

# PHILIPPINE K TO 12 IMPLEMENTATION: DIFFICULTIES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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## ABSTRACT

K to 12 curriculum created novel challenges among educators, parents, students, school administrators, and stakeholders. Thus, this study described the difficulties and coping strategies of elementary school administrators in dealing with the K to 12 program implementation. This study employed the qualitative phenomenological research design, which included twelve (12) school administrators in Davao del Sur in selected public elementary schools. Key Informant Interview was utilized to gather necessary data to bring out the difficulties and coping strategies of elementary school administrators on the K to 12 implementation in the Philippines. Results revealed that participants experienced scarcity of learning materials, lack of training and orientations, low-quality materials, and additional workload. Despite the challenges, school administrators find ways to mitigate their current situation, such as employing innovative strategies, social support systems, and personal coping strategies. The results of this study would bridge to future research about the experiences of other school administrators, teachers, and students who had undergone the K to 12 curriculum.

### **Keywords:**

*Education, K to 12, school administrators, Phenomenology, Philippines*

## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Republic Act No. 10533 in the Philippines, known as "The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," presented different challenges as admitted by the secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), Leonor M. Briones (Malipot, 2018). The new curriculum, widely known as the K to 12 curriculum, was the country's first significant educational system shift since 1945 and has been a vast transformation of its educational system, primarily to the public schools. Even today, it has School administrators who were in distress about implementing the new curriculum because problems in resource shortage plague it. This situation has been felt even in private schools that directly assess and provide its own school's needs. How much more in public schools which depend on the government's budget for all their operational requirements

Undoubtedly, there have been hindrances to implementing curriculum change even though Lingard (2018) regarded this change as both a response to and articulation of globalization. In the United States, principals were resistant to the reform (Fink, 2014) in Washington's remote town. Meanwhile, Rose (2016) found that Australian education had been fraught with challenges in the insufficiency of



training, focus on pedagogy, support and application of numeracy, literacy, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities on the implementation of their national curriculum reform. These challenges have been the baggage of school administrators as manifested in many countries.

The implementation stages difficulties have never been contemporary in Asian countries (Cheung & Man Wong, 2012). It only led principals and teachers to compliance, examination, and pedagogic culture of dilemma (Law, 2014). The need for more understanding of curriculum implementation (Cheung & Man Wong, 2012) had been principals' sentiments in Hong Kong. Several principals were dissatisfied and lacked confidence in the central agencies' competence in supporting the curriculum reform (Adamson, Tak-Shing, Wai-Ming, Kin-Sang, Hau-Fai & Wai-Lun, 2010). These reasons led to many unsuccessful curriculum reforms in education.

As school managers, principals directly shouldered problems and implementation issues in the Philippines' K to 12 curriculum, though Okabe (2013) articulated that the curriculum was timely and admirable. To mention these problems: there were an insufficient knowledge and experiences of the school leaders (Guru & Abulad, 2016), which include school administrators as the front line of the school's entirety, schools in rural areas did not receive much support from the government (Durban & Catalan, 2015), as noticed in the lack of quality school supplies, limited resources, and inadequate technology infrastructure (Brooks & Sutherland, 2014) in the secondary level. These were among the issues that school administrators faced from their day-to-day living to realize the reform. However, despite these challenges, they sorted out strategies that somehow alleviated their present situation. They changed their previous and usual practices in several ways (Husband & Hunt, 2015). Mokhele (2012) concluded in his study that school principals motivated the teachers and engaged the society in fulfilling the implementation, while Zhan, So, Winnie, Cheng & Irene (2016) added that they too changed their teaching approaches and materials used in the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, when principals showed idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Arokiasamy, Abdullah & Ismael, 2014), it demonstrated satisfaction among teachers. It resulted in better performance of the implementation.

Principals' leadership and skills need to equate to the needs of the curriculum. Still, studies globally, regionally, and locally showed that school principals encounter difficulties implementing a new curriculum. Though few studies identified the obstacles as mentioned earlier linked principals' efforts towards program implementation improvement, such a link seemed plausible in most cases. And such barriers could be symptoms of a more fundamental problem yet uncovered. Geographically, only a few studies were conducted on principals' struggles and mainly focused on secondary schools' perspectives. For this reason, I felt that there was a need to explore Filipino public elementary school administrators' efforts regarding the implementation of the K to 12 program in the Philippines and their coping strategies with the challenges they met through this qualitative study.

### **Theoretical Lens**

This study was from the lens of the Complexity Theory of Cowan (1980). Complexity theory developed by Cowan in the 1980s could best explain that school administrators have coping strategies despite the challenges they had. This theory was drawn from research in the natural sciences that examined uncertainty and non-linearity used in strategic management and organizational studies. In this theory, as used in sciences, an organism senses and responds to its environment, thereby changing its environment changes the organism, reacting actively, proactively, and reactively to the changes and its environment. Any organization and institution employed adjustments and developments to survive in the changing external environment. In this study, this theory explained that during reforms or changes in the educational system, school leaders struggle in many ways but could find the keys of unfolding the light of their leadership in the implementation. Understanding how school administrators adapted to their



environments and how they coped with uncertainty and the multifaceted problems involving change could best resolve the difficulties they experienced.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore elementary school administrators' difficulties and coping strategies in dealing with the K to 12 program implementation in the Department of Education.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the difficulties experienced by the public elementary school administrators in implementing the K to 12 curriculum?
2. What are the coping strategies of the public elementary school administrators in dealing with the difficulties encountered in implementing the K to 12 curriculum?

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

School leaders and teachers are directly affected whenever changes in the educative process occur since they are the direct persons involved in the implementation. School leaders' feedback around the world on a new curriculum's performance provided substantial evidence that there were factors why and how the new curriculum is successful or a failure. Principals' or school leaders' views on curriculum reforms and their experiences during implementation will be in this review.

#### **School Administrators and the Curriculum Reform**

The need for leaders and leadership has not changed even though the practice of leadership had (Bass, 1990 and Kouzes & Posner, 1995 cited in Normore, 2016). In the process of curriculum change, the role of school administrators in curriculum implementation was not only supervision, but it encompassed many things ensuring the achievement of curricular objectives (Onojerena, 2014). However, some principals had limited understanding of what comprised their role and experienced many impediments (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2013). Some principals expressed their struggles in content expertise and difficulty managing their time between being a building manager and an instructional leader (Fink, 2014).

School leaders were seen and expected to function most of their duties as instructional leaders, but Smith (2011) stated that they must also possess important characteristics being the transformational leader. This type of leaders had effects on satisfaction among teachers and better performance at school. However, García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012) contended that there were no studies conducted in knowing the interrelations between types of leadership and improving organizational performance. Therefore, a strong foundation of leadership is necessary, especially in the field of education.

More vivid concerns elicit school leaders' anxiousness and struggle to set their roles as instructional and transformational leaders. Principals faced the challenge of how best to meet the expectation set forth by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy in the USA. Pepper (2010) concluded that their ability to balance their transformational and instructional leadership styles skilfully would pave the way to achieving the law's goals. Similarly, school leaders in the UAE had the same difficulty as discovered by Ishimaru (2013). They struggled to navigate a clear understanding of their conflicting leadership role expectations from higher ranks and a link on the same ground of concern. Thus, the school principal's leadership in curriculum implementation had a substantial reason for the undertaking's success or failure.

When China used curriculum reform as a critical strategy to counter manpower-related global challenges and empower the country in the 21st century (Law, 2014), there was an apparent failure of the curriculum reform that took root in schools (Walker, Haiyan, & Shuang, 2011). Hong Kong principals



also noticed the insufficiencies in the preparation of the implementation. These have been a challenging factor, just like what happened when the National Secondary School Curriculum (NSSC) was introduced (Adamson et al., 2010). Despite these views, Karami (2014) stated that educational reformers worldwide were willing to reinvent their practice and search for new platforms for growth for reforms and positively affect students' learning. Hence, principals' strong leadership is the key to how and why changes in the educational system failed or succeed, whether in instructional or transformational terms.

The Philippines' K-12 curriculum aims to address the Philippine educational system's deficiency, particularly in basic education. It also sought to respond to the international education criteria standards and be leveled with the students in neighboring countries (Okabe, 2013). To achieve this, the Department of Education (DepEd) laid the new curriculum's salient features. The universal kindergarten (children at the age of five years old would start schooling), and Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) as the medium of instruction in all learning areas except English and Filipino from kindergarten to grade three from its bilingual aspect (Filipino and English language) in the previous curriculum. MTB had also been added as a learning area in grades one to three. Another feature was contextualization and enhancement. The instructions' content was in spiral progression, contextualized, and indigenized based on the learners' schema.

Though the government held a firm stance that the new curriculum would be the immediate solution to the enduring crises facing the country's basic education, Alegado (2018) concluded that many doubted this reform's capacity to bring forth change. Some of the reasons for these doubts as discovered were: schools in rural areas do not receive much support from the government (Durban & Catalan, 2015), as noticed in the lack of quality school supplies, limited resources, and inferior technology infrastructure (Brooks & Sutherland, 2014). Ferreol and Gutierrez (2015) added that even school leaders had inadequate training, especially content and pedagogy-related matters. It transpired on exerting much of their time in administrative practices (Tito & Perez, 2017) and insufficient knowledge and experiences of the school leaders (Guru & Abulad, 2016). From these pieces of evidence, school administrators were facing an extraordinary burden and heavy loads in realizing the thrust of DepEd in its new educational system.

### **Challenges of School Administrators**

As a response and articulation to globalization, educational systems change (Lingard, 2018). Due to differences, school administrators faced challenges in professional development, scheduling and workloads, lack of support, cultural diversity, and financial responsibility.

**Professional development.** School systems expected school principals to have extraordinary credentials, experience, and dispositions to modernize the visions and enable transformational change and engage in instructional leadership (Richardson, Watts, Hollis & McLeod, 2016). Studies of effective principals revealed that the significant reason for principal failure in curriculum implementation was the inability to deal with people (Lunenborg, Muse & Abrams, 2011). Principals often felt the lack of professional development during curriculum reforms, as shown by China's educational leaders. They had limited teaching experience and had low levels of formal education with little training and professional development (Militello & Berger, 2010), all of which the reform needed. They were unsure if they had the necessary knowledge and skills to do the new work (Phillips, 2018).

Furthermore, some teachers opposed principals' leadership in modifying their teaching strategies (Madsen & Mabokela, 2014), while others had shown low commitment towards reforms. Unfortunately, some school leaders admitted that they lack the skill to address it (Bala, 2017). Their community relationships also struggled because they gave an increasing focus on test pressures (Husband & Hunt, 2015) brought by the reform rather than on strengthening their collaboration effort with the community. Thus, this gives the idea that leading the reform also means teaching people to change.





**Scheduling and workloads.** Principals felt frustrated during the implementation of curricular reforms. They thought the lack of time in the initial implementation year concerning learning requirements, rubrics, and evaluating teachers in the new system and some program components are still in the design phase (Derrington & Campbell, 2015). Bridges and Searle (2011) and Cheung et al. (2012) concluded in their studies that the conception of principals of having a stabilized, reduced, and more manageable workload during reforms were hopeless because they were working 55 hours a week, which was a 10% increase than before when the reform bedded in. After seven years, Phillips (2018) still discovered the same phenomenon in Iowa where principals felt frustrated because there was not even enough time to complete their work in a day. Principals claimed that they have increased responsibilities and accountabilities (Ng & Pun, 2013). It left them the feeling of consumed and sandwiched by and between the competing demands (Lindberg, 2014). These workloads were unreasonable as they added their time spent in school and took away their time (Bridges & Searle, 2016). Moreover, Lingam, Lingam & Sharma (2017) concluded on their study on the implication of the educational reforms that school leaders' difficulty in balancing their workloads and that of the teachers primarily to schools with fewer teachers, was common in developed countries. Time management and balancing the administrator's responsibilities were factors in implementing a curriculum reform at its best.

**Lack of Support.** Support from the government and agency leading the reform was essential to the school administrators, and most of them agreed that they did not receive much (Cheung & Man Wong, 2012; Durban & Catalan, 2012; Phillips, 2018). The support needs referred to were mostly in addressing teachers' claims to their school leaders. To mention, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads, learners' diversity (Cabili, Sequete & Capilitan, 2015; Cheung et al., 2012; Nahal, 2010) were the everyday needs that agencies should consider in addressing (Kovačević, Rahimić & Šehić, 2018). Moreover, agencies must address insufficient teacher training on pedagogy and understanding the whole concept of the reform. These were essential in a workplace as they laid the foundation of an employee's new career (Oregon State University, 2018). When a professional employee performs their jobs according to standards, they contributed to a group's success.

**Cultural diversity.** There was a need to develop the knowledge of school leaders on cultural diversity (Backor & Gordon, 2015) that begins in understanding one's own culture before the preceding others (Kovačević et al., 2018). Philippine K to 12 program addressed this concern as reflected in the law's statement where learning materials and medium of instruction to the primary levels would be in Mother Tongue Based (MTB). However, school leaders and teachers assigned in schools were not locals who had no or less background of the learners and community's culture.

**Financial responsibility.** Principals suffered constraints in financial responsibility issues (Walker et al., 2012). This responsibility is time-consuming (Lindberg, 2014) because principals needed to attend to many acute problems. It was evident in the division of Davao del Sur wherein principals consumed much of their time in monthly liquidating the government's monetary subsidy to every school, namely: Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP). Failure to do so, the division would forfeit the school's budget for that specific month, which would result in the unavailability of the needed resources for the month and would further affect the performance-based bonus of teachers. Malito (2018) stated that most public-school teachers spent their own money on school supplies. Ninety-four percent of public-school teachers have spent their own money for school purposes without being reimbursed, according to research conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics between 2014 and 2016.

### **Coping Strategies of School Administrators**

Despite challenges experienced by school administrators during educational settings, they could mitigate their current situations through different strategies.



**Emotional coping strategy.** School principals were effective when they were able to influence their teachers to believe what they believe. Bonifacio (2013) concluded that principals would achieve it with the support given by teachers, superiors, and the government. However, as Quebec's principals observed, they sometimes inhibited their emotions to preserve a harmonious school climate (Poirel & Yvon, 2014). Meanwhile, principals in Ireland reflected their feelings and others, engaged in emotional learning, and understood their teachers' strengths and limitations (Brennan & Ruairc, 2011).

Moreover, in his study, Miller (2013) stated the importance of motivation as a driving force of an individuals' action in reaching goals. It was the reward for achieving the goals that motivate or the feeling of fulfillment given by the accomplishment that drives. According to Ivy Exec Inc. (2018), body language is a valuable tool to inspire and encourage. Hence, body language was more influential than talk.

**Communication.** Imparting and exchanging information was essential in building and maintaining relationships, especially in significant changes like educational reforms. Principals explained to teachers that the new reform requirements were reasonable and achievable if they consider their attitudes and needs considering the externally imposed instructions (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015). Communication was used to develop shared meanings and created visions to enhance an organization's future and guided through times of change.

**Personal coping.** Individuals adopted various coping strategies on their own (Xiao & Cooke, 2012) when stoked with challenges. Helitzer, Graeber, Lanoue, and Newbill (2015) stated that they involved generating, implementing, and evaluating personal actions to solve the problem. School principals demonstrated a sound understanding of the necessity to change first and assess the entire school's needs to lead the change (Ibrahin & Al-mashhadany, 2012). Such positive attitude in manifesting individual coping had a significant impact on persons' well-being and Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2012) proved that is a better approach to mitigating work-family conflicts.

**Delegation of responsibility.** Delegation is assigning responsibility or chunking work and giving authority how to do the task (Huang et al., 2016). Research has shown that leaders who delegate had higher rates of effectiveness (Drescher, 2017). Rogers (2018) also added that influential leaders delegate works, allowing themselves to have more time to strategize and plan while providing new avenues to develop their skills and confidence. When done successfully, this would be beneficial to both parties.

**Building connections with people.** Schools do not exist in isolation, and they needed the support and help of the whole community. The African proverb which says, "It takes a village to raise a child" sounded to be true. As a child needs love and relationships with lots of different people (McBain, 2019) which is same as true in schools. School-community collaboration established an educative community composed of educating entities such as home, school, religious places, and agencies. According to Usigan (2017), building trust and community networks involved a sense of transparency and shared responsibility among parents, teachers, staff, principals, and the community. Administrators should not take it lightly when it comes to transparency of the school aspect.

Hence, the literature mentioned above, such as the need for professional development, frustration in workload distribution, lack of support from the government, dealing with diverse learners, and financial responsibility constraints, explained the school administrator's vast responsibility. Specifically, going through the rigors of implementing the new curriculum put their leadership in managing the school towards reform into a test. School administrators must be aware of how to assume their responsibilities, address their needs for them to function well, and be conscious enough of several areas and rooms for improvement in dealing with such difficulties. The mentioned expected responsibilities of principals warranted immediate response and attention. In return, they could successfully implement the curriculum's desired changes as directed by our educational system.



## METHODS

This part of the study presented the process and procedures as used during the conduct of the study. Included herewith are research design, participants, sampling, data sources, data collection, analysis and interpretation of data, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

### Research Design

This study used a qualitative method using a phenomenological approach. It is an approach that aims to describe, understand and interpret the meanings of experiences of a specific group of participants. It seeks to understand participants' observation, in-depth interviewing, and others that yield descriptive data through the qualitative method (Townsend, Cox & Li, 2010). Thus, the qualitative approach focused on research questions such as; what is it like to experience a particular situation (Creswell, 2007). Interviewing, observing, and analyzing were the central process of this method (Miriam & Tisdell, 2015; Kilicoglu, 2018), describing the events in a natural environment realistically and holistically. Qualitative is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in people's lived experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) and is concerned with establishing answers to the whys and hows of a certain phenomenon.

The phenomenological approach uses observable techniques such as observations/fieldwork, narratives, analysis, reenactments of lived experiences, and thinking with theory (Vagle, 2018). It could provide a more contextual approach to ethical decision-making by probing, uncovering, and interpreting the meanings of participants' responses (Greenfield & Jensen, 2016). Hence, this study explored school administrators' lived experiences in implementing the K to 12 curriculum, particularly their difficulties and coping mechanisms through interviewing, observing, and analyzing their responses.

### Participants

The participants of the study were twelve (12) public school administrators who shared their experiences and thoughts as school leaders in implementing the Department of Education's curriculum reform- the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 known as the K to12 Curriculum. They were those who could give the best information as stated in the research questions. In a qualitative method using the phenomenological process, five (5) up to twenty-five (25) participants shall be selected who could best give their shared experiences in the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Alase, 2017). In determining the participants in this study, the established criteria were: Current public elementary school administrators in Davao del Sur's division with at least three (3) years of experience as school administrators. They were spearheading either central or big schools as identified by the division of Davao del Sur. This study did not include the School Administrators leading small schools determined by Davao del Sur's division.

### Data Sampling

This study used a purposive sampling technique. It is a type of sampling helpful in studying and gathering information on understanding the search problem and context of the present study's phenomenon (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative studies because it involved the importance of the informants' availability and cooperation to participate and communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner (Etikan, Musa & Alhassim, 2016). Thus, it helped derive a conclusion wherein information-rich cases from the participants who underwent a particular phenomenon from illuminating the questions under study (Patton, 2005; Polit & Beck, 2010). In connection to this, the selection of school administrators was done based on the set criteria. The researcher interviewed twelve (12) school administrators with at least three years of experience as school administrators who run either central or big schools.



### Data Sources

The information gathered from the school administrators' Key Informant Interviews (KII) was drawn from the interview protocols' questions. It involved interviewing a selected group of individuals who provided the more needed information, ideas, and deeper insights on a particular subject (Kumar, 1989; Marshall, 1996; Ayala & Elder, 2011). KII involved an in-depth interview of selected participants for their first-hand knowledge about the topic of interest where interviews are loosely structured and relied on a list of issues (USAID, 1996 cited in Macfarlan, 2018). KII resembles a conversation among acquaintances, allowing a free flow of ideas and information. Interviewers framed questions spontaneously, probed for information, and took notes. Interviews were conducted in the second semester of the school year 2018-2019 among school administrators in the division of Davao del Sur. There were a proper recording and transcription of the entire duration of the interviews. Other sources of information that supported this study were online journal articles and books.

### Data Collection

To collect the needed data for this study, an initial survey for individuals who were suitable informants in the division of Davao del Sur, Philippines, was done, as suggested by Creswell (2007), considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria set for this study. As the researcher, I sent the letter of permission to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) office to conduct the study. I sent letters of authorization to conduct the study to the different chosen district supervisors with the SDS authorization. Upon their approval, informed consent was sent to different school administrators referred and recommended by the district supervisor. In the given informed consent to the participants, proper explanation of the study's purpose and significance were stressed out, including the importance of their participation and the time they willingly contributed and, above all, the assurance of their identity's confidentiality on the duration of the study. They were also informed and thoroughly explained that their participation was voluntary and that they might opt not to continue their involvement if they felt uncomfortable during the interview process.

Thus, there was a strict observation on the interviewee's meeting based on the date, time, and location of the participant's interview and recording his/her remarks and responses and individual assessment through taking notes and audio recorders. The researcher considered the following conventions: i.) The participants knew that there was a recording procedure on the entire interview through taking down notes and an audio recorder for the motivation behind appropriate interpretation and later, on the investigation; ii.) After the interview, information derived from them was securely kept, and their identity was preserved correctly; iii.) The transcribed data from the recorded interview was confirmed by the interviewee to observe the data's precision and accuracy, and iv.) In the conducted study, as the researcher, I was the interviewer, transcriber, audio recording operator, and record keeper for the duration of the interview.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study used thematic analysis. It encodes qualitative information that requires explicit codes that may be in the form of a list of causally related themes and may be directly or indirectly observable in the information (Boyatzis, 1998 cited in Heath, 2010). Joffe (2012) added that the themes formed are implicit or explicit patterns of responses. The gathered data were analyzed using the method of Collaizi (1978). The themes were identified from the essential or interesting patterns in the data and used in addressing the research issue (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

For easier data analysis and interpretation method, this study used a tabular presentation for each research question, which includes the participants' significant verbatim responses, participants' code in the KII coding, and formulated meanings. Then, formulated meanings were clustered into themes as meanings of the common responses, further classified into emergent themes. The emerging themes as the major themes were utilized and clearly elaborated in the discussion based on the results of the study.





**Trustworthiness.** Ensuring the trustworthiness of this study was one of the concerns that I considered. Elo et al. (2014) stated that in ensuring trustworthiness, analysis phased from data collection must be scrutinized well from organizing down to reporting results. Experts validated guide questions used during the interview. Thus, an observation of the following measure to assure this study's reliability: credibility, dependability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

**Credibility.** It is the confidence placed in the research findings' truth (Connelly, 2016). It is also equivalent to internal validity, which is concerned with the aspect of truth-value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, there must be a rigor of inquiry by adopting credibility strategies suggested by Anney (2014). It includes long and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity (field journal), triangulation, member checking, peer examination, interview technique, researcher authority, and structural coherence. This study's veracity used standard procedures to conduct qualitative research and gather the needed information to ensure credibility. Forms and letters presented to this study's participants before and after the key informant interviews established credibility. Concerning accuracy and congruency of information, I employed the member-checking method to validate their responses' translations.

**Transferability.** Transferability refers to the study's generalization applicable in other settings, contexts, and respondents (Polit & Beck, 2010). It is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004) as cited by Anney (2014). This research aimed to guide future researchers who plan to study a phenomenon similar to this study. In promoting transferability, the conclusions of this study were from the results given by the informants. Thus, the researcher observed Shenton's (2004) suggestion in providing detailed information about this study's context to help other people understand this study by citing various authors to present the phenomenon in several fields.

**Dependability.** Dependability has something to do with how reliable a study is (Creswell, 2007). It involved participants evaluating the findings and the study's interpretation and recommendations to ensure that they are supported by the study's informants (Cohen et al., 2011).

This study is dependable because the collected data and information were from the school administrators' personal and lived experiences implementing our educational system's new curriculum-the K to12 Curriculum. Their experiences were the foundation of their manifestations in terms of behavior and personality and the bases of their testimonies and expressions. I am also a teacher who has close contact and connection with the participants. It was my edge that the participants comfortably share their experiences during the interview.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability was the degree to which other people could confirm the results and is also associated with the study's objectivity (Trochim, 2006). It is also concerned with the aspect of neutrality (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, this study's findings were not from the researchers' own opinions and sentiments as emphasized by Shenton (2004) but rather from the participants themselves. I gathered the necessary information for this study, assuring the confidentiality of participants' responses and documents during the interview. Hence, a thorough description of how the data gathering went, especially on what happened during the actual interview, was provided.

With the applied measures, this present study is a comparable model for ensuring trustworthiness.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical consideration is one of the essential components in doing qualitative research because Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) stated that it considers human subjects' protection and considers what constitutes socially responsible and acceptable research. At any instance, I firmly believe the words of



Munhall (1988), Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri (2016) that qualitative researchers must always consider anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent of the participants.

This study necessitated the participation of the vital school administrator participants in the interview.

**Anonymity.** It means that each participant's information is contained and enshrouded from any individual to guarantee to protect the participants' privacy (Vasilateanu & Casaru, 2015). The school administrators were invited to participate in the interview where ethical principles such as respect of human rights, understanding their feeling, and protecting each participant's identity, including the place and the research location, were taken into full account by the researcher. Participants' personal information was deleted and replaced with codes to ensure their names, place, and other concerns were discreet.

**Confidentiality.** As the researcher, I must protect each participant's identity, place, and research location. "A careful planning and conduct of the research will be set forth and taken into considerations first and even up to the presentation, interpretation, and publication of results" (Tudy, 2017, p.105). It ensured to evade breach of confidentiality. I saw to it that the gathered data and information were kept secure and were not divulged in any ways to anyone.

**Informed Consent.** It adheres to providing the practicalities' issues in deriving the desired data, information recording consent, collecting/using data, privacy, confidentiality, potential risks, and benefits (Harriss & Atkinson, 2015). Before the conduct of the study, participants received an informed consent from which contains the following: the purpose of the study, time/length of the interview, procedures, risks, and benefits, and an explanation including the voluntary involvement of the participants, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw of participation from the study.

## RESULTS

Based on the study's purpose, thorough data analyses were from the participants' responses from the Key Informant Interview were repeatedly done. The following results presented here are placed into three clusters based on the two research questions of the study. The first part centered on the difficulties experienced by the public elementary school administrators in implementing the K to12 curriculum. The second cluster focused on school administrators' coping strategies on the difficulties they encountered in implementing the new curriculum.

### Difficulties experienced by the public elementary school administrators in the implementation of the K to12 curriculum

When asked about their difficulties experienced in the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum, there emerged from the participants' responses the following themes, as found in table one: (1) scarcity of necessary materials, (2) lack of essential training and orientation, (3) low quality of needed materials, and (4) additional workload for school administrators.

**Lack of Essential Training and Orientation.** Of all the difficulties school administrators experienced, a lack of essential training and orientation came out to be dominant. An awakening response of 100 percent or twelve (12) out of the twelve participants (12) identified such difficulty.

The school administrators were adjusting to a new trend set by the Department of Education. They needed essential training to be fully aware and oriented about the features of the new curriculum. However, participants were unanimous in saying that they did not receive much. One of them shared this statement with assertiveness in tone that there is "*Lack of planning preparation in terms of school administrators' nga mura bitaw og dapat unta* (such as) *series of seminars and information drive before*



*the implementation* (Par, transcript 4, lines 9-10). All of them unanimously stated that their training was not sufficient to get them ready for the implementation. Not all training conducted was attended by all school administrators, especially in the different grade level training. The mentioned reasons were that there were differences in the interpretation and application in implementing the curriculum. Though DepEd conducted training, all were about conceptual frameworks or the "what," not the "how."

School administrators felt almost the same experience with teachers regarding training, especially in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). With the new strategies to be employed in the new curriculum, school administrators found it difficult to motivate teachers to be persistent and diligent in their work, accompanied by some teachers' complaints of teaching all learning areas in a day. They felt difficulty on the curriculum's transition and even brought confusions in responding to these experiences' implementation queries.

**Scarcity of Learning Materials.** One of the shared experiences among school administrators was the scarcity of necessary materials. They battled on the insufficiency of textbooks, activity sheets, and other related learning references. *"We cannot fully implement things if we have the scarcity of necessary materials* (Win, transcript 3, line 10)". These materials the participant referred to is the insufficient and inefficient distribution of instructional materials such as books, teachers' guide TGs), learners' materials (LM), and other references, including ICT-related materials. It resulted in resistance of some teachers in the implementation. The absence of these materials made it the school administrators challenging to go over teachers' work.

The materials needed for discussions, implementation of the lessons, and even activities were minimal from the school administrators' perspectives. The provisions of these materials were only a few until now. They could not fully implement things in the curriculum if materials were scarce.

**Poorness in Quality of Learning Materials.** Though it is a requirement for learning material to sustain years of usage, the participants still noticed that the learning devices were of low quality. They said that textbooks were not in hard-bound copies. It resulted in being damaged easily and found out that the books before were better. One participant even took a sample of the learners' material and showed how frustrated was she while turning some of the torn pages. The dismay can be seen in her facial expression and with a statement that *"Ang textbook nila kay softbound dali ra magisi dili pareho sa una nga lig-on. Karon pag pakli pa lang wan-a, buak."* (The given textbooks were soft bounded and easily torn, unlike before which were durable.) (Ann, transcript 8, lines 66-67).

Thus, school administrators realized that quality materials were essential in implementing the new curriculum's goals, especially books and even computers.

**Addition of Workloads.** As described, this referred to the new scheme in the preparation and liquidation of Mandatory and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), the new method of checking the Daily Lesson Log (DLL), and the difficulty of accomplishing other thrusts of DepEd.

Seven (7) of the twelve (12) participants mutually shared that there has been an addition of works upon the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. Two of them bluntly said with a sigh that: *"Mas nidaghan ang among trabaho karon kay sa dili pa K to 12."* (There were several other works added now compared before the implementation of K to 12.) (Par, KII 4, transcript 4, line 178). Surprisingly, school administrators needed to attend to the clamors from both parents and teachers regarding the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction and as a subject. One participant shared her experience from their parents saying *"Daghang reklamo sa parents nga moingon 'mam oy unsa naman ni inyong Math dili naman me kabalo aning onse...unsang siya nga number'". So didto daghang clamors sa mga parents*



(Several parents claimed that they do not know the lessons in Math like eleven as onse, what is this number?) (*Ann, transcript 8, line 21-22*). One participant also added that “*Ang pag observe pud nako sa mga teacher’s kay lahi man gud ang approach karon sa K to 12. Example sa Grade 1 kay lahi ang binisaya nga gigamit sa books ug ang language nato diri sa balay ug ang dialect nga gigamit sa mga bata sa balay. Ang standard nga gamit baya sa curriculum kay Sinugbuanong Binisaya pero ang atoa baya kay Dabawenong Binisaya, so naa gyuy language barrier nga maglisud og sabot ang bata* (There is a language barrier because the approach and standard of K to 12 in the use of mother tongue is different from the language used by the school children and the community.) (*Uno, transcript 2, lines 8-12*).

Furthermore, they mentioned in detailed what other works were added such that aside from studying the new entries in the DLL, there was a new scheme of liquidating the MOOE. From the planning and crafting of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which is the basis of liquidating the monetary subsidy of the school was already a tedious work to do which in turn a day is not enough. However, they had to accomplish it in due time not to affect the teachers' Performance-Based Bonus (PBB). One of the participants added that though it is part of their responsibilities, she felt guilty and had difficulty finding her essence as an instructional leader. Most of the time, she spent in MOOE liquidation, seminars, and training. Thus, these responsibilities forced them to perform even they were on leave from their duty.

These schemes have not been experienced before. Thus, school administrators considered the responsibilities as mentioned earlier as burdensome and felt guilty at some point because they had mostly left out their primary role in the school-being of an instructional leader.

### **Coping strategies of the public elementary school administrators in dealing with the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the K to12 Program**

The following themes emerged when asked about the participants' coping strategies in dealing with the difficulties on the implementation of K to 12 – (1) innovative strategy, (2) social support system, and (3) personal coping strategy.

**Innovative Strategies.** It is the dominant strategy employed by school administrators in coping with their experienced difficulties. All participants (12 out of 12) put into effect this strategy: the school administrators' ability to manage versatility on technology integration, alternative reading aids, forum and symposium, and allocation of funds for educational purposes.

Most of the participants advised the teachers to use and provide their laptops, which were useful in the teaching and learning process. There were mostly learning areas that need the incorporation of ICT in delivering the instructions. As firmly articulated by one of the participants saying, “*Akong gi required ang mga teachers to provide their laptop aron makatudlo gihapon sila sa mga subject nga kinahanglan ang presence sa computer.*” (I required the teachers to provide their laptops to teach still the subjects that need the presence of computers.) (*Par, transcript 4, lines 164-165*). On the other hand, the school's initiative in conducting forum and symposium helped school administrators clear the parents' doubts and inquiries about the new curriculum. Even staying long in their offices turned out to be helpful in facing the parents' queries about the implementation.

Another innovative strategy employed by the participants was allocating funds and having personal expenses for learning materials. Still, as observed, the funds were not sufficient, so their teachers needed to spend from their own pockets to meet the school needs. Hence, school administrators tried to do their best to properly allocate the MOOE funds to provide the implementation deficiencies and be accompanied by innovations. It helped them get through the situation.





**Social Support System.** In coping with the difficulties encountered, school administrators had exerted specific efforts that allowed the workforce to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize problems. The participants came up with mechanisms allowing them to minimize difficulties. The social support system is one of their coping strategies composed of motivational strategy, the conduct of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, the delegation of works in alleviating their heavy workloads, and community linkages and parents' collaboration.

Motivational strategy as imparted by school administrators was the encouragement given to their teachers. They acted as good sources of motivation to teachers to make works easier amidst problems and challenges. They had to overcome the difficulties brought by teachers' resistance towards the change of curriculum. The participants were unanimous in stating that they motivated their workforce to continue doing the task despite challenges, and it proved to have a positive effect on teachers' work attitude. One of them positively stated, *"I motivate the teachers to do their job. If you do not motivate these people, nothing will happen on the implementation of the new curriculum"* (Win, transcript 3, lines 41-43). Most of them supported the teachers through mentoring and coaching and encouraged them to adapt to the trends. Learning Action Cell Sessions (LAC) had been conducted to seek strategies and suggestions among the workforce, which alleviated teachers' burdens on the new curriculum through the system of delegation of workloads. Instead of facilitating the LAC sessions, master teachers acted as facilitators in the session. Competent ICT coordinators were given under load to spend with the school administrator doing ICT-related works and reports.

Besides, school administrators made strong linkages to the community and asked for support from the parents. They needed to link to the parents for help because the school alone cannot supply the needs. Moreover, they had connected to the Local Government Units and Barangay Leaders for further assistance because they could not cater to the needs of the learning environment by themselves. Strong community linkages and stakeholder partnerships helped the school administrators provide the school's needs, especially to the learners' needs.

**Personal Coping Strategies.** This strategy is best known as self-coping mechanisms. It was through teachers' translanguage methods, self-studying and researching on the new curriculum. Translanguaging as used in this study is the act performed by teachers using two or more languages, preferably the language used in the community to easily convey meanings to the learners.

Though there were teachers, parents and even learners had a negative thought of the language used in the LMs as shared by one participant that *"Naglisud ko unsaon nako pagtabang sa akong maestra kay akong maestra Ilokano din naa tay MTB. Dili gyud siya kasabot sa Bisaya"* (Glen, transcript 5, lines 34-35) but I observed in their responses that they use translanguaging as self-mechanism. Teachers somehow interpreted the terms used in the Sinugbuanong Binisaya LMs and translated them into words commonly used in the community for learners to understand. *"Teachers are kana bang ilahang i-interpret (interpreting) the words used in the reference nga (which is) Sinugbuanong Binisaya nga LMs, they use the term, but they equate it with the word used in the community"* (Dacy, transcript 12, line 128-129).

Moreover, the school administrators coped through self-updating. They did self-research to update the new educational trends and personally studied the curriculum guide to know and be updated with their responsibilities and the teachers' works. From this view, computers and internet connection helped the school administrators lift their knowledge of the department's current and new course that has something to do with their responsibilities being the school's face.



Hence, research participants made a way to cope with implementing the K to 12 program. They used various means of reducing the difficulties they were facing. They had interpersonal, intrapersonal, and innovative mechanisms or strategies muddle through mentioned difficulties.

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the difficulties and coping strategies of the K to 12 implementation from the perspectives of those who took charge of implementing the school level- the school administrators. School administrators are school leaders who experienced difficulties while leading their schools towards excellence. Thus, this study's results revealed that K to 12 brought challenges to school administrators.

### **Difficulties experienced by public elementary school administrators in the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum**

Principals in today's schools were not prepared for the task at hand. They were confronted with various issues as they provide leadership and organization to their schools (Tobin, 2014), which exacerbate the new curriculum's implementation. It supported one of the results of this study. The dominant difficulty school administrators experienced in implementing the K to 12 curriculum was the lack of essential training and orientations. Training and orientations were indispensable in a workplace because they laid the foundation of an employee's new career (Oregon State University, 2018). However, public elementary school administrators identified that they lacked training that resulted in difficulties in implementing the new curriculum tasks. Most of them had not attended all the training pertaining to the implementation of the curriculum. It resulted in unanswered queries of stakeholders and confusion on the standards of enrollment among learners. Also, MTB's utilization as a subject and a medium of instruction brought a loud noise in the implementation. It was because there had been no proper dissemination and clear understanding of how was *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as used in the LMs be transpired to the pupils' everyday language.

Moreover, though trained school leaders are needed, there must be strengthened teachers' training on pedagogy and understanding the whole reform concept. Alegado (2018) stated that the need for teacher training is the accustomed answer to poor student performance in public schools based on the students' scores from the annual National Achievement Test (NAT). Poor performance of students was the result of the weak connection between course content and classroom activities, as shown by teachers (Arlestig, 2012), specifically to those who taught content not aligned to their pre-service education. Another reason was there were still several schools whose teachers were untrained in the K to 12 curriculum. This picture brought worry to Senator Pia Cayetano who said that schools should acknowledge that training is needed, and people need to see actual training happening now (Geronimo, 2015). However, DepEd promised to afford teachers with training to equip them on K to 12 Program. In the same manner, it vowed to work with the Commission on Higher Education to make sure the Teacher Education course meets the needed standards. It will make the training and workshops accessible to new teachers to deliver the best learning to students and residents (K12 Philippines, 2015).

Another difficulty was the scarcity of learning materials. They had insufficient textbooks, learning aids, and even electronic materials needed for the implementation. Learning materials pertained to teachers' educational materials' amplitude to achieve specific teaching-learning processes (Lewis, 2018). Based on this study's results, there was an inefficient distribution of LMs and even until this moment, not all grade levels had the complete LMs, mainly textbooks. Thus, Taboh (2015) exclaimed in her article that lacking school materials hinders students' success. These resources the school administrators were referring to were learning materials, the need for additional teachers, enough classrooms, and ICT related resources (Bala, 2017; Basilio, 2018; Brooks et al., 2014; Cabili et al.; Koh et al., 2014; RazzHowever, as, 2015). The presence of these resources was necessary because UNESCO (2012) stressed out that students' performance was severely dependent on whether they had the opportunity to see and handle the equipment, chemicals, and specimens. Hence, adequate teaching and



learning resources should be provided, and more funds to be allocated for procuring teaching and learning materials. But the problem was, even though government officials pushed the importance of education, they did not exert effort to make sure that the education they value was received (Taboh, 2015). And school administrators had to face this concern.

Additionally, the results also revealed that materials needed in the learning environment were of poor quality. Thus, these materials should be of a high-end quality to sustain for years and be usable for the school, the teachers, and the students. Tearing off pages from the textbook should be avoided as far as possible (Textbook Committee, Education Bureau, 2016) because loosely bound textbooks will discourage students from studying them (Das, 2015). Moreover, electronic learning materials or e-LMs such as computers should have good Random-Access Memory (RAM) and a sound processor (Sorte, 2018) to function well and last long. Therefore, the government should increase funding for high-quality resources to improve education (Amato, 2015).

Moreover, a surprising difficulty they had was the addition of workloads, particularly in the liquidation of MOOE. Sparks (2016) supported this result based on his study that most school principals took their time with administrative tasks, such as paperwork and scheduling. I observed several other reports our school leaders needed to accomplish, and it hindered the main reason they were in school-being an instructional leader. NSW Department of Education (2017) supported the mentioned personal experience that principals were spending more time leading the school's management than leading teaching and learning. This responsibility was considered time-consuming (Lindberg, 2014) as there were many acute problems that principals needed to attend to. The government and its concerned agencies should listen to school leaders' concerns and be responsive to them (Derrington & Campbell, 2015) to scaffold their teachers well towards improving the implementation of the reform. Without proper, adequate, and excellent support, desired reforms in schools are far at hand.

### **Coping strategies of the public elementary school administrators in dealing with the difficulties encountered in implementing the K to 12 program**

This study's results revealed school administrators' coping strategies to address the difficulties they encountered in implementing K to 12 curriculum. Coping strategies were the effort made by an individual, healthy, or unhealthy, conscious, or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate or weaken stressors or tolerate effects in the least harmful manner (Matheny et al., 1986 as cited in Abbas and Roger, 2013). This is linked to Cowan's Complexity theory which explained that an organism sensed and responded to its environment. Thus, changing its environment enabled the organism to react and adjust to suit the new environment. In this study, the change of curriculum made the school administrators find ways to cope with the challenges they encountered in the new set up of the new schemes of their work and environment for them to function well.

Employing innovative strategies were their dominant ways of coping. One way of carrying this strategy was through the integration of technology. Osiyemi (2016) stated that e-LMs could play an extensive part in education if adequately adopted. Thus, the participants made ways to have an internet connection in their schools. Teachers were advised to have their laptops in the delivery of instruction and easy access to available resources. Proper allocation of school funds will realize the needed learning materials, but Malito (2018) stressed out that public schools did spent their own money to make their classrooms more conducive for learning. Furthermore, conducting alternative reading aids or centers was an approach of school administrators to lessen the number of learners at risk of reading. For some, especially in the United States, the term alternative refers to educational settings geared towards students whose needs cannot be met in the traditional school, such as underachievers who do not qualify for special education (K12Academics, 2019).



On the other hand, school administrators' high communication skills are likely to contribute to better functioning in the administration processes (Memduhoglu, 2015). Thus, the participants were able to convey the parents and stakeholders on the new issuances of DepEd pertained to the K to 12 implementation by conducting forum and symposium. It was done for parents to have a clear understanding of the implementation.

School administrators employed social support system as another means of coping. Supportive environments strengthened social support function and connected social support resources self-management behaviors (Chen, Chang, Liu, Ho, Weng, & Tsai, 2018). School administrators dealt with the hardships by motivating the teachers through technical assistance and mentoring. Sidikova (2011) concluded in his study that motivation was a significant force that enabled workers fully involved in projects and committed to even unexpected future. LAC sessions conducted helped school administrators cope with teachers' difficulties in new strategies to be employed in their teaching. Gutierrez (2015) found that teachers and knowledgeable others shared their problems and discovered connections between the lesson and pupils' learning outcomes, leading to possible changes in teachers' practices. Master teachers were delegated as facilitators on the sessions. Thus, research has shown that leaders who delegated have higher effectiveness rates (Drescher, 2017). Campbill (2018) stated that delegating more work would provide an avenue for new skills. New leaders would emerge as they felt trusted and respected; thus, responsibility was less but organized. When done successfully, this would be beneficial to the entire educational system. Also, schools do not exist in isolation and cannot go it alone (National Dropout Prevention Center, 2019); school administrators-built bridges to the community and asked for support from the parents. Administrators did it because Gross (2015) found that school community partnerships played an essential role in successful schools, often provided support and resources that met staff, family, and student needs beyond what is typically available through the school. With the help of this, school administrators reduced the burden of implementing and supporting the said curriculum.

Another means of coping done by school administrators was personal coping. Several studies point out what personal coping is but, in this study, it was the strategy done by school administrators that had a direct positive effect on themselves. According to Allen and Leary (2010), it could be related to self-compassion, as it involved a desire to do what is best for oneself and minimize one's future suffering. Based on this study's results, I found out that most school administrators used their translanguage strategies as one of their self-mechanism in dealing with the difficulty in implementing K to 12. Translanguaging is about making connections between ideas that others' voices be heard (Garcia, 2009). Self-studying was another personal coping strategy referred to as self-directed learning by Van Rensburg and Botma (2015). One's own learning needs were identified, developed, and implemented to gain knowledge and monitor one's progress. School administrators did research and self-study to fully understand the new curriculum and cope with the training they had not attended. With these, they were able to bridge the gap between diversity training and diversity performance.

### **Limitation of the Study**

This study focused only on public elementary school administrators' difficulties and coping strategies upon implementing the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, known as the K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines. The results of this paper were based on studies using a qualitative approach and experiences of the twelve (12) informants who were spearheading either central or big schools as identified by the office of the division of Davao del Sur and with at least three years (3) years of experience as a school administrator. It excluded the experiences of public-school administrators in the small and primary schools.

### **Implications of the Study**

Based on the results and discussion on the participants' responses, school administrators in the public elementary schools faced different difficulties in implementing the K to 12 curriculum in the





country but somehow found alternative ways of coping. Thus, this study could provide useful data for school administrators to find ways and processes on how to overcome struggles in curriculum shifting. This study may also give an overview of the challenges a school administrator might face when implementing a new curriculum and what qualities they must possess to withstand such challenges. It would also pave the way for a clear understanding to teachers that administrators too struggled in many ways during changes in the educative process. Teachers may then be enlightened that school administrators had employed strategies to the best they could to cope with their difficulties and the entire academe. This study's results may possibly help resolve their clamors against their school leaders concerning how they handled the reform.

Moreover, it had been seen that scarcity of materials and lack of essential training were two of the most noted struggles our school administrators were facing. Therefore, this research may serve as a wake-up call to DepEd authorities to realize what happens in the field during the implementation and raise and allocate budget for the implementation's necessary matters. School administrators and teachers may also be given quarterly seminars and training to discover new trends in education. Additional personnel also may be provided to every school to help the school administrators with their paper works. In this manner, administrators could focus on their primary function as instructional leaders and seeking help from the teachers in doing tasks on their behalf may be avoided.

Though translanguaging was used as strategy to easily deliver the lessons, the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and learning area in the primary grades brought a massive concern to school administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents most especially to the community with different mother tongue. With this, curriculum experts may review the curriculum's standards and provide more comprehensive learning resources considering the diversity of learners. Policymakers may even use this study as a lens on how they could ensure that all requisites on a new policy must have been provided and prepared before the implementation to minimize such difficulties based on this study's results.

Hence, the results were not meant to be generalized but rather to bridge to future research. It would be interesting to see other studies among private schools' experiences on implementing K to 12 since experiences shared in this study were from public school administrators. The teachers' experiences in private and public schools would also entice them to study and even investigate the students' difficulties and coping strategies who underwent the curriculum to see the problem from a different perspective.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Leading academe has never been easy, most especially in times of curriculum change. Though both the government and its governing agency- DepEd, spawned their efforts to be armed before the new curriculum bedded in, still challenges in the implementation were undeniable. School administrators were confronted with a scarcity of learning materials during the implementation of the new curriculum. They lacked essential training and orientations that would serve as their foundation for the new curriculum. Although it is very vivid that schools needed good quality learning materials, the participants still noticed poorness in the quality of textbooks and electronic materials handed by the government. Surprisingly, school administrators did not anticipate the additional workloads they needed to implement the new curriculum. It made them feel guilty because of the many other jobs and thrusts of the government entrusted to them, which made them left behind their primary function of being instructional leaders. However, these difficulties did not hinder the school administrators from backing off from their duties and responsibilities.

Despite the difficulties of implementing the K to 12 curriculum, school administrators' coping strategies were discovered, which helped them get through on their present situation. They coped using their social support systems and innovative strategies; however, some were good at working individually or employing self-coping strategies. These coping strategies geared the school administrators to the well-



being of the entire school and served as their weapon on strengthening the implementation of the new curriculum.

The difficulties mentioned above and the coping strategies of school administrators on implementing K to 12 curriculum gave us a realization that overcoming these struggles during change could not be done alone. It is a shared responsibility and could not be achieved without the cooperation among teachers, students, and school administrators. If done, a sound and conducive learning community could be propagated.

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