

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is now leaving behind its reputation as the Asia's only country with a 10-year basic education program and enters the K+12 system as former President Benigno Aquino III signed the Republic Act 10533 also known as "An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening Its Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for Basic Education, Appropriating Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes," otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013." and to date, the law is currently on its third year of the implementation having Grade 11 to those institution that are offering Senior High School Program. The full implementation of the program will happen next year for Academic Year 2017-2018 for it will operate its Grade-12 Senior High School and expected to produce the first K+12 Filipino graduates.

It is apparent that one of the major changes brought about by the K to 12 reforms is on the education structure. Previously, preschool was not compulsory, that is, pupils could enroll in Grade 1 with or without having gone through preschool. Under K to 12 and with the Kindergarten Act (RA 10531), preschool education for five-year-old children becomes mandatory before entering elementary school. There will be the same six years of elementary education, but students entering secondary level will begin their junior high school as Grade 7. Junior High School is for four years (Grades 7 to 10) and Senior High School (SHS) is for two years (Grades 11 to 12). The additional two years of SHS would mean that the high school graduates are better prepared for whatever path they will choose, and they are of legal age (18 years old) to be lawfully employed.

In connection to this, however, for other private schools, the new K+12 Program were adopted since SY 2012-2013 (*ahead of one year to any other public and private schools in the Philippines*). At this point, they are handling its first batch of Grade 12. Thus, this research serves as a formative evaluation that aims to know the effectiveness of the three schools mentioned-above in their implementation of the Senior High School Program.

To construct this conceptual framework, the researcher uses the K+12 Basic Education Curriculum Framework formulated and designed by the Department of Education. The prior conceptual framework illustrates perspectives on the system and process of how K+12 works are presented by the following figure. The K+12 Education Program of the Department of Education can be considered as what to be said as in its infancy, and to date, the research studies conducted in this area is also limited and dominated by the smaller numbers of researchers.

The importance of conducting this study is necessary as Cruz (2010) claims that, the K+12 Program in the context of the students are expected to be more prepared to enter the labor force and equipped with the necessary skills enough for the workplace. Therefore, the effective implementation of the new program is very crucial.

School A: In Connection to the K-12 Initiative of the Department of Education (DepEd), and as a school with a distinct Filipino and Chinese character, School A aims to continue producing responsible Filipino

citizens, and it hopes to stay aligned to the aim and objectives of the Philippine Department of Education.

School B: School B on the other hand, continuously commits itself to excellence, service, social transformation, and global competence in a family atmosphere, a climate of joy and simplicity, and love as they embraced gratefully the new K+12 education program.

School C: It is likewise the same for School C's positive attitude towards the implementation of the program as it commits itself by integrating the work of education with the life of faith, develops persons, particularly girls and young women to build the Filipino nation and to be co-creators of God's kingdom on Earth.

To conclude, the three schools applaud the K-12 initiative, and believes that as a whole, the initiative aligns well with what their respective institution has been doing over the past years.

In this thesis, the researcher will take the opportunity to analyze effectiveness of the three schools in the implementation of their Grade-12 Senior High School Program using a framework designed and formulated by the Department of Education as a guide support for school improvement and student success. This will serve as a priori framework of the study.

In addition, this study will inform the education research community of the strengths and weaknesses as well as the limitations of the implemented Senior High School Program mandated under RA 10533.

It is expected that through the implementation of the K-12 Program in the Philippine basic Education Curriculum, this will serve as the main key to our nation's development. Though the government is facing many problems as it implements the program over the course of several years, this can be considered as a vital sign of improvement since the demand for upgrading the quality of our education is critical to our country's success.

According to Cruz (2010), the graduates under the K-12 will be more prepared to enter the labor force. With the new curriculum, senior high school students can specialize in a field that they are good and interested in. As a result, upon graduation, they will have the specific job-related skills that they need even without a college degree.

Globalization is cited a number of times in Republic Act 10533 (the K-12 law), as can be seen in this excerpt from section 2: For this purpose, the State shall create a functional basic education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment. In order to achieve this, the State shall:

(a) Give every student an opportunity to receive quality education that is globally competitive based on a pedagogically sound curriculum that is at par with international standards;

(b) Broaden the goals of high school education for college preparation, vocational and technical career opportunities as well as creative arts, sports and entrepreneurial employment in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized environment; and

(c) Make education learner-oriented and responsive to the needs, cognitive and cultural capacity, the circumstances and diversity of learners, schools and communities through the appropriate languages of teaching and learning, including mother tongue as a learning resource.

Furthermore, the RA 10533 mandated the DepED to hereby adhere the following standards and principles in developing the enhanced basic education curriculum; (a) The curriculum shall be learner-centered, inclusive and developmentally appropriate; (b) The curriculum shall be relevant, responsive and research-based; (c) The curriculum shall be culture-sensitive; (d) The curriculum shall be contextualized and global; (e) The curriculum shall use pedagogical approaches that are constructivist, inquiry-based, reflective, collaborative and integrative.

In addition, DepEd has said that one of the key features of the K-12 program will be that every graduate will be equipped with the following skills: Information, media and technology skills, learning and innovation skills, effective communication skills, and life and career skills.

Schools A, B, and C sees that these align well with the "Approaches to Teaching and Learning" that the school is in the process of nurturing the holistically developed Filipino. These approaches to learning include organizational skills and attitudes towards work, collaborative skills, and communication, information literacy, and reflection, problem-solving and thinking skills, subject-specific and interdisciplinary conceptual understand. Hence, this study will serve as a formative evaluation of the effectiveness of the three schools in the implementation of the K+12 program on their respective institution.