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**FEATURE**

**Responding to K-12 Implementation: A Case  
Study of an Adventist Secondary  
School in the Philippines**

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**Abstract.** *The implementation of K-12 basic education curriculum in the Philippines has presented several challenges such as teachers' training and deployment and infrastructure requirements (Sergio, 2011) to Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools that are already having difficulty in just maintaining their operation and suffering enrollment decline (Furst, 2013). This paper explores how the leadership of a Seventh-day Adventist secondary school in the Philippines responded to this phenomenon and its impact on the institution. A qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion with the members of the school board and purposively selected teachers were used. Using the Taba inductive method of analysis, the result of the study would be useful as a reference for the leaders in the Education Department of the Church in policy and decision making to meet the further demands brought by the K-12 implementation in the Philippines. Overall, the effective response to the challenges brought about by the implementation of the K-12 curriculum was partly due to the strong support of the school leaders to comply with the government requirements that have resulted to (a) teachers' improved engagement in professional development, (b) higher liquidity, and (c) increase in enrollment. The findings of this study show that the quality of support from school leaders may contribute to the development and growth of a school.*

**Keywords:** K-12 curriculum, Philippines, Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools, basic education curriculum, school climate, culture of excellence, qualitative, case study

## **Introduction**

Before 2016, the Philippines had a 10-year basic education cycle, while the majority of the world has a 12-year basic education cycle (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], n.d.). The poor overall performance of the Filipino students in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey and the National Achievement Test has been linked to the 10-year basic education cycle (Magno, 2011; Senate Policy Planning Office [SPPO], 2011). Over the years, “the Philippine education has been under serious threats of deterioration” (Sergio, 2011, p. 71). To improve the educational system and comply with the global standards, the Philippine government implemented the K-12 curriculum through the Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) signed into law in 2013.

However, the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines has met several challenges, such as reforms in teachers, curriculum, and logistics (Calub, n.d.; Sergio, 2011). In particular, secondary schools faced issues “in redesigning the curriculum, in deploying and training teachers at the start of the program’s implementation, in ensuring the sustainability of the program, and in meeting the required infrastructure” (Sergio, 2011, p. 70). Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools (SDASS) were not exempted from these challenges.

However, even though many SDASS are having difficulty in maintaining their operation and suffering enrollment decline (Furst, 2013), they have found ways to respond to the K-12 curriculum educational reforms. Thus, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into how the leadership of an SDASS in the Philippines responded to this phenomenon and its impact on the institution. Specifically, this study focuses on an SDASS boarding school in Luzon.

## **Literature Review**

This study explores an SDASS in the Philippines in its response to reforms brought by the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum implementation. This literature review deals specifically with the basic education curriculum in the Philippines and the SDASS in the Philippines.

### **K-12 Basic Education Curriculum in the Philippines**

Globalization has brought a paradigm shift in education worldwide. And along with this is the establishment of a global qualification reference framework (CHED, n.d.). Unfortunately, with its 10-year basic education curriculum, the Philippine education was left behind globally, being one of three remaining countries (Djibouti and Angola) with a 10-year basic education curriculum (CHED, n.d.). The 10-year basic education curriculum and the overall poor quality of education are “also reflected in the country’s low scores in national assessment tests” (SPPO, 2011, p. 2). With a mean percentage score of 75% as a passing mark, the elementary level students got 68% (school year 2009-2010), while the *December 2019, Vol. 22, No. 2*

secondary level students got 46% in the same school year (SPPO, 2011). In terms of the international tests, “the Philippines is among the worst participating countries” (SPPO, 2011, p. 3). The Philippines was on the 23rd of the 25 participating countries in 2003. Even the considered best students from national science high schools in the Philippines were ranked among the bottom in Advanced Mathematics in 2008 (SPPO, 2011). Being left behind in terms of the global education standards puts Filipino graduates in a competitive disadvantage in the context of globalization. All these have been attributed to the 10-year basic education curriculum.

In 2010, the Philippine government made drastic measures to address deteriorating quality of education through education reforms highlighted by the implementation of the K-12 curriculum through Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013). The main purpose of the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum is to reform the Philippine education sector, which includes adding 2 years more in basic education (CHED, n.d.). The objectives are “to decongest the curriculum, to prepare the students for higher education, to prepare the students for the labor market, and to comply with the global standards” (SAPO, 2011, p. 4). The government hopes that through this reform, the education system in the Philippines can be saved from deterioration.

The first full cycle of the implementation of the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum spans for at least 14 years: 2010 (conceptualization of the curriculum), 2011-2012 (launching of the universal kindergarten), 2012-2013 (new curriculum for grade 7), 2013 (signing of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), 2016-2018 (formal implementation of the senior high school [SHS] curriculum), 2018-2019 (first graduates of the SHS and enrollment to college), and 2023-2024 [first batch to graduate from the complete K-12 curriculum in the Philippines] (CIIT: College of Arts and Technology, 2018a). The student starts at kindergarten at 5 years old and enters college by 18. The curriculum has four specialized tracks: academic track; technical, vocational, and livelihood track; sports track; and arts and design. The SHS core curriculum has eight learning areas: language, mathematics, science, communication, philosophy, humanities, social science, and PE and health. After 7 years at the primary level, the students have to complete a 6-year secondary level—grades 7 to 10 (junior high school) and grades 11-12 (senior high school).

Despite the optimism on the new curriculum, studies and even the Department of Education of the Philippines (DepEd) reveal several challenges in the implementation in the area of teachers, curriculum, and logistics (Calub, n.d.; Sergio, 2011). Sergio (2011) particularly pointed to the “redesigning the curriculum, deploying and training teachers at the start of the program's implementation, ensuring the sustainability of the program, and meeting the required infrastructure” (p. 70) as the challenges. Other studies (Alcober, 2017; Ang, 2017; Bala, 2017; Cabili, Sequete, & Capilitan, 2015; Cocal & Marcellano,

2017; Dagaraga, Demata, Felicilda, Malinda, & Sabando, 2013; Rabacal & Alegato, 2017; Vizconde, 2015) report various challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, no teacher's manuals, congested or lack of classrooms, the need for newly-hired teachers to develop their teaching skills on the different pedagogical approaches, the need of other teachers to be trained on pedagogy, the lack of available partners to provide appropriate immersion program for the grade 12, and the low commitment of some teachers, among others.

Since 2010, several steps have been taken to provide solutions to the challenges brought by the major reform in education in the Philippines. The DepEd and CHED together with various agencies in the government have taken necessary steps to remove the barriers toward accomplishing the objectives of this reform such as (but not limited to) hiring and training of teachers, building more infrastructures in the schools, and financial subsidies to private SHS (CHED, n.d.; Hernando-Malipot, 2017; SAPO, 2011). However, there is scarce literature describing the ways private schools responded to the challenges of the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum implementation, particularly among SDASS.

### **Consequence of the K-12 Curriculum Implementation**

The first batch to graduate from the complete K-12 curriculum in the Philippines will be in the school year 2023-2024, the overall impact of the K-12 implementation to the academic competitiveness and global workforce readiness of the students cannot be explored yet. However, the initial impact of the K-12 curriculum has been observed. Ang (2017) noted that “many colleges and universities in the Philippines struggled with the problems of the K-12 transition, which caused a decrease in enrollment, deficit in revenues, displacement of teachers, unused classrooms, closure of program offerings and indebtedness” (p. 25). However, when higher education institutions also operate high schools, they can minimize these problems by utilizing their teachers and facilities for senior high schools. In the same way, high schools that operate within a higher institution campus may not have much difficulty with the transition compared to high schools with no higher institution connection.

Because of work immersion during their senior high school (part of the K-12 curriculum), the senior high schools who graduated in the school year 2018-2019 were perceived as better prospects for job applications than those applicants who did not undergo the K-12 program. DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones explained that “all senior high school learners get workplace exposure in industries related to their tracks and specializations” (Mateo, 2018, para. 12). JobStreet.com survey revealed that among the employers that used employment websites, 24% would hire K-12 program graduates (Mateo, 2018).

The implementation of the K-12 curriculum financially benefitted the private schools, especially those that are struggling to survive. Many private schools are receiving aid from the government from 17,500 to 22,500 (Philippine pesos) per qualified student (CIIT: College of Arts and Technology, 2018b). The reason for this is that even before the implementation of the K-12 curriculum, the government schools have been experiencing a substantive shortage in classrooms together with other facilities (Ang, 2017). The additional 2 years to the basic education furthers the shortage of classrooms and facilities. To address the needed infrastructure and facilities, the government made arrangements with the private schools to accept students who would not be accommodated by public schools because of limited space. In return, the government provided the funds. The SDASS (where this study was conducted) has benefitted from this arrangement.

### **Role of School Leaders in the K-12 Curriculum Implementation**

School leaders play a vital role in the changes that are happening in the school, such as the transition from the 10-year basic education curriculum to K-12. The school leaders' ability to spearhead the transition to the K-12 curriculum is a much-needed skill for a school to meet the demand for a successful transition and meet the goals and objectives set by the institution and the government (Trybus, 2011). Among the major roles of the school leaders in the implementation of the K-12 implementation include the following: (a) as resource managers, (b) advocate of teachers' professional development, and (d) as instructional leaders.

School leaders, as resource managers, need to adequately and efficiently utilize available resources to attain the desired results (Atherton, 2018; Chemutai, 2015). These education resources include (but not limited to) finances, facilities, and human resources. The success of the transition to the K-12 program does not only depend on whether the school has adequate or inadequate educational resources for the implementation of the K-12 program. Regardless of the resources available, the school must use its talents and materials wisely and effectively for a successful transition. There is a "positive and significant correlation between the effectiveness of resource management strategies and learners' academic performance in the national examination" (Mutungwa & Orodho, 2014, p. 74). Thus, improving the academic performance of the students also depends on the ability of the school leaders to manage their resources as the schools respond to the challenges brought by the K-12 implementation.

The success of the K-12 transition depends vastly on the teachers' readiness and qualification to teach following the K-12 curriculum. Thus, the government initiated and subsidized various professional development training and seminars for teachers both from public and private schools. School leaders, especially the principal, have a critical role in giving "attention to and support of teachers' professional development" (Holland, 2009, p. 16). Chen (2018) noted that

principals, as instructional supervisors, are one of the catalysts for improving teachers' professional development (see also Bredeson & Johansson, 2000). Among the areas that principals have a substantial impact on teachers' professional development is on the assessment of professional development outcomes.

In the school, the principal as a school leader functions as the instructional leader to ensure that the K-12 curriculum is implemented in the school. Further, the principals are expected to promote the effective learning of all students (Lunenberg, 2010). In this study, the learning of students is measured by learning the competencies set by the government through the K-12 curriculum. School principals can accomplish the goals by "focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration, using data to improve learning, providing support, and aligning curriculum, assessment, and instruction" (Lunenberg, 2010, p. 1). As evidenced in several studies (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2012; du Plessis, 2013; Fullan, 2016), when the principal as an instructional leader takes into consideration all these elements, the school can effectively support the goals and objectives of the K-12 curriculum for students' learning.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Secondary Schools**

The SDASS in the Philippines is part of the 7,500 Adventist schools in the world. The Adventist school system is grounded on this definition of education:

True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. (White, 2018, p. 13)

Knight (2015) writes that the church pioneers established schools to serve as a training ground for missionary work and to protect the youth from the influence of secular education. He maintains that SDA schools are to maintain "spiritual identity and sense of mission" for the schools to be "a dynamic force in a world in need of redemptive healing" (Knight, 2014, pp. 14-15). The mission of Adventist education is to guide learners in developing a life of faith in God and utilizing their whole qualities to serve God and others. Aside from academic knowledge, Adventist education caters to the development of the physical, intellectual, and social-emotional aspects of the students through a process that spans a lifetime.

The first church school of the SDA Church was opened in 1853 by Martha Byington in Buck's Bridge, New York (*About Adventist Education*, n.d.). In 1917, the first SDASS in the Philippines, Philippine Seventh-day Adventist Academy, was opened and is currently the Adventist University of the Philippines (ASTR: Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, 2016). As of 2015, the SDA Church operates 2,336 secondary schools worldwide. Twenty of these schools are located

in the Philippines, while 13 out of the 20 are located in Luzon (NPUC), where this study is conducted (Seventh-day Adventists, 2017). Among the 13 schools, five are boarding schools.

Parents have varied reasons for sending their children to an Adventist school. Adventist parents send their children to Adventist schools because of spiritual focus, a safe and caring environment, and dedicated school personnel, while non-Adventist parents mentioned the safe and caring environment, high-quality academics, and spiritual focus as their main reasons. For those who did not send their children to Adventist schools, their reasons are the distance from home, high tuition cost, and lack of high-quality academics (Anderson, 2009a, 2009b; LaBorde, 2007). These cited factors for parents not sending their children to Adventist schools may have caused the enrollment decline in many Adventist schools.

Enrollment decline is one of the problems faced by many Adventist schools. Several SDA Church schools in Canada and the United States reported a decline of enrollment (Bryson, 2005; Marshall, 2008). SDASS, in particular, are having difficulty in maintaining their operation and suffering enrollment decline (Furst, 2013). The annual statistics of the SDA Church show that total enrollment in Adventist schools in the Philippines is declining. However, a recent survey shows that enrollment in secondary and tertiary Adventist schools increased from the year 2015 to 2016 (Seventh-day Adventists, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Interestingly, these are years that coincide with the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines.

Most of the published studies on K-12 in the Philippines were focused on public schools (Cocal & Marcellano, 2017; Rabacal & Alegato, 2017; Vizconde, 2015). Thus, there is a need for additional empirical studies exploring K-12 curriculum implementation and its impact on private schools in the Philippines. In our literature review, there seems to be a limited number of published studies that specifically deals with the K-12 implementation in SDASS. These and other reasons necessitate conducting this study.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study specifically deals with the transition from the 10-year curriculum to the K-12 curriculum. Thus, the theoretical framework appropriate for this study is the theory of change. The theory of change informs education reform strategies to achieve the results desired (Fullan, 2016). The focus is on the key people participating in the change process (Ellsworth, 2000). These key people involved in the process must be knowledgeable and skilled in the three overlapping phases of change. These are initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Miles et al., as cited in Roy, 2013; see Figure 1).

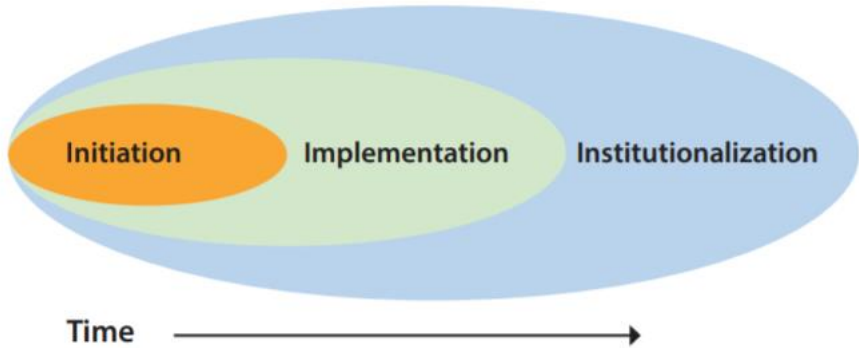


Figure 1. The three overlapping phases of the change process.

Note. From *School-based professional learning for implementing the common core*, by P. Roy, 2013, retrieved from <https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/tplchange.pdf>

In educational change, two distinct sides (by policymakers and by teachers) initiate reform (Li, 2019). In the case of the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines, the reform was initiated by the policymakers as advised by their researchers. Finally, educational change has five areas: curriculum development, school improvement, school effectiveness, teacher research, and teacher development (Wideen & Pye, 1994; Wong & Cheung, 2009). A number of these areas are the focus of this study.

### Research Questions

This study is guided by three research questions. These questions focus on the challenges, coping mechanisms, and the impact of the implementation of K-12 program in the selected school. The following are the research questions:

1. What are the major challenges faced by the school in the implementation of the K-12 Curriculum?
2. How did the school respond to these challenges?
3. What is the overall impact of the K-12 implementation on the school?



## **Methodology**

To learn the “meaning that the participant hold about the problem or the issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 29), this study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is the appropriate method to explore the challenges and responses of an SDASS in the Philippines in the K-12 curriculum implementation. This section includes the research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration, and researchers’ positioning.

### **Research Design**

The main goal of this study is to explore how the leadership of an SDASS in the Philippines responded to the nationwide K-12 curriculum. This can be best explained using a single case study design “to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19; see also Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This research design involves presenting detailed descriptions especially for a unique situation (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). In this study, we used instrumental case study because we focused on a concern (the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in SDASS) and then selected “a bounded case to illustrate this issue” (Creswell, 2012, p. 99).

### **Research Setting**

The study was conducted in an SDASS in the Philippines. The school is a boarding school located in one of the major cities in Luzon. It is one of the first two schools that were able to comply with the government requirements for the K-12 curriculum and offered both junior and senior high schools in the city. Unlike other SDASS, this school is not located within the vicinity of an Adventist higher institution. The school was experiencing an enrollment decline over the years and was struggling financially.

### **Sampling**

This qualitative study employed purposive sampling, as suggested by Creswell (2014). The participants include the principal and the treasurer, who were members of the school board. Five teachers were also included. These teachers have taught in the school for not less than five years.

### **Data Collection**

For the data collection process of this study, we followed Creswell’s (2014) suggestion. We first contacted the principal and asked permission if we could conduct the study. After we received the approval, we scheduled the interview with the principal. However, when we arrived at the school, the principal was in a seminar. So we interviewed the teachers and the treasurer. We interviewed the

principal at another time. We gave each of the participants a copy of the informed consent form. They were asked to sign the form as evidence that they understood its content and were willing to join the study. We used semi-structured interviews with probing questions. Recorded digitally, all the interviews lasted for at least 30 minutes for each participant. After we transcribed and partially analyzed the data, we had to ask additional questions for clarification mainly through phone calls and social media. All the interviews were conducted in 1 day but we communicated with the participants after that for other inquiries related to the data.

The observation was done days before the interview and after the interview. We went around the campus and even engage in informal conversations with some students, staff, and faculty. The observation was written in our field notes. Our observation was written in field notes. For the documents, we took pictures of the lesson plans and school records. The use multiple sources was to ensure the credibility of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015). We also had a member check to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

### **Data Analysis**

Taba inductive method of analysis was used in this study. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. We used different markers of different colors to highlight the data so that we could easily group the data according to their attributes. We labeled each group and identified the critical relationships of the groups. After this, we made inferences about the data. From the data, themes were generated to answer the research questions.

### **Ethical Consideration**

To observe ethical consideration, we gave the participants an informed consent form, informing them that their participation is voluntary and they could withdraw any time. We also told them that their confidentiality would be respected. We used pseudonyms for each participant.

### **Researchers' Reflexivity**

To secure the integrity of this study, the researchers' position in the research must be presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Both are licensed teachers by the Philippine Regulatory Commission. Before becoming the AIIAS Graduate School Academic Editor, the first researcher was a teacher for 6 years and had undergone extensive training in preparation for the K-12 implementation. The second researcher is a high school teacher in an SDASS.

## Results

The result of the study is presented in three themes: challenges faced during the k-12 implementation, the school's response to the challenges, and impact of the k-12 implementation to the school, corresponding to each research question. The challenges faced by the SDASS include infrastructure and facilities, teachers' readiness and eligibility, and finances. The school leaders responded by (a) improving the teachers' engagement in their professional development; (b) acquiring government subsidy, and (c) strengthening the connection with the alumni. The initial impact of the K-12 implementation to the school after complying with the government requirements was the (a) better engagement of teachers in professional development, (b) higher liquidity, and (c) increase in enrollment.

### Challenges Faced During the K-12 Implementation

This section answers Research Question 1. Among the challenges faced by the school during the implementation of the K-12 curriculum were infrastructure and facilities, teachers' readiness and eligibility, and finances. This result supports previous studies (such as Sergio, 2011; Vizconde, 2015) that point to similar problems.

**Infrastructure and Facilities.** One of the major challenges the school had to deal with was the infrastructure and facilities. Many of the school buildings are old (Teacher Paul, In-depth interview; FN, p. 6). The school also needed laboratories and additional classrooms for the senior high school (FGD O-2). The library and computer laboratories lack additional books and equipment, especially for research (FN, p. 5) and computers to accommodate all the students (Teacher Gina, In-depth interview). Teacher Tim mentioned that the school (as required by the government) needs a separate administration office for the senior high school. All the participants noted that the internet connection needs to improve.

This concern raised by the participants is common among many schools, especially those small private schools and public schools. Abulencia (2015) highlights school facilities as an important variable that needs to be addressed before the implementation of the K-12 curriculum. However, even after 5 years after the start of the K-12 curriculum program, many schools, especially public schools, are having inadequate classroom space and learning materials (Abulencia, 2015; Calderon, 2014).

**Teachers' readiness and eligibility.** The participants mentioned that they had a hard time, especially during the first 2 years of the K-12 implementation. The teacher struggled with the new teaching approach and lesson planning for K-12. One of the participants said in Tagalog, "Kami ay hirap na hirap [we really struggled]" (Teacher Madie, FGD). Some of the subjects are given to teachers who are not qualified to teach the subject; "for example, a science teacher is given

subjects from other areas because we lack teachers especially for social studies” (Teacher Paul, In-depth interview).

The result of Acosta and Acosta’s (2016) study emphasizes on *eligibility* as one of the factors that determine the readiness of teachers to teach implementation of the K-12. Teachers who do not have the training for a particular subject would spend a lot of time preparing their lesson plans and learning materials (Calderon, 2014). In many private schools, teachers are usually overloaded that they do not have time for preparation. As a result, student learning suffers.

**Finances.** The finance of the SDASS was already struggling even before the implementation of the K-12. Teacher Paula explained that because the school had to hire six teachers more, the finances of the school struggled (In-depth interview). Teacher Tim revealed that the collection of tuition fees from the parents was usually delayed. So the liquidity of the school was negative (In-depth interview). When the K-12 was implemented, it had to spend money it did not have just to comply with the government requirements. This dilemma was happening in many schools around the country. Ang (2017) mentions that many educational institutions experienced a deficit in revenues and others were in debt when the K-12 curriculum was implemented.

### **School’s Response to the Challenges**

This section answers Research Question 2. The leaders of the school had to comply with reforms mandated by the government. Despite the obvious lack of resources, they tried to find ways to address the challenges effectively.

Improving the teachers’ engagement in their professional development. The school leaders invested in and supported their teachers’ professional development. The data from the interviews collaborated with the documents reveal that with the school’s support, six teachers finished their post-graduate studies. Their teachers attended a lot of DepEd required training and seminars. Teacher Paul expressed in Tagalog, “Tadtad kami sa training.” It means that they have undergone quite a number of trainings that during the first 2 years of the implementation; they had to attend at least one training every month (FGD N-1). Some teachers also were given the opportunity by the school to undergo certification training sessions from TESDA (national certificate/certificate of competency).

Teachers are a valuable resource of the school since they are very critical in the delivery of quality education and student learning. Abulencia (2015) explains that K-12 implementation should start with the training of teachers. During the first 2 years of the implementation of the K-12 curriculum, the teachers are considered novice in many aspects, such as in the delivery of instruction and assessment. Thus, induction programs through seminars are necessary to comprehensively support the teachers (Warsame, 2011) to improve their classroom practices (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Acosta and Acosta (2016) recommend that

teachers must be given opportunities and support by the school to upgrade their skills, especially when they are handling specialized subjects in senior high school. All these can be done when school leaders invest in and support the professional development of their teachers because administrative support has been cited as one of the valuable components of successful professional development for teachers (Bliss, 2011).

***Strengthening the connection with the alumni and the local community.*** The data showed that the school leaders strengthened the school's connection with the alumni and the local community. The school appointed a campus-based alumni relations officer that focuses only on communicating with the alumni. The school has also developed a website so that the alumni can easily monitor the progress and the needs of the school. The alumni of the SDASS donated money, facilities, and school buildings needed for the K-12 curriculum implementation. The second-floor classrooms for the senior high and the science building were donated by the alumni (Document, FN-A-2, FDG 0-1).

The school also connected with local business establishments and offices as partners that provide an appropriate immersion program for grade 12 students (Document, FGD 0-F). The good performance of the students during the immersion even became an advertisement for the school (Teacher Paul, In-depth interview). Teacher Gina even revealed that the students were allowed to use the facilities of other institutions to complete their school projects because their school lacks those facilities. It seems that there is a collaboration between schools.

A strong and healthy connection with the alumni benefits the school. Alumni is one of the factors that brings strength and expansion to the institution, especially through their donations because they feel obliged and honored to return the favors to their Alma Mater. For that reason, Shakil and Faizi (2012) show that an Alumni Association plays an important role in supporting the school's progress. Also, a campus-based alumni relations officer plays a crucial role in developing rapport so that alumni would engage in a lifetime of service to their alma maters (Kelleher, 2011). Further, Stephenson and Bell (2014) implied that the donations from the alumni help the school to survive even if it is struggling financially.

Abulencia (2015) also supports the partnership and collaboration between the school and the local government units, the business sector, parents, non-governmental organizations, and other concern sectors (Abulencia, 2015). The community is an extension of the school. Thus, a strong and healthy connection with the local community assists the school in providing quality education to the students.

***Acquiring government subsidy.*** The school was struggling financially with negative liquidity even before the K-12 was implemented (Document; Teacher Tim, In-depth interview). Thus, the school leaders endeavored to submit all the requirements to qualify for a government subsidy. The school's effort was not

wasted as it was one of the first two schools in the city to qualify for government subsidy.

This government subsidy is called the *voucher program*. This is offered to junior high school and to incoming senior high schools for them to pursue their studies (Grades 11 and 12). One voucher covers the costs for one student for one school year (K-12 Philippines, 2015). Acquiring government subsidy is commonly practiced by schools around the world. Countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development provide 85% of total school funding for a typical school year (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012).

### **Impact of the K-12 Implementation on the School**

The third theme addressed Research Question 3. The school leaders responded to the challenges by religiously complying with the requirements of the government. Their strong support to address the challenges enabled the school to gain a positive impact from the implementation. The prominent as mentioned by the participants are the (a) improved teachers' engagement in professional development, (b) higher liquidity compared to the previous school years, and (c) increase in enrollment.

***Improved teachers' engagement in professional development.*** The participants revealed that since the K-12 was implemented, they have more professional development opportunities provided by the school and the national and local government. The school leaders have been active in supporting their teachers' post-graduate studies, resulting in six teachers finishing their post-graduate studies. With the support of the school administrators, the teachers are also active in attending DepEd-required trainings and seminars. Some of the participants expressed that they had more professional development engagement in the first 2 years of the K-12 implementation compared to their entire professional development experience before the implementation (FGD N-2). This result was also observed in public schools as public school teachers were required to undergo several professional developments in preparation for the K-12 curriculum. Combalicer (2016) reported that as a result of the trainings, teachers improved, especially in the areas of preparation and readiness, curriculum enhancement, strategies and techniques, and learning resources.

***Higher liquidity compared to previous school years.*** The interview with the school leaders, as supported by documents, shows that the school was -27% in terms of liquidity before the K-12 implementation. Teachers' salaries were sometimes delayed as many parents did not pay the tuition fee on time. However, since the school was able to qualify for the government subsidy for the junior and senior high school, the majority of their students are receiving 17,500 to 20,000 pesos per school from the government. The money is sent by the government to the

school. As a result, the current liquidity of the school is +14% (Teacher Tim, In-depth interview). Teacher Tim expressed that this is still low but is much better compared to their previous liquidity. Other participants collaborated that the school is now financially capable especially in giving salary.

The government subsidy ranges from 17,500 to 22,500 depending on the location of the school. The recipients are students in public schools and students who will enroll in private schools. For students who come from private schools, they will receive 80% of the specified amount (K-12 Philippines, 2015). Getting subsidy from the government to help students not only from public schools but also from private schools is common around the world as 85% of total school funding in many countries comes from government sources (OECD, 2012).

***Increase in enrollment.*** The school records show that there is a constant increase in enrollment in the school. The school has more than 400 students at the time of this study. Aside from adding another 2 years (senior high school), the school is one of the few schools in the city that was able to comply with DepEd requirements for senior high school. As a result, many parents sent their students to this school. Besides, the school was able to qualify for a school subsidy. More students can now attend private schools even if their parents could not afford private schools because the government pays for the tuition fee (FDG-L1). Programs such as government subsidies (vouchers) are shown to have affected the enrollment increase of schools. A study in the Chicago metropolitan area shows that private school enrollment has increased, and parents choose to send to private schools because of the government subsidy (Ferreyra, 2007).

### Conclusion

The data from this study revealed that the implementation of the K-12 caused various challenges to an already struggling school in terms of finance and enrollment. However, the school leaders of the SDASS responded by religiously complying with the requirements of the government. Their strong support to address the challenges enabled the school to address the challenges and gain a positive impact from the implementation.

The teachers' readiness and eligibility to teach the K-12 curriculum were addressed by improving the teachers' engagement in their professional development through DepEd required trainings and seminars, certification trainings (national certificate/certificate of competency), and postgraduate studies. The government subsidy for the K-12 implementation helped the school provide the salary of teachers. The challenge of infrastructure and facilities was addressed through the support of the church and other individuals who supported the school. But the major donations come from the alumni of the school.

The participants of the study have observed that the impact of the implementation of the K-12 curriculum to the school is mostly positive. Compared

to the years before the K-12 implementation, (a) the teachers are now more engaged in professional development, (b) the finance officer has recently reported higher liquidity, and (c) the school document shows an increase in enrollment. Overall, the effective response to the challenges brought about by the implementation of the K-12 curriculum was largely due to the strong support of the school leaders to comply with the government requirements. The findings of this study show that the quality of support from school leaders may contribute to the development and growth of a school.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends that SDASS leaders who envision a successful transition to the K-12 curriculum must do the following:

1. Sponsor more in-house K-12 seminars and trainings.
2. Allocate sufficient budget for teachers or administrators to attend off-campus K-12 seminars and trainings.
3. Develop a regular mentoring program for teachers for the enhancement and sustainability of the skills acquired.
4. Monitor and evaluate teachers on how they implement the K-12 curriculum.
5. Create a dynamic collaboration between the home and community to meet the objectives of the K-12 curriculum.
6. Purchase of K-12 books and other reference materials, laboratory equipment, modules, and information technology equipment to instruction.
7. Track the progress and evaluate the implementation of the K-12 curriculum for future implementation.

For a future study, the recommendation is to investigate the impact of the K-12 program on the preparation of students for college.



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