Filipino teachers' experiences as curriculum policy implementers in the evolving K to 12 landscape

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Basic education in the Philippines responded to the multiplicity of demands in its socio-political, economic, technological, and academic spheres through various reforms, the most large-scale of which is the K to 12 education program. This initiative changed many facets of the curricular operations in Philippine classrooms which are supported by policies. The changes that these curricular policies intend to achieve are shaped by the teachers who are at the forefront of its implementation. Using a phenomenological approach, this study investigates how five Filipino teachers implement these policies in their classrooms. Findings reveal that teachers face a number of tensions that describe their lived experience in making sense and operationalising curriculum policies in their classroom: (1) confused yet appreciative; (2) frustrated yet flexible; and (3) powerless yet vital. This study concludes with discussion about the success of curriculum implementation depending largely on how teachers understand and implement curriculum polices.

Introduction

Education is beset with multiplicity of changes and demands in its socio-political, economic, technological and academic spheres, such as globalisation (Abulencia, 2015; Misra, 2012), technological advances (Laal, 2013; Wikramanayake, 2015), a push for egalitarian principles in the teaching profession (Bongco & Abenes, 2019; Coulter & Greig, 2008), and transformative education (Bivens, Moriarty & Taylor, 2009; Bourn, 2016). These demands have pressed basic education to design itself in such a way that it would be able to educate holistically developed, lifelong learners (Abisaki, 2015; Laal, 2013), who are equipped to thrive in the 21st century world (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009).

Philippine basic education (kindergarten, elementary, junior and senior high school) responded to challenges in education with reforms (Barlongo, 2015), one of the largest scale being the *K to 12 Education Program*, which started in 2012 (Orale & Uy, 2018) and legitimised through Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) and Republic Act No. 10157 (Kindergarten Act of 2012). These initiatives were described by the then secretary of the Department of Education, Armin Luistro as "the most comprehensive basic education reform initiative ever done in the country since the establishment of the public education system more than a century ago" (SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012, p. iii). The reforms intended to reverse the decades of decline in Philippine education and create a system that is both high-performing and inclusive (Sarvi, Munger & Pillay, 2015).

The K to 12 Education Program changed many facets of the basic education system such as its philosophy, structure, and curricula (Okabe, 2013). One can argue that more than the "whats of teaching", the K to 12 Program also altered its "hows". These reforms are very much evident in the changes in the different curricular activities such as lesson planning, teaching and classroom management, and learning assessment. For instance, it is notable that while there are materials that are easily downloadable for the teachers, the Enhanced Basic Education Law promotes a relevant and culturally sensitive curriculum which makes contextualisation a key feature of the new curriculum. Because of this, teachers are expected to contextualise, indigenise, or localise the lessons as may be necessary to ensure that the learning would be responsive to the needs of the students (GovPH, 2013). Moreover, with the clamour for inclusivity (GovPH, 2013) and recognition of diversity (DepEd, DO 42, s. 2017 - National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers), differentiated learning must be taken into consideration in the planning.

There are also related policies that affect teaching and classroom management in K to 12 classrooms. One of the most significant of these is the child protection policy (DepEd Order 40, series of 2012) which seeks to protect "children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse" (p.1). This policy affects the manner by which classrooms should be managed by teachers. Moreover, with the promotion of learner-centred teaching and constructivist learning, it is expected that the teacher will provide opportunities for the learners to actively engage in the learning process through interactive and collaborative activities. Student diversity also requires differentiated teaching. In addition, teachers are expected to be gender sensitive (DepEd Order 32. s. 2017) and inclusive.

Finally, with the new competency-based curriculum, assessment of learning became focused on performance tasks (DepEd Order 8, series of 2015). Another aspect that changed dramatically was the shift from student ranking to a new, criterion-based policy on awards and recognition (DepEd Order 36, s. 2016). This order further promoted holistic development as it moved away from focusing on academic achievement, and gave equal recognition to a wide range of student achievements such as leadership and social responsibility.

However, consideration has to be made on how these large-scale initiatives actually trickle down to the individual classrooms, especially since curriculum implementation is influenced by many factors, such as poor growth of a country's economy, politics, and school leadership (Syomwene, 2013). Furthermore, Ornstein and Hunkins (2017) indicated that people is one of the many factors that determine successful curriculum implementation. Thus, the role of teachers in implementing these recent policies in the classrooms is important. Teachers as the people in the frontline of curricular policy implementation have a significant influence on how these changes disseminate to individual classrooms.

Villena, Reyes and Dizon (2015) argued that teachers are the most important people in curriculum implementation, while Vilches (2018) asserted that teachers are a major

influence upon whether educational reforms will succeed, or not succeed. While teachers had been viewed as technicians in the past, Fink (2000) asserted that teachers are more than just passive implementers of change. Change is not something that the system does to them, but something that must be accomplished along with the teachers. Vandeyar (2017) further emphasised how change started "with the personal change of the teacher" (p.373).

However, in spite of the key role that teachers play in curriculum implementation, Ornstein and Hunkins (2017, p. 257) asserted that implementation fails on many occasions because the *"people factor"* is often neglected, as education tends to focus so much on modifications of the programs and processes. In the Philippine implementation of the K to 12 curriculum, Vilches (2018) argued that the short and abrupt training left many of the teachers confused with their new roles in the new curriculum. Specifically, challenges that haunt teachers as they implement the new curriculum include: (1) the evolving role of the teacher in the face of curriculum reform; (2) a mismatch between the goals of the new curriculum and the realities of the local classrooms; and (3) flow of communication and engagement (Vilches, 2018). Indeed, curriculum implementation is a challenge among teachers, especially in terms of how they should implement curriculum policy at the classroom level.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine how Filipino teachers implement the new curricular policies at the classroom level. Given the paradigm shift in Philippine basic education classrooms brought about by the K to 12 Education Program, there is a need to describe and understand the experiences of Filipino teachers as curricular policy implementers. Adopting an emic perspective, the present study purported to answer the central question,

> What characterises Filipino teachers' experiences as curriculum policy implementers?

Method

Research design

This study employed a qualitative approach in order to explain the complexity of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of curricular policies in the classroom context. This approach amplifies the voices of teachers, who may not necessarily be voiceless, but are sometimes ignored in the implementation process (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017). Specifically, this study used a phenomenological approach which allows for the exploration of the lived experiences of individuals by looking into the universal essence of the said experiences (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of this approach is to illuminate the layer of human experience of interest and search for the essences of the participants' shared experiences (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). The phenomenological design was deemed most suitable for this study as it sought to investigate the teachers' lived experiences as they implemented curricular policies in their classrooms.

Selection site, criteria, and participants

This study focused its selection of participants on basic education teachers at the elementary level in the division of Bataan, Philippines. Participants who were teaching in different "Barangay" schools in the said division were selected, based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) have taught in the basic education level for at least five years; and (2) have experienced the transition from the former/old basic education curriculum to the present K to 12 basic education curriculum. The latter criterion was important because teachers would be better able to describe the challenges in implementing a new curriculum policy if they had been teaching prior to the implementation of the new curricular program. Table 1 summarises the profiles of the participants in this study.

Table 1: Profiles of research participants

Partici-pants	Gender	Age	Teaching experience	Teaching New Curriculum	Subjects/ classes
P1	Female	26	5 years	2 years	Grade 6: Values education, Technology and livelihood education, Maths, Filipino, Science
P2	Male	29	8 years	2 years	Grade 1: All subjects Grade 6: English, Maths, Social studies, Values education, Music, Arts, Physical education & Health
P3	Female	31	10 years	6 years	Grade 2: All subjects
P4	Female	28	6 years	2 years	Grade 4-6: English Grade 6: Science, Social studies, Values education, Technology and livelihood education, Music, Arts, Physical education & Health
P5	Female	29	8 years	3 years	Grade 5: All subjects except Technology and livelihood education

Data collection

A letter of invitation to participate in the study was sent to each of the five selected teachers. The letter consisted of an explanation of the purpose and nature of the study. The date and time of the interview were scheduled based on the participants' convenience. Further, a consent form was signed by the participants, with the assurance that their participation would be private and confidential, and that their identity would remain anonymous.

Prior to the conduct of the interview with the participants, the researchers surveyed the curricular policies that had been issued by the Department of Education through DepEd orders starting 2013 to 2018. The researchers came up with the list of relevant policies which were used during the interview sessions with the participants. The participants were requested to provide demographic information for profiling, along with the list of the

curricular policies that they remembered implementing in their classrooms. The definition of curricular policies, as used in the study was explained to guide the participants in their responses. The list of curriculum policies from each participant was compared with the researchers' list in order to guide both the data collection and data analysis for the study.

Permission was sought from the participants for the first researcher to document the interview session using an audio-recorder. Semi-structured, face to face interviews were conducted with the participants. Sample key questions asked where: "How do you feel about your role in the policy implementation process?" and "How did you adjust your classroom operations to accommodate changes in the new policy?" Probing or follow-up questions were asked, depending on the participants' responses on the initial key questions. All interview sessions lasted for less than an hour. A second interview session was conducted online with three of the participants to clarify some of their responses from the face to face interview, and to ask additional questions.

Analysis

While the interview questions were in English, the participants were allowed to respond in both English and Filipino. Verbatim data from the interviews were transcribed. Responses in Filipino were first translated to English prior to the coding process, which is considered by Saldaña (2009) as an interpretive act. Afterwards, analysis was conducted on the transcript in order to identify the significant statements for further coding, which could include phrases, words (Factor, Matienzo & de Guzman, 2017) or longer statements. A combination of descriptive and *InVivo* codes was used during the first cycle coding, which generated 31 initial codes.

As trustworthiness is one of the qualities of a good qualitative research, the initial codes, together with the translated significant statements, were sent back to the participants for member checking. This was to determine if the codes that were generated would resonate to the participants' experiences (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016).

After member checking to ensure that the codes are truly reflective of the intended meanings and experiences of the participants, patterns among the codes were explored in order to generate the themes (Factor, Matienzo & de Guzman, 2017). As similarity is one of the patterns that could be a basis in pooling the codes together (Saldaña, 2009), similar codes were grouped into themes which later became instrumental in understanding the phenomenon of interest.

Findings

From the data that were gathered, three themes emerged, that seem to be tensions that the Filipino teachers experienced. These themes collectively characterised the teachers' experiences as curriculum policy implementers in the classroom: (1) Confused yet appreciative; (2) Frustrated yet flexible; and (3) Powerless yet vital. The three themes are discussed in detail in the succeeding paragraphs.

Confused yet appreciative

Information plays a crucial role in curricular policy development and implementation. It had been observed, however that not all information that teachers hold about the curricular policies is correct and thus may lead to confusion. For instance, it had been observed that there are policies for which teachers are holding onto 'inaccurate' bits of information. To cite an example: "… *they would say that "no read, no pass" but that is against the mass promotion*" (P2). By "mass promotion" this participant was referring to an idea for which the government does not have any written policy. However, it had been observed that some of the proposed and implemented government systems (e.g. *No Filipino child left behind* and the Philippine Education for All 2015 National Plan of Action) have been misconstrued to mean recommending mass promotion of students (Orale & Uy, 2018), regardless of the student's failure to learn the required competencies.

Further, interviews with P1 and P2 showed misconceptions about the spiral curriculum which led to dissatisfaction about the spiral progression feature, which is one critical new feature of the K to 12 curriculum. All five participants shared the same belief that lesson development is supposed to be deductively designed (i.e. teachers must begin the lesson from the general ideas to the specific). This is in spite of the fact that spiral curriculum, as an important feature of the new curriculum, expects that learners would have better learning by presenting ideas from simple to complex, as learners build on their prior knowledge to construct new understandings (Orale & Uy, 2018).

Interestingly, the participants implemented all policies that they *'know about'*, not only because they are expected to, but also because they are positive that the policy changes are important to enhance the quality of education. One participant was of the opinion that the policies were, "…*implemented in order to enhance the quality of education in the Philippines*" (P5). Another believed that these policies were drafted with "…*our best interest in mind…*" (P4). Teachers were also confident that the Department in general shared the same goal of ensuring what's best for the learners. Participants have assured during the interview, "... *DepEd is really for the kids*" (P3); "*(Officials/ Heads) … would (rather) ask, did the kids learn?*" (P2).

This understanding and positive appreciation of the purposes of policy changes compels teachers to take the initiative to link themselves to various channels of information that are be necessary for the implementation of the curricular policy, such as the DepEd's website, colleagues, principal, and experts or resource persons in training and seminars. As the teachers clarify their confusions or misunderstandings of the policies, they develop a stronger appreciation of the new polices.

Frustrated yet flexible

Teachers shared frustrations over the inconsistency in the implementation of new curricular policies. P2, for instance, imparted, *"However, I was expecting that when it comes to implementation, there would be uniformity."* Participants shared that when they get the chance to talk with other teachers, that is the only time that they would realise that they have varied

implementations of the same policy. As shared by one participant, *"Sometimes when we talk about it, we just discover that we have different implementations."* She further explained, *"Sometimes, even teachers coming from the same district would have different implementations"* (P1).

However, in spite of the teachers' desire for consistent implementation of the curricular policies, they understood the need for flexibility in implementation. They believed that contexts of the community, school, and their individual classrooms have to be taken into consideration. All participants agreed that community plays a significant role in how the policy would be implemented. For instance, P3 shared her adjustments with the DepEd order 31, s. 2018, which intends to implement comprehensive sexuality education for Filipino learners at all levels in basic education through curriculum that *"protects and promotes the rights of learners to health education, information, and care"* (p.4) using appropriate pedagogical approaches. P3 explained, *"…we could not really implement it because of the area. When we discuss sensitive topics, it could hurt someone in the community"*. Because of this, she shared that they tend to *"lighten"* the way by which sexuality education is integrated in the curriculum in order to caution the community.

While the teachers recognise the policy interpretation by principals in the school context, they also believe that teachers are still the ones who understand the classroom context best. Hence, they believe that they should make decisions on how the policy will be operationalised in their respective classrooms. As P2 asserted, *"…the school head doesn't really know what the classroom set up is… Since you, as a teacher, is the pilot inside your classroom, it would be something for you to decide"*.

Powerless yet vital

Being powerless is a common feeling that was shared by the participants. These feelings appear to be coming from the belief that from the very start, (in the policy development) their realities had already been missed. As one participant asserted, *"I really wish that drafting the policy is not only based on the concerns of the few. I really wish they would listen to the voice of those teachers in the far flung areas"* (P4). This feeling of being powerless continues to the implementation phase, reinforced by their conviction that their beliefs hold no power in the matter. As P4 shared, *"… in the end, we still need to implement it"*. P5 agreed to this, claiming that *"…I think, our opinion has no place in the implementation of the policy"*.

Being powerless is also evident in the teachers' lack of realisation on how their official reports on the policy implementation could affect curricular policies. As emphasised by teachers across the interviews, not all policies cover their contexts or situations. This made it imperative for them to make necessary adjustments in its implementation in their respective classrooms. However, it is notable that none of them report the adjustments they need to make. P4 said, *"When I make adjustments on the policy, I don't report this to the officials during evaluations"*. This reality was shared by P1 who assured that *"It is only a local arrangement within the school"*. (P1) When asked if they ever raise their concerns regarding the policies, P5 jokingly said, *"Sometimes, in my head. Hahaha"*.

P3, shared about having to make an official report, should she decide to make adjustments, "…*any changes that you would make has to be put into writing… that they do not know anything about it.*" It is quite apparent however that making such decision to report alterations is not a welcome thought for the teachers. It seems that they are convinced that they are always expected to follow the policies. As some of the participants have shared, "*And if ever we have any opinion, nothing would really change anyway... In the end, we are still be obliged to follow them*" (P5). "*We still implement it because we are supposed to*" (P4); "*Because for as long as they say that you've got to implement this, you could not change that*" (P3).

In spite of such feelings of being powerless, it seems that teachers also believed that their role in the policy implementation process could not be underestimated. As P5 shared, "*Our role is very important because we are the ones who provide the information, execute and implement it.*" P3 agreed with this, claiming that, "…*we are the instrument to implement it and we deliver the results... Whether or not the policy would be successful depends on how we implement it*".

Teachers see their roles as most vital in bringing about the changes that the policy intends to achieve in their classrooms, as they are the ones who knew what the classroom context really is. This feeling is reinforced with their school head's recognition of this reality as expressed in their support to the teachers' decisions for necessary modifications in implementation. For instance, one participant shared, "…*My Ma'am (principal) told me to manage my own time…*" (P1). Another participant shared, "… *(the modification) is okay for the principal for as long as you are teaching… So it's up to you. Even if the DLL (daily lesson log) says that the kids has to multiply, but they still could not add, then, you could go on teaching addition. You will make that decision as the teacher*" (P2).

Discussion

The present study aimed to characterise Filipino teachers' experiences in implementing curriculum policies in their classrooms. The findings from the analysis identified three tensions that collectively characterised their experiences as curriculum policy implementers in their classrooms.

Confused yet appreciative

Information plays a crucial role in policy implementation. In a framework set forth by Bhuyan et al. (2010), formulation and dissemination of policies is one of the seven dimensions that affect implementation. It was emphasised that it is imperative for people who will be responsible for its implementation to have a clear understanding of the policy. For its part, the DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2015 (13 April, 2015) provided the guidelines on the establishment of a policy development process at DepEd. The said document stipulates that upon adoption, a policy shall be made public online through the DepEd website and the *Official Gazette*, ensuring that it would be searchable.

However, teachers' needs for information require more than accessibility of the information. As revealed by the findings of this study, the sufficiency and quality of information should also be a concern in the implementation of curricular policies. While

previous literature tends to assume that implementers automatically understood the details of the policy and therefore could automatically implement the said policy, if only they would decide to do so, recent literature shows teachers as active thinkers in the implementation process (Blackman, 2016).

Findings from the study conducted by Vilches (2018) on the experiences of one Filipino teacher in implementing the K to 12 curriculum show that one of the challenges is the flow of communication between different people and levels of the education system. The researcher asserted that implementation of curricular change is not a 'one shot' event but a continuous process. Changes do not happen overnight, and learning about the policy implementation is not something that is completed once everyone has been 'trained' (p.34). Similarly, the teachers who participated in the present study seem to have started from being confused about the policies, but their experiences from teaching in the new curriculum allowed them to outgrow most, if not all of their initial confusions.

Significantly, teachers recognised the importance of the changes that are implemented through the policies. This is consistent with the findings of Resurreccion and Adanza (2015) which indicated that even though teachers found it hard to adapt to the spiral approach of the new curriculum, they also recognised that the changes could help develop learners into globally competitive and dynamic individuals. Hence, in spite of the challenges, the teachers link themselves to various channels of information that are helpful in the implementation of the curricular policies. This is in line with a new learning theory in the age of technology development, connectivism. This theory asserts that with the new context, 'know-what and know-how' are supplemented by 'know-where' which pertain to the ability to locate sources for information needed. This theory emphasises that the 'pipe' is more important than what it contains, for when knowledge is required but unavailable, the ability to plug into potential alternative sources becomes a vital skill (Siemens, 2005). Furthermore, teachers engage actively in the process of comparisons and interactions with other agents of implementation such as the students, the community, colleagues, and school principal, to verify or refine their understanding of the information that they obtained. Indeed, the teachers' appreciation of the new curricular system and related policies seems to have allowed them to become more motivated in learning more about the policies, and how they should be implemented in their classrooms. This appreciation, in spite of initial confusions, allowed teachers to feel and act capably when implementing the new curricular policies in their classrooms.

Frustrated yet flexible

Teachers desire consistency in program implementation. They believe, however, that the varied interpretations in the curricular policies present challenges. Also challenging are the varied situational contexts that are needed to be taken into consideration by the teachers. These appear to show that notwithstanding the sufficiency of information about the curricular policy for implementation, variations in implementation would continue to emerge. This is consistent with the assertions of Chaudhary (2015) that curriculum implementation is affected by a diversity of factors such as the students, resource

materials and facilities, the teacher, the learning environment, culture and ideology, instructional supervision and assessment.

Nevertheless, it is quite interesting to note that in spite of the teachers' frustration over lack of consistency in the implementation of the curricular policies, they also believe that contexts call for flexibility in implementation. In many points of the interviews, teachers recognised this reality. For one, teachers were very vocal in their assertions that many classroom contexts have to be considered which compels them to make certain decisions on how to implement the policies. As Fink (2000) put it, the policy initiators and implementers are coming from different frames of reference. While the former sees the learners as statistics, the latter sees them in a more specific light as complex and diverse individuals. Similarly, Kimathi and Rusznyak (2018) asserted that part of professional teaching is making judgements on a daily basis, based on teachers' knowledge, as well as their commitment to learners' well-being which guides their actions.

Vilches (2018) asserted that more than the general frameworks of the curriculum, teachers' decisions are driven by a number of conditions in their learning milieu. These realities to which the teachers have closer access, compels them to make flexible adjustments to bridge the plan with the learners' individual contexts. Further, Rivera (2017) asserted that if there is one individual who understands the needs of the learners, that person would be the teacher. This flexibility on the part of the teachers seems to have emerged as they cope with the demands of curriculum implementation, in spite of the frustrations brought about by challenges in the implementation.

Powerless yet vital

The feeling of being powerless is very much evident in the teachers' submission to the principal's dissemination and interpretation of the policy in the school and in their failure to see how their reports could effect change in the policy review. They see themselves as mere actors expected to follow the script. Because of this, in spite of freedoms that the new system offers them, teachers still grope around the changes in their roles. This particular finding is consistent with the observation of Vilches (2018), that while the new educational system changes the role of teachers into one that is more autonomous and adaptive, teachers are not comfortable with such freedom.

It is notable that none of the adjustments made on the policy implementation and concerns about these policies were actually reported by the teachers to their heads. While they are aware of the possibility of making adjustments which have to be supported by official reports, it had been observed how such notions are considered by teachers as unwelcome thoughts, especially as they believe that they are only expected to comply. While the Department of Education's aims to establish a policy development process that provides for systematic evidence-based and participatory mechanisms and procedures for the formulation, adoption and review of policies (through DepEd Order No. 13, series of 2015), the teachers' decision to keep their silence on their situations and concerns exposes curricular policy development not only to the danger of what Fink (2000) warned as the "dialogue of the deaf", but also, to the "dialogue of the mute".

Teachers' discomfort and hesitation towards this freedom and power arises from many factors. As Overton (2006) asserted, authoritarian perspectives dominates the overt power relationships of the teachers' work. The treatment they get is that of managerial control, and they are positioned as subordinates who are expected to follow as instructed and hence, lack a sense of control in their work. Being seen as one and the same things as their work, which needed to be managed and controlled, results in the disempowerment of teachers. Further, as noted by Bourn (2016), in spite of teachers supporting the idea of their role as "vision creators" (p.68), their realities show challenges to these envisioned roles. In contrast, the European Commission (2018) in its guiding principles on policy asserted that teachers should be recognised as individuals who could be trusted and should be empowered as contributors to the development of a school.

In spite of such feelings of being powerless, it was pleasant to know that teachers believe in the central and critical role they play in the policy implementation process. The teachers believed strongly that it is through them that the implementation process would succeed or fail. This is consistent with the argument of Vilches (2018) that the classroom teacher has the power to determine whether the educational reforms will succeed or not. In fact, of all the people involved in the process of curriculum implementation, Villena, et al. (2015) asserted that teachers are the most important agent. Indeed, due to the teachers' vital role in the implementation process, many researchers have advocated for the involvement of the teacher in the curriculum development process (Oloruntegbe, 2011; Vilches, 2018).

Conclusion and recommendations

In the midst of multiple demands and changes surrounding education today, the Philippine's basic education initiated its own transformation through a number of reforms. How these reforms will see the light of day in the classrooms is influenced by teachers who are active implementers in the process. Findings from the present study showed that the teachers' role as curriculum policy implementers in their classrooms is characterised by the experience of tensions. The three tensions identified in the present study shows how teachers struggle, yet find ways to realise the goals of the change initiative. The tensions are reflections of the reality that teachers continuously face challenges but that they strive to adapt to the roles assigned to them by the reform. It could be observed, however, that while some efforts yield positive experiences, other aspects of the experience require an on-going support from the education system, if we are to turn their challenges into the changes that we desire to achieve.

Indeed, in-service training from the DepEd should be stronger and more developmental in nature, in order to facilitate the adaptation of Filipino teachers to the new curriculum, whereas pre-service education should be re-calibrated in order to purposively develop teacher education students who are capable and highly competent to perform their tasks and responsibilities in the K to 12 framework. Moreover, there is also a need for school principals and other school leaders to be further supported as they themselves are curriculum implementers. As school leaders and instructional supervisors, the way

principals communicate and translate curriculum polices to their teachers will strongly affect how teachers implement the policies and teach in the classroom. Similarly, it is also vital that teacher understand how basic education recognises their power in promoting change so that they would find the confidence to give voice to their concerns. While it is true that different contexts mean different interpretations of the policies, the teachers' concerns regarding their experiences in policy implementations has to be reported officially. This will facilitate a two way communication providing a genuine evaluation of the curricular policies, thus addressing the danger of engaging with the "dialogue of the mute".

While this study has documented the realities of Filipino teachers as curriculum policy implementers, readers should take the findings with caution for two reasons. First, the participants in the study were recruited from just one division in one province from the Philippines. It is plausible that basic education teachers from a particular division or province have a context that is not representative of the overall population of public school teachers. Therefore, the findings or insights acquired from the findings cannot be generalised as true for all teachers in the country. Second, curriculum policy implementation in the study was operationalised in a broad way and the researchers did not attempt to examine it in light of the teachers' actual pedagogy in the classroom and how the policies may have shaped their choice of specific instructional or assessment strategies in the classroom.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding these limitations, the findings advance the literature on Filipino teachers' experiences in the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum by providing a description of how a select group of Filipino teachers make sense of their experiences as curriculum policy implementers. Hence, our understanding of Filipino teachers in this time of curricular and educational reforms may further expand through the conduct of similar studies on Filipino teachers' cognitions, motivations, and actions in the implementation of curriculum programs and policies. For instance, a quantitative study that could take into account the views and experiences of significantly higher sample of Filipino teachers in implementing curriculum policies could complement the findings of the present study.

This study concludes with the idea that the success of curriculum implementation depends largely on how teachers understand and implement curriculum polices. Therefore, emphasis must be given to making it certain that our teachers are provided with the resources and support that they need in order to traverse a world that they are only starting to learn to live in.

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