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Research Article

Principals and Teachers' K to 12 Implementation Experiences in Bohol: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The K to 12 program was implemented to produce globally-competent graduates by adding two more years of the basic education. However, each implementation of educational reforms would have lots of issues to contend. This study explored the K to 12 Senior High School (SHS) Program implementation experiences of the principals and teachers. It employed a case study design, analyzing personal experiences and views to understand and provide insights and recommendations about the K to 12 Basic Education Program (specifically Grade 11), based on the experiences of principals and teachers from Senior High Schools in Bohol, Philippines. Two (2) sets of researcher-designed interview guides were used to conduct unstructured interviews. Thematic analysis was applied in analyzing the data. There were three emergent themes that were developed from the experiences of the research participants, such as: K to 12 Transition Management, K to 12 Implementation Challenges, and Mitigating Measures. The essence and salient features of the K to 12 Senior High School (SHS) curriculum were well-crafted and helped the students enhance their skills and prepare them to be globally competitive since the Department of Education crafts it. Although the principals' role was to implement the curriculum and ensure that the students' concerns were addressed and left no one displaced in the Senior High School. Nevertheless, some challenges were encountered, such as the lack of sufficient teaching materials, facilities, classrooms, inadequate teachers' capacity-building programs, and students' social, economic, and psychological struggles that hindered academic access.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Educational management, Implementation challenges, K to 12 Senior High School, Philippines, School leadership, Teachers' experiences

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Introduction

Knowledge and learning have been recognized since the beginning of time (Patrinos, 2016). Education plays a crucial role in driving economic development. Empirical evidence indicates that enhancements in the quality of education are associated with higher rates of gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Grounded in human capital theory, a nation's economic progress is largely determined by the quality of its educational system, as it shapes the skills, productivity, and capabilities of its workforce. In other words, the more and better educated a person is, the greater the chances of economic development (Combalicer et al., 2016). Human capital accounts for approximately 62 percent of total global wealth, making it about four times greater than produced capital and roughly fifteen times the value of natural capital. Globally, governments, the private sector, families, and individuals spend more than \$5.6 trillion a year on education and training (Patrinos, 2016).

Moreover, a better-educated society provides a sound foundation for long-term socioeconomic development as Grant (2017) opines that human capital has long been considered the most distinctive feature of the economic system, and further work has proven the impact of education on productivity growth empirically.

In addition, education plays a vital role in the students' lives and society. A responsive and productive citizen is an essential element to promote development; therefore education sector in the Philippines must be aware of crucial steps to take in order to produce graduates that are not only focused on themselves but are responsive to the needs of the society (Cogal et al., 2019).

Republic Act No. 10533 stipulates that the State shall create a functional basic education system to develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills, and values for life-long learning and employment (Congress of the Philippines, 2012). Abueva (2021) discoursed that Filipinos are known to be competitive in the international community. However, the current education system hinders it from becoming even more competitive.

The continuous deterioration of the quality of education in the Philippines has prompted the Department of Education (DepEd) to push for the implementation of the K to 12 program, which entails the institutionalization of kindergarten and the addition of two more years of high school in the basic education cycle (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2010). This K to 12 curricula introduced a new pattern of systems for Philippine education (Cogal et al., 2019).

Under Republic Act No. 10533, the Department of Education extended the country's basic education cycle by introducing Grades 11 and 12, thereby expanding the previous four-year secondary program. This reform was partly intended to bring the Philippine education system in line with the 12-year basic education structure commonly implemented in many countries.

More crucially, Senior High School (SHS) aims to better prepare students for whatever career path they may choose after high school, academic or otherwise (Department of Education, 2019).

The preparation and implementation of the K-12 transition require substantial financial and human resources; hence, the justification for such systemic restructuring must be strong and well-founded. At the macro level, concerns regarding national competitiveness within an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global economy, as well as rising social inequities, often shape broader development agendas and influence sectoral planning. At the education sector level, the rationale for adopting such reforms commonly includes alignment with international standards, enhanced preparation of learners for lifelong challenges, preservation of national identity, and the improvement of student competencies. Whether these or other reasons are sufficiently compelling depends upon a country's political, fiscal, socio-economic, and education contexts (Sarvi et al., 2015).

The implementation of the K to 12 program in the Philippines has been accompanied by numerous challenges and concerns. There are many discussions concerning the quality of education provided by the system. Much work still needs to be done, and expected unforeseen challenges along the way. One salient matter is

monitoring and evaluating program implementation's management, from curriculum to infrastructure to budget.

Crisol and Alamillo (2014) added that there are several factors that they believe would contribute to the success or failure of the program. The first refers to the government's financial allocation for instructional resources, including textbooks, school facilities, and equipment needed for the newly added courses in the curriculum. Another important factor is the socio-economic condition of Filipino families, particularly those residing in rural areas. Many of these families express resistance to its implementation due to limited financial capacity, as parents struggle to sustain the additional educational expenses associated with extended years of schooling.

Dizon et al. (2019) explained that implementing the new curriculum was a solution to the different issues in the country. Nonetheless, the reform also introduced various challenges, as it brought about substantial transformations across the entire education system and consequently affected Filipinos in multiple ways.

Hence, this period was regarded as a significant phase of transformation in Philippine education, driven by intensive internal reform efforts, including the full implementation of the K to 12 system in 2016, as well as external developments, particularly the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. In fact, the proposal has spurred a heated debate on whether it could lead to improvements or exacerbate the present State of education in the country (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2010).

Also, Abueva (2019) said that implementing the K-12 Program in the Philippine Curriculum of Basic Education was the key to the country's growth. Despite encountering numerous challenges throughout its multi-year implementation, the program represents a necessary reform, as it plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of education and supporting the country's long-term development.

Education difficulties such as curriculum implementation, instruction, learning materials, facilities, support services, and governance of primary education have immersed the Philippines since the start of the K to 12

implementation. The said implementation faced the complexity of preparing the Senior High school (SHS) graduates to pursue an academic college degree, and the current situation incites the question. Along with this premise, this research is undertaken to assess the K to 12, Senior High School program implementation experiences of the principals, teachers, and students.

The education sector has undertaken deliberate and systematic efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the system in pursuit of national goals. Various strategies such as diverse assessment approaches, critical evaluations, academic discourse, and continuous review have been employed to identify and address gaps within the system. Challenges such as investments in human capital, infrastructures, teaching facilities, and learning resources or materials were seen as a significant factor for the system's ineffectiveness as Puricallan (2020) said that if the program is not well implemented, then serious problems are encountered.

Notwithstanding the challenges encountered in implementing the K to 12 Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, many stakeholders recognize its potential long-term benefits and its relevance in sustaining education in an increasingly technology-driven era. From this perspective, the K to 12 program provides a strategic response to national concerns in teaching and learning, particularly during disruptions such as the pandemic, while also enhancing the global competitiveness of Filipino graduates. In this context, the present study aims to examine the experiences of key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program, with a specific focus on the Senior High School curriculum in Bohol, Philippines.

Related Literature

Education reform in the Philippines has been delayed for decades. Before the adoption of the K to 12 program, the country was one of only three nations globally along with Djibouti and Angola that implemented a 10-year basic education cycle. Most countries across the globe operate on a 12-year basic education cycle (Commission on Higher Education, n.d.).

Accordingly, the Department of Education, through the National Education for All Committee (NEC), in line with its international commitment to improving the quality of Education for All (EFA), engaged the SEAMEO INNOTECH to undertake a regional comparative analysis of the curricula of selected Southeast Asian countries, specifically Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. Initiated in February 2011, the study utilized multiple data-gathering methods, including interviews, literature review, surveys, workshops, and consultations with country experts, educators, school leaders, and curriculum developers from the participating countries. Additional data on assessment models were obtained from Hong Kong, which provides seamless secondary education, for comparison (Department of Education & SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2012).

Republic Act 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 added two years to basic education (Congress of the Philippines, 2012). One of the primary arguments put forward by supporters of the law is that Senior High School (SHS) graduates will acquire the essential skills and competencies needed to either join the workforce or engage in entrepreneurial activities, depending on their chosen path. One of the rationales offered by proponents of the law is that Senior High School (SHS) graduates will be equipped with the skills and capacity to work or engage in entrepreneurial activities if they choose to do so (Orbeta et al., 2019).

The program is aligned with both global and national development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Philippine Development Plan and Budget Priorities Framework, and the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) Higher Education Reform Agenda (K-to-12 PMU, 2017). At the international level, it is particularly consistent with the SDGs 2030, especially the objective of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Relevant specific objectives under this goal include increasing the number of adults with relevant skills, increasing the number of scholarships in higher education, and increasing the number of qualified teachers in higher education (Cabalhin et al., 2018).

The K to 12 Basic Education Program covers Kindergarten plus 12 years of basic schooling, composed of six years of elementary education, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School (SHS). This framework is intended to allow sufficient time for learners to develop mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills, support lifelong learning, and better prepare graduates for higher education, technical-vocational pathways, employment, and entrepreneurship. The curriculum adopts a spiral progression approach, where key concepts are introduced in simplified form and revisited across grade levels with increasing depth and complexity. From the elementary stage, learners are already exposed to basic ideas in areas such as biology, geometry, Earth science, chemistry, and algebra, which are progressively reinforced to strengthen conceptual understanding and competencies over time (Official Gazette of the Philippines, n.d.).

Senior High School constitutes two years of specialized upper secondary education, where learners select a track aligned with their aptitude, interests, and the capacity of their school. This chosen pathway determines the subjects taken in Grades 11 and 12, which are organized into core subjects and track-specific components. The core curriculum covers seven learning areas, namely languages, literature, communication, mathematics, philosophy, natural sciences, and social sciences. Content from selected general education subjects is likewise integrated into the SHS curriculum to strengthen foundational competencies. Learners may choose from three main tracks: Academic, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), and Sports and Arts. The Academic track is further divided into strands: Business, Accountancy, Management (BAM); Humanities, Education, Social Sciences (HESS); and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). In addition, students undergo work immersion, which may include earn-while-you-learn arrangements, to provide practical exposure and real-world experience relevant to their chosen specialization (Official Gazette of the Philippines, n.d.).

Senior High School is the apex of secondary education. At this level, the learner goes

through core subjects and a required specialization for the learner's career pathway chosen from among entrepreneurship, technical-vocational, and academics (Puricallan, 2020).

The implementation of Senior High School (SHS) was designed to provide learners with the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to better prepare them for their chosen pathways in higher education, employment, or entrepreneurship. The inclusion of two additional years—Grades 11 and 12—is intended to further strengthen students' preparedness by enhancing their academic foundation, practical skills, and values for success in their respective fields or disciplines (Cogal et al., 2019).

The five-year span from 2016 to 2021 is commonly described as the K to 12 transition period. However, this phase posed considerable challenges not only for the basic education system but also generated cascading effects across other related sectors. It is also a once-in-a-generation window of opportunity to reform the country's entire education landscape (Commission on Higher Education, n.d.).

According to the Philippine Business for Education (n.d.), the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in the Philippines initially received negative reactions from various sectors of society. Since 2011, critics have consistently raised concerns, arguing that the government was not fully prepared for the reform and that it would place additional burdens on students and parents. Despite these calls to suspend the program, the government maintained its position, emphasizing that the reform would provide both learners and the national economy with significant opportunities. The Department of Education also asserted that the country was ready for the major educational shift, citing efforts to address gaps in classrooms, teachers, and learning materials, as well as the completion of planning stages in coordination with key stakeholders.

A study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2021) found that many firms are hesitant to hire Senior High School (SHS) graduates, largely due to limited understanding of the SHS program. Employers also expressed the need to determine whether the competencies developed under SHS align with

current industry requirements. The study further emphasized the importance of improving employer awareness of SHS graduates' skill sets. In addition, many firms perceive SHS graduates as not yet fully work-ready. Although SHS learners are required to complete at least 80 hours of work immersion, employers believe this duration is inadequate for meaningful exposure to workplace practices and for the development of both technical application skills and professional behaviors.

Despite the various challenges encountered in the implementation of the new curriculum, many stakeholders still view the long-term outcomes of the K to 12 program as beneficial for Filipino graduates. In this regard, continued support and constructive engagement from Filipinos are essential to further strengthen and improve the education system introduced by the government. By investing more time and resources in education, national growth and development can genuinely be achieved (Dizon et al., 2019).

Domain of Inquiry

This study explored the K to 12 Senior High School (SHS) Program implementation experiences of the principals and teachers. Specifically, it sought to present the following: (1) the experiences of the principal as a program administrator in terms relating to the administrative processes such as planning or designing, program implementation, supervision, and monitoring; (2) the teachers' experiences in the program implementation concerning curriculum, facilities; learning materials; (3) the challenges, issues or concerns encountered in the implementation; and (4) the suggestions or recommendations can be made to improve the program implementation.

Materials and Methods

This section presents the research design, study setting, participants, research instruments, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study utilized a case study design, wherein participants' perspectives were examined to generate insights and formulate

recommendations regarding the K to 12 Basic Education Program, with a specific focus on Grade 11. It drew on the experiences of key stakeholders in Bohol, Philippines to provide a deeper understanding of the program's implementation and outcomes. This design explored a wide array of dimensions of the research participants' understandings, experiences, and observations, how social processes, institutions, discourses, or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate (Mason, 2002). Case study evaluation provides a lot of descriptive data that a reader has to assess (Patton, 2002).

Research Environment

The research was undertaken at the different schools offering the Senior High School curriculum in Bohol, Philippines.

Research Participants

The study participants were the Senior High School (SHS) principals and teachers of the public and private schools in the Province of Bohol under the Bohol Division and Tagbilaran City Division. There were seventy-nine (79) research participants with forty-five (45) teachers in the public SHS and twenty-five (25) from the private SHS. Nine principals each from the private or public SHS, respectively. The researchers asked permission from the gatekeepers such as Superintendents of the Province of Bohol both the Bohol Division and City Division. The participants were chosen randomly. The researcher ensured that ethical procedures were observed by securing informed consent and confirming the voluntary participation of the respondents.

Research Instruments

Two (2) sets of researcher-designed interview guides were used to conduct unstructured interviews. The first set contains questions for the principals about their experiences in implementing the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education program in planning or design and implementation in terms of supervision and monitoring. The second set contains questions for the teachers relating to their perceptions on the implementation of the Senior High in the Basic

Education in the aspect of the curriculum, instruction, learning materials/educational technology, and facilities. The contents of the interview guide underwent a validation process by experts with no conflict of interest in the study to determine whether the questions were acceptable and fitted to the identified participants. The revisions were undertaken based on the comments and suggestions of the validator in terms of relevance, domain, and technical quality of questions.

Data Analysis

To acquire accurate data, the researcher monitored the following steps of qualitative data analysis Creswell (2001). Initially, the data were organized into different formats such as databases, sentences, and individual words, followed by repeated readings of the dataset to obtain a comprehensive understanding of its content. The researchers documented interpretations from the transcribed recordings throughout the process and identified key statements that suggested potential categories or meanings. These were then grouped into broader categories or themes and systematically classified. This procedure enabled the identification of emerging patterns and meanings within the data. Finally, the participants' responses were synthesized and summarized using evaluation coding and values coding techniques.

Also, Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that qualitative research includes familiarizing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The researcher used the evaluation coding to interpret the worth or significance of the programs or policy (Saldaña, 2016). Values coding was employed to capture participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs, thereby representing their perspectives and worldviews. In this context, attitudes refer to how individuals think and feel about themselves, others, objects, or ideas, while beliefs form part of a broader system that encompasses values and attitudes, as well as personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, and other perceptions of the social environment.

After which the researcher follows the six phases of thematic analysis by Nowell (2017), consisting of: (1) familiarizing with the data wherein the researcher prolong engagement with data, triangulating different data collection modes, storing the data in well-organized archives, and keeping records of all data field notes, and transcripts; and (2) generating initial codes, after familiarizing with the data the initial codes, theorizing activity that requires the researchers to keep revisiting the data like audit trial of code generation. 2002) (3) searching for themes, we covered many concepts in the interviews, so we initially utilized the conceptual framework to develop a broad, higher order of code to help organize the data. (4) reviewing themes, the members of the researcher teams reviewed the coded data extracts from each subtheme to determine if a coherent pattern was apparent. (5) defining and naming themes, we wrote a detailed analysis for each individual theme, identifying the story that each theme told while considering how each theme fit into the overall story about the accurate data set concerning the research questions. (6) producing the report, once the researcher has fully established the themes and is ready to begin the final analysis and write-up of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

This study upholds strict adherence to research ethics, ensuring that all procedures were implemented to protect participants' identities while maintaining confidentiality, integrity, and objectivity throughout the research process.

Result and Discussion

Through one-on-one interviews with principals and teachers, three key themes emerged from their experiences in implementing the K to 12 Basic Education Program in Bohol, Philippines: K to 12 Transition Management, Implementation Challenges, and Mitigating Measures. These themes are discussed in detail in the succeeding sections.

Theme 1: K to 12 Transition Management

There were myriad things that need to be considered in implementing the K to 12

program, especially the Senior High School curriculum. These preparations relate to curriculum, enrolment, teaching materials, and overall operations.

a. Limited to No Curriculum Crafting Involvement. The participants mentioned that most of the principals were not involved in crafting the curriculum for the Senior High School. Their role is to implement the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum in the schools since the national office had already designed the SHS curriculum. However, some mentioned they were part of the selected principal assigned to craft, especially for the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Strand (TVL) strand. Moreover, as implementers of the curriculum, they contextualized the various aspects of the curriculum and prepared the necessary materials and documents for its implementation. They narrated the following statements:

"As the school principal, we were not directly involved in crafting the curriculum of the Senior High School because we were just the implementor. We can only modify and contextualized what is being designed from the National Office."

"In the Division of Bohol, I am one of the writers of the learning activities sheets of the Division, specifically in Food and Beverages Services. Our learning activity sheets were used during the first quarter. "I helped to organize the curriculum" (P 4).

"My involvement there is to gather our teachers to contextualize some of the curriculum's aspects that are suited to our situation. Still, generally, we already have a prepared or intended curriculum to be delivered, so Deped is."

"It comes from the Central Office then to be implemented at the school. What we can only do is modify and contextualized."

The research participants opined that the principals had limited involvement in

designing the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum. However, they have selected involvement in designing a specific curriculum. They disclosed that their main tasks were to contextual analysis of the curriculum and prepare the learning activity materials. In general, the Department of Education National provided the designed curriculum to all the schools offering the SHS curriculum; however, the school administrators are free to make certain modifications to improve the implementation system.

Curriculum development can be challenging; therefore, the involvement of all stakeholders, especially individuals who are directly involved in student instruction, is a vital piece in successful curriculum development and revision (Johnson, 2001). Curriculum development should be understood as an ongoing process aimed at addressing learner needs and enhancing student learning outcomes. It should not remain static, but rather function as a dynamic and evolving framework. As such, the curriculum must be flexible and responsive to changes within the educational system and broader societal contexts. Only then will it be able to be an effective change agent in the educational process (Alsubaie, 2016).

b. Various Preparations for the Materials Needed in Teaching the SHS Curriculum. The teachers assigned to teach the senior high schools studied the new curriculum and the underlying concepts. They also prepared their teaching materials to ensure that they could carry out their job correctly. Part of the preparations was the capacity-building activities undertaken by the Department of Education. At the start of the school year, way back in 2016, Senior High School teachers were sent to orientation, mass trainings, and workshops, especially the newly hired ones. They uttered these significant statements:

"They prepared a matrix of activities and time table for the school year. We help organized and implement the curriculum with the teachers to understand from small to more significant concepts."

"We implement or help scaffold the students to understand the specific learning areas, especially the TVL."

"Identify other essential competencies to be included in the curriculum that does not overlap with Junior High."

The teachers start their preparations by comprehending the Senior High school curriculum's concepts and identifying the intended learning competencies for each subject. With these, they will be able to design their lesson to enable the students to acquire the intended learning outcomes. They also studied how to implement the spiral progression and scaffold their learners also to ensure that they will learn the practical skills. Hence, the principal can only monitor whether they are correctly implementing what they should implement and always give feedback and technical assistance.

Part of the support provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) is the provision of ready-made teaching-learning materials that were distributed to the various public schools offering the Senior High School curriculum. DepEd even has the Learning Resource portal where the teachers can assess various teaching materials, and DepEd Commons is currently populated with interactive ebooks that provide weekly lessons for use in home-based activities (Llego, n.d.)

Moreover, the private schools adopted the DepEd-ready curriculum and modified it to suit their strategic direction. Aside from that, they made their educational materials using their available funds (Llego, n.d.) continued that based on the ongoing inventory by the Bureau of Learning Resources (BLR) of printed, digital offline and online materials, and educational videos, DepEd presently has the following: (1) From the private sector, several digital learning resources are made available to support teaching and learning. These include Globe eLibrary, which offers students and educators free, time-limited access to digital storybooks and e-learning videos.

Also provided are platforms such as Buri Books, recognized as one of the largest collec-

tions of Filipino children's e-books, and Front-learners, which features e-lessons and e-quizzes in English, Filipino, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In addition, various instructional materials are accessible, including textbooks, printed and digitized Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) modules, educational television content, open educational resources, activity sheets, worksheets, lesson exemplars, and assessment tools.

c. Standard Approach of Monitoring and Supervising Senior High Teachers Performance.

As the head of the school, the principals or the school heads ensured that the teachers were following the guidelines set forth by the Department of education and the school. The principals applied the standard criteria in assessing whether or not the teachers are doing their job based on the norms, whether private or public SHS. The disclosed these significant statements:

"We evaluated the teachers using their IPCR "Individual Performance Commitment Review".

"We conducted class observation and constantly monitored their lesson plan."

"With the use of evaluation sheets, we have a private conference with the teacher's concern if there were a problem. We give more attention to new teachers."

"I constantly check their outputs, performance ratings. Before the pandemic, I had a class observation. I also check the alignment of the competencies. But this time, I just monitor their modules."

"Class observation and learners' performance during immersion are the assessment methods I usually monitor and supervise my teachers."

"We are using the assessment tool used by Basic Education. Class observation by the coordinators and checking and approval of test questions and table of the specification to assure the quality of test question items for."

So, we usually conduct graded and non-graded classroom observation, so when you say non-graded, we monitor whether they are attending their classes and attaining or complying with the desired competencies. The graded classroom observation is also intended for their performance rating at the end of the school year. Then, we also try to evaluate how they draft their DLL (Daily Lesson Log), especially if their teaching experience is less than three years."

"We also try to help them on the computer side because not all of our Senior High teachers are technically savvy, so we try to expose them to the laptop or desktop using the Microsoft Excel application."

The Department of Education had already designed the criteria and forms in assessing the class and out-of class performance of the teachers. The principal will just have to follow the guidelines, conduct classroom observations and the Daily Lesson Log to check their preparation for each subject that were assigned to the teachers. The performance of the teachers is based on the rating they obtained to the various assessment tools.

According to Gepila (2019), teachers serve as key drivers of national development, as they play a crucial role in shaping and preparing learners who can contribute to the country's progress. For this reason, strengthening teacher quality and maintaining high standards of instruction are essential for long-term and sustainable nation-building. In the Philippine context, teacher competence is currently evaluated using the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which replaced the earlier National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) through DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017.

Theme 2. Challenges in K to 12 Transition

Implementing a new education program is complex to handle. The primary implementers would inevitably face myriad challenges in ensuring that the guidelines set forth by the

Department of education would be followed. So implementing the Senior High School Curriculum under the K to 12 program is not an exception.

a. Schools Limited Resources Hindered the Ability to Cater Students Choice of Track/Strand. Most of the Senior High Schools (SHS) schools have no challenges concerning enrollment volume, especially schools located in the hinterland since the number of enrollees was manageable. To accommodate all the enrollees, they administered an early enrollment to anticipate the number of enrollees in a particular school year. They catered to all enrollees and ensured sure not to deny any registration. Another challenge encountered was many of the enrollees who chose Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and other Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) tracks since they cannot be accommodated due to the limited capacity of the schools to offer tracks. So they motivated other learners to transfer to other TVL subjects. To accommodate all enrollees and minimize problems with room accommodation, they offered a shift schedule of classes. Grade 11 will have their session in the afternoon, and Grade 12 will have it in the morning. The NCAE result would help them in choosing the appropriate strand. It was disclosed that:

"Most public schools only offer General Academic Strand (GAS), while private schools offer HUMSS. Other schools offered TVL (Home Economics like Food-Tech & Garments) Electrical, Computer Hardware, Wildings, TVL(Cookery and Bread and Pastry, Food and Beverages, Tourism, Housekeeping, Tour Guiding, Food Processing, Aquaculture, and ICT."

"The NCAE result would help them in choosing the appropriate strand."

Enrolment management for public Senior High Schools in the far-flung areas in Bohol was not a problem because they had enough enrollees, while others had few enrollees. Since the

Senior High School curriculum implementation was at the transition stage, the school faced limited resources to offer different strands and strands. Also, the limited number of available classrooms was addressed by shifting the class schedule.

As of November 2016, data from the Department of Education indicated several remaining resource gaps that needed to be addressed. These included shortages of 13,995 classrooms, 88,267 teachers, 235 million instructional and other learning materials, 2.2 million school seats for 2016, 66,492 seat sets (each consisting of 45 seats and one teacher's desk), and 44,538 computer packages. The lack of learning materials has become a burden to students and teachers (Umil, 2012).

b. Teaching-Learning Materials Shortage. At the start, the big problem was the facilities and equipment, but we were given facilities and some equipment this time. Some equipment was acquired from the National Office through Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). The teachers downloaded some resources or materials from the Resource portal from DepED. Other used localized equipment, made use of available spaces, made improvements, and made this space functional, like installing additional electrical facilities, expanding the learning spaces, contracting tables, and acquiring the equipment from the SEF and other donations like welding machine utilizing the MOOE.

The principals and teachers shared that at the start of the K to 12 program implementation, their most significant challenge was how to fill in the gap in the available learning materials with the high number of learners enrolling in Grade 11. Although the Department of Education devised the teaching materials portal, it cannot fully address the inadequacy of the educational resources to carry out the curriculum ideally. Even though the advent of the internet can be used to access online-available teaching and learning resources, many schools were struggling with the Internet connection. The research participants disclosed such challenges:

"The learning materials were available. The DepEd has a portal

containing all the Learning Materials.”

“Resiliency in achieving the objective despite lacking materials. On the other hand, insufficient materials will not suffice the number of students. Some materials are no longer functional—the time constraint conflict of schedule in using different learning materials. In addition, there is no internet connection.”

“Concerning internet connectivity, some school near the city has stable internet connectivity. Other teachers used their internet connection or pocket wifi or data. But most of the school's internet connectivity is intended for the office only. Others are accessible in a specific area. Slow to no internet connection. Accessible only for teachers, not for students.”

“But other schools have insufficient learning materials like books and internet connections.”

Based on the narratives of the research participants, the teachers were struggling with the inadequacy of the provided educational materials from the Department of Education. Even though the Internet has been of great help for them in accessing online teaching materials, the schools did not have enough Internet systems or infrastructure to enable all the teachers and students to have a stable connection.

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) scored the Department of Education (DepEd) over the supposed lack of printed learning materials documented in various public schools nationwide. The Alliance of Concerned Teachers reported that the Department of Education was unable to supply learning modules for several subject areas across different grade levels. These gaps reportedly included Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health for Grade 1; Araling Panlipunan for Grades 2–7 and 9; Science for Grades 5–6; Filipino for Grades 6–8; and Mathematics for Grades 6–8 and 10. It also cited the lack of learning modules for Grade 11 in the General academic; Humanities and Social Sciences: Accountancy and Business Management; and Technical and Vocational Livelihood

(Shielded Metal Arc Welding) strands (Mateo, 2019).

c. Abrupt Implementation: Teacher's Lack of Readiness for K to 12. The implementation of the K to 12 program was perceived as being carried out in an unplanned manner, with teachers the primary implementers reportedly lacking sufficient training to effectively deliver the diverse subjects within the complex Senior High School curriculum. Also, the time to prepare the teaching and learning materials was not enough. Due to hit-or-miss means of implementing the new education program, the teachers cannot submit the reports and deliverables on time. They were also overwhelmed with the voluminous preparations they needed to comply with, which caused their refusal to accept additional tasks. The gap in technology know-how posed a significant challenge. They revealed the following situations:

“Most schools don't have problems with the performance of my teachers in Senior High because they are qualified to teach and competent. But some principals highlighted some challenges encountered, like the new teachers who face difficulty in teaching. Other teachers are teaching, not their field of expertise. These are late submission of DLP, sometimes late in attending the class, and sometimes refusal to do the assigned task. Teachers formulate test questions during exams because Basic Education is somewhat specific compared to college.”

“There is no perfect teacher and institution, so sometimes we have problems with the teacher's performance, especially this pandemic. The teacher must exert a lot of effort. We have problem with our season teacher with the use of technology” (P7).

It was expected that the rushed method of implementing the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education program would lead the teachers to be

burdened with so many things to prepare, given the school's limited budget and other resources. The training was not enough to capacitate them to teach the different subjects in the various tracks and strands. In the pandemic, the big problem was that the seasoned teacher struggled to use the technology even though they had undergone training.

Umil (2012) opined that part of the Department of Education (DepEd) preparations in the implementation of the K to 12 program is to train public school teachers. However, teachers noted that their training was rushed and not well thought of. The Alliance of Concerned Teachers noted that the duration of teacher training was insufficient to adequately prepare educators for the demands of the new curriculum, given the many new competencies they needed to acquire. It was emphasized that a training period of one to two months was not enough to fully equip teachers for effective implementation. While public school teachers generally supported the goals of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, including the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 3, concerns were raised regarding its execution. These included perceptions of weak planning, rushed training processes, and the limited distribution of teaching guides across schools.

d. Students' Academic, Social, Economic Hindered their Studies. The principals and teachers had observed that many factors affected the Senior High School students' ability to attain academic success in their Senior High School years. No matter how they toiled hard to guide and provide support to their students, absenteeism, tardiness, low grades, adjustment struggles, untimely pregnancy, lack of parental support, and problems in balancing time in meeting both ends in life still emerged as their concerns. They shared the following statements:

"Some schools had only minimal problems since we could maintain 100% promotion since the beginning of SHS. But other schools had encountered problems on students'

performance, such as absenteeism and tardiness."

"Some of the student's performance is somewhat not so well considering some factors: parents support, distance, poor student's habits, and influence of new media. They had problems with teenage pregnancy and drop-outs of students, and some were influenced by "barkadas," resulting in drunkenness."

"In the earlier implementation years, some were not yet ready about what is Senior life. At the start, the students and parents were very pessimistic about the implementation of the Senior High School."

"Another main issue of the learners was dropping out at the end of the semester. The students were working at the same time studying."

"None compliance and late compliance with performance tasks and a lack of support from parents because they just said their child was addicted to the computer. They also had difficulty in the sciences and math subjects like calculus."

The teachers and principals had varying experiences in implementing the K to 12 program in the schools where they were assigned. Most of the teachers have no issues, but others highlighted some challenges encountered, like the students' character who were not motivated to learn; in fact, some dropped out in the middle of the school year. Other students faced family issues that hindered them from concentrating on their studies, attending classes, submitting assignments, projects, and other deliverables. Some were lots from the right path and got pregnant while unprepared, which only added their economic and psychological burden.

Gurobat and Lumbu-an (2022) explained that the K to 12 Education Program introduces a revised curriculum designed to enhance students' skills and conceptual understanding across different strands, preparing them for tertiary education and fostering lifelong learning competencies. However, they also noted several implementation challenges, including

concerns about delayed entry into the workforce and the perception of additional years of schooling as a burden. From the perspective of students and parents, the extra two years in Senior High School were initially viewed as a significant extension of study time, although they have gradually come to accept and adapt to the reform.

Theme 3: Mitigating Measures

Since challenges and problems are part of the birth pains at the early stage of the K to 12 implementations, the key implementers, the principals, and teachers devised various means of addressing the problems with the operations during the transition period, insufficiency of teaching materials, problems with the teachers' performance and other gaps.

a. Guiding Teachers to be at the Right Track. The principals have the primordial responsibility in overlooking the activities and performance of the teachers. Beforehand, they should ensure that before assigning the teachers, they should undergo proper orientation program, training, mentoring, and coaching to prepare them for their actual job of teaching the subjects under the Senior High School curriculum. They responded that:

"The principals address teachers' performance problems by conducting annual training, mentoring, constant monitoring and supervision, and feedbacking and individual conferencing.

"The best thing in our school is that we coach others, we are not in a competition and have the camaraderie, we constantly gather, share the best practices, and help each other" (P9).

"The teachers were reminded of their responsibility through reviewing the classroom assessment guidelines of Deped Order No. 8 Series of 2015. Then we also try to listen to both sides why they are having trouble so the feedback mechanism."

"Team teaching is a big help to support the new teachers. The principal noticed that some teachers sometimes skipped a particular lesson because of difficulty and were not in the field of specialization to teach the subject."

The first action undertaken by the school leaders was to capacitate the teachers, especially the newly hired, in teaching the myriad of subjects under the Senior High School curriculum. It can be noted that sharing best practices helped them improve their teaching strategies. As part of the administrative function, the school heads always remind their teachers to follow the Department of Education guidelines so that they will not meet another problem among the way. Also, part of the team building among the teacher was promoting discretionary behavior in helping one another so that the burden of adjusting to the new curriculum would be lightened.

At the school level, the principal or headteacher is primarily responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities. Monitoring involves the systematic collection of information, while evaluation refers to assessing the effectiveness of implemented actions based on their impact on learners' quality of learning. In larger schools, this responsibility is shared with heads of departments and subject coordinators, who likewise monitor and evaluate teaching and learning processes and submit reports on a fortnightly basis. Routine monitoring covers various aspects of daily instruction, including teachers' lesson preparation documents, the attendance of both teachers and learners, and adherence to reporting or class schedules.

The learner's reaction is also used to determine if the students enjoyed the lesson, leading to a conclusion as to whether learning has taken place (Ndungu et al., 2015).

b. Student-Engaging Intervention Schemes. The teachers need to address the problems encountered by the students in their studies, like low performance, absences, failure to submit subject activity sheets, assignments, answered modules, projects, and others. In cooperation with the teacher and school support

services, the principal implemented different intervention activities to ensure that the students would be able to finish the school year correctly. The research participants shared that:

"They conducted remedial classes and home visitation"

"We also had a career guidance seminar to guide the students and explain the importance of senior high."

"They called the parent's attention and Visit the Immersion Industry."

"We explained to the parents the goal of Senior High School during the parent-teacher association meeting. The teachers do the constant follow-up. They implemented the Career Guidance Advocacy Program."

It can be gleaned from the following responses from the principals and teachers that they undertook remedial classes and home visitation to monitor the students' learning progress. Guidance-related activities were also implemented. Likewise, parents and teachers' partnerships played a vital role in guiding and helping the learners attain school success.

According to Myende and Nhlumayo (2020), there is a general consensus that parents are invaluable partners in their children's education.

c. Work Immersion: Preparing Students for the Labor Market. Since the addition of extra years to the secondary curriculum aims to better prepare students for employment after completing Senior High School, the primary implementers emphasized the need for schools to provide work immersion experiences that expose learners to real workplace environments. The research participants shared the following responses:

"The students love immersion. In our school, we really find immersion really fulfilling."

"We learned a lot during immersion in the virtual workplace."

"The curriculum, in general, is wonderful. It is designed such that we will produce a globally-competitive

learner. The government or the entire community can support each other, so I hope the government will provide all the necessary facilities and equipment because the curriculum is there."

"The right people were already hired to deliver the program. I guess it is essential that constant evaluation and monitoring should be made."

"We can improve the system, particularly in the TVL track. The demands of the world are ever-changing. Hence, it is also a good point that more or less our sidearm is TESDA, so TESDA also enlightens us of what is in demand in the market, so we try to adjust."

Based on the revelations of the research participants, the Senior High School curriculum is comprehensive, although complex to implement. However, including industry or work immersion program would bring the students to different perspectives about their chosen strand and track. It gave them a real scenario of the workplace they would want to belong to after graduation. It can be realized that not all skills and competencies can be taught inside the four walls of the classroom.

Work Immersion is a mandatory component for Senior High School graduation. It requires students to undergo immersion in an industry or workplace aligned with their intended postsecondary pathway. Through this experience, learners are exposed to real work environments related to their field of specialization, thereby strengthening their competencies. Specifically, Work Immersion enables students to: (i) acquire relevant and practical industry skills under the supervision of professionals; (ii) recognize the relevance of school-based theories and principles in actual practice; (iii) further develop their technical knowledge and abilities; (iv) improve communication and interpersonal skills; and (v) cultivate appropriate work values, discipline, attitudes, and respect for the world of work.

These prepare them to meet employment or higher education needs and challenges after graduation (Department of Education, 2017).

d. Multifaceted Means to Improve the Senior High Curriculum Implementation.

The early implementation of the Senior High School curriculum in both private and public high schools caused many loopholes, shortcomings, and gaps before the educational stakeholders would reach the ideal level. Therefore, to address the myriad of issues. The research participants recommended the following:

“Senior’s time/period scheme, which is by semester, must be reviewed because the students will tend to drop out after the first semester. I hope there must be a uniform course offering per semester so that the transferee students don’t have difficulty in enrolling the subjects.”

“There must be an ideal time frame and include only the most essential learning competencies must be identified to finish the discussion.”

“Most of the principals said there must be a specialized teacher to handle the elective subjects. The must be constant training of the teachers.”

“The DepEd will also look at the course offering so that the students don’t have difficulty transferring to other schools because of the different subjects offered. The DepEd must really identify the exact subject per semester. The DepEd must reflect on the course offering so that we have a uniform offering per semester.”

“Their must be a complete specific learning competency for TVL, must be additional internet connection. We will given additional learning materials/facilities for our TVL, especially on food processing and aquaculture.”

In the quest of the Department of Education leaders to attain the primary purpose of requiring additional two years in basic education, the Senior High School curriculum was indeed

overwhelming for the principals, teachers, and students. The principals faced voluminous problems monitoring the operation, while the teachers had many things to prepare. On the part of the students, they have to comply with a significant number of school requirements, which are physically, mentally, and psychologically exhausting, leading many students to drop out and discontinue schooling. Although the education authority of the country deeds its part, supports the schools, the gap between the reality and expected outcome is huge to fill in.

Implementation is a critical stage in any change process, as stakeholders’ responses to reform can either facilitate or hinder successful transformation. In the context of education, school administrators and supervisors play a key role in guiding institutions through challenges associated with reform implementation and in supporting effective adaptation to change. Given the critical role of the school principals in effecting sustaining educational change, it is essential to know what they do to overcome the challenge of change implementation and strengthen their capacity for school transformation and improvement (Calub, n.d.).

Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of the K to 12 Senior High School Program in Bohol, Philippines by examining the experiences of principals and teachers, who serve as the primary implementers of the program. The findings showed that while the SHS curriculum was centrally designed, school leaders and teachers played a crucial role in contextualizing its delivery, managing instructional processes, and ensuring compliance with Department of Education standards. Principals focused on supervision, monitoring, and administrative coordination, while teachers demonstrated adaptability in preparing learning materials, implementing varied teaching strategies, and supporting students across academic tracks. However, the implementation process was challenged by limited resources, inadequate facilities and learning materials, insufficient teacher training, and students’ social, economic, and personal constraints that affected academic engagement.

Despite these challenges, schools adopted multiple mitigating measures to sustain program implementation, including continuous teacher mentoring, collaborative teaching practices, student intervention programs, parent engagement, and work immersion experiences. Notably, the enhanced immersion program, which emphasized the use of technology and improved facilities, provided students with opportunities to gain National Certificate (NC) competencies, thereby strengthening their readiness for employment and technical skills development. These strategies collectively helped bridge implementation gaps and reinforced students' preparedness for higher education and the workforce.

Overall, the study underscores that the success of the K to 12 SHS Program depends not only on curriculum design but also on strong school leadership, teacher preparedness, adequate resources, and responsive support systems. Strengthening these areas including technology-driven immersion programs remains essential to achieving the program's goal of producing competent, resilient, and globally competitive learners.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for principals, teachers, and school administrators to further enhance the quality of education at the Senior High School level: 1) additional necessary facilities, tools, and equipment like books and materials, especially for the TVL strand; 2) Internet connectivity must be extended for students to access internet sources; 3) intensify SHS immersion program; 4) improve the quality of education, there must be well-qualified and trained teachers who must know how to deal with the 21st-century students.

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