

STUDIES ON THE ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE K-12 CURRICULUM: A SYNTHESIS

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Abstract: According to the K to 12 Deped Primer (2011), "K-12 means "Kindergarten and the 12 years of elementary and secondary education." Kindergarten points to the 5-year-old child who undertakes the standardized curriculum for preschoolers. Elementary education refers to 6 years of primary school (Grades 1-6) while secondary education means four years of junior high school (Grades 7-10 or HS Year 14). In addition to this, two years are now allotted for senior high school (Grades 11-12 or HS Year 5-6)". According to the DepEd discussion paper, at the core of this basic education program is "the complete human development of every graduate". The K-12 curriculum aims to enable every child "to achieve mastery of core competencies and skills", and develop tracks based on the student's interests and competencies. The focus of K-12 is twofold: curriculum enhancement and transition management. This is a synthesis of the related studies on the issues and concerns of teachers in the implementation of educational curricula. It particularized the similarities and differences of these studies in terms of the different components of research.

Keywords: Curriculum; DepEd; Issues and Concerns; K-12 Program; Related Studies; Synthesis; Teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

In pursuance of section 16 of Republic Act No. 10533, entitled "An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening Its Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for Basic Education, Appropriating Funds Thereof and for Other Purposes, otherwise known. as the "Enhanced Basic Education act of 2013", which was approved on May 15, 2013, the Department of Education, marking a milestone in the Philippine educational system, implements the K-12 program.

Teachers are key to the successful implementation of new curricula, as they are the means used to turn innovations into classroom realities (Pinto et al., 2007). Teachers are expected to adopt the new ideas and implement them in their teaching i.e. change in curriculum requires change in teachers' practices (Fullan, 1992). These demands put strain on teachers as it requires them to change their practice and resume the role of "novice" again (Fogleman, J., McNeill, K. L., & Krajcik, J., 2011).

Kennedy (1996) stated that, "those having to implement the educational changes taking place are the teachers within the public education system who are having to adopt new ideologies and implement them in their teaching, since it is the teachers who are responsible for passing on the changes through their teaching to 'their students (i.e. the future citizens the governments are concerned to educate). This double demand (teachers having to change their teaching ideologies and then

pass on those ideologies through their teaching to their students who also have to change) puts teachers under strain where the changes involved represent a major shift in beliefs and practices, and can threaten successful implementation unless necessary logistical and professional conditions are met." School resources should include: teachers, learners, parents, knowledge, and time.

When teachers interact with the innovation they may accept, reject, or modify some parts to make it suit their particular context. The innovations get transformed in the process, as "the new and old overlap to create a zone of turbulence and challenge" (Pinto et al., 2007). Problems manifest themselves in the gaps between the intended curriculum (as expressed in policy document), the implemented curriculum (expressed by real life in schools and classroom practices), and the attained curriculum as expressed by learners' experiences (Fogleman, J., McNeill, K. L., & Krajcik, J., 2011). Various studies have been conducted focusing on the 'problems' of teachers regarding the K-12 curriculum implementation.

This review and synthesis of the studies will promote a greater understanding of the problem of the study on curricular implementation, which will give the researcher an understanding of the research methodology, the instruments, and awareness into the statistical procedures through which the soundness of result is to be proven. This review of related studies will promote deeper insights on the issues and concerns of teachers in the implementation of the K-12 Program.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper was to primarily impart the accomplished researches on the issues and concerns of teachers in the implementation of the curricula.

RELATED STUDIES

Problems of Early Childhood Teachers

In a study, Wai-Yum (2003) tried to find out the problems of early childhood teachers experienced in the process of top-down curriculum reform at a local kindergarten in Hong Kong. The purpose of the study was to reveal the lived experience of the real people in real context. The qualitative method was used through individual and focus-group interviews. At the end of the study, teachers explained four major difficulties regarding the new curriculum reform.

The first problem was that teachers had to fulfill too many tasks by the implementation of the curriculum however they do not have adequate time to finish those and they became overburdened by the heavy workload.

Second was the frequent supervision and intervention of the principal into the classroom teaching so teachers felt that the principals do not trust and these lead teachers to lose confidence in their teaching.

Third problem was the lack of getting answers from principals regarding the new curriculum reform. Teachers added that despite the expectation was high from the teachers; it was surprising to see that the administrators do not know much about the things about to implement.

Finally, teachers were having the problem of lack of support and encouragement from the administrators and parents. There is a need for collaboration among the teachers, principals and parents for the proper implementation of the new curriculum.

Views Of Early Childhood Teachers on Early Childhood Curriculum

In the study of Düsek (2008), the views of early childhood teachers (N=91), schools principals (N=22) and inspectors (N=27) about an Early Childhood Curriculum were gathered. The data were collected in the city of Ordu and both questionnaires and interviews were used. Inspectors, school principals and early childhood teachers all reached a consensus that the new curriculum was child-centered and more flexible compared to the previous one. School principals and early childhood teachers also appreciated that there was an emphasis on the parent involvement by the new curriculum. Besides, inspectors and school principals indicated the appropriateness of the new curriculum with the curriculum used in primary education.

In addition to the positive sides of the curriculum, school principals described the problems of the new curriculum implementation as the lack of information regarding the new curriculum among early childhood teachers. They also added the physical environment deficiencies as the hurdles confronted during implementation.

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Early childhood teachers on the other hand, distinguished their problems regarding the curriculum. First, they stated the physical environment deficiencies which prevent proper implementation of the new curriculum. Then, they added their lack of knowledge about understanding the new curriculum as whole. Third was related with the parent involvement that is early childhood teachers claimed that home-visits were difficult to make. Teachers also added that it was difficult to find the necessary documents such as development control list, objective evaluation form, teacher self-evaluation form... etc,

Teachers' Views Regarding Curriculum Implementation

In a study conducted by StvgIn (2005), early childhood teachers' views regarding the curriculum being implemented were gathered. The data were collected from early childhood teachers (N=114) in Ordu city and their views categorized into four areas: objectives, education and planning, parent involvement and evaluation. Regarding the objectives, it was detected that teachers did not have difficulties both on deciding the objectives to choose for an activity and choosing objectives from all areas of development appropriate for the age group of the children. Teachers, in terms of education and planning, proposed that there was a need for examples regarding which methods to use, what kinds of technological materials to be included in the daily plans. In addition, teachers elaborated that the examples of science and nature activities, music activities and reading- writing activities should be included in the curriculum.

The type of activities was needed regarding parent involvement, on the other hand, were not described clearly according to the views of the teachers. They added that parent involvement should consider involvement of both fathers' and mothers' education.

Finally, teachers found evaluation forms designed for evaluating children inadequate. They suggested that there should be more examples of evaluation forms to understand whole progress of the children. In other words, observation forms designed for children were not adequate so other evaluation techniques should be included in the curriculum.

Difficulties Faced By Teachers In The Curriculum Planning And Implementation

A study by inal, Kandlr, & Özbey (2009) focused on the difficulties faced by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation of curriculum. The study sample consisted of a total of 154 teachers working at private and government kindergartens in Ankara and Afyon. Questionnaire with two sections (demographic information of teachers and their views on educational contexts) was used to gather the data. In the study, it was aimed to analyze whether teachers' views on planning educational contexts varied with respect to their years of experience, educational background, and type of the school they are working in.

At the end of the study, it was found that the biggest difficulties teachers faced were in preparing annual plans and choosing objectives and goals for the whole year. Then, evaluation was the difficult part for the teachers since they were not sure what to write.

On the other hand, choosing the kinds of teaching methods and techniques was a problem for the teachers. They had difficulty in designing the classroom and having problem regarding the attitudes of parent towards early childhood education. Despite stating the different types of problems faced by the preschool teachers, problems related with the kinds of activities such as science, math, reading and writing, field trips, inclusion were not included in the questionnaire.

Moreover, the reasons for such problems were gathered from the firsthand resources. that of the preschool teachers. In that sense, to be able to offer suggestions for possible solution to the problems of preschool teachers, their ideas might also be included in the process.

In conclusion, various studies have been conducted focusing on the problems of preschool teachers regarding the curriculum implementation. In order to achieve the high-quality standards in early childhood education, problems of preschool teachers should continue to be analyzed well and realistic Practical solutions should also be offered to increase effectiveness in curriculum implementation.

Teachers' Problems and Dilemmas

In one of the studies conducted by Cisneros, Cisneros- Chernour and Moreno (2000), Mexican kindergarten teachers' problems and dilemmas was explored after the K-9 curriculum reform. The new curriculum emphasizes "individualism and assertiveness" which are opposed with the Mexican culture and there was a stress on accountability. Data gathered through a qualitative method by interviews, focus groups, document analysis over 8 weeks of period.

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First problem was the conflict between the school and home. Parents perceive kindergarten as a playing ground for the children not as a learning place after the curriculum reform so this creates a barrier between the school and home collaboration.

Second, there was a lack of continuity and compatibility between kindergarten and some elementary schools. Transition from kindergarten to elementary school becomes a problem because children were expected more passive role when they start to elementary school.

Third, role expectations from teachers by the schools and the Mexican Department of Education were different. While the department let the teachers to be flexible in terms of activities, the school principals wanted them to follow exactly what the manuals and guides tell.

Fourth was the lack of resources. Teachers, especially when working in rural areas developed low expectations for children because of the scarce resources. In that sense, teacher explained that this curriculum does not pay attention to regional differences.

Final problem was the immigration and migration issues. Teachers were having difficulty when dealing with children with limited Spanish and do not know how to include those children into the classroom activities.

III. A SYNTHESIS

In terms of purpose or objective(s): Wai-Yum (2003) tried to find out the problems of early childhood teachers experienced in the process of top-down curriculum reform at a local kindergarten in Hong Kong; Düeek (2008) determined the views of early childhood teachers, schools principals, and inspectors about an Early Childhood Curriculum; Slvgln (2005) gained insights on the early childhood teachers' views regarding the curriculum being implemented; Inal, Kandrr, & Özbey (2009) focused on the difficulties faced by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation of curriculum; and Cisneros, Cisneros- Chernour and Moreno (2000) explored the Mexican kindergarten teachers' problems and dilemmas after the K-9 curriculum reform.

In terms of the subjects of the study, the above enumerated studies, had pre-school and kindergarten teachers as subjects.

As to the research design and approach, the descriptive research design was adopted in all the cited studies. Also, the quantitative approach was adopted in the studies of Wai-Yum (2003); Düsek (2008). While Cisnerosg Cisneros- Chernour and Moreno (2000) adopted the qualitative approach.

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