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FEATURE

Teacher Involvement in School Curriculum Design and Development in the Philippines: A Case Study

Weber R. Irembere

Abstract. *Curriculum is one of the major important aspects of education. It is the set of plans, objectives, and processes involved in educating people. While teachers are one of the stakeholders of the students' education, however, they are not fully involved in planning or developing the curriculum. This limited involvement can have a negative impact on the quality of education. According to Taba's theory, curriculum must be well structured and the structure must involve teachers. This case study aimed to explore teachers' involvement in curriculum design and development in a private school in Cavite, Philippines. Individual interviews, as well as documents, were used in collecting data from the teachers and the principal. The data collected were analyzed according to Creswell's process. This process consisted of organizing and preparing data, coding data, describing and generating categories and themes, and making interpretation of the findings. The results showed that teachers are considered merely as implementers of the school curriculum and as repercussion, they face a number of challenges in teaching. Some ways to get teachers more involved in school curriculum design and development are suggested in this paper.*

Keywords: Curriculum design, curriculum development, teacher involvement, department of education, case study, Philippines.

Introduction

Designing and developing a curriculum are two important aspects of a curriculum process in which stakeholders should collaborate. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) assert that the development of a curriculum involves a number of people from both sides—the learning institutions and the community. It also

includes a plan made at the classroom, school, regional, country, and federal levels. Teachers are an important cornerstone in the work of designing and developing school curricula. Weinbaum and Supovitz (as cited in Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2015) argue that the core of any reform at school is making a curriculum plan. They state that “curriculum work is often a collaborative process involving district administrators, classroom teachers, and other faculty, along with outside experts, such as a professor from a local university” (p. 381). Accordingly, a curriculum is designed with the interventions of the people engaged in the teaching and learning process. Not only are the curriculum specialists needed in curriculum design but also the implementers and consumers.

A few theories related to curriculum development have been written by different authors. In the matter of school curriculum development, Taba (1962) states that to determine what should be taught, educators have to formulate hypotheses, assemble data, and interpret them. To completely achieve this goal, teachers need to be involved in all parts of the school curriculum development process. Additionally, an operational curriculum is in the hands of the instructors. Expressing the significant role of the teachers in outlining and guiding the curriculum, Taba (1962) states that “the final creative touch of translating the general and often vague objectives and plans into operating curriculum depends on the capacity of the teachers as curriculum makers” (p. 239). Though teacher involvement increased at the end of the 20th century, a need for more involvement in curriculum decisions is still evident (Henson, 2015). The participation of teachers in curriculum design or development is a need that cannot be ignored.

Teachers are probably the most important group in developing a curriculum. They should have either the major or the total membership of the curriculum board. They serve as the first voice in the step of developing the curriculum and are instrumental to the implementation plan. Their part in committees is found in initiating and reviewing proposals, gathering data, doing investigations, contacting parents and other people, taking notes and creating the materials of a curriculum (Gordon, Taylor, & Oliva, 2019; Oliva, 2005).

Although teachers occupy a major place in making decisions for a curriculum, they do not have a part in curriculum committees (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). The lack of teachers’ participation in curriculum design and development is an obstacle that affects the whole process of teaching and learning in Philippine schools. This study aimed to determine the reasons for the lack of teachers’ participation in curriculum design and development in the Philippines at the secondary school level. It also intended to identify the major challenges teachers face in the implantation of a curriculum designed without their involvement and get their opinions about this situation. This study is important in that it can draw teachers’ attention to this reality and reveal their responsibility and right to be part of the committees that make decisions in curriculum design and development.

Literature Review

The involvement of teachers in curriculum design is a known tradition. The successful activity of curriculum reform relies on teachers' work because they put every reforming idea in practice (Huizinga, Handelzalts, Nieveen, & Voogt, 2014). In this study, the literature review pointed out the considerations and the views of other researchers regarding the involvement of the teachers in designing and developing a curriculum. The importance of involving teachers in curriculum development is highlighted. Additionally, it is also emphasized that the work of teachers is not solely limited to the implementation of a school curriculum.

Teachers' Involvement in Curriculum Design

Being the implementer of the curriculum, the teacher has to be a part of the decision-making process regarding the curriculum design. Oliva (2005) asserts that the teacher has to be involved in every single step of making a curriculum, including the designing of specific objectives, materials, sections of the course, and strategies. Teachers need to have a part in the curriculum committees at the school, district, and state levels and fulfill special duties during the school period (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). There should be no curriculum in the absence of the instructor. Teachers become a strong basis of a significant curriculum when they participate as experts and are involved in planning, enacting, assessing, and revising a curriculum (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015).

Unfortunately, teachers are often considered more as implementers rather than designers of a school curriculum. Alsubaie (2016) argues that developing a curriculum is a challenging undertaking. For this reason, all the stakeholders are to be involved. Teachers, especially, who directly deliver instruction to learners, are a vital instrument for developing and revising a curriculum successfully. Additionally, based on their experience, knowledge, and expertise, teachers are the center of all the effort of curriculum development. The more teachers are involved, the better the learning is.

Developing a curriculum is a process that requires teachers' presence to express their points of view. In Kenya, teachers experience frustration in implementing an integrated English language curriculum that is developed without their voice. They lack knowledge regarding the objectives, have insufficient information about the guidelines set by the curriculum developers (Koth, 2016). Huizinga et al. (2014) found that teachers have limited skills and pedagogical knowledge in designing a curriculum. Therefore, Huizinga, Handelzalts, Nieveen and Voogt (2015) pointed out the need for developing expertise for teachers in designing a curriculum.

They found three ways through which teachers can get a chance to develop their expertise: "The use of exemplary materials, evaluating the designed materials, and sharing experiences of the conducted design process" (p. 158). Through these

ways, the teachers can be more effective, trained, and skilled in the matter of curriculum development.

The Importance of Involving Teachers in the Curriculum Development

Teachers are in charge of transferring the decisions to learners by putting the theory into practice. Therefore, they need to be found within the team that makes curriculum decisions. They have to be in the planning phase of what to be implemented because they know and have the special perception of the problems in the classroom (Cincioğlu, 2014). Fullan (2014) argues that the effectiveness of educational reform and the success of a school curriculum depend on the level of involvement of teachers who are the backbone of the curriculum development. Handler (2010) found the necessity of involving teachers in school curriculum development. He argued that in a collaborative and effective work with teams and specialists in charge of developing a curriculum, teachers could make a great contribution in preparing materials and different sections of schoolbooks. Further, involving teachers is of great significance to make alignment of the content according to the needs of the learners.

Other researchers discovered that though teachers could positively contribute to the process of developing a school curriculum, they are disregarded during that process (Abudu & Mensah, 2016). More so, in the school where instructors participate in curriculum development, the central administrators have a wide influence on the work of the teachers (Ziba, 2011). Abudu and Mensah (2016) found in Ghana some barriers that block teachers to participate in the curriculum development. They stated, “The main barriers that teachers meet in their attempt to participate in curriculum design include huge workload, lack of expertise, limited funding and lack of availability of information on when curriculum development is to be executed” (p. 28). The presence of the teacher in curriculum committee is rarely visible.

Implementation of a School Curriculum

Teachers are the first implementers of a curriculum. Mulenga and Luangala (2015) recognize that the role teachers play in the implementation of the curriculum is very significant to help learners acquire attractive knowledge, talents, truth, and good behavior. Kobiah (2016) indicated that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is the institution in charge and responsible for the development of the school curriculum in Kenya. His findings revealed statistically the existence of a significant relationship between the perception of the instructors with the way they are involved in selecting and organizing learning experience and how they implement a curriculum in secondary schools. He concluded that “due to the top-down model of curriculum development followed by KICD, the curriculum development process is still largely centrally-

controlled, and the experiences and talents of teachers are untapped and under-utilized in this vital process” (p. 58). This leads to little consideration of the work of teachers by the decision-makers of the curriculum design.

In their study, Philippou, Kontovourki, and Theodorou (2014) found that teachers are considered observers of an event at a distance, receive, implement a curriculum, and reform with limited independence. They are more curriculum executors in the classrooms rather than curriculum creators. Mikser, Kärner, and Krull (2016) see the teacher as the owner of the curriculum, and owning the curriculum implies not only being a curriculum executor but also a curriculum developer. However, their findings show that when it comes to making a curriculum, “the general part was left to the politicians, academicians (i.e., university professors and lecturers not working in schools) and administrators” (Mikser et al., 2016, p. 850) while teachers are simply involved in developing the course syllabi. Inasmuch as teachers are concerned, the literature points out the significant role of the teachers and their perceptions regarding curriculum development. However, there is a gap in the studies on teacher involvement in the school curriculum development of international private high schools which implement two different curricula to local and international students in the Philippines.

This study explored the following questions:

1. Why are teachers less or not involved in the curriculum design and development in high schools?
2. How does the lack of involvement of teachers in curriculum development affect the process of teaching-learning?
3. What are the opinions and suggestions to solve this problem of not involving the teachers in curriculum design or development?

Methodology

The research methodology is a systematic way that shows how a research problem is addressed (Rajasekar, Philominathan, & Chinnathambi, 2014). This section outlines the methodological process used in conducting this study. To be viable, the methodology of the study needs to be harmonious in all its aspects. This section describes the research design, research setting, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, and the researcher’s reflexivity.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach. A single case study was employed to explore the views of teachers regarding their involvement in the school curriculum design and development. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study can

be an existing reality such as a human being, a diminutive assembly, an association, or a company. Additionally, a case study research starts by identifying a specific case to be described and analyzed. The case of this study consists of the involvement of teachers in curriculum design and development in a selected international private high school. The bounded system of this study consists of the administrator or principal, curriculum documents, students, and the classrooms of the school.

Research Setting

This qualitative research was conducted in one international private high school. It is a faith-based secondary school. In its international nature, this school hosts students from the different parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Also, the school employs teachers of different nationalities. This selected international private school is located in the province of Cavite in the Philippines.

Participants and Sampling

This qualitative inquiry made use of purposeful sampling to get the information needed. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that purposeful sampling “means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 158). In this study, five high school teachers and the principal of the school were selected as a sample of the study. The selection of the teachers was based on the following criteria: First, the required teaching experience for a teacher to be selected was a minimum of 5 years. Second, holding at least a master’s degree in teaching/education was in consideration. Last, the teacher had to be a licensed teacher in the Philippines. In line with this, Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora (2016) state that purposive sampling depends on the kind of participants a researcher looks for. It is usually used according to the specific kind of individuals.

Data Collection Procedures

This section describes the instruments that were used to collect data. The instruments used in the data collection were semi-structured interviews. Aurini, Heath, and Howells (2016) assert that as an investigating instrument, interviews grant a researcher the possibility to explore the ideas more deeply and the understanding of the points of view of the participants. The form of interview used in this research is an individual semi-structured interview using open-ended questions. Interviews were held in the length of 15-30 minutes according to the appointment given by each participant. Document analysis was a useful tool to triangulate with interviews done with the teachers. Denzin (as cited in Aurini et al., 2016) states that triangulation of methods of data collection “means combining

methods such as interviewing, surveys, and observation across times and places to offer multiple perspectives” (p. 64). The curriculum documents consulted in this study were the curriculum guides, course outlines, lesson plans, and textbooks.

Data Analysis Procedures

This section describes the process of data analysis and synthesis used in this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that generally, data analysis aims to give meaning from the text and image of the information. They state that data analysis “involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together” (pp. 190-193). In this research study, data analysis began as soon as the first pieces of information were collected. The mental process of analysis started during the contact with the first participant.

In agreement with the participants, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and treated as raw data in order to give a sense of the experiences of the teachers about the curriculum design and development. In this research, the data collected were analyzed according to Creswell’s (2014) process from the specific to the general meaning. In this process, data were prepared and organized, coded, and described to generate categories and themes through which interpretations were made. Seldañá and Omasta (2018) state that “the purpose of coding is to identify forms of participant action, reaction, and interaction, as suggested by the data” (p.126). Coding relies on previous transcriptions to generate categories (Kowal & O’Conneil, 2018).

Ethical Consideration

Creswell (2014) declares that there are ethical issues that must be considered in qualitative inquiry. The following ethical considerations guided this study: the research materials were approved by the institution’s Ethics Review Board (ERB) according to the policies of the institution (Anderson & Corneli, 2018); the informed consent form was signed by the participants for their agreement to participate in this study. Additionally, they were not forced to participate, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Next, the participants were placed in adequate protection with the confidentiality enforced. Other published works were specified and properly credited to avoid issues of plagiarism.

Researcher’s Reflexivity

The reflexivity of the researcher plays a significant role in the research process. Creswell and Creswell (2018) claim that “inquirers explicitly identify reflexively their biases, values, and personal backgrounds, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES) that shape their interpretations formed during a study” (p. 183). Personally, to reveal my biases, it is worthy to note that I have secondary

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schools for 14 years. Having experienced the struggles of implementing the secondary school curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education from the central government and the misalignment related to the teachers and the subjects to teach, I have found my interest in searching for challenges teachers face in implementing a curriculum and listen to their experiences.

Trustworthiness in research is of great significance. According to Dahler-Larsen (2018), qualitative evaluators usually want to ensure how trustworthy their findings are, based on the credibility of the results in general. In this case, I used member check, which consisted of returning the raw data and provisional interpretations to the participants from whom the data were collected. Given that it was hard to meet them face to face, I emailed them for member check. Additionally, I approached two researchers for peer examination to get more insights into my research process.

Results

The results of this study are synthesized into six themes. The six themes are arranged as follows: a) compass for teaching, b) curriculum decision-makers, c) teachers' assignment, d) challenges in curriculum implementation, d) curriculum mapping, and f) teacher recommendations. These themes were generated by the categories produced from the different codes which were created as part of the data analysis.

Descriptive Information of the participants

The participants of this research were all the teachers at one high school in Cavite, Philippines. They had been serving as teachers for a number of years in different schools. From Table 1, six participants took part in this study. Five of them were high school teachers and one principal/administrator. Three of them were female and the other three were male. Except for one participant, who was a master's degree holder and a PhD candidate in education, all others were master's degree holders. Additionally, they were licensed teachers in the Philippines. The code attributed as HSTP stands for (High school teacher participant) followed by the number of the participant. However, for the last participant, PAP6 stands for Principal Administrator Participant 6. Therefore, participants are used with HSTP followed by the identification number assigned to the participant.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Country of origin	Work experience	Education attainment	Code
1	M	India	17 years	PhD Candidate	HSTP1
2	M	Ethiopia	10 years	MA Ed	HSTP2
3	F	Philippines	18 years	MA Ed	HSTP3
4	F	Philippines	6 years	MA	HSTP4
5	M	Philippines	14 years	MA Ed	HSTP5
6	F	Philippines	20 years	MS Ed	PAP6

Theme 1: Compass for Teaching

During the teaching-learning process, teachers have basic documents which serve as indicators or compass of their teaching. These documents are safeguards in the effective implementation of the school curriculum. However, although the teachers had document guides that indicated the subjects to be taught, they suffered from a lack of textbook references for some subjects. Given that those books and teaching materials were not provided, it became the responsibility of the teachers to make all arrangements by downloading books from the internet or documents with contents related to their guides, according to HSTP3 and 4. Conversely, for some courses, there was no curriculum established by the Department of Education, and the teachers suffered from making the curriculum guide by themselves based on some existing textbooks. The Physics subject for junior high school was an example given by HSTP5.

Theme 2: School Curriculum Makers

Making a decision for what to teach to learners requires a collaborative work among stakeholders. Läänemets and Rüttnann (2015) argue that before making such a decision, designers should clear the questions regarding what to plan and what to implement. Making any decision for instruction implies evaluating its psychological meaning on students and professors. In the Philippines, however, some entities seem to have the power of making the decision while others need a total submission. Below are stated the reasons for which teachers are not involved in the curriculum development.

The privilege of the Department of Education (DepEd). The participants revealed that the school curricula are designed by the DepEd in the Philippines. In the government of the Philippines, the DepEd has all the prerogatives and rights to decide what to teach. Expressing the dependence of this private school, one of the participants stated:

We come to private schools, under the Department of Education. The subjects, especially in junior and senior high school, are under DepEd because junior and senior high schools are a pattern under the curriculum of DepEd. Every time the DepEd issues a memorandum for requirements, we have to comply with the requirements. Otherwise, we do not get the letter that approves the senior high school. (HSTP1)

Teachers need to show total compliance by implementing a curriculum that is designed without their participation. They embrace the directions set by the school curriculum decision-makers. Total submission is shown in every single task of teaching.

School gatekeepers' committees. The collected data indicated that when it comes to designing a curriculum, especially for private schools, headteachers and the private school owner are the ones who establish a system that teachers have to follow. One participant expressed that, "Actually, in my previous school, I did not have any idea about the curriculum. So, I was not really involved in developing a curriculum. They already have a system that we need to follow. So, we are not part of making the plan of the curriculum" (HSTP4). Another participant affirmed that he was consulted to give his opinions when the school was implementing the K-12 program for Grades 11 and 12 because it was the time the Philippines was starting with the senior high school program implementation. However, the final curriculum document was approved by the administration of the school. Since then, there has been "no consultation, no idea of improvement of curriculum or evaluation of that implemented curriculum" (HSTP5).

Teacher marginalization in curriculum development. Being the great implementers of a school curriculum does not imply having a part in the curriculum design and development committee. The participants expressed some reasons for which they are not really involved in the curriculum design and development. First, the administrators do not invite teachers in the curriculum design, development, or evaluation. This explains how underestimated teachers are. Further, though a teacher can be sometimes invited, he/she may be passive in the curriculum committees because the "administration is like this, if you make noise they will fire you. They want things to be peaceful; they want everybody to know they are the head" (HSTP1). When it comes to the DepEd curriculum committee, the participants stated that they are little involved in implanting the curriculum described and prepared by the DepEd. Others expressed their marginalization by saying that as teachers, they are ignored during the curriculum design and development. They are not consulted and are not part of the curriculum planning committee (HSTP1, 2, 3). Additionally, private schools have a system, and teachers just follow the system. So, teachers are not really involved in developing a curriculum; they are not part of making a plan of the curriculum" (HSTP3 & 4).

Theme 3: Teachers' Assignment

Teachers have their responsibilities at school. When asked about their participation in the school curriculum design and development at the secondary school level, all the participants responded negatively. They expressed that their part in the curriculum is to adjust, modify and adapt to the philosophy and the belief of the church they belong to. It is a personal responsibility of each one of the high school teachers to adapt the DepEd curriculum. In this perspective, the lessons taught may fit with the values of the mission statement of the school.

Theme 4: Challenges in Curriculum Implementation

The participants expressed different views regarding the lack of teacher involvement in curriculum design or development. They pointed out a number of difficulties they faced in curriculum implementation. The challenges they encountered in this context were related to the lack of stability of the workers, conflicts between curricula, hesitation in teaching, and the learners' problems. These challenges affect both teachers and students.

Lack of stability of workers. The effective implementation of a curriculum demands the presence of the teacher for a number of years since he/she is the one who knows the problems of the learners and their level. However, the participants revealed that no school ensures the teachers who can be available the following years. One of the participants asserted, "If I am going to be a teacher for the social studies, at least I should be there for five years. I will not only master the subject but also effectively implement the curriculum" (HSTP2). Further, the change of the administrators every school year or so affects the teachers in their implementation of the curriculum.

Curricula conflicts. All the participants brought up the problem of implementing a foreign curriculum from North America, which does not help Asian, African, and European students in the Philippine setting. In its international nature, the school hosts many students from different countries. Further, the students have different backgrounds and different curriculum in their home countries. The school claims to follow the American curriculum by having block curriculum, which does not support all the students. Yet, there is a curriculum from the DepEd which needs to be taught. This is a big challenge not only for the teachers but also for the students since the majority of the learners are not permanent at the selected school. Some are children of missionary parents who are in the Philippines not for more than four or five years. Others are children of adult students who study in the same town for just a few years and must return to their respective countries once they are done with their university program. When these young children return to their respective country, they are completely lost (HSTP1, 3 & 4).

Hesitation in teaching. Teachers are not sure about what program to teach—either the DepEd program or the western curriculum. The participants claimed of not having any training, any orientation on how to implement the two curricula. Once appointed to the school, every teacher is responsible for checking and mixing the North American curriculum and the DepEd curriculum. Moreover, the misalignment of subjects and the surprising attribution of courses to some teachers in the middle of the school year do not allow teachers to get prepared for making the curriculum guide, lesson plans, and course outlines properly before they teach.

Additionally, the participants mentioned the problem of lack of contextualization of the western curriculum applied in Asia, especially in the Philippines. Teachers suggested a curriculum that is strong enough to be adapted everywhere it is needed. The delivered curriculum must be explained to the parents of the children so that these parents can have the option of choosing another school for their children, when necessary. By expressing the need for a contextualized and dynamic curriculum, one of the respondents claimed:

The disadvantage is that the [North American] curriculum is not contextualized. It is based on the western point of view. American standards, American curriculum, American points of view! But we could not all be Americans. Yes, we have very few students from the United States. The thing is how about those who are Asians, Koreans, Africans, or Indonesians? Their worldview is quite different from others. So, a contextualized education curriculum would be a great help. (HSTP5)

Learners' problems. The participants confirmed that students encountered a number of problems due to the curriculum that does not meet their needs. The first challenge evoked was the lack of adaptation of the students to the school curriculum of their country when they go back home. One alarming illustration given was the case of a girl from a family who left this school in Grade 10 and was not allowed to go to Grade 11 in one of the countries in Europe. The suspicion was that she did not qualify for that grade. It was a big challenge because the school decided to accelerate her and she refused by claiming to be where her academic records indicated she should be. Teachers who trained her were worried to hear the news (HSTP2).

Another problem that affects students is the English language. Participants brought to mind the case of Koreans and Chinese students who had a big issue with the English language since they had not been exposed to the environment where they have to speak English a lot. Such students have to learn English quickly because the medium of instruction is English.

Theme 5: Teachers' Aspirations

The above themes have proved the non-involvement of the teachers in school curriculum design or development. The participants expressed the reasons for

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which they are not involved in the matter of curriculum development. They gave some important suggestions as to ways they can get involved in curriculum development.

Curriculum mapping. The participants argued that mapping a curriculum is one way to solve the problem of the lack of teachers' participation in curriculum design and development. All the participants talked about the need and importance of teachers to come together and map the curriculum at the end of the school year. They emphasized the collaboration among subject teachers. The participants revealed that they do not have formal subject teacher meetings set with objectives to be achieved. They sometimes met to share information with one another rather than evaluate what went well or wrong and needed to be improved. One of the participants claimed, "we subject teachers meet informally. We usually talk about issues but informally. A formal meeting means there is a goal to update. No, we do not have" (HTTP5). Additionally, teachers need to come together at the end of the school year to work not only on subjects but also the topics to be taught the following year.

The participants argued that the summer period should be a time for curriculum mapping. This work has not yet been done as reported by some of the participants and they suggested that the alignment could be established between grade levels. This time could also be used to select and evaluate textbooks to be used the following year. One of the participants stated, "We should not only set the curriculum mapping for the subjects but we have to [align] each curriculum with the next grade" (HSTP2).

Teacher's desire. The participants expressed their desire to be part of the curriculum committee for a number of reasons. Teachers have the background of the students' problems, experience what happens in the classrooms, and know the difficulties and even the levels of the learners. The teachers wished to have an effective collaboration with the DepEd at national level and participate in school curriculum plans or even have representatives. The curriculum designers are invited to consider teachers' opinions when making a school curriculum. One of the participants claimed: "teachers should be invited in the planning because they know what the problem in the classroom is. Listen to the challenges of teachers. Observe us and give us feedback, get us involved in planning or developing a curriculum" (HSTP4). If teachers are not consulted, those who make the curriculum might design it without considering the needs of the students and of the community itself. The teacher is the one who can provide the details on how to meet students' needs.

Another aspect highlighted is the worldwide student consideration. The international aspect of the students in this specific school needs great attention. One of the participants stated:

We need to make sure that those students are given an international curriculum that is adapted because every time there is a discussion that involves the national setting in the Philippines, we also need to consider the international setting of that child. They need to connect because everything they learn about the Philippines remains here. But they need to know what is happening in their country (HSTP2).

The participants also emphasized the willingness of the teachers to participate in curriculum development. They asserted that teachers should be regularly consulted; their suggestions should be taken into consideration. A regular cycle of updating the curriculum is important, and at the time, “we teachers would be consulted. Ideally, teachers should be consulted in regular updating of a curriculum because it does not make sense: you change the curriculum, and you do not ask the teachers who are delivering the curriculum” (HSTP5). Participants said that this is to be done by looking back at the curriculum where implementers did well and what to improve; what is useless in a curriculum and the part to strengthen.

Discussion and Implications

The respondents in this study showed how voiceless they are when it comes to designing or developing a school curriculum. The reasons for which teachers are not involved in the curriculum design and development have been pointed out in this study. The DepEd, the administrators of the schools, and the owners of private schools have the prerogative to make decisions of what to teach. Ignoring the participation of the teachers in school curriculum development has generated problems that teachers face in the implementation of the curriculum. These challenges include hesitation in teaching, implementation of two curricula for which they did not participate during the development process, and the learners’ challenges when they have to move to another school. However, the implementation of the findings of this study is a way to overcome these challenges. Involving teachers in curriculum mapping and curriculum development, as well as accepting teachers’ suggestions, can improve the teaching-learning process. In line with this, Cincioglu (2014) argues that when teachers work with other stakeholders in the school curriculum development, they can come up with the most suitable course outline. Further, from the combination of theory and practice, they get more experience, knowledge, and wisdom to perform the process of teaching and learning.

The role of teachers in facilitating students to get the knowledge is significant. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers get involved and totally be allowed to participate in the whole curriculum development process. This can help them fulfill their vital role and responsibility to implement the school curriculum (Mulenga & Mwanza, 2019). In agreement with this, the participants expressed how they are aware of what is happening on the ground of the teaching and learning process. If they are involved in the curriculum development, they can easily modify, adjust,

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and implement it according to what is happening daily in the classroom. Additionally, when teachers are involved in making a curriculum, the curriculum becomes realistic and beneficial for the students. Teachers know the weakness and strengths of the students attending their school. Not only is their involvement in the school curriculum development beneficial for the learners at school but also in the learners' further studies.

Conclusion

Conceptualizing, designing, developing, and implementing school curricula at any level of education, especially in the high school level, is a complex work that needs collaboration among different stakeholders. Despite the low and insignificant level of teacher involvement, teachers explained how important their participation in curriculum design or development is. These findings are sustained by the study done by Mulenga and Mwanza (2019) on teacher's voices crying out in the school wilderness. They found that teachers are not given the opportunity to participate in the school curriculum decision making, and their voice is like a cry in the school wilderness. Though teachers know how to teach and can make a significant contribution to curriculum development, they are ignored by the system and limited at the implementation stage.

Teachers are not involved in the curriculum design and development because planning a curriculum is a prerogative of the decision-makers from the DepEd, administrators, and school owners. Teachers are ignored, marginalized, and do not know when the curriculum is to be designed. Adudu and Mensah (2016) supported these findings in their study; they discovered some obstacles that hinder the participation of the teachers in the curriculum development.

There are a number of challenges teachers encounter in the process of teaching-learning such as block curriculum, confusion, and conflict between two curricula to implement at the same time, lack of stability of workers especially the yearly change of administrators, and the lack of retention of some teachers. Some ways to improve the participation in the curriculum design include collaboration among subject teachers, curriculum mapping during the summer session, orientation, and training for the teachers. Further, making the teachers as key stakeholders in constructing a curriculum since they are the implementers who know the problems of the learners in classrooms would make teachers happy and encouraged in teaching. As Wadesango (2014) asserted, involving teachers in school-based decision making boosts up their commitment, job satisfaction, and morale. This, in turn, would lead to effective curriculum implementation, and thus, learner performance would be enhanced.

There were some limitations in carrying out this study. The acting principal of the school was newly appointed and was not fully aware of the problems teachers had in terms of designing, developing, and implementing the curricula.

Additionally, some of the teachers were not willing to exhibit the curriculum documents that they had.

Recommendations

Teachers play a significant role in helping students acquire desirable knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Their role is not to be solely limited in implementing a curriculum. Some recommendations need some consideration. The DepEd should ensure the existence of a curriculum specialist or a leader who would assist teachers in curriculum issues at school levels, and thus, their points of view and suggestions can be addressed in curriculum committees at the national level. During the summer period, teachers need to participate in curriculum mapping and collaboration and evaluation among subject teachers in high school. A contextualized curriculum, especially in the case of a private school in an international setting, is to be designed and shown to the parents of the children with all the purposes and expectations so that they may decide on the suitability of the curriculum for their children.

Further studies need to be conducted on teacher training for the implementation of foreign and national curricula for the benefits of the international children. Additionally, a study on curriculum mapping through subject teacher collaboration is needed to draw the ways for a teacher to get basically involved in curriculum design and development.

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*Weber R. Irembere, PhD Student, Education
Curriculum and Instruction
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies
Silang, Philippines
iremberew@aiaas.edu*