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Article

Revisiting the K-12 Reform in the Philippines: Stakeholder Satisfaction, Challenges, and Sociological-Philosophical Insights on Values, Lived Experiences, and Educational Transformation

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Abstract

The K–12 Curriculum Reform in the Philippines presented a significant education transformation designed to improve educational quality, strengthen employability, enhance global competitiveness, and promote holistic learner development in a rapidly changing global landscape. It also emphasized the integration of values education, spirituality, and social studies to nurture morally upright, socially responsible, culturally aware, and spiritually grounded individuals who can actively contribute to national development and global citizenship (Republic Act No. 11476, 2020). Anchored in the sociology of education and sociology of religion, this study analyzed stakeholders' satisfaction and lived experiences, framed by philosophical inquiries into values and educational transformation, experienced challenges, and sociological insights on the transformation to evaluate how global reform ideals satisfied the program implementation and local educational realities. Using a descriptive research design, google form survey data were gathered from teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and industry representatives. Using a descriptive research design, google form survey data were gathered from teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and industry representatives. Mean and frequency results revealed positive levels of satisfaction among school-based stakeholders, particularly teachers and school administrators. However, findings identified challenges in infrastructure, socio-economic pressures, and values integration, particularly in aligning curriculum with industry expectations, teacher preparedness, and religious education's role in holistic formation on families and alignment gaps, that is between curriculum, industry expectations and teacher's preparedness. Notably, industry stakeholders expressed comparatively lower level of satisfaction, indicating gaps between intended learning outcomes and market demands. The challenges experienced highlighted urgent priorities in enhanced learning resources, stronger employability alignment, and strengthened curriculum and teacher capacity. Notably, the strongest recommendation was to revisit the program's implementation, ensuring resilience, values-driven refinement, and integration of spirituality and philosophical inquiry in curriculum development, signaling a call for strategic review of the K-12 reform under Republic Act No. 10533, a clear call for strategic refinement and responsive improvement of the Department of Education.

Keywords: *Curriculum reform, Lived experiences, Stakeholder satisfaction, Sociology of religion, Values education*

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Introduction

Globally, curriculum reform had become a central strategy for nations seeking to respond to rapid technological change, labor market demands, and shifting social expectations (UNESCO, 2023). Across Asia and other developing regions, curriculum restructuring has been undertaken to improve educational quality, strengthen employability, promote lifelong learning, and enhance global competitiveness. Education reform became an action for national development in the twenty-first century. Educational reforms were interpreted, shaped, and implemented by people within their own educational setting and cultural contexts (Ball, 2023). Thus, educational change succeeded or failed depending on how the people involved such as teachers, students, parents, school leaders, and community partners understood, implemented and experienced it.

Within this global reform movement, the Philippines institutionalized the K-12 Program through the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, expanding basic education to twelve years and introduced Senior High School tracks intended to improve college readiness and workforce preparedness. The implementation of the K-12 Education Program in the Philippines represented one of the most comprehensive structural reforms in the country's modern educational history. The Department of Education (2022), through the Basic Education Development Plan 2030, positioned K-12 program as a vehicle for quality enhancement, and economic alignment.

National evaluations, however, indicated that while structural reforms have been institutionalized, persistent gaps remained in infrastructure, teacher preparation, and industry linkage (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2023). Instituted under Republic Act No. 10533 and continuously refined through policy reviews, the curriculum underwent renewed revision and stakeholder consultations beginning in 2022 under the leadership of the Department of Education. The revised framework sought to decongest learning competencies, strengthen foundational skills, and respond to post-pandemic educational realities, while emphasizing inclusivity and contextual relevance (Department of Education, 2022).

At the local level, schools served as social institutions where reform was enacted within specific community contexts. Stakeholder satisfaction, perceived relevance, and experienced challenges crafted not only program effectiveness but also long-term sustainability. Variations in resources, socio-economic conditions, and school-industry partnerships influenced how K-12 program was experienced across communities.

Anchored in the sociology of education, this study analyzed stakeholders' satisfaction, challenges, and perceptions of implementation to illuminate how global reform ideals were negotiated within national policy structures and local educational realities. By integrating global, national, and local perspectives, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of curriculum reform as a socially embedded and contextually mediated process. Understanding stakeholders' satisfaction, the challenges they encountered, and the broader implications of reform execution sheds

light on the social processes, institutional capacities, and community-school interactions that formed educational change in the Philippine society.

Given these considerations, a sociological analysis of how stakeholders perceived and experienced the implementation of the K–12 curriculum was crucial. This study aimed to analyze the K–12 curriculum reform in the Philippines through a sociological lens, focusing specifically on stakeholder's satisfaction, perceived challenges, and insights on program implementation in selected schools and communities in Bulacan. It sought to determine how various stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of the reform, identify the structural and contextual factors influencing its implementation, and assess how local experiences reflect broader national educational dynamics. By situating community and school perspectives within the larger framework of educational reform, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of how curriculum change operated as a social institution and shaped by the realities of the Philippine society.

Addressing these gaps, this study examined stakeholder's satisfaction and implementation experiences to guide improvements in the education reform. Through the stakeholder perspectives, this research provided evidence-based insights that can guide policy enhancement and strengthen the ongoing implementation of the K–12 curriculum program. Grounded in sociology, it emphasizes that a curriculum is effective not only when it is technically well-designed, but when it is seen as relevant, fair, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to systematically analyze the implementation of the K–12 curriculum reform in selected schools and communities in Bulacan, Philippines. By collecting and analyzing numerical data through structured surveys and rating scales, the study generated statistical summaries that objectively describe stakeholders' levels of satisfaction, encountered challenges, areas needing improvement, and recommendations (Heath, 2023).

Through the quantification of stakeholder perspectives, the research provided evidence-based insights that can guide policy enhancement and strengthen the ongoing implementation of the K–12 curriculum program.

Population and Sampling

This study involved 311 stakeholders from selected schools and communities in Bulacan, Philippines, including 137 students, 43 teachers, 45 school administrators, 58 parents, and 30 industry representatives. The diverse sample ensured for a balanced assessment of K–12 curriculum implementation across school and community contexts.

Following recent methodological guidance (Hair et al., 2023), having at least 30 participants, supported reliable descriptive analysis using frequency and mean. A

combination of random and voluntary sampling was used, with participation facilitated through a google form survey. While the sample provided meaningful insights, results may not fully represent all stakeholders in Bulacan.

Instrumentation

This study adapted a validated instrument from De Leon, De Regla, and Estrella (2017), which originally examined community and industry acceptance of the proposed K–12 curriculum using six input variables: Family Finances, K–12 Awareness, Government Resources, Teacher Preparedness, Technical-Vocational Competencies, and Employability.

To ensure relevance to the current context where the curriculum was already implemented, the variable of Curriculum Content was added. Education experts reviewed the revised instrument and provided feedback to strengthen its content validity. This process aligned with established best practices in instrument validation in recent educational research (Guo, Shi, & Zhai, 2024).

Data Analysis

The data on stakeholders' level of satisfaction and evaluation of each K-12 program variable were analyzed using frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviation based on a 5-point Likert scale as shown in Table 1. In descriptive quantitative studies, the mean provides an overall measure of central tendency, while the standard deviation (SD) indicates the consistency of responses (Hair et al., 2023). The relatively moderate SD values implied generally consistent stakeholder perceptions across variables.

Table 1. Level of Satisfaction in the Implementation of K-12 Program

Scale	Range	Description
5	4.21- 5.00	Very Satisfied
4	3.41- 4.20	Satisfied
3	2.61-3.40	Neutral
2	1.81- 2.60	Dissatisfied
1	1.00-1.80	Very Dissatisfied

For data on challenges experienced, program variable needing improvement and development, and stakeholders' recommendations**,** descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, and ranking were computed to identify priority areas for program enhancement. This approach aligned with established practices in descriptive quantitative research, which emphasized the use of central tendency and dispersion measures to summarize perceptions, alongside frequency and percentage analysis to prioritize actionable insights (Hair et al., 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Results and Discussion

The following tables revealed the stakeholder's sociological analysis regarding their level of satisfaction and evaluation on the K-12 program implementation variables, their challenges experienced, the program variable that needs improvement and development and their recommendation on the K-12 program implementation.

Table 2 presented the stakeholders' level of satisfaction on the K–12 program implementation variables such as Family Finances, K–12 Awareness, Government Resources, Teachers' Competencies, Academic and Technical-Vocational Competencies, Employability, and Curriculum Content. The mean scores of Family Finances (M = 3.39, SD = 0.768), K–12 Awareness (M = 3.59, SD = 0.779), Teachers' Competencies (M = 3.53, SD = 0.831), Academic and Technical-Vocational Competencies (M = 3.61, SD = 0.890), Employability (M = 3.62, SD = 0.804), and Curriculum Content (M = 3.60, SD = 0.895) all received positive results, indicating favorable stakeholders' sociological perceptions of the program implementation.

Table 2. Respondents Level of Satisfaction with the implementation of K-12 Program

Variables	Mean	SD	Description
Family Finances	3.39	0.768	Satisfied
K-12 Awareness	3.59	0.779	Satisfied
Government Resources	3.07	0.958	Neutral
Teachers Competencies	3.53	0.831	Satisfied
Academic And Tech-Voc Competencies	3.61	0.890	Satisfied
Employability	3.62	0.804	Satisfied
Curriculum Content	3.60	0.895	Satisfied
Grand Mean	3.52	0.672	Satisfied

From the perspective of sociology and social science, these collective perceptions reflect how educational reforms shape social experiences, cultural expectations, and institutional relationships within communities. Positive evaluations suggest that stakeholders perceived the K–12 reform as contributing to social mobility, skills development, and preparation for societal participation.

Meanwhile, the mean score of Government Resources (M = 3.07, SD = 0.958) was rated Neutral and showed the highest standard deviation, indicating divergent stakeholders' perceptions and suggesting uneven experiences regarding institutional support. This finding reflects broader social structures and inequalities in access to educational resources, where differences in economic conditions, governance, and institutional capacity influence stakeholders lived experiences. Variability in perceptions of resource allocation is common in educational reform implementation,

particularly in decentralized systems (OECD, 2023), describing mixed opinions and less consistent evaluations in this variable. Overall, the results suggested that while stakeholders were generally satisfied with the K–12 program implementation variables, resource-related factors may require improvement and targeted policy attention to promote educational equity and social inclusion.

Table 3 presented the stakeholder's evaluation in each variable of K-12 program in terms of effectiveness and overall implementation. Overall, results indicated a generally positive evaluation, as four out of five stakeholder groups reported being "Satisfied." Teachers obtained the highest mean score of 3.68 and SD of 0.697, followed by school heads/administrators -3.60 and SD- 0.734), student's evaluation mean result of 3.54, SD-0.63, and parents- 3.47, SD- 0.601. These findings showed that those directly involved in program implementation and daily instruction perceived K-12 outcomes more favorably. Their positive analysis may reflect alignment between curriculum design and school-level execution, consistent with implementation perspectives advanced by the Department of Education under the K–12 reform framework. However, respondents working in industry reported a lower mean of 3.14 and SD of 0.758, interpreted as Neutral, indicating comparatively weaker satisfaction. This result is particularly significant because industry stakeholders played a critical role in evaluating workforce readiness, one of the central goals of the Department of Education K-12 program. The neutral rating may imply perceived gaps between K-12 competencies and labor market expectations, a concern echoed in recent Philippine education reform studies (2023).

Table 3. Stakeholders' evaluation on the different variables of the K–12 program in terms of effectiveness and overall implementation?

Stakeholders	**Mean**	**SD**	**Description**
Parent (with child graduated from senior high school)	3.47	0.601	Satisfied
School Head/ Principal/ Supervisor/ Program Chair/ Administrator	3.60	0.734	Satisfied
Student (graduated from senior high school)	3.54	0.631	Satisfied
Teacher (teaching in senior high school)	3.68	0.697	Satisfied
Working in Industry	3.14	0.758	Neutral

The relatively moderate standard deviations across groups (SD 0.601-0.758) suggested consistency in responses, strengthening the reliability of the findings. From a sociology of education perspective, the variation in satisfaction highlights the importance of multi-sectoral alignment between schools and industry to ensure

curriculum relevance and employability outcomes. Strengthening school-industry partnerships may therefore be essential to enhance overall program effectiveness and stakeholder confidence.

Table 4 presented the frequency distribution of challenges experienced by stakeholders in the implementation of the K–12 Program using multiple-response data (where N=717, total responses).

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Challenges experienced by stakeholders in the Implementation of the K-12 Program (Multiple Response Data)

Reported Challenges	**Frequency (f)**	**Percentage (%)**	**Rank**
Lack of Facilities	217	30.27%	1
Financial Burden	190	26.50%	2
Curriculum Relevance and Content	112	15.62%	3.5
Student Readiness for Employment	112	15.62%	3.5
Teacher Competencies	86	12.00%	5
Total Responses	**717**	**100%**	

The findings revealed that lack of facilities (30.27%) was the most frequently reported challenge experienced, followed by financial burden (26.50%). These concerns reflect not only economic and infrastructural constraints but also broader sociological issues, where unequal access to resources illustrates school inequalities within the education system. From a sociological perspective, these challenges demonstrate how social stratification influences educational opportunities, particularly in public schools with limited facilities and household financial capacity. In addition, within the sociology of religion, these struggles are often interpreted through values such as perseverance, hope, and communal resilience, where families and educators continue to strive for education despite hardships, reflecting shared moral and spiritual commitments to upliftment and progress. In addition, according to the Department of Education (2022), disparities in physical resources remained a major concern despite policy reforms under the K–12 system. This gap directly affected the quality of instruction, especially in technical-vocational and STEM tracks where specialized facilities are essential.

Mid-ranked challenges such as curriculum relevance and student readiness for employment (15.62%) pointed to alignment issues between education and labor market/ industry expectations, highlighting the need for socially responsive and values-oriented education. Meanwhile, teacher competencies (12.00%) remain essential, as educators serve not only as knowledge transmitters but also as moral and value-forming agents in society. Overall, the challenges underscore that K–12 implementation is shaped by interconnected structural, economic, and cultural factors, where resilience, shared values, and collective responsibility became essential in addressing gaps and strengthening the reform within both sociological and cultural perspectives.

According to the Department of Education (2022), disparities in physical resources remained a major concern despite policy reforms under the K–12 system. This gap directly affected the quality of instruction, especially in technical-vocational and STEM tracks where specialized facilities are essential. The second-ranked challenge, financial burden, highlighted the economic strain experienced by stakeholders during the additional two years of senior high school. Although K–12 was designed to enhance employability and global competitiveness, implementation costs including transportation, materials, and daily expenses continued to affect household costs and budgeting.

Studies from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2023) indicated that while long-term benefits were projected, short-term financial pressures remained a significant concern among Filipino families. Mid-ranked challenges experienced were curriculum relevance and content and student readiness for employment both with 15.62% pointed to alignment and matching issues between education and labor market expectations. These findings suggested a perceived gap between intended curriculum outcomes and actual workforce competencies. Although the K-12 reform aimed to produce employed-ready graduates, industry feedback has indicated variability in skill preparedness, particularly in applied and technical skills. This reflected a broader implementation gap between curriculum design and industry integration.

Finally, teacher's competencies got 12.00%, ranked lowest remained a critical issue. Teacher readiness was central to curriculum success, and insufficient training or professional development may limit effective delivery of specialized K-12 tracks. Strengthening continuous capacity-building initiatives is therefore essential to sustain reform gains.

Overall, the table highlighted three major challenges in K–12 implementation: Limited Infrastructure challenge (insufficient facilities and equipment), Socio-economic Pressures on Families challenge (financial strain on families), and Alignment Gaps challenge (curriculum–industry demands mismatch and teacher preparedness). Addressing these interconnected challenges requires sustained government investment, stronger school–industry partnerships, and targeted teacher development programs to ensure that the K–12 reform fully achieves its goals of effectiveness and full implementation.

Table 5 presented stakeholders' perceptions of priority K-12 program variable for improving the effectiveness and relevance (N = 839 multiple responses).

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of K-12 program variable needing improvement and development to enhance its effectiveness and relevance
(Multiple Response Data)

Area Needing Improvement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank

Facilities and learning resources	238	28.37%	1
Student readiness for employment	175	20.86%	2
Curriculum content	146	17.40%	3
Academic and technical-vocational competencies	143	17.05%	4
Teacher preparedness	114	13.59%	5
Others	23	2.74%	6
Total	**839**	**100%**	

The findings showed that facilities and learning resources ranked first with 28.37%, reinforcing persistent infrastructure concerns in program delivery. From the perspective of Religious Education, Theology, and Spirituality, the provision of adequate educational resources reflects the values of social justice, stewardship, compassion, and human dignity, emphasizing society's moral responsibility to provide equitable learning opportunities for all learners. Adequate laboratories, workshops, digital tools, and instructional materials are foundational to quality learning, particularly in senior high school tracks requiring specialized equipment. The Department of Education (2022) acknowledged that strengthening school infrastructure remained central to achieving equitable and quality basic education outcomes.

Second, student readiness for employment gained 20.86%, highlighting stakeholders' continued concern regarding the work-preparedness objective of the K–12 program. Within theological and values-based perspectives, education is not only preparation for employment but also formation of responsible, ethical, and service-oriented individuals who contribute positively to society. Recent assessments by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2023) noted that stronger industry linkages and experiential learning opportunities were necessary to improve school-to-work transitions.

Mid-ranked variables such as curriculum content (17.40%) and academic and technical-vocational competencies (17.05%) suggested the need for curriculum improvement, refinement, and deeper skills development. These findings imply alignment gaps between intended learning outcomes and actual competency acquisition. In Religious Studies and Spirituality, curriculum development also involves the integration of values formation, ethical reflection, social responsibility, and character building to ensure holistic education. Although teacher preparedness ranked fifth with 13.59%, it remained a critical factor because teachers serve not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as mentors of moral and spiritual values. Ongoing professional development and values-oriented training are therefore essential to strengthen both instructional competence and learner formation.

Overall, the results pointed to three interconnected improvement priorities: resource enhancement, employability alignment, and strengthened curriculum and teacher capacity. Addressing these areas through the integration of values education,

spirituality, ethical leadership, and social responsibility will help ensure that the K–12 program achieves its goals of quality education, holistic development, and meaningful societal contribution

Table 6 findings indicated suggestions and recommendations from the stakeholders, the call for K-12 program implementation refinement.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Suggestion/Recommendation of the stakeholders in the implementation of K-12 program (Multiple Response Data)

Stakeholder Suggestion	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Revisitation of the K–12 program	191	43.51%	1
Recalibration of the K–12 program	179	40.77%	2
Abolition of the K–12 program	62	14.12%	3
Other specific recommendations	7	1.60%	4
Total	**439**	**100%**	

The highest-ranked suggestion of the stakeholders was the revisitation of the K-12 program that gained 43.51%, suggested a need to review and re-examine the program to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Through this recommendation, revisitation of the K-12 program through the Department of Education MATATAG Agenda (2023) that represents a policy-level review and reassessment of the original K-12 reform framework in the Philippines is suggested to be strengthened- examining the curriculum content, teacher's competencies and teaching workloads, learning resources, policy design and implementation strategies. Closely following was recalibration recommendation from the stakeholders gained 40.77%, implying that stakeholders favor strategic adjustments, modifications or corrections to meet its goals. In contrast, only 14.12% support abolition, reflecting that while dissatisfaction existed, most respondents still recognized the reform's foundational objectives. These results aligned with implementation research showing that large-scale education reforms often required iterative policy refinement to address contextual gaps and operational constraints (Department of Education, 2023; World Bank, 2023).

Within the Philippine context, the K–12 program institutionalized through Republic Act No. 10533 was designed to enhance global competitiveness and employability. However, emerging evaluations emphasized the need for curriculum streamlining, stronger labor-market alignment, and improved teacher support systems (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2022). The relatively minimal call for abolition underscores that stakeholders were not rejecting the reform's goals but instead advocating responsive governance and evidence-based policy adjustment.

Overall, the given findings reinforced policy implementation theory, which posited that K-12 reform success depends not only on legislative intent but also on continuous sociological analysis and feedback, stakeholders' engagement, and adaptive and supportive school management. The focus on revisiting and adjusting

the program showed that education reform was enacted through improvement and continuous cycles of review and adjustment rather than abandoning the existing goals (Anderson et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The findings revealed that stakeholders were generally satisfied with the implementation of the K-12 program, reflecting sociological insights into how educational reforms shape collective lived experiences and social development and gave it a positive overall evaluation in each program variable. However, differing perceptions regarding government resources highlighted improvement and institutional challenges, emphasizing the need for equitable policy interventions and stronger educational support systems. However, three key challenges emerged: limited infrastructure, socio-economic pressures on families, and alignment gaps between curriculum, industry demands, and teacher preparedness, underscoring the need for values-driven resilience and holistic perspectives from sociology of religion and social studies. These challenges highlighted urgent priorities in enhanced resources, stronger employability alignment, and strengthened curriculum and teacher capacity, while also calling for integration of values education, spirituality, and religious studies to sustain holistic learner formation. Notably, the strongest recommendation was to revisit the program's implementation, signaling a call for strategic improvement rooted in philosophical inquiry and sociological reflection, rather than rejection of the reform. This affirms the need for responsive enhancement under Republic Act No. 10533 that sustains values, spirituality, and resilience in Philippine education.

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