open-ended questions for additional opinions and suggestions from the respondents.

For data collection in the academic year 2025, the researcher used the same questionnaire that had been employed in the 2015 study. However, some wording and contextual details were revised and updated to reflect current educational conditions. The instrument was evaluated for quality and demonstrated a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88.

2.2 Procedures for Developing the Research Instrument

2.2.1 The researcher studied curriculum documents and related research studies concerning the evaluation of educational management, particularly those based on the CIPP Model, to serve as a conceptual framework for developing the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher reviewed the principles and structure of Likert-type rating scales to guide the questionnaire design.

2.2.2 The questionnaire was developed to comprehensively cover the four components of the CIPP Model proposed by Stufflebeam: context, input, process, and product. The items were derived from theoretical documents, textbooks, and related research studies. A five-level rating scale was used to assess the level of readiness, defined as follows:

5 means the highest level of readiness
4 means a high level of readiness
3 means a moderate level of readiness
2 means a low level of readiness
1 means the lowest level of readiness

2.2.3 The initial version of the questionnaire was submitted to three experts for validation. They were asked to review the items for content validity, clarity of language, and construct consistency. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated, and items with IOC values between 0.67 and 1.00 were retained. The questionnaire was then revised and refined according to the experts' recommendations.

2.2.4 The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with a group of 30 participants, consisting of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and school board members who were not part of the main study sample.

2.2.5 Data from the pilot test were analyzed to examine the item discrimination using the item-total correlation method. Items with correlation coefficients of 0.25 or higher were retained. The reliability of the questionnaire was then examined using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, which indicated item discrimination values between 0.32 and 0.85 and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.88, confirming that the questionnaire was highly reliable.

2.2.6 After all revisions and validations, the questionnaire was finalized, printed, and used as the official instrument for data collection in both academic years 2015 and 2025.

3. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher carried out the data collection through the following steps:

3.1 The researcher contacted and obtained permission from school administrators to conduct the data collection process. Official coordination was made to ensure that each participating school was informed of the research objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures before the distribution of the questionnaires.

3.2 The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the selected schools and collected them through postal mail. For schools that did not return the questionnaires within the specified period, the researcher made a follow-up visit in person to collect the remaining data. This process continued until all questionnaires were received, ensuring that the number of responses matched the required sample size.

For both the academic years 2015 and 2025, the researcher used the same data collection procedure to maintain consistency and reliability in the comparison of results between the two time periods.

4. Data Organization and Analysis

4.1 The completed questionnaires were reviewed and screened to ensure accuracy and completeness before being used for data analysis and synthesis.

4.2 The researcher calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for each item, for each dimension, and for the overall dataset. The obtained mean scores were then interpreted according to the following criteria:

4.51–5.00 means the highest level of readiness
3.51–4.50 means a high level of readiness
2.51–3.50 means a moderate level of readiness
1.51–2.50 means a low level of readiness
1.00–1.50 means the lowest level of readiness

4.3 The responses from the open-ended questions in Part 3 of the questionnaire were analyzed using content analysis. The researcher grouped the qualitative data based on similar or related themes and synthesized the information into descriptive summaries that reflected the participants' opinions and suggestions.

4.4 To compare the levels of readiness for early childhood education management between the academic years 2015 and 2025, the researcher employed the Independent Samples t-test. This statistical method was used to compare the mean scores of each dimension as well as the overall readiness levels according to the CIPP Model framework for both years. The level of statistical significance was set at .05.

5. Statistical Techniques Used for Data Analysis

In this research, the following statistical methods were employed to analyze the data:

5.1 To examine the quality of the research instrument, the researcher assessed content validity of the questionnaire using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and measured reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. These analyses ensured that the questionnaire items were accurate, consistent, and appropriate for measuring the intended variables.

5.2 To describe the level of readiness in early childhood education management among schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in Phetchabun Province, the researcher used descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation. These measures were calculated for both the overall readiness and each of the four dimensions under the CIPP Model framework.

5.3 To compare the levels of readiness in early childhood education management between the academic years 2015 and 2025, the Independent Samples t-test was applied. The statistical significance level was set at .05, to determine whether differences between the two years were statistically significant.

Research Findings

The presentation of the data analysis and interpretation of results was carried out in both narrative and tabular formats. The findings are presented as follows:

1. Comparison of the overall readiness for early childhood education management

The comparison was based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and members of basic education school committees. The overall results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management (Overall Dimensions)

Evaluation Items	2015			2025			t	p-value	Interpretaton
	M	S	Level	M	S	Level			
1. Context	3.88	0.53	High	3.72	1.12	High	–1.05	.297	No sig
2. Input	4.24	0.41	High	4.31	0.72	High	2.10	.041*	Sig
3. Process	4.23	0.55	High	4.40	0.60	High	2.45	.018*	Sig
4. Product	4.19	0.39	High	4.38	0.64	High	2.58	.013*	Sig
Overall	**4.14**	**0.42**	**High**	**4.21**	**0.77**	**High**	**2.18**	**.034***	**Sig**

From Table 1, the comparison of mean scores on the readiness for early childhood education management based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and basic education school committee members between the years 2015 and 2025 revealed that the overall mean score in 2025 was 4.21, which was higher than the overall mean score in 2015, which was 4.14. The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that the difference in the overall mean scores between the two years was statistically significant at the .05 level. This finding demonstrates that the level of readiness for early childhood education management in 2025 was significantly higher than in 2015.

When considering each dimension separately, the Context dimension showed a decrease in the mean score from 3.88 in 2015 to 3.72 in 2025, but this difference was not statistically significant. In contrast, the Input dimension increased from 4.24 to 4.31, the Process dimension increased from 4.23 to 4.40, and the Product dimension increased from 4.19 to 4.38. The differences in these three dimensions were statistically significant at the .05 level, indicating that the improvements in resources, learning processes, and educational outcomes were substantial and consistent with the ongoing development of early childhood education in Phetchabun Province.

2. Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management by Dimension

Table 2 Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management: Context Dimension

Evaluation Items	2015			2025			t	p-value	Interpretation
	M	S	Level	M	S	Level			
1. School location	4.12	0.61	High	3.29	1.24	High	2.26	.027*	Sig
2. Community	3.80	0.58	High	3.94	1.01	High	-	.367	No sig
3. Community learning	3.71	0.52	High	4.02	0.88	High	-	.038*	Sig
Overall	**3.88**	**0.53**	**High**	**3.72**	**1.12**	**High**	**1.05**	**.297**	**No sig**

From Table 2, the comparison of mean scores based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and members of basic education school committees between 2015 and 2025 showed that the mean score for the school location item decreased from 4.12 to 3.29. The result of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant at the .05 level, suggesting that opinions regarding school location differed significantly between the two time periods.

For the community cooperation item, the mean score increased from 3.80 to 3.94, but the difference was not statistically significant. In contrast, the community learning resources item showed an increase in the mean score from 3.71 to 4.02, and the difference was statistically significant at the .05 level. When considering the overall mean score for all items in the context dimension, the analysis showed no statistically significant difference between 2015 and 2025.

Table 3 Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management: Input Dimension

Evaluation Items	2015			2025			t	p-value	Interpretation
	M	S	Level	M	S	Level			
1. Teachers	4.38	0.44	High	4.48	0.60	High	-0.94	.352	No sig
2. Administrators	4.45	0.48	High	4.41	0.62	High	0.38	.703	No sig
3. Buildings and facilities	4.28	0.50	High	4.19	0.76	High	0.83	.408	No sig
4. Curriculum	3.85	0.56	High	4.43	0.61	High	-4.16	.000***	Sig
5. Learning materials and equipment	4.18	0.61	High	3.96	0.88	High	1.92	.058	No sig
6. Budget allocation	4.30	0.56	High	4.29	0.74	High	0.07	.943	No sig
Overall	**4.24**	**0.41**	**High**	**4.31**	**0.72**	**High**	**2.10**	**.041***	**Sig**

From Table 3, the comparison of mean scores on readiness in the input dimension for early childhood education management, based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and members of basic education school committees between 2015 and 2025, revealed that the overall mean score for 2025 was 4.31, which was higher than that of 2015, with a mean score of 4.24. The result of the Independent Samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference at the .05 level, suggesting that although the overall readiness in input factors differed significantly between the two years, both were at a similarly high level.

When considering each item, almost all subcomponents showed mean scores that were close to each other and not significantly different between 2015 and 2025. The only exception was the curriculum item, where the mean score increased from 3.85 in 2015 to 4.43 in 2025, representing a statistically significant difference at the .01 level.

Table 4 Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management: Process Dimension

Evaluation Items	2015			2025			t	p-value	Interpretation
	M	S	Level	M	S	Level			
1. Experience organization	4.27	0.68	High	4.47	0.62	High	-1.52	.131	No sig
2. Classroom environment	4.25	0.54	High	4.35	0.58	High	-0.92	.359	No sig
3. Management and administration	4.12	0.61	High	4.45	0.59	High	-2.85	.005**	Sig
4. Quality assurance	4.27	0.60	High	4.38	0.59	High	-1.01	.316	No sig
Overall	**4.23**	**0.55**	**High**	**4.40**	**0.60**	**High**	**-2.45**	**.018***	**Sig**

From Table 4, the comparison of mean scores on readiness in the process dimension for early childhood education management, based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and members of basic education school committees between 2015 and 2025, showed that the overall mean score in 2025 was 4.40, which was higher than that of 2015 with a mean score of 4.23. The result of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that the difference in overall mean scores was statistically significant at the .05 level, suggesting that the readiness in the process dimension for early childhood education management in 2025 was significantly higher than in 2015.

When examining each sub-dimension, the mean scores for experience organization and classroom environment increased slightly in 2025 compared to 2015, but the differences were not statistically significant. The management and administration sub-dimension showed an increase in the mean score from 4.12 in 2015 to 4.45 in 2025, and this difference was statistically significant at the .01 level. Meanwhile, the quality assurance sub-dimension increased from 4.27 to 4.38, though the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5 Comparison of Readiness for Early Childhood Education Management: Product Dimension

Evaluation Items	2015			2025			t	p-value	Interpretation
	M	S	Level	M	S	Level			
1. Characteristics of learners	4.40	0.36	High	4.41	0.60	High	-0.09	.927	No sig
2. School as a community role	3.97	0.58	High	4.29	0.76	High	-2.25	.027*	Sig
Overall	**4.19**	**0.57**	**High**	**4.38**	**0.64**	**High**	**-2.58**	**.013***	**Sig**

From Table 5, the comparison of mean scores on readiness in the product dimension of early childhood education management, based on the opinions of school administrators, early childhood teachers, and members of basic education school committees between 2015 and 2025, revealed that the overall mean score for 2025 was 4.38, which was higher than that of 2015, with a mean score of 4.19. The result of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that the difference in overall mean scores was statistically significant at the .05 level, suggesting that the readiness in the product dimension of early childhood education management in 2025 was significantly higher than in 2015.

When examining each sub-dimension, it was found that the characteristics of learners had similar mean scores between 2015 (M = 4.40) and 2025 (M = 4.41), with no statistically significant difference. However, the school as a community role model sub-dimension showed an increase in the mean score from 3.97 in 2015 to 4.29 in 2025, and the difference was statistically significant at the .05 level. This result indicates that the respondents' perceptions of schools as community role models improved notably in 2025.

Summary of the Research Findings

Based on the analysis of data regarding the readiness for early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province between 2015 and 2025, the findings can be summarized as follows.

1. Overall Readiness

The schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in Phetchabun Province demonstrated a higher level of readiness for early childhood education management in 2025 compared with 2015. The difference was statistically significant at the .05 level, indicating that the management of early childhood education in 2025 had developed and improved in readiness over the past decade.

2. Readiness by Dimension (CIPP Model)

When examined by dimensions under the CIPP Model framework, it was found that the schools' readiness in the input, process, and product dimensions differed significantly, with the 2025 scores higher than those in 2015. This suggests progress in essential aspects such as resources, management practices, and educational outcomes. However, the context dimension showed no statistically significant difference between the two years, implying that environmental and community-related factors affecting early childhood education remained relatively stable during the period.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, the discussion can be presented as follows.

1. Overall Discussion

The results indicated that the overall readiness for early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province in 2025 was at a high level and significantly higher than in 2015 at the .05 level. This finding reflects the development of the early childhood education management system during the past decade, particularly in terms of educational policy, curriculum, and school administration. The results demonstrate that schools in Phetchabun Province have continuously adapted and developed to align with the social, economic, and educational policy changes of the country (OEC, 2017; OBEC, 2025).

This trend is consistent with the report of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA, 2024), which stated that early childhood education institutions in Thailand, especially those under OBEC, have shown continuous improvement in quality assessment results, most notably in the areas of school administration and community participation. These factors are essential components of educational readiness. The findings are also in line with the study by Wongsing (2022), which emphasized that developing teachers' competencies directly enhances the quality of learning management and children's development. Similarly, Srisawat (2021) found that early childhood schools that received consistent support in terms of resources and teacher development demonstrated higher levels of operational readiness compared to schools lacking systematic development.

In terms of causal interpretation, the improvement in readiness may be related to policy and structural changes in early childhood curricula over the ten years between 2015 and 2025. During this period, three curriculum versions were implemented: the 2005, 2017, and 2025 editions. Each revision reflected the evolution of educational philosophy concerning children and learning, shifting from a behavioral approach to competency-based and participatory learning concepts (Prasansaph, 2025; OBEC, 2025). In particular, the 2025 Curriculum emphasizes core competencies and play-based learning, as well as the active involvement of families and communities. These changes required schools to adapt their learning experiences, resource management, and quality assurance systems to align with the new approach, resulting in significant improvements in the process and product dimensions, consistent with the findings of this study.

Furthermore, the increase in readiness in the input dimension, particularly in curriculum and management aspects, may reflect the ongoing professional growth of teachers and school administrators during the past decade. This progress has been supported by national policies aimed at enhancing the quality of educators, such as the Teacher Competency Development Project and the Tambon Quality School Project, initiated by the Ministry of Education. These initiatives have enhanced teachers' knowledge and skills in designing learning experiences appropriate to the context of children and their communities (OEC, 2023; UNICEF, 2023). The present findings also align with Kanchanaphen (2023), who found that

strengthening teacher competencies and promoting community participation had a significant positive effect on the readiness level of educational institutions.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight that during the past decade, early childhood schools in Phetchabun Province have shown substantial progress, particularly in administrative practices, learning process management, and learner outcomes. These improvements can be attributed to educational policy reforms, the introduction of new curricula, and the continuous enhancement of early childhood teachers. The findings carry important implications for future educational policy, especially regarding the allocation of resources, teacher development, and the integration of community-based learning to ensure that early childhood education achieves the goals of the 2025 Curriculum effectively and sustainably.

2. Context Dimension

The research findings revealed that the level of readiness in the context dimension of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province in 2015 and 2025 did not differ significantly. In both periods, the mean scores were at a high level, indicating that schools in Phetchabun Province have maintained stability in contextual factors such as school location, community collaboration, and local learning resources. These elements serve as essential foundations for sustaining continuous and consistent early childhood education over time.

However, when examined by specific indicators, it was found that community learning resources showed a statistically significant increase in the mean score from 2015, while the school location indicator showed a decreasing trend. This change reflects the diverse geographical conditions and varying accessibility to educational services in Phetchabun Province. Small schools located in mountainous and remote areas continue to face spatial limitations, yet they have received increasing support from local authorities and communities in developing learning resources, such as temple-based learning centers, early childhood development centers operated by subdistrict administrative organizations (SAOs), and networks of early childhood volunteer educators (OEC, 2023; UNICEF, 2023). Consequently, the overall community collaboration and learning resource context has shown positive development trends.

These findings are consistent with Wongsing (2022), who found that parental and community participation has a direct influence on the readiness of early childhood schools, particularly in rural areas where resources are limited. Community support can effectively compensate for physical and infrastructural constraints. The results also correspond with Srisawat (2021), who reported that contextual factors such as parental understanding of the curriculum and local cultural values significantly affect school administration and the quality of early childhood learning.

When linked with curriculum development, it was found that the 2005 and 2017 Early Childhood Education Curricula emphasized the importance of community context as a learning resource that enriches children's experiences (OBEC, 2005; 2017). The 2025 Curriculum further advances this concept by identifying "learning with the community" as a key component in developing children's core competencies, including communication, social interaction, and problem-solving in daily life (OBEC, 2025; Prasansaph, 2025).

Consequently, schools across various regions, including Phetchabun, have placed greater emphasis on systematically building collaboration with communities. Although geographical constraints still affect school locations, the expansion of learning resources and community partnerships has helped sustain a consistently high level of contextual readiness.

From these findings, it can be discussed that the community context in Phetchabun Province plays a vital role in the sustainability of early childhood education management. Many schools utilize their relationships with local communities as a form of social capital to enhance learning opportunities and foster desirable characteristics in young children. Although the mean score in the context dimension did not significantly increase, maintaining a stable level of readiness over a ten-year period can be viewed as a positive indicator of the resilience and adaptability of the early childhood education system in a geographically diverse province such as Phetchabun.

3. Input Dimension

The research findings revealed that the level of readiness in the input dimension of schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province in 2025 was significantly higher than in 2015. This improvement reflects the advancement of fundamental support systems for early childhood education management, including personnel development, resource management, and curriculum enhancement. These components correspond to the "Input" aspect of Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP Model, which emphasizes that the availability and management of initial resources are critical variables that directly influence the quality of educational processes and outcomes. The increase in the overall mean score in this dimension is consistent with the policy direction of OBEC, which prioritizes early childhood teacher development, improvement of school facilities, and allocation of budgets to promote quality learning experiences at the early childhood level. This aligns with the National Education Plan (2017–2036), which identifies early childhood development as the "foundation of quality of life and human capital" for the nation (OEC, 2017).

When examined by specific components, the curriculum aspect showed a statistically significant improvement. This corresponds to the implementation of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum (2017) and its revised version (2025), which shifted the curriculum structure toward developing children's core competencies (OBEC, 2025). The revised curriculum moved away from behaviorist, subject-based approaches toward the integration of natural learning experiences that emphasize holistic child development. This change has directly influenced teachers' and administrators' knowledge, understanding, and attitudes toward teaching and learning. The findings are in line with Kittiwat (2019), who found that the adoption of the 2017 curriculum enhanced schools' readiness to implement learning activities and instructional materials, and with Muangsri (2023), who reported that most early childhood teachers perceived the new curriculum as enabling them to design learning activities that better align with children's developmental stages.

However, other components of the input dimension— such as teachers, administrators, facilities, learning materials, and budgets— although maintaining high mean scores, did not show statistically significant differences between the two periods. This indicates a form of systemic stability within the early childhood education structure in Phetchabun Province. In other words, most schools already possessed sufficient basic resources, though disparities still existed among different educational service areas. Small schools in remote regions continued to face shortages of teachers with specific early childhood expertise. This finding is consistent with the report of the Office of the Education Council (OEC, 2022), which noted that the shortage of early childhood teachers and the limited allocation of specialized budgets remain major challenges in several provinces.

In summary, the findings in the input dimension illustrate positive progress in Thailand's early childhood education system over the past decade, particularly in curriculum reform and policy-based resource development. These improvements have contributed to overall readiness, even though some factors have remained constant. This outcome aligns with Stufflebeam's (2003) assertion that educational quality enhancement must begin with improvements in "input factors" before process and outcome development. It also corresponds with UNICEF (2023), which reported that long-term investments in teachers and curriculum are the most influential determinants of learning quality in early childhood education.

4. Process Dimension

The research findings revealed that the level of readiness in the process dimension of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province was significantly higher in 2025 than in 2015 at the .05 level. This result indicates a systematic improvement in learning management, child development activities, and the participation of parents and communities over the past decade. These findings are consistent with Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP Model, which identifies the "process" component as a crucial indicator of implementation and as a measure of the quality of educational administration in practice. The higher mean score in this dimension suggests that the internal systems within schools have become stronger, particularly in organizing learning activities, conducting internal supervision, and assessing child development.

A closer examination of the subcomponents revealed substantial progress in integrated learning activities and experiential learning. These improvements were directly influenced by the revised Early Childhood Education Curricula of 2017 and 2025, which emphasize play-based learning and holistic child development (OBEC, 2025). The new curriculum provides clear guidelines for designing learning experiences that align with children's natural development while promoting essential competencies such as problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, which are key elements of twenty-first - century learning. This policy transformation is also reflected at the operational level. Phanthong (2021) found that early childhood teachers developed greater understanding and competence in organizing diverse and developmentally appropriate activities after participating in workshops based on the 2017 curriculum. Similarly, Khamdee

(2023) reported that schools implementing competency-based learning and community participation models achieved significantly higher process quality scores than those maintaining traditional approaches.

Nevertheless, despite the overall improvement, disparities were still observed between large and small schools, particularly in internal supervision and child development assessment. These differences may be attributed to personnel limitations and the lack of specialized expertise among early childhood teachers in certain areas. The shortage of trained personnel in developmental assessment has led some schools to continue using traditional evaluation methods that focus more on academic outcomes than on children's natural growth and development. This finding corresponds with the report of the Office of the Education Council (OEC, 2022), which pointed out that the development of child assessment systems still requires additional technical support and financial resources.

In summary, the significant increase in the process dimension reflects the results of systemic development over the past decade, particularly in curriculum reform, teacher development, and the promotion of a competency-based learning culture. This finding aligns with Stufflebeam's (2003) concept, which emphasizes that the enhancement of educational quality must begin with improving the "process" to ensure that the "product" or learning outcomes are sustainable. It is also consistent with UNICEF (2023), which reported that countries achieving success in improving the quality of early childhood education tend to prioritize the learning process rather than accelerating academic outcomes.

5. Product Dimension

The research findings indicated that the level of readiness in the product dimension of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Phetchabun Province in 2025 was significantly higher than in 2015 at the .05 level. The overall mean score in 2025 was 4.38, compared to 4.19 in 2015. This demonstrates that the quality of outcomes from early childhood education has significantly improved over the past decade. These results are consistent with Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP Model, which conceptualizes "Product" as the reflection of progress in the three preceding components: context, input, and process.

When considering specific subcomponents, the role of schools as community models showed a statistically significant increase in the mean score, from 3.97 to 4.29. This reflects an enhancement of the schools' role as community learning centers and greater parental participation. Such development aligns with the Early Childhood Education Curricula of 2017 and 2025, which define schools as learning spaces shared with families and communities (OBEC, 2025). This outcome also reflects the success of the policy "Schools as the Foundation of Early Childhood Development," which emphasizes the collaboration between home, school, and community.

Regarding the learners' characteristics, although the difference between 2015 and 2025 was not statistically significant, the mean scores remained at a high level in both years. This finding indicates that schools have consistently maintained high standards in child development, particularly in physical, emotional, social, and intellectual domains. These are the core competencies outlined in the new

curriculum, which aims to develop children to learn effectively, think critically, and live happily with others (OEC, 2025).

These findings are consistent with Nakasathian (2023), who examined the readiness and learning outcomes of early childhood children in northern Thailand and found that after the implementation of the 2017 curriculum, children demonstrated significant improvement in cognitive development and social participation. The results also align with Chaimongkon (2024), who reported that promoting competency-based learning at the early childhood level enhances children's confidence and communication skills in the long term. Furthermore, the findings correspond with the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA, 2022), which found that early childhood schools in rural areas have shown higher learner quality assessment scores due to the adoption of competency-based development approaches.

Another noteworthy aspect is that the improvement in outcomes may also reflect changes in child development assessment practices, which have shifted from quantitative performance measurement toward individual developmental progress. This approach is emphasized in the 2025 curriculum, which promotes the use of developmental portfolios and context-based behavioral observations (OBEC, 2025). The results suggest that schools have been able to implement these new assessment concepts effectively in practice.

In summary, the significant increase in product readiness in 2025 reflects the success of Thailand's early childhood education system at both policy and implementation levels. This progress results from curriculum reform, teacher development, and the strengthening of community collaboration. The findings are consistent with Stufflebeam's (2003) assertion that the "quality of product outcomes" is a direct reflection of the strength of all preceding components. They also align with UNICEF (2023), which emphasizes that the sustainability of early childhood education quality depends on coherent system development across the input, process, and product dimensions.

Suggestions

Suggestions for the Application of Research Findings

The findings of this research indicate that community learning resources for early childhood children remain less developed compared with other dimensions. Schools should therefore establish stronger collaboration with local administrative organizations, communities, and partner agencies to develop learning environments suitable for young children. These may include natural learning centers, local museums, and community-based wisdom learning sites that allow children to learn from real-life experiences within their own contexts. Such approaches can holistically enhance children's social and cognitive development in accordance with the Early Childhood Education Curriculum B.E. 2568 (2025).

In addition, relevant supervising agencies, such as the Educational Service Area Offices, should implement projects that provide financial and technical support for the development of community

learning resources. Strengthening this aspect will enhance the "context" dimension of school readiness to a level comparable with other dimensions. This improvement will directly contribute to the long-term quality of educational processes and learner outcomes.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Future studies should be conducted to assess the readiness of early childhood education management in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) using more diverse research designs, such as qualitative research, mixed methods research, or evaluations based on other conceptual frameworks such as the Logic Model or Balanced Scorecard. This would provide more comprehensive and in-depth insights that integrate both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, leading to a clearer understanding of the factors influencing readiness.

2. Comparative studies should be carried out among schools of different sizes, including small, medium, large, and extra-large schools, to analyze differences in their levels of readiness for early childhood education management. Such findings would enable relevant agencies to design development strategies and allocate resources appropriately according to the specific contexts and needs of each school category.

3. Further research should explore the readiness of early childhood education management in schools under other affiliations, such as private schools, schools administered by local administrative organizations, and schools under specialized agencies such as the Office of the Private Education Commission or the Department of Local Administration. Comparative analysis of administrative practices, personnel readiness, and product quality among these systems would yield valuable insights for comprehensive policy recommendations that strengthen the overall early childhood education system at the national level.

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