

Exploring the Link Between Teachers' Curricular and Pedagogical Readiness: A Step Towards an Effective Child Development Program

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Abstract

In the initial phases of learning, there is a crucial period where both immense potential for growth and susceptibility to negative influences coexist. Children's development is shaped by various factors that can either bolster their resilience or render them more susceptible to harm. In this quantitative-descriptive study, three (3) public and private senior high schools in the Division of Zamboanga City voluntarily participated. They are teachers at selected public and private senior high schools in Zamboanga City. The data revealed that On the Level of Readiness of Teachers in terms of Teachers' Training, senior high school teachers in the public schools were highly ready in terms of training, which eventually improved their ability to teach their assigned subjects. On the level of readiness of teachers in terms of curriculum content, it shows that public teachers were also highly ready to make their lessons suitable to their needs. However, on the level of readiness of teachers in terms of strategies, the findings revealed that private teachers have other class activities prepared to encourage students to optimize their participation. Hence, the study recommends that the design of the instructional curriculum should be adaptive to the needs of young learners.

Keywords: *curricular and pedagogical readiness, child development program, trainings, instructional materials, curriculum*

Introduction

In the field of education, the idea of being prepared and open to change is widely recognized as a key factor in successfully introducing new policies, programs, or practices. When individuals or groups are ready for educational reform, they are less likely to oppose or hinder its implementation. Additionally, they approach the changes with more enthusiasm and careful consideration compared to those who may not be fully prepared. Some views on readiness suggest that providing adequate knowledge about the proposed changes, such as enhancements to the basic education curriculum, is vital for facilitating the smooth adoption of the new program.

Readiness goes beyond simply avoiding resistance; it involves an active and engaged willingness, the ability to adapt, and a transformation of thinking to embrace the new approach. This state of readiness is seen as a critical precursor to the successful implementation of educational reform because stakeholders play a pivotal role in making it happen. When readiness is high, stakeholders become more deeply committed to the change effort, invest greater effort in the transformation process, and demonstrate greater perseverance in overcoming obstacles or setbacks, all of which contribute to the successful implementation of the new program (Weiner, 2009).

SHS teachers in Zamboanga City Division were sent to orientation of the Senior High School Program to familiarize its salient features and objectives. In the same manner, teachers attended seminars and trainings to enhance their preparations in contents, strategies and evaluation. These preparations were carried out to make SHS teachers effective in carrying out their pedagogical tasks, thus, making SHS program successful.

Since the roll-out of Senior High School Program in Zamboanga City Division, there has been no study made on assessing the implementation of the Program particularly on the readiness of teachers and the challenges they are facing. It is in the aforementioned rationale that the researcher finds it

necessary to assess the level of readiness and challenges faced by teachers so that whatever findings are made maybe utilized to improve the SHS program in action planning, policy formulation and development especially in the early stage of education.

During the early stages of learning, there exists a significant window of opportunity for growth and susceptibility to harm. The development of children is influenced by factors that provide resilience as well as those that make them vulnerable. The overall impact on children's developmental well-being is more strongly determined by the combined effect of protective factors and risk factors rather than individual ones (Briss et al.). The opportunities for development during these formative years are crucial in laying the foundation for children's academic achievements, health, and overall well-being (Schweinhart et al., 1986). Hence, this study was conducted to serve as baseline Towards an Effective Child Development Program.

Related Literature and Studies

On Curriculum Readiness

The public school curriculum constantly undergoes changes to adapt to the evolving society. Oliva and Gordon (2013) highlight that public schools, as significant societal institutions, face modern challenges that can even jeopardize their existence. To survive and remain relevant, schools must respond to these challenges by modifying their curriculum to address the current issues in society. Therefore, it is evident that curriculum changes are a direct response to societal changes.

The 2013 curriculum development in Indonesia provides an example of the complexities involved in implementing curriculum changes in a country with a vast population of nearly 250 million people, comprising diverse ethnic groups and varying social-cultural backgrounds. As experts in curriculum advocate, several factors require careful consideration during the process of changing the curriculum. Schwab (1978) emphasizes four essential elements in curriculum design and development: teachers, learners, milieus, and subject matter. Curriculum developers must thoroughly assess these factors while designing the school curriculum.

When it comes to implementing the changed curriculum, teachers play a crucial role. The effectiveness of curriculum implementation depends on their knowledge and ability to execute various curriculum components, such as goals, objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessments. Teachers' readiness to implement the school curriculum relies on their capability to select, organize, and deliver the curriculum contents effectively. Additionally, understanding learners' characteristics, including their attitudes towards curriculum contents and motivation to learn, significantly impacts the successful implementation of the curriculum. The social-cultural aspects of the learners' surroundings also influence both curriculum development and implementation.

Garcia (2017) in her study "Level of Readiness of Teachers in Teaching the K to 12 Curriculum in Selected Private Schools in Zamboanga City" reported that majority (166 or 56.85%) of the teachers had 10 years and below teaching experiences. Majority of them were bachelor's degree holder and had two (172 or 58.90%) seminars and training attended in the K to 12 curriculum. She emphasized that there was a significant difference in the level of readiness of the teachers in teaching the K to 12 Curriculum in terms of mastery of the subject matter in the use of teaching strategies, ICT and assessment when grouped according to length of service. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the level of readiness of the teachers in teaching in the K to 12 Curriculum in terms of mastery of the subject matter, and in the use of teaching strategies, but no significant difference in the use of ICT and assessment when group according to educational attainment and length of service.

On Pedagogical Readiness

According to Andreasan (2001), the willingness to accept changes in the educational system consists of three elements: enduring, situation-specific, and conditional components. This readiness pertains to how much an individual or a group is prepared to embrace and adopt reforms. Some consider

readiness as a personal state where individuals engage with potential changes, develop their attitudes towards them, and then take appropriate actions. Individual readiness may involve aspects like self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to successfully undergo change, or fear of the consequences that change might bring. On the other hand, organizational or collective readiness is how stakeholders share their determination to implement the new program and their collective belief in their ability to do so (Weiner, 2009). Observers of reform often view readiness as a characteristic of the organization, its structure, or the collective involved. It's worth noting that inadequate readiness has been suggested to account for around half of all unsuccessful large-scale reform efforts (Weiner, 2009).

On the Child Development Program

Engle & Black (2008) provided an explanation of child development, which involves the gradual development of interconnected skills encompassing sensorimotor, cognitive-language, and social-emotional abilities. These skills are influenced by the child's physical well-being, family environment, and the broader social network (Engle, P. et al. 2007).

Zigler, Gilliam & Jones (2006) defined school readiness as the essential skills children need to effectively benefit from formal schooling experiences. It encompasses a wide range of abilities, such as physical health, motor skills, self-care, emotional and behavioral self-regulation, social skills, communication skills, pre-academic skills, attention, curiosity, and motivation to learn. Some argue that school readiness should solely focus on literacy and numeracy skills (Pianta, R. & M. Cox, 1999).

While poverty significantly affects children's education and development, Luthar, Cicchetti & B. Becker (2000) noted that there are instances of children from low-income families who have excelled. Twin studies have revealed individual variations in adaptation, even among children with the same genetic background raised in the same environment (Carbonneau, R. et al., 2002). Adoption studies act as a natural experiment, demonstrating how changes in a child's primary context—their family—can mitigate the negative effects of poverty. Rutter, M. (1998) cites the example of Romanian children raised in institutional care for the first two years of life and then adopted into middle-income British families, many of whom achieved academic and social scores consistent with U.K. norms. The resilience displayed by some children in overcoming the adverse effects of poverty may be attributed to individual differences in how families cope with poverty and support their children, as well as inherent variations among the children themselves.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative- descriptive research design aimed to describe a phenomenon (Johnson 2000). The design was deemed appropriate for the study because it primarily described the level of readiness and the extent of challenges in teaching among selected public and private senior high schools. It also described variance in the level of readiness of teachers in teaching subjects in SHS in terms of profile and the extent of challenges they met when categorized according to teachers training, curriculum content, strategies, instructional materials, and students' readiness. Three (3) public and private senior high schools in the Division of Zamboanga City voluntarily participated in this study. The population of this study were teachers teaching selected public and private senior high schools in Zamboanga City.

In the selection of the respondents, total enumeration sampling was used. This means that all the teachers in the schools selected were selected as respondent of the study. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where the entire population with a particular set of characteristics is being examined. A researcher made 4 –point Likert type questionnaire-checklist which consists of three parts. Part I solicited personal information of the respondents, such as, age, sex, school, educational attainment, length of service, and specialization were utilized to meet the objectives. Part II was on the level of readiness of teachers in teaching in the SHS Program. The level of readiness of teachers was measured in terms of teachers' training, curriculum content, instructional

materials and strategies used. Each indicator has seven statements with four options, numbered and described: 4 – highly ready, 3 – ready, 2 – less ready, and 1 – not ready.

Results and Discussions

On the Level of Readiness of Teachers in terms of Teachers' Training

Table 1 below shows that the five statements on the readiness of SHS teachers in terms of teachers' training were related between 3.23 to 3.52 for public and 3.23 to 3.40 for private. The public senior high school teachers generated the highest weighted mean of 3.52 described as highly ready in "training has increased level of productivity and development". It shows that senior high school teachers were highly ready in terms of training which eventually improves their ability to teach the assigned subjects. On the other hand, private SHS teachers recorded the highest mean score of 3.40 described as moderately ready in "adequate training for teachers is provided to enhance teaching performance".

Table 1. Level of Readiness of Teachers in terms of Teachers' Training

Teachers' Training	Public		Private	
	Mean Response	Remarks	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Adequate training for teachers is provided to enhance teaching performance.	3.45	Moderately Ready	3.40	Moderately Ready
2. Training has increased level of productivity and development in teaching the assigned subjects.	3.52	Highly Ready	3.36	Moderately Ready
3. The time for teachers' training and development is sufficient.	3.32	Moderately Ready	3.23	Moderately Ready
4. Trainings given are based on the needs and are appropriate	3.43	Moderately Ready	3.32	Moderately Ready
5. Teachers' trainings given are relevant and useful.	3.48	Moderately Ready	3.32	Moderately Ready
Grand Mean	3.44	Moderately Ready	3.33	Moderately Ready

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Not Ready (NR)
 1.51 – 2.50 Less Ready (LR)
 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Ready (MR)
 3.51 – 4.00 Highly Ready (HR)

The public teachers obtained the grand mean in the level of readiness in terms of teachers' training at 3.44 and 3.33 for private described moderately ready. It means that teachers were moderately ready in terms of training provided to enhance teaching performance, time for teachers' training is sufficient, trainings given are based the needs, relevant and useful.

Teachers' training is an important part in the pursuit of improving the quality of education (Guskey, 2002). The ultimate goal for this need is to equip teachers with the necessary skills to meet the demands of their profession (Farrell, 2012).

Table 2 reveals that the six (6) statements on the readiness in in terms of curriculum contents were related between 3.58 to 3.72 for public and 3.47 to 3.65 for private. The teachers generated the highest weighted mean of 3.72 for public and 3.65 for private described as highly ready in “mastery of the subject matter”. It shows that the teachers were highly ready in making their lessons suitable to their needs.

Table 2. Level of Readiness of Teachers in terms of Curriculum Content

Curriculum Contents	Mean Response	Remarks	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Has the mastery of the subject matter	3.72	Highly Ready	3.65	Highly Ready
2. Has ability to contextualize the lessons	3.72	Highly Ready	3.65	Highly Ready
3. Can draw higher order thinking questions	3.61	Highly Ready	3.47	Highly Ready
4. Can develop life-long learning skills out of the subject matter.	3.58	Highly Ready	3.58	Highly Ready
5. Are familiar with the subject matter in the teaching guide.	3.63	Highly Ready	3.56	Highly Ready
6. Includes contents which are found in the teaching guides.	3.61	Highly Ready	3.60	Highly Ready
Grand Mean	3.64	Highly Ready	3.58	Highly Ready

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Not Ready (NR)
 1.51 – 2.50 Less Ready (LR)
 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Ready (MR)
 3.51 – 4.00 Highly Ready (HR)

Similarly, teachers were highly ready 3.72 and 3.65 for public and private respectively in terms of their ability to contextualize the lessons. The public and private SHS teachers obtained the grand mean in the readiness in teaching the in terms of curriculum contents at 3.64 and 3.58 respectively described highly ready. It means that teachers were highly ready in terms of curricular contents, can contextualize the lessons, draw high order thinking questions, develop life-long learning skills, uses various reference materials to enrich the contents, and were familiar with the curriculum guides of the core subjects to be taught in the SHS.

Rivera (2018) supports this result which stated that curriculum content shows the basic purpose why teacher teaches; it provides reasons for the need to study any course subject with particular objectives and specific content.

Table 3.shows that the seven (7) statements on the level of readiness of teachers in terms of strategies were rated between 3.54 to 3.72 for public and 3.30 to 3.63 for private.

The public senior high school teachers gave themselves the highest weighted mean (3.72) described highly ready in employing group activities to maximize participation among students. It manifests that teachers were highly ready in using group activities to their students to maximize their participation in class activities. In the same vein, private senior high school teachers were highly ready with a weighted mean of 3.63 in using variety of strategies and techniques. However, it can be gleaned that private teachers were moderately ready in terms of using strategies appropriate to the developmental needs of the learners as well as using ICT to arouse motivation. These findings means that private teachers have other class activities prepared to encourage students to optimize their participation.

Table 3.Level of Readiness of Teachers in terms of Strategies

Strategies	Mean Response	Remarks	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Uses variety of teaching strategies and techniques.	3.54	Highly Ready	3.63	Highly Ready
2. Can identify teaching strategies suited to the level of the students.	3.62	Highly Ready	3.54	Highly Ready
3. Provides activities that encourage students' participation	3.64	Highly Ready	3.55	Highly Ready
4.Uses teaching strategies that foster collaboration learning	3.69	Highly Ready	3.54	Highly Ready
5. Uses strategies relevant to the developmental needs of the students.	3.70	Highly Ready	3.48	Moderately Ready
6.Employs group activities to maximize participation among students	3.72	Highly Ready	3.55	Highly Ready
7.Uses ICT to arouse students' motivation to learn	3.65	Highly Ready	3.30	Moderately Ready
Grand Mean	3.65	Highly Ready	3.51	Highly Ready

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Not Ready (NR)
 1.51 – 2.50 Less Ready (LR)
 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Ready (MR)
 3.51 – 4.00 Highly Ready (HR)

The average weighted mean of the public and private senior high school teachers in their level of readiness of teaching in terms of strategies is 3.65 and 3.51 described highly ready. It manifests that teachers were highly ready in terms of using strategies which were helpful to the developmental needs of their students. This implies that SHS teachers were equipped with variety of teaching strategies for different teaching-learning situations and were using these strategies as the need requires.

Shinn (1997) as cited in Ramillano (2017) said that teaching strategies are essential tools in improving teachers' quality of teaching and how learners learn based on their preferences.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results reflected on this study, it was derived that the public senior high school teachers are Highly Ready in terms of teachers' training, curriculum content, strategies and instructional materials while those from private senior high school teachers are moderately ready. Hence, this study recommends that the design of the instructional curriculum should be adaptive to the learners' needs and the teachers' capabilities to teach. They should review the existing senior high school curriculum especially designed to cater learners' needs and teachers' abilities. It is also recommended to the educators'/school heads/principals should assist and guide the teachers in the implementation and sustenance of senior high school curriculum. More so on providing resource and trainings to the teachers in order to make them competent teachers and to be prepared for the young learners. Studying children closely allows us to delve deeper into the factors that shape their development and find the most effective approaches to nurture them as responsible individuals, capable of making positive contributions to society.

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