Senior high school program implementation in Cebu, Philippines: The teachers' perspectives

Rex T. Argate[1], Judy Ann O. Ferrater-Gimena[1], Renato S. Sagayno[1], Moma D. Ortega[1],
Rithsun J. Mamacos[1], Aurora C. Miro[1], Chuchi S. Montenegro[2],
Fe R. Janiola[3], Gino G. Sumalinog[4*]

[1]University of Cebu, Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines
[2]Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines
[3]Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines
[4]Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines
[*]Corresponding author: sumalinogg@cnu.edu.ph

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Senior High School education is one of the salient features of the K to 12 curricula. This study explored the lived experience of the 15 Senior High School (SHS) teachers as direct implementers of the program in the Province of Cebu, Philippines. These teachers have been in service in the Department of Education since the SHS program started. This study was qualitative in nature, and it used the phenomenological research design. It utilized the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) steps for its data analysis method. A semi-structured interview guide was also employed to capture the phenomenon's essence. After an extensive and careful analysis of the transcribed responses from the interviewees, three themes related to the lived experience of the teachers emerged: 1) noteworthy steps, 2) temporary drawbacks, and 3) teachers' suggestions for future directions. The findings of the study revealed that the informants had been provided with enough training, evaluation and monitoring, and free Internet connectivity. However, they also experienced the nonuniformity of access to learning materials, difficulty in teaching new courses, and complexity brought about by the mismatched students' behaviors. For future direction, other researchers may delve into the lived experience of the SHS students.

1. Introduction

Being the only country in Asia and one of the three nations in the world providing a 10-year pre-university education to its people, the Philippines had decided to take a big leap (Baron & Tiangco, 2019). The country has now upgraded from its old system to a K to 12 program to be at par with the world's educational system. This enhancement of the curriculum, known as R.A. 10533 series of 2012, was made into law in 2013 and was one of the main thrusts of the late President Aquino's government (Acosta & Acosta, 2016). The implementation began in the school year 2012 - 2013, which implied that the first complete cohort of learners who embarked on the new program will graduate from Senior High School (SHS) in 2024 (Oxford Business Group, 2021).

Experts believed that the Philippines' risk-taking in changing the basic education curriculum, the K to 12 in particular, was vital to the country's growth (Abueva, 2019, as cited in Dizon, Calbi, Cuyos, & Mirnada, 2019). It was a significant development for our country to upsurge the standard of our education (Dizon et al., 2019). The K to 12 primarily focused on helping the students "launch powerfully" and become victorious through the Senior High School program. It further aimed to nurture Filipinos' holistic development by ensuring that SHS completers became aware and ready to ace the different exits after Senior High School (Baron & Tiangco, 2019). The significant move to change the educational system was firstly made to improve the lives of the learners and eventually change the community they are part of. According to Arbolencia (2015), the government envisioned serving the main stakeholders: parents, administrators, teachers, and students. These groups of people could directly benefit from the positive success of the implementation.

Despite the rigid planning and preparation, the alteration of the curriculum in the area of basic education has resulted in several challenges, concerns, and issues for the people who questioned its smooth implementation and transition. The teachers had difficulty delivering some of the topics that were not related to their specialization. They could only discuss the topics based on their understanding, for they lack mastery (Cabili, Capilitan, & Sequete, 2015). In addition, the teachers were seen to lack mastery and competence in the subject (Umil, 2017, as cited in Rogayan & Villanueva, 2019). As teachers strived to deliver quality education, they faced problems with facilities. Jaca et al. (2018) revealed inadequacies in the preparation and insufficiency of resources during the implementation of educational reform. There was a shortage of buildings, classrooms, libraries, and other learning resources. In a study conducted by Balinario (2021), he stressed that teachers had experienced a lack of tools and equipment to deliver some Science activities. Teachers complained about the inadequacy of reading resources and materials, for they could affect the mode and delivery of instruction. Teachers have also raised concerns about the learning materials being delivered late and less than the number of students to be catered to during the first three years of implementation (Cubillas, 2018; Sumalinog, 2021; Vizconde, 2015). In consonance, Chaudhary (2015) expressed that the curriculum implementation could be significantly affected by the teachers who were the direct implementers of the curriculum if the conducive learning environment did not aid them, enough learning materials for their students, etc.

Looking at how the new curriculum came to be and how it struggled during its first few years of implementation, we could tell that the government had given enough share of its efforts and initiatives just to improve the lives of every Filipino student. However, the studies highlighting its drawbacks should not be taken for granted. If it could persist any further, the pure and noble intentions of the crafters and implementers would all be in vain. It should not be forgotten that back in 2012, the enhanced curriculum was presented and applied locally to produce globally competitive graduates with abilities to cope with international standards (Okabe, 2013, as cited in Bagtas, Sicat, Calaguas, Yalung, & Calbang, 2016). To attain the goals, the teachers who were the main battlers in the field need to be supported and equipped. Having thought of the Senior High School teachers as agents of change, this paper was conceived. This study delved into the lived experiences of the SHS teachers to get their perspectives and suggest better solutions to the problems they have experienced first-hand. Though there were several studies about the K to 12 implementations, the authors of those papers explored broad topics that ended up recommending broad chunks of ideas. With this paper, the teachers' perspectives were magnified to see the nitty-gritty of the phenomenon. The results of this paper could be grounds for policy recommendations and a positive course of action. In general, the main problem, which is exploring the lived experience of the Senior High School teachers as direct implementers of the program, will be shed light.

2. Domain of inquiry

This study explored the lived experience of the Senior High School (SHS) teachers as direct implementers of the Senior High School program.

3. Related literature and studies

The Philippine Educational system has undergone a lot of changes and developments. Before its recent reform, the Philippines was one of the three countries with the shortest basic education years. Fortunately, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was signed into law by Pres. Benigno Aquino III. With this law, students must go through kindergarten, followed by a 12-year basic education before college. It was a meritorious effort and initiative (Rivera, 2017). Primarily, the K to 12 was mainly centered on helping the students "launch powerfully" and become victorious through the Senior High School program. It further aimed to nurture Filipinos' holistic development by ensuring that SHS completers become aware and ready to ace the different exits after Senior High School (Baron & Tiangco, 2019).

The implementation of the K to 12 programs has opened up some positive points. According to Abulencia (2019), the K to 12 resulted in retooling and retraining teachers, producing instructional materials, allocating the budget, constructing buildings, securing facilities, etc. Resources became the basic requirement to withstand the program's evaluation. The Department of Education has developed a good practice of consistently evaluating and monitoring schools and conducting conferences, advocacy campaigns, workshops, consultative meetings, and parent orientation. It has also extensively disseminated information about the curriculum through the media and other social network platforms (Department of Education, 2017a). Under the new system, teachers were trained and assisted both at the regional and national levels (Jaca et al., 2018). They had various trainings from specialists in different fields (Department of Education, 2017b). The teachers showed their utmost cooperation, believing that the curriculum change could assist the students in developing into dynamic and globally competitive individuals.

Despite the desirable actions that were offered for the smooth flow of the program, some issues arose during its gradual implementation period, and they needed a long-term solution that would promote sustainability (Sergio, 2011, as cited in Dizon et al., 2019; Jaca et al., 2018). The issue of the professional development of teachers, the inadequacy of the facilities, and other mishaps making a noise. Trance and Trance (2019) opined that the first few steps of the implementation process and the number of years were the most challenging and complicated times. Part of the challenges was the teachers' hesitations due to the problems that they had observed. Half admitted they were partially ready for the K to 12 implementations (Migallos, Cabahug, & Hipol, 2020). They willingly took part in the program, but they were not fully equipped to handle the subjects and needed more training (Dizon et al., 2019). Combalicer (2016) added that teachers were not fully armed with techniques and strategies. They believed that the skills they lacked could be addressed through seminars and in-service training on techniques and strategies. They also lack mastery and competence in the subjects (Umil, 2017, as cited in Rogayan & Villanueva, 2019).

With the identified difficulties, Acosta and Acosta (2016) mentioned the importance of upgrading the teacher's skills, which were the most essential part of the implementation (Villena & Dizon, 2015). Likewise, Migallos et al. (2020) agreed and called retooling and upgrading the educators' skills the most significant support the school should provide. The problems could be addressed through proper and appropriate training and seminars, which could greatly help the teachers (Lartec, 2014, as cited in Jaca et al., 2018). Furthermore, the authors added that teacher training could equip teachers with knowledge and skills in handling new courses, especially those

who were going to teach for the first time. The significance of training was not debatable for most teachers, so DepEd must make them more developmental. Filipino teachers' adaptation to the new curriculum could be facilitated (Bongco & David, 2020). For Dizon et al. (2019), training and seminars could provide teachers with practical, appropriate, and effective teaching methods that they could use during instruction. The teacher and students' interaction would be maximized with continued use of what they learned. However, some professional development activities could not occur, for public schools were only dependent on the budget allocation that the government may release to the Department of Education (Jaca et al., 2018). Abulencia (2019) insisted that principals then became accountable for the failures of the school, so they needed to be anticipatory and forward-looking when their first option failed.

Another problem was the unavailability of teaching and learning materials in the first few years of the K to 12 program implementations (Legaspi, 2014). Combalicer (2016) shared the same sentiments after discovering the lack of modules and other academic references. The same problem persisted even after years of thriving and trying in the implementation stage (Dizon et al., 2019; Trance & Trance, 2019). Even during experiments, the lack of materials became a problem, specifically those related to Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) (Cabili et al., 2015; Combalicer, 2016). However, some teachers insisted that they had enough, and they did not encounter any of the problems posed above, but they commented on the overcrowding of the curriculum, which meant that there were too many competencies to be accomplished (Atienza, 2020). Added to the existing problems was the lack of budget for classroom buildings (Vizconde, 2015). According to Sarvi, Munger, and Pillay (2015), schools may build more infrastructures in locations without private and public schools. They may consider collaborating with the local government to make "education for all" possible.

Despite the difficulties and other inadequacies, the Department of Education continued to evaluate the curriculum and measured its impact on the learners (Rivera, 2017). This was one of the essential steps that the agency has fulfilled. Rogayan and Villanueva (2019) posit that periodic assessments should ensure that the educational system aligns and enables the learners to address the challenges of the 4.0 phase of education. Consequently, the efforts of the crafters and implementers may not cover the multitude of challenges. Still, as long as the Department of Education continues to move forward and take some little steps consistently, the system will soon work as expected.

4. Methodology

This section contains the research design, environment, informants, inclusion criteria, instrument, data gathering procedure, and data analysis procedures.

4.1. Research design

This paper used a qualitative research design, and it employed the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The qualitative approach was very appropriate to use since the experiences of the informants could not be quantified by numbers alone. The IPA could capture the hesitations, pauses, and other communication cues that could add to the richness of the data. It provided clear steps and a stance in interpreting and understanding the lived experience of the informants involved.

4.2. Research environment

This study was conducted at the Senior High School institutions within the Province of Cebu. These schools were compliant with the requirements of the Department of Education before

they added up some buildings and facilities as required by the agency. They were allowed to offer the Senior High School program because they had teachers, some facilities, and approval from the Department of Education. Only 15 schools among the several basic education institutions from the southern area to the northern part of Cebu were chosen. The researchers visited the schools physically to conduct the interview.

4.3. Research informants

The informants of this study were the 15 Senior High School (SHS) teachers. They were purposively chosen, for they were assigned to teach in the SHS department when the additional program started. They witnessed how the instruction began during the pilot years and up to the time the system was fully established. With their first-hand experience and rich observation of the phenomenon, the researchers believed that these teachers could uncover the lived experience being explored. The informants were assigned pseudonyms in the results and discussion session to hide their identities. Letters were sent to them so they could signify their intent to take part in the study.

4.4. Research instruments and data gathering procedure

This study used a semi-structured interview, which was checked and validated by research experts. The instrument was forwarded to the Research Ethics Committee of the university to ensure the safe participation of the informants. The questions did not lead the interviewees to a specific answer but guided them to explore their rich experiences. The questions were meant to bring out the lived experiences of the Senior High School teachers who were directly involved in the implementation of the K to 12 project. The informants were given enough time to prepare through some initial questions. They were informed of the possible benefits that they could get as well as their rights to withdraw anytime. The interview was recorded and kept confidential by the researchers and the data would only be discarded after the paper will have been published.

4.5. Data analysis

This study followed the IPA analysis protocol of Smith and Osborn (2007), which consists of five steps, namely:

4.5.1. Looking for themes in each case

The transcript was read through multiple times in this step. To become acquainted with the answers provided by the informants, the researchers immersed themselves in the data. There was a margin next to the transcripts where anything relevant, interesting, or noteworthy said by the informants would be recorded.

4.5.2. Looking for connections

The emergent concepts at this stage were mentioned on the right. They were then grouped following their ties. To make sure all other related words were present, the grouped emerging themes were cross-referenced to the transcript.

4.5.3. A table of themes

Each concept was presented in this stage, which was organized into groups and given logical labels based on links. This procedure was meticulously carried out to ensure that the themes, and not the researcher's personal biases, would be reflected in the verbatim transcript.

4.5.4. A Master list of themes for the group

Following the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the analysis developed, and a final list of themes emerged.

4.5.5. Write up

Writing reports for publishing utilizing the master list of themes was the focus of this step. Narrative accounts were used to illustrate the topics. Verbatim statements from the informants' comments would be used as the writing went on to support the analysts' interpretation.

5. Result and discussion

After an extensive and careful analysis of the transcribed responses from the interviewees, three themes related to the lived experience of the SHS teachers emerged: 1) Noteworthy steps, 2) Temporary drawbacks, and 3) Teachers' suggestions for future directions.

5.1. Noteworthy steps

The teachers, as the direct implementers of the curriculum crafted by experts, have noticed some noteworthy steps of their immediate heads and bosses. They appreciated the help that they have gotten from them, especially the skills enhancement through the regional and national mass training, seminars, INSETs, and others. They also felt valued and heard, for they were often included in the regular consultations and evaluations in the area of instruction and learning material development. Added to their joys were the free internet initiatives that lightened their teaching preparation, research work, paperwork, etc. According to the Department of Education (2017a), it would retain its uninterrupted funding to educators in terms of benefits, allowances, and other DepEd-related endeavors. The agency upheld its pure intention to help.

5.1.1. Enough training and enhancement programs

Acosta and Acosta (2016) mentioned the importance of upgrading the teacher's skills, which were the most essential part of the implementation (Villena & Dizon, 2015). The informants mentioned that they received training and enhancement from the Department of Education despite the mishaps and inadequacies during the implementation. They all referred to the Mass Training of Teachers (MTOT), INSET, and PEAC, which were held both at the regional and national levels. They all agreed that activities like these could help their preparation in handling new courses. They shared that they acquired new skills, leveraged their current level of creativity, and learned some meaningful and useful ideas for learning material development. They considered these training sessions as learning opportunities to be refreshed from what they previously learned. According to Sheena, Ani, Joy, and Ella:

"Seminars and training have been helpful because they taught us how to make sure that the activities and assessments are aligned to achieve the goal of learning."

"Yes, it is very sufficient and very helpful since teachers still lack some preparation."

"We have in-service training to modify and improve our instruction towards making our job easy and efficient."

"The training is sufficient to get you started teaching new courses."

The responses of the informants showed the positive impacts of the training and seminars provided to them. They also found the activities relevant to the classroom endeavors that they would engage in. In consonance with the verbatims of the informants, Migallos et al. (2020) agreed that the retooling and upgrading of the educators' skills was the most significant support that the school could provide. These could greatly help teachers with their careers (Lartec, 2014, as cited in Jaca et al., 2018). Furthermore, the authors added that teacher training could equip teachers with knowledge and skills in handling new courses, most especially those who were going to teach for

the very first time. For Dizon et al. (2019), training and seminars could provide teachers with useful, appropriate, and effective teaching methods that they could use during instruction. With continued use of what was learned from seminars, the teacher and students' interaction would be maximized. Similarly, enough training is the answer so teachers can continually innovate to better help students meet the needs of the new curriculum (Asio, Francisco, & Rodriguez, 2020; Balayo et al., 2022). Teachers must be knowledgeable, inventive, and innovative. To address new curriculum issues, teachers must participate in extensive research and publication training. To modify the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of students, teachers must possess the necessary skills and talents (Quijano, 2023) to enhance their teaching methods (Puricallan, 2020). Consequently, a teaching task that starts with letting the teachers become equipped and informed could lead to learning successes.

5.1.2. Regular evaluation and consultation meetings

The informants expressed assurance that they were being taken care of because of the evaluation and consultation meetings conducted by their principals. According to them, they had been called for a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to evaluate their teaching performance, curriculum alignment, instructional delivery, facilities, and critical classroom scenarios. Monitoring of the principal's and teachers' requests has also been conducted to ensure that requests for the school and the students were granted. The consultation, evaluation, and monitoring that the principals were doing coincided with what was indicated on the website. The Department of Education has developed a good practice of including a consistent evaluation and monitoring of schools and conducting conferences, advocacy campaigns, workshops, consultative meetings, and parent orientation. It has also extensively disseminated information about the curriculum through the media and other social media platforms (Department of Education, 2017a). Mary, Ana, and Beth shared:

"Yes, a series of consultations were done through the process of SWOT analysis. We were made to evaluate all the areas honestly to find out what the school needs. Everything was well-addressed by our school heads."

"There were consultative meetings for the areas of concerns in the implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and the use of facilities including the need to acquire materials and facilities."

"Yes, there are consultative meetings if we speak of facilities and other needs."

Based on their responses, the informants were confident that they were involved in the entire process of curriculum development and evaluation. Per Rogayan and Villanueva (2019), there should be a periodic assessment to ascertain that the educational system would align and enable the learners to address the challenges of the 4.0 phase of education. However, some of them seemed partially satisfied, for some of their demands were not given attention and quick action. They admitted that sometimes, their requests fell on deaf ears. There were times that they would resort to finding the solution in their own hands. Ben and Rey expressed:

"There are consultations done. However, there is no action on what was discussed sometimes."

"Yes, there are consultative meetings, but not all concerns can be addressed due to lack of funds."

Despite the unpleasant remarks, the responses still pointed out that the heads of the learning institutions never failed to gather their people and involve them in the progressive conversation

for the welfare of the students. The verbatims of Ben and Rey connoted that they knew the reasons why, and they understood how the educational system in the Department of Education worked. Despite the difficulties and other inadequacies, the Department of Education continued to evaluate the curriculum and measured its impact on the learners (Rivera, 2017). This was one of the essential steps that the agency has fulfilled. Consequently, the efforts of the crafters and implementers may not cover the multitude of challenges, but as long as the Department of Education continues to move forward and take some little steps consistently, the system will soon work as expected.

5.1.3. Free Internet initiatives

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0 phase, the Internet became the primary source of information. It could raise the quality of education in various means. The Internet opened the gates to a wealth of knowledge and information, increasing chances for the acquisition of knowledge to go beyond normal (Public Policy, 2017). In this study, the privilege of using the Internet in all of the teaching tasks overwhelmed the teachers, for life could be easy with Internet access. The informants narrated that giving Internet connectivity for free would already make them smile. They all admitted that the speed was slower than expected. In some schools, Internet access was only speedy and accessible depending on the location. Despite these, the informants were still thankful that they got the chance to enjoy the power of the Internet. However, they have not forgotten that not all schools have Internet connectivity. The schools, which were situated near the cities enjoyed the perks of having Internet access. According to Beth, Fe, and Ani:

"The library and laboratories are places where students can access the internet with the guidance of the teachers. The connection is strong and is only using the computers and iPads from the school which is used for learning."

"In our school, an internet connection is available in the principal's office and the computer laboratories. The school has also subscriptions to online journals and e-library."

"Yes, and it can help me in my subject because I can search for some information that is not included in my discussions or in the book I use. Teaching becomes easy."

The informants showed gratitude, for they knew that in today's times, the Internet could answer wild queries. Chaudhary (2015) discoursed that teachers used the Internet to access materials, prepare lesson plans, and accomplish a wide variety of useful school tasks. As to the informants, the Internet speed did matter, but compared to other Senior High Schools that did not even have a single facility, a sluggish Internet speed would be good enough. The majority of the schools of the informants who were interviewed did have internet connectivity, but some of them struggled to have a good signal. However, it was never hidden to every Filipino that our Internet speed had never been consistent. There were days with likable Internet and days with poor connectivity, but the informants showed gratefulness for having one rather than nothing at all.

The noteworthy steps that were noticed and experienced by the informants, such as adequate training and enhancement programs, evaluation and consultation meetings, and free internet initiatives, were essential in the implementation of the program. The informants also affirmed the efficacy and benefits of the steps initiated by the school leaders.

5.2. Temporary drawbacks

Despite the desirable actions that were offered for the smooth flow of the K to 12 programs, the informants noticed some drawbacks. Based on their responses, the drawbacks were only

temporary and might be fully solved as the new educational shift ripened. Normally, drawbacks could only be present for a short while and be gone after years of implementation, for implementers would soon get a good grasp of the dilemmas. Some issues arose during its gradual implementation period, and eventually met a long-term solution that would promote sustainability (Jaca et al., 2018; Sergio, 2011, as cited in Dizon et al., 2019). In this study, the informants identified some temporary drawbacks. The majority of them commented on the lack of buildings, learning materials, classrooms, references, and textbooks, which resulted in the nonuniformity of access to learning materials. Teachers have also expressed disappointment in the difficult courses that they needed to teach. Added to the problems was the reality that there was a mismatch between the student's behavior and their grade level.

5.2.1. Nonuniformity of access to learning materials

There was an unavailability of teaching and learning materials in the first few years of the K to 12 program implementations (Legaspi, 2014). The same problem persisted even after years of thriving and trying in the implementation stage (Dizon et al., 2019; Trance & Trance, 2019). In the study, the informants boldly revealed that some of the schools where they were assigned lacked some buildings, classrooms, textbooks, and computers. Sometimes, the schools only have a few copies of the learning materials. For some, the materials were only available for use in some courses, not for all. Some teachers expressed that they had no problem in terms of learning materials because they had computers where they could access files electronically and digitally. Some had enough computers but had limited copies of the references in the library. The situations were not the same. So, the nonuniformity of access to the available learning materials became a problem. In reality, no child deserved to learn less compared to other privileged students just because he or she had no access to what others were enjoying access. In terms of technical skills, the nonuniformity of access to learning materials would create biased learning. Some students may be used to digitized learning styles, while others are alienated from digitization. Comparing the number of learning materials at the onset of the implementation versus the present status, it could be said that the situation now seems a bit better. However, at present, all students need to learn together, for the poor performance of one may affect the rest, especially during internationally-administered examinations. Ailyn, Rose, and Mary shared different experiences:

"Not at all, only for some. Book and references are lacking."

"Yes, all are available. Maybe the only difficulty is the availability of the computer or laptop for class presentation."

"Yes, they are available. In our school we have big and spacious computer laboratories with 50 units of functional computers and another 50 units of tablets; 2 cookery classrooms or laboratories, 1 EIM or Electrical Installation and Maintenance classroom and laboratory, and all of those mentioned were equipped with learning tools and materials."

The verbatim statement showed the nonuniformity of access. If the same situations persisted, it would not create a good learning environment, knowing that only some of the schools were equipped with up-to-date learning materials, while the rest suffered from inadequacies. Despite the demand to give everyone equal access, Jaca et al. (2018) reminded others that public schools were only dependent on the budget allocation provided by the government. In school, principals, as locally accountable leaders in the school, must be forward-looking or anticipatory. They should be risk-takers (Abulencia, 2019). Therefore, the Department of Education (DepEd) needs to give the schools access to enough teaching materials, particularly audio and visual

materials. The teachers need them (Ogah, 2023). The problems regarding learning materials may not be patched too soon, but a slow but progressive action would make it possible.

5.2.2. Advanced and difficult courses to teach

The subjects offered in the Senior High School curriculum were new and not the ones that the teachers had been teaching to Junior High School students. In the field, most of the SHS teachers were only transferred from Junior High School. The subjects in Senior High School were closely the same as the General Education courses that college students would take during their first two years in college. Looking closely at their differences, it could be said that the teachers were being challenged by a new course to teach or a new curriculum that they had not been to when they were still students. According to the informants, they were adjusting to the difficulty of the courses, so they would need to research most of the topics just to gain an understanding of the content. As a result, teachers' time was almost spent preparing their lessons. Inside the classroom, the teacher's knowledge of the topics being delivered was only a step higher than the students'. Beth, Ani, Ellyn, Allen, and Joy reiterated:

"I was alienated by the subjects. They are difficult, so I need to research more."

"The competencies and content were too heavy. You need to research so you can teach the subject."

"The competencies are sometimes difficult, and it is difficult to look for references."

"The challenges that I encountered were the topics laid on my subject. They were slightly advanced since Senior High school is somewhat the real preparation for Tertiary Education students."

"I think the most crucial thing is time, and the teachers are not masters of the subject."

The informants gave honest, verbatim narratives. Atienza (2020) commented on the overcrowding of the curriculum, which meant that there were too many competencies to be accomplished. Sometimes, teachers truly lack the mastery of the competencies that they would teach (Umil, 2017, as cited in Rogayan & Villanueva, 2019). In consonance, Asio et al. (2020) mentioned that the most frequent issues that teachers run into are overloaded curriculum competencies and idealistic outcome expectations and job mismatch; traditional teaching. Most students are forced to learn things that they could not use because there are no workplaces where they can apply after finishing school.

However, the reasons for the informants involved in the study were completely understandable since the Senior High School has only been here for not too long. To make the implementation successful, it is advised to hire teachers for specialized positions and train them in the most recent teaching techniques as well as in technology (Gamboa, Danganan, Gamboa, Koh & Villanueva, 2020). The hiring should be based on the needs of the school and following the track or strand the school offers (Puricallan, 2020). By doing so, the teachers would not have a hard time adjusting and mastering the competencies and contents.

5.2.3. Students' mismatched behavior

Educating Senior High School students requires much understanding and patience. According to the informants, the SHS students that they were handling did not act according to their level of maturity. The informants expected the students to be a bit formal and decent all because they were already over the Junior High School level. Moneva and Gatan (2020) mentioned that emotionally intelligent students were expected to be disciplined, ready to learn, and calm. In actual classroom settings, the informants noticed mismatched behavior among the students. Ailyn,

Joy, Ella, and Ben stated:

"They are still acting like first-year high school. They need to acquire the attitude of being in a higher level of secondary education. Be responsible."

"First is the dealing of the students actually because students were supposed to be in college already. However, they would act like Junior High School students, not as SHS students."

"The SHS students behaved like they had not moved out from their Junior High School. They're still not responsible."

"A few challenges include the students' behavior. They still expect a childish treatment."

Based on the informant's verbatim statement, they seemed to forget that the SHS level is still part of the basic education curriculum. Getting into the informants' heads, they might have been thinking of the age similarity between the college and the SHS students. However, the informants could be right, for the subjects that the SHS students were taking had been patterned already to the semestral time frame of the college students. For Dizon et al. (2019), teachers should strive to learn more for the benefit of the students. With continued use of what they learned, the teacher and students' interaction would be maximized.

Some drawbacks hindered the smooth implementation of the Senior High School program. The drawbacks, such as nonuniformity of access to learning materials, advanced and difficult courses to teach, and students' mismatched behavior, were personally experienced by the teachers as informants. Their honesty in admitting the truth is a manifestation that they want change and positive progress to take effect so that students can learn at a maximum level.

5.3. Teachers' suggestions for future directions

Teachers had limitations, too, that needed to be addressed. According to Cabili et al. (2015), teachers handling the K to 12 subjects had difficulty delivering some content that was not related to their majors. Sometimes, their discussions only revolved around their limited understanding of the lessons. However, teachers were known to be progressive thinkers, and they never stopped inquiring for more, be it for personal or communal reasons. In terms of their determination to deliver quality learning, they would exhaust all means just to become the teachers that they should be.

In this study, the informants boldly raised some suggestions that their bosses and institutional heads might consider. They hoped that their voices would pave a path, so future directions may be sketched ahead. They conveyed that they wished for more frequent specialization-related training on teaching techniques and methodologies. They even reiterated that the ones handling the courses should be replaced immediately so the teachers could gain mastery of the course they were handling.

"So far, nothing else I can suggest but to continue and give more training and more opportunities for the teachers to learn strategies related to their field of specialization."

"It the better if the training is based on specialization because even your major, you will still need more strategies in teaching it in Senior High."

"I wish we'd have more training about the spiral progression in Mathematics, my major."

"I hope we are given enough training and seminars to improve ourselves and our strategies in teaching our specializations."

The quoted statements from the informants all showed their desire to get trained again and even more on the helpful strategies since the SHS only followed a semestral time frame. Dizon et al. (2019) opined that training and seminars could provide teachers with useful, appropriate, and effective teaching methods that they could use during instruction. According to Sumalinog (2019), teachers would show more interest in delivering quality education when trained with strategies related to their specializations. According to Gamboa et al. (2020), it is best to fortify relationships with the business sector so that schools can benefit from the expertise of the services offered by establishments in the community.

The suggestions and future direction that the informants revealed could be valid bases for improvement since they were speaking out of their rich experiences. Their words are part of their strong will to accept points for improvement. Looking at the entirety of the informants' lived experience, one could tell that their existence as SHS teachers could be the source of information that could fuel the K to 12 implementations more. As they journeyed with the researchers, their words opened the realities of life, especially the phenomenon in the area of SHS teaching.

6. Conclusion

Teaching at the Senior High School level was both challenging and beneficial because these additional two years in basic education were still in the process of forming classroom realities. Its newness made it unpredictable. From the teachers' perspectives, the K to 12 implementations were a work in progress. The teachers were not certain of the entirety of the implementation, for they needed more enlightenment. Despite the uncertainties, the teachers have noted some noteworthy initiatives such as the training provided to them, the consultation and evaluation activities that involved their voices, and the free Internet, which was given as their privilege. On the other hand, the informants showed leniency, for even if they identified their struggles, they also emphasized that those obstacles could be taken away. In general, the program implementation came with both negative and positive aspects. As the implementation progressed, the informants hoped that their voices would matter. Consequently, the perspectives of the teachers may change depending on the actions of the heads of the learning institutions toward the problems that the informants faced.

7. Recommendations

1. The Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) may capacitate the local colleges, not just the renowned universities, so they can offer specialization-related training to Senior High School teachers near their locations.

2. The Department of Education (DepEd) may allocate an equal budget to each school offering Senior High School programs so that each of them may become capable of acquiring facilities and equipment for highly digitized learning.

3. The Senior High Schools administrators all over Cebu may share their best practices to assist the struggling learning institutions from any inadequacy.

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