

Teachers' competence and the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in Sibagat 2 District, Division of Agusan Del Sur

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum and the teacher competence of Sibagat District, Division of Agusan del Sur for the school year 2019-2020. The study used a descriptive research design. There were 131 respondents of the study. It used as a questionnaire research instrument on the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum and the teacher's competence which gathered the data from the respondents of the study. The implementation of the K to 12 curriculum focused on the objective, content, evaluation, curriculum and instructional materials. It used the frequency count, percent, weighted mean, correlation coefficient and the T-test of relationship statistical treatment in analyzing the data. The respondents agreed that the teacher shows competence in imparting knowledge and skills to the learners, prepared lesson plan and instructional materials, evaluated learning outcome, applied teaching strategies, adopted levels of questioning, providing remedial teaching and demonstrated the use of teaching aids and devices. On the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum, the respondents agreed that the objective is relevant for the development of the learners. The respondents also agreed that content provided resource topics to be imparted by the teacher to the learners. The respondents agreed that the evaluation measures the learning outcome through formative and summative tests. The respondents agreed that the curriculum is relevant for the development of the learners. Moreover, the respondents agreed that the instructional materials enabled the learners to manipulate concrete materials during the learning activities. On the test of relationship, objective, content, evaluation, curriculum and instructional materials significantly relate with the teacher competence. Based on the findings, the teacher competence serves as pivotal point that plays an important role in developing the learners'. The following were the conclusions drawn; the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in terms of objective, content, evaluation, curriculum and instructional materials are learner-centered for the best benefit of the learners. The objective, content, evaluation, curriculum and Instructional materials in the K to 12 program are relating factors on teacher competence. Based on the conclusions drawn, the following were the recommendations; The teacher should provide enough time in giving remedial teaching for learners' development. The school heads should strengthen the objective of the K to 12 curriculum that enable the learners to participate in the learning activity. The school heads should optimize learning activities for the learners to realize their

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strength and weakness in a particular subject of the lesson. Researchers should undertake research similar to the present study with different variables to verify the validity of its result.

Keywords: teachers' competence, K to 12 curriculum, teaching strategies

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the K to 12 curriculum focuses on the objectives, content evaluation, and instructional materials and teaching aids that will give assurance to the development of the children in school. The objectives of the K to 12 curriculum emphasize the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, which will enable the learners to develop their total personality.

The contents are relevant topics to be imparted to learners during classroom teaching and learning activities, which expose them to the knowledge and skills required for the elementary grade level of education.

The implementation of the K to 12 curriculum requires teachers who possess comprehensive knowledge, skills, expertise, and competence to effectively impart to learners, thereby addressing the curriculum's objectives. Their ability to teach the children will promote quality education to the learners, and they can easily find a job after they graduate from senior high school.

K-12 programs indicate a high quality of education, particularly in terms of the global standard of education systems, qualifications for working abroad, and the development of skills for employment. The K to 12 program implementation aimed at creating more skilled students with basic skills for lifelong learning and employment. This program promoted the mutual recognition of Filipino learners and professionals in other countries by enabling them to master the skills and learn the core competencies necessary to meet the demands of the global market.

The goal of implementing the K-12 Basic Education Program is to create a functional basic system that will produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential learning and employment skills. This is in line with President Aquino's agenda of having quality education as a long-term solution to poverty. The K-12 Education vision from the Department of Education (DepEd, 2010) states that every graduate of the Enhanced K-12 Basic Education Program is an empowered individual who has learned through a program that is rooted in sound principles and geared towards excellence (Mohammad, 2016).

The researcher, a K to 12 teacher teaching Mother Tongue, is interested in determining whether the implementation of the K to 12 program relates to teachers' competence.

The study is anchored on the concept that the teachers' competence relates to the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum. This study determines the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in terms of objectives, contents, evaluation, and curriculum and instructional material related to teachers' competence to arrive at a further decision and action aimed at enhancing what was started. Hence, the paradigm presents the dependent and independent variables of the study and the process through which it was conducted using the systematic approach.

The objectives of the curriculum implementation, which focus on teaching domains, will provide teachers with the right direction on how to implement the curriculum, thereby producing

quality learners through quality instruction. It aims to achieve the school's curriculum objectives and serves as a basis for teachers to impart knowledge and skills that learners can apply to ensure quality education beyond.

The contents of the curriculum that are relevant to the development of the learners challenge the teachers to implement in the field of teaching with full of confidence and expertise that promote assurance in the attainment of the objectives to produce quality learners. It serves as a guide and reference for the teachers to teach competently the content of the curriculum, with full of teaching methods and strategies that cater to the needs of the learners through quality teaching in sharing knowledge and skills with them.

The evaluation of the learning outcome of the learners, based on the content that is important for the needs in developing the learners, will enable the learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will fit their level of development through the process of evaluating the learning outcome of the learners. The evaluation also determines the performance of the learners in the different subjects in a curriculum that leads to their development of strengths and weaknesses in their teaching work. They would be able to realize their success in developing the total personality of the learner. The frequent practice in the evaluation of the learners will promote quality education through effective teaching. A well-designed curriculum that meets the learners' needs serves as a foundation for effective instruction, enabling teachers to share knowledge, skills, and expertise with learners, who are equipped with a wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and confidence. Competent teachers would be guided in implementing the curriculum with a full range of teaching strategies and techniques that would assure effective instruction of the K to 12 curriculum related to the teacher's competence with enthusiasm, resourcefulness, and creativity.

Statement of the problem

The study determined the relationship between the teachers' competence and implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in Sibagat II District, Division of Agusan del Sur.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following concerns:

1. How do the teacher respondents perceive their teaching competence?
2. How do the respondents perceive the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum in terms of objectives, contents, evaluation, and curriculum and instructional materials?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on their teachers' competence and their perception of the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to provide a comprehensive account of the data gathered on teachers' competence and the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe existing conditions and examine the significant relationship between teachers' competence and curriculum implementation. Appropriate statistical treatments were employed to analyze the data and arrive at valid conclusions regarding the extent of competence and its association with curriculum practices.

The research was conducted in the Sibagat II District, Division of Agusan del Sur, which is located in the western part of the province. The district comprises 18 schools, namely Kolambugan Elementary School, Magkalape Elementary School, Sta. Maria Elementary School, Banagbanag Elementary School, Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Afga Central Elementary School, Del Rosario Elementary School, Padiay Elementary School, Perez Elementary School, Tabontabon Elementary School, Bagumbayan Primary School, Bantolinao Elementary School, Bayabas Primary School, Pañas Primary School, Balonbon Elementary School, El Rio Elementary School, Anahawan Elementary School, and Dandanon Elementary School. The district office is based at Afga Central Elementary School. Each school differs in teacher population: Kolambugan Elementary School has 9 teachers, Magkalape Elementary School has 2, Sta. Maria Elementary School has 8, Banagbanag Elementary School has 7, Sta. Cruz Elementary School has 7, Afga Central Elementary School has 21, Del Rosario Elementary School has 3, Padiay Elementary School has 8, Perez Elementary School has 9, Tabontabon Elementary School has 2, Bagumbayan Primary School has 2, Bantolinao Elementary School has 2, Bayabas Primary School has 2, Pañas Primary School has 2, Balonbon Elementary School has 2, El Rio Elementary School has 10, Anahawan Elementary School has 7, and Dandanon Elementary School has 7. Collectively, these schools represent the diverse educational environment of the district and served as the research locale.

The study involved all 131 teachers in Sibagat II District, who were selected as respondents through complete enumeration to ensure the reliability and comprehensiveness of the results. The distribution of teachers across the schools was as follows: Kolambugan Elementary School, 9 teachers (6.8%); Magkalape Elementary School, 2 teachers (1.5%); San Isidro Elementary School, 7 teachers (5.3%); Sta. Maria Elementary School, 8 teachers (6.1%); Banagbanag Elementary School, 7 teachers (5.3%); Sta. Cruz Elementary School, 3 teachers (2.2%); Afga Central Elementary School, 21 teachers (16.03%); Del Rosario Elementary School, 3 teachers (2.7%); Padiay Elementary School, 8 teachers (6.1%); Perez Elementary School, 9 teachers (6.87%); Tabontabon Elementary School, 21 teachers (16.03%); Bagumbayan Primary School, 1 teacher (0.7%); Bantolinao Elementary School, 2 teachers (1.5%); Bayabas Primary School, 2 teachers (1.5%); Pañas Elementary School, 2 teachers (1.5%); Balonbon Elementary School, 2 teachers (1.5%); El Rio Elementary School, 10 teachers (7.63%); Anahawan Elementary School, 7 teachers (5.34%); and Dandanon Elementary School, 7 teachers (5.34%). This detailed distribution provided a clear profile of the teacher population and allowed for accurate representation in the findings.

To gather data, the researcher used two research instruments. The first was the Teachers' Competence Research Questionnaire, consisting of 10 items adopted from Archer and Hughes (2017). This tool measured teachers' competence using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 5 – Strongly Agree to 1 – Strongly Disagree. The second was the K to 12 Curriculum Research Questionnaire, adopted from the work of Akcay and Vager, which evaluated curriculum implementation in terms of objectives, content, evaluation, and instructional materials. This tool also used a five-point Likert scale with the same descriptors. Both instruments were specifically chosen to ensure comprehensive coverage of the constructs under investigation.

Data gathering commenced after the approval of the thesis proposal by the Panel of Examiners and the issuance of formal authorization from the Superintendent of Schools, Division of Agusan del Sur. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the teachers, allotting a period of one to three days for completion. After retrieval, the questionnaires

were carefully recorded, organized, and subjected to analysis. The administration of the instruments adhered strictly to ethical research protocols, including voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses.

For quantification of data, specific scales were used to interpret responses. Teachers' competence was classified according to the following ranges: 4.21–5.00 (Strongly Agree) indicating very high competence, 3.41–4.20 (Agree) indicating moderate competence, 2.61–3.40 (Neutral) indicating adequate competence, 1.81–2.60 (Disagree) indicating limited competence, and 1.00–1.80 (Strongly Disagree) indicating very limited competence. Similarly, the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum was quantified as follows: 4.21–5.00 (Strongly Agree) indicating very high implementation, 3.41–4.20 (Agree) indicating highly implemented, 2.61–3.40 (Neutral) indicating moderately implemented, 1.81–2.60 (Disagree) indicating adequately implemented, and 1.00–1.80 (Strongly Disagree) indicating inadequately implemented. These scales ensured consistent interpretation across all responses.

The statistical treatment of data involved several techniques to ensure accuracy and rigor. Frequency counts were used to determine the number of respondents who fell into each level of perception regarding teachers' competence and curriculum implementation. Percentages were calculated to express these frequencies in relative terms. Weighted means were employed to identify the average level of perception among respondents. To assess the strength of relationships between variables, correlation coefficients were computed. Finally, the t-test was applied to determine the significance of the relationship between teachers' competence and the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. These statistical methods provided a sound basis for analyzing the data and drawing conclusions from the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered in the study, the corresponding analysis, and the interpretation of findings in line with the objectives of the research. It highlights the perceived competence of teachers, the level of K to 12 curriculum implementation, and the test of relationship between these two variables.

The teachers' competence level

The study examined the competence level of teachers using ten indicators that reflected their daily undertakings in the classroom. The item "show competence in imparting knowledge and skills to the learners effectively" received a weighted mean of 4.4, with a verbal description of Strongly Agree and an interpretation of Outstanding. Similarly, the item "prepare lesson plan needed for the daily teaching activities" garnered a mean of 4.3, also described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Outstanding. These findings indicated that teachers perceived themselves as highly competent in knowledge delivery and lesson planning, showing that they were conscientious about the preparation and delivery of lessons.

Other indicators received ratings that reflected Agree responses and were interpreted as Very Satisfactory. These included "use instructional materials needed for the teaching-learning activities in the classroom" (mean = 4.0), "possess the ability and skills and since I have the educational qualification" (mean = 4.1), "apply the teaching strategies that best suit the needs of the learners' development" (mean = 3.8), and "seldom adopt my questioning to the level of

ability of the learners” (mean = 3.9). The item “sometimes evaluate the learning outcome of the learners based on their level of development” received a mean score of 3.4, described as Neutral and interpreted as Satisfactory, which suggested that teachers may not always be keen on assessment because of other demands such as ancillary tasks added to their teaching load.

Meanwhile, indicators that reflected negative statements were rated Disagree but interpreted as Very Satisfactory. These included “do not provide remedial teaching opportunities to slow learners” with a mean of 2.6, “miss selecting relevant topics when I teach the learners for their development” with a mean of 2.5, and “do not use teaching aids and devices to enhance learning of pupils/students” with a mean of 2.6. The disagreement with these negative statements indicated that teachers generally provide remedial teaching, select relevant topics, and use teaching aids in their classrooms, all of which are positive practices despite the negative phrasing of the items.

The overall weighted mean of teachers' competence was 3.6, which fell under Agree and was interpreted as Very Satisfactory. This showed that teachers perceived their level of competence to be very satisfactory overall. The findings further suggested that while teachers excel in lesson preparation and classroom knowledge delivery, there is still room for improvement in classroom assessment and consistent use of evaluation measures. These results were consistent with Fullan's (2008) assertion that teachers require continuous on-the-job learning and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to refine their practice. Archer and Hughes (2017) similarly emphasized that effective teaching requires competence, creativity, resourcefulness, and mastery of teaching strategies.

The implementation of the K to 12 curriculum

Perceptions of teachers on teaching competence

The perceived level of K to 12 curriculum implementation was measured in terms of five areas: objectives, content, evaluation, curriculum, and instructional materials. In the domain of objectives, results showed that the indicator “serves as basis for the accomplishments of work among the school leaders and teachers” received a weighted mean of 4.3, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Outstanding. Other items under objectives included “focuses on the development of the learners” (mean = 4.2, Agree, Very Satisfactory), “enables the learners to participate in a learning activity diligently” (mean = 3.9, Agree, Very Satisfactory), “guides the teachers to do their duties and responsibilities in developing the learners” (mean = 4.0, Agree, Very Satisfactory), and “encourages the school officials to pursue the goal of the school for quality education” (mean = 4.1, Agree, Very Satisfactory). The average weighted mean for objectives was 4.1, interpreted as Very Satisfactory.

For the domain of content, teachers rated all items as Agree and interpreted them as Very Satisfactory. These included “enables the teacher to prepare the lesson plan punctually” (mean = 4.1), “serves as reference for the teacher to select topics to be imparted to the learners” (mean = 4.2), “provides learning activities with the learners to be done on a specific period of time” (mean = 3.8), “provides resource topics to be imparted by the teacher to the learners thoroughly” (mean = 3.9), and “contains the list of relevant information to be studied and discussed during the teaching-learning activities” (mean = 4.0). The average weighted mean for content was 4.0, also described as Very Satisfactory.

In terms of evaluation, the results were similar. Teachers agreed that evaluation was conducted on a specific period of time (mean = 4.0), measured learning outcomes through formative and summative tests (mean = 4.2), required teachers to construct tests to be given during periodical examinations (mean = 4.1), enabled learners to realize their strengths and weaknesses in particular subjects (mean = 3.9), and determined learners' performance across subjects leading to their development (mean = 4.0). The average weighted mean for evaluation was 4.0, interpreted as Very Satisfactory.

For the curriculum domain, the following mean scores were obtained: "provides learning activities to the learners based on their level of development" (mean = 4.0), "guides the teacher to prepare their lesson to be taught to the learners" (mean = 4.2), "provides remedial teaching to slow learners for their development" (mean = 4.1), "includes learning activities that will develop the special talents and skills of the learners" (mean = 3.8), and "exposes the learners to participate in any academic-related activities that will promote their total development" (mean = 3.9). All were interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with an overall weighted mean of 4.0.

The domain of instructional materials also received consistent Agree responses. Teachers rated "enables the learners to acquire skills through manipulating objects" (mean = 4.2), "provides learning activities that are meaningful to the learners" (mean = 4.1), "offers opportunities for the learners to operate any apparatus or equipment that will develop their manual skills" (mean = 3.9), "exposes the learners to perform projects and experiments to discover things with educational value" (mean = 4.0), and "enables the learners to identify modern objects/equipment needed for instruction in the classroom" (mean = 3.8). The average weighted mean for instructional materials was 4.0, interpreted as Very Satisfactory.

Perception on the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum

Taken together, the results indicated that teachers perceived the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum to be generally Very Satisfactory across all five domains, with only one indicator reaching the Outstanding level. These findings implied that while teachers recognized the strengths of the curriculum, there remained areas that could be improved to fully realize its goals. The results support earlier findings by Caup and Al-Buda (2017), who noted that teachers expressed concerns over the expense of the K to 12 program, inadequate facilities and laboratories, delayed salaries, and shortages of teachers in Senior High School. Natividad (2019) also reported challenges including insufficient learning materials such as books and guides, more than one preparation for daily lesson logs, lack of laboratories, difficulties in assessing transferees, and limited partnerships with industry and government units, all of which affected effective curriculum delivery.

Relationship between the perception of the respondents on their teachers' competence and their perception of the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum

To determine the relationship between teaching competence and curriculum implementation, a correlation analysis was conducted across the five areas of implementation. Results showed low but positive r-values: 0.28 for objectives, 0.24 for content, 0.21 for evaluation, 0.23 for curriculum, and 0.19 for instructional materials. Corresponding computed t-values were 3.559, 3.008, 2.613, 2.875, and 2.354, respectively. Although the correlation

coefficients were small, indicating weak relationships, all t-values exceeded the critical t-value of 3.645, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This meant that the relationship between teachers' competence and curriculum implementation was statistically significant.

The findings suggested that as teachers' competence increased, the level of K to 12 curriculum implementation also improved, though the relationship was weak. This outcome highlighted the importance of teacher competence in facilitating curriculum goals, even if other factors may also influence implementation. These findings align with Dizon et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of interactive teaching strategies that immerse students in real-life contexts to strengthen K to 12 implementation. Kanter (2010) also stressed that a relevant curriculum depends on teacher competence, as teachers who are well-acquainted with curricular goals are better able to provide learning opportunities that enhance knowledge, skills, and holistic development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between teachers' perceived level of teaching competence and the level of implementation of the K to 12 curriculum in Sibagat District, Division of Agusan del Sur for the school year 2019–2020. Employing a descriptive–correlational research design, the study involved 131 public school teachers who served as respondents. The investigation focused on five areas of curriculum implementation, namely objectives, content, evaluation, curriculum, and instructional materials. Data were gathered using survey questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics, particularly weighted mean, as well as correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the variables.

The findings revealed that teachers perceived their teaching competence to be at a Very Satisfactory level, suggesting that they possessed the skills and knowledge required to effectively deliver instruction. Likewise, the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum across the district was also rated Very Satisfactory, with mean scores of 4.10 for objectives, 4.0 for content, 4.0 for evaluation, 4.0 for curriculum, and 4.0 for instructional materials. These results indicated that the schools in Sibagat District were able to adhere to the K to 12 framework in a manner consistent with the expectations of the program. Further analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' competence and the level of curriculum implementation, as evidenced by r-values with corresponding t-values that exceeded the critical value set for correlation. This finding implied that improvements in teaching competence were associated with better levels of curriculum implementation.

From these findings, several conclusions were drawn. The very satisfactory competence level of the teachers suggested that the district benefits from a pool of capable educators who contribute meaningfully to school performance and student learning. The equally very satisfactory level of curriculum implementation further demonstrated the schools' ability to align with the standards of the K to 12 program, covering objectives, instructional content, assessment practices, curriculum activities, and use of instructional materials. Most importantly, the study affirmed that teacher competence plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of curriculum implementation. Although the relationship was significant, the results also highlighted that there remain several concerns in the actual practice of K to 12 implementation, pointing to the need for further enhancements to maximize the potential of the program.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations are advanced. Teachers may explore more effective strategies to improve their competence, particularly through collaborative

research initiatives that focus on developing instructional materials and adopting innovative pedagogical techniques. Professional growth may also be supported by pursuing graduate studies, which could further strengthen their expertise. School heads in the district are encouraged to conduct benchmarking with other high-performing schools to learn from best practices and integrate these approaches into their own contexts. Additionally, administrators may design and implement more training and development programs for teachers, ensuring that competence is consistently elevated to support higher levels of curriculum implementation. Future researchers are also encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of professional development programs in enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge of the K to 12 curriculum, as well as to examine the challenges teachers encounter in adapting to the program. Such investigations could lead to the formulation of practical solutions that would support continuous improvement and sustainability in curriculum delivery.

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