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Economic Implications of Senior High School to Parents in Southern Philippines: A Rural-Urban Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This pioneer study unravelled the economic implications of Senior High School (SHS) curriculum to parents in the rural area of Jolo and the urban center of Zamboanga City. Finding out the significant difference of said implications to parents clustered according to: Area Status, and Children's Grade Level and Children's School Type, and SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to them in both areas are also within the confine of this endeavour. As an expose facto cross-sectoral and evaluative survey, this research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. One hundred twenty seven (127) respondents comprising of parents and senior high principals/coordinators/directors were determined through a Purposive sampling method. Weighted Mean, t-test (Independent Sample-Test), and Ordinal Scales were utilized in analysing the data. The findings are forwarded - The economic implications of the curriculum to parents in both areas are as follows: more spending for school and non-school needs of children, compromised other household expenses and needs of the family, difficulty to support the education of senior high and non-senior high children, compromised expenses on non-senior high children, increased in educational expenses, costly secondary education, increased of daily expenses, financial burden, difficulty to manage income, difficulty to deal with tuition and miscellaneous fees, difficulty to save money, compromised personal and social expenses, need to generate extra income and borrow money to support the education of children, difficulty to extend financial assistance to needy relatives and friends (rural respondents), and difficulty to attend to social obligations on regular basis (rural respondents). As to the extent/intensity of the implications, parents in SCT-SHS and NDJC-SHS in rural area are more affected by the curriculum than the rest. While in urban center, parents in DPLMHS-SASHS and TTNHS-SHS are more affected than those in the four senior high schools. Generally, the extent/intensity of the economic implications of the curriculum to parents in both areas is slight. Income and tuition fee are among the top-ranking pre-determined SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to parents in rural area and urban center, and in the twelve senior high schools in both areas. Specifically, parents are shelling-out an average of PhP35,000 to 45,000 every year for the senior high education of their children. From the study findings, the researcher developed a model dubbed as Cycle of Despondency. The curriculum increases the private costs of education and burdens affluent family of two years of indispensable child's contribution in terms of labor opportunity cost. Above all, it is taxing to parents beyond their financial capability to cope. Scrapping it, however, is indubitably not an astute plan. Instead, immediate and sweeping review and modification are prudent stratagems to undertake since it is already running for four years now. Program mitigating its pecuniary repercussions to parents have to be devised, along with inflexible regulation of school fees and charges. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and corporate entities have to amend some job "educational requirements" to accommodate senior high graduates in the labor market. Studies on the economic aspect of the curriculum must be launched by various social divides - to spot genuine recommendations in aid of legislation and curriculum planning in general and map out alternative methodologies to minimize its impacts to family in particular. Otherwise, the curriculum will completely end up in fiasco.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Philippines embarked on a daring initiative of restructuring its basic education curriculum resulting, among others, to the inclusion of

additional two years of specialized upper secondary education known as Senior High School (SHS). Said bold reform was primarily prompted by the fact that Philippines is the only country in Asia and among the



three remaining countries in the world (Djibouti and Angola) that patronizes the 10-year basic education cycle. Another impulsion is the prevailing circumstance that the country's basic education curriculum is incessantly attracting attention with the continuous display of off-colour performance among learners nationwide in various international benchmarking assessments of competence randomly conducted across the country. Unavoidably, the uninspiring results will denigrate the employability of our graduates especially abroad. Considering that 18 percent of the average Filipino family income originated from overseas remittances, this issue is enough cause for alarm. When SHS curriculum was launched in 2016 amidst remonstrations from various segments of social edifice, uncertainty begun to haunt hundreds of thousands of Filipino families who are already struggling coping with the cost associated with keeping their children in school even with the four-year secondary education. This is highly expected as majority of the country's population live below poverty line. Apparently, its implementation entails tremendous amount of "out-of-pocket" expenses parents have to endure for another two years under the current financial strain that is intensified by the seemingly interminable inflation hitting 2.2 to 3.0 percent in June 2019 in the domestic market.

This study endeavours to determine and analyze the economic impact of the curriculum to parents. Since it started, studies on the curriculum mainly focused on its efficiency in relation to students' learning competencies. Its economic aspect relative to family educational finances had been a neglected area among surveys; in spite of the recommended action step by the Department of Education (DepEd) in 2010 that studies on the financial implications (to the government, implied costs to households, and private education) of the curriculum have to be launched, as if undeserving attention for an extensive analysis. Specifically, this research pioneers in aiming at filling the gap in knowledge by pursuing the following objectives: 1) To find out the economic implications of SHS to parents in

rural area and urban center, 2) To find out the significant difference of said implications to parents when clustered according to Area Status, and Children's Grade Level and School Status in both areas (null hypotheses implied), and 3) To identify SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to parents in both areas. As the curriculum requires two-year extension and is now on its fourth year of implementation, it is highly timely and reasonable to subject the program to keen scrutiny. Above all, the curriculum is a major scheme and a national concern that merits stern attention and critical analysis vis-à-vis its economic aftermath should a comprehensive and unprejudiced perspective of this vital educational paradigm shift is to be sought.

2. Methods

This study is an expose facto cross-sectoral survey and evaluative research that utilized a qualitative descriptive approach. As a descriptive study, this research is an attempt by which the researcher examines the effect of the naturalistically-occurring treatment after the treatment has occurred rather than creating a treatment himself (Tuckman, 1975). One hundred twenty seven respondents (115 Parent-Sample and 12 Principal/Coordinator/Director-Sample) were randomly selected using a Purposive Sampling method from twelve senior high schools in rural area (Municipality of Jolo) and urban center (Zamboanga City). The data were generated via a Six-Point Likert-Type Questionnaire (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2– Disagree, 3 – Slightly Disagree, 4 – Slightly Agree, 5 – Agree and 6 – Strongly Agree) and Interview Checklist, and analyzed using Weighted Mean, t- test (Independent Sample Test) and Ordinal Scale processed through SPSS Application.

3. Results

This portion contains the findings and analysis on the following: 1) The Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents in Southern Philippines' Rural Area and Urban Center, 2) The



Significant Difference of the Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents Clustered according to Area Status, and Children's Grade Level and School Type in both area; and 3) SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to Parents in both areas.

The Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents in Southern Philippines' Rural Area and Urban Center

Rural Area

The parent-respondents were randomly selected from six senior high schools in the Municipality of Jolo. Sulu College of Technology-Senior High School, Notre Dame of Jolo College-Senior High School, and Mindanao State University-Sulu Senior High School are under the SUC, and Jolo Agricultural School-Senior High School, Jolo School of Fisheries-Senior high School, and Sulu National High School-Senior High School are under the DepEd. SCT and NDJC are private integrated senior high schools, and the rest are integrated public senior high schools.

The respondents are composed of fifty nine of which twenty are males and thirty nine are females. Twenty one of them are unemployed, ten are in contractual services, eighteen engaged in business/self-employment, one worked in private sector, and nine are government employees. Educationally, they fall under the bracket of high school graduate, earning Php5,000-10,000 per month. Thirty nine of their children are enrolled in public schools and twenty in private schools. Thirty of their children are G11 and twenty nine are G12 of which forty three are registered under Academic Track and sixteen in TVL Track.

A total mean score of 4.42 shown in table 1 confirmed that there are indeed economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents in rural area.

Specifically, the respondents claimed that they are economically affected by the implementation of the curriculum. They asserted that the additional years entails more expenses for both school and non-school-related needs of their children and compels them to

spend more for education. They also asserted with a mean score of 4.32 that it makes education costlier to them than before. In general, the respondents admitted with a mean score of 4.68 that the added years is a big financial burden to them as parents.

Moreover, the respondents claimed with a mean score of 4.20 that with the curriculum in place, they find it hard to sustain the secondary education of their children. They confirmed that regardless of the grade level and type of school where their children are enrolled at, the curriculum financially affects them all the same. They also claimed that the curriculum increases their educational expenses. With a mean score of 4.63, they asserted that although senior high is free in public school and voucher system is provided in private school, they still have to shoulder other school-related expenses for another two years. As such, it becomes harder for them to manage their income relative to other needs of the rest of the members of their family.

Parents in private schools confirmed with a mean score of 5.20 that the voucher grant of their children is not enough because private school charged high-top tuition fees beyond the voucher amount. They asserted that it has to be increased for them to be less problematic with the senior high education of their children.

The respondents admitted that the effects of the curriculum are related to their income. They assailed that if their income is good enough, they will certainly be less worried about their senior high expenses. The respondents claimed that they have to minimize their daily personal expenses and that they are struggling to save money due to senior high. They confirmed that their daily expenses had increased and that their personal needs are often set aside because of their senior high expenses. They likewise confirmed that even other household expenses like food, clothing, etc. are often compromised for the same reason. In fact, with a mean score of 4.04, the respondent asserted that they find it hard to support the education of the rest of their children and that fund allotted for other members



of their family are often diverted to their senior high expenses.

Table 1. Mean Scores of the Economic Implications of SHS Curriculum to Parents in Rural Area

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| S1 - 4.84 | S8 - 4.20 | S15 - 4.73 | S22 - 4.34 |
| S2 - 4.68 | S9 - 4.20 | S16 - 4.53 | S23 - 3.85 |
| S3 - 4.66 | S10 - 4.44 | S17 - 4.50 | S24 - 4.55 |
| S4 - 4.70 | S11 - 4.63 | S18 - 4.61 | S25 - 3.81 |
| S5 - 4.32 | S12 - 5.20 | S19 - 4.04 | S26 - 4.21 |
| S6 - 4.50 | S13 - 5.25 | S20 - 4.08 | S27 - 4.00 |
| S7 - 4.20 | S14 - 4.54 | S21 - 4.20 | S28 - 4.00 |
| Total Mean Score = 4.42 | | | |

With a mean score of 3.85 the respondents confirmed that due to the curriculum they are currently suffering from financial difficulty. To them, they need to engage in other extra-income generating activity and even consider the need to borrow money to sustain the education of their children. They also claimed that they find it hard to attend to other school needs of the rest of their children. The respondents asserted with a mean score of 4.00 that because of their senior high expenses, they find it difficult to even extend financially aid to their needy relatives and friends, and attend to their social obligations regularly.

The parents in rural area appealed for the abolition of the curriculum. They claimed that the curriculum does not make their children ready for actual job, and that their children are showing little interest of studying in senior high. Some parents even claimed that the curriculum prompted students to drop out of school because of the lengthy years students have to endure. They pointed out that the work immersion has to be extended to further expose their children to actual work, and schools, whether public or private, must be fully equipped with teaching-learning materials and work immersion facilities. Otherwise, they should not offer senior high education at all.

The interview sessions with senior high principals/coordinators/directors revealed the following results:

While all of them considered the curriculum as one of the excellent reforms in education, they also possessed different point of views in terms of its economic implications to parents.

Some of them claimed that parents are not financially affected because tuition is free in public school and is covered by the voucher program in private school. Most of them, however, confirmed that the implementation of the curriculum is a tremendous burden to parents financially.

Generally, they assailed that the curriculum is plagued with various imperfections. To them, it needs to undergo extensive review and restructuring. A unified and systematic scheme of assessment has to be instituted and strictly adhere, and monitoring students' progress should be done quarterly. Above all, they unanimously believed that unless all the support systems are provided, the curriculum will certainly fail to realize its contemplated goals and objectives.

Urban Center

The parent-respondents were selected randomly from six senior high schools in Zamboanga City. Southern City College-Senior High School and Zamboanga State College of Marine Science and Technology-Senior High School are under the SUC, and Zamboanga City High School Main-Senior High School, Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial High School- Stand Alone Senior High School, Baliwasan Stand



Alone-Senior High School, and Talon-Talon National High School-Senior High School are under the DepEd. SCC-SHS is a private integrated senior high school, and BSA-SHS and DPLMHS-SASHS are public stand-alone senior high school. The rest are integrated public senior high schools.

The respondents are composed of fifty six of which twenty nine are males and twenty seven are females. Thirteen of them are unemployed, thirteen are working in contractual services, eighteen engaged in business/self-employment, two worked in private sector, and ten are government employees. Educationally, they belong to the bracket of college level, earning a monthly income of Php5,000-10,000. Forty six of their children are enrolled in public school and ten are in private school. Twenty seven of their children are G11 and twenty nine are G12 of which forty five are registered under the Academic Track and eleven in TVL Track.

As indicated by the total mean score of 4.27, there are in fact economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents in urban center.

Specifically, parents in this area ascertained that they are economically affected by the implementation of the curriculum. They claimed that the added years in senior high compels them to spend more for education. To them, it implies more expenses they have to endure for both school and non-school related needs of their children as indicated by their mean score of 4.61. They asserted that it makes education costlier to them than ever before. In general, they confirmed with a mean score of 4.48 that the additional years is a big financial burden to them as parents.

The respondents confirmed that the curriculum increases their expenses for education and makes it

more difficult for them to sustain the secondary education for their children as attested by their mean score of 3.82. They also claimed that regardless of the grade level and type of school where their children are currently enrolled at, the curriculum financially affects them all the same. They assailed that the curriculum makes them struggling to manage their income in relation to other needs of their family. The respondents also claimed that even though senior high education is free in public school and with voucher program in private school, they still have to bear the burden of spending for other school-related expenses for another two years.

Respondents in private school asserted with a mean score of 4.30 reflected in table 2 that the voucher grant is not enough because private school are charging high-top tuition fees beyond the voucher amount. As such, they appealed that the amount has to be increased for them to be less problematic with the senior high education of their children.

The respondents confirmed that the financial effects of the curriculum have relationship with their income, claiming that if their income is good enough they will certainly be less worried about their senior high expenses. They confirmed that with senior high in effect, they have to minimize their daily personal expenses and find it hard to save money. They also asserted that their daily expenses had increased and find it hard to support the education of the rest of their children as indicated by their mean score of 3.79. In addition, the respondents asserted that other household expenses like food, clothing, etc. are often compromised and fund allotted for other members of their family is often diverted to their senior high expenses.



Table 2. Mean Scores of the Economic Implications of SHS Curriculum to Parents in Urban Center

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| S1 - 4.66 | S8 - 4.66 | S15 - 5.04 | S22 - 4.45 |
| S2 - 4.48 | S9 - 4.48 | S16 - 4.57 | S23 - 3.64 |
| S3 - 4.63 | S10 - 4.04 | S17 - 4.30 | S24 - 4.57 |
| S4 - 4.61 | S11 - 4.84 | S18 - 4.48 | S25 - 3.70 |
| S5 - 4.57 | S12 - 4.30 | S19 - 3.79 | S26 - 3.63 |
| S6 - 4.61 | S13 - 4.80 | S20 - 3.96 | S27 - 3.45 |
| S7 - 3.82 | S14 - 4.50 | S21 - 3.68 | S28 - 3.36 |
| Total Mean Score = 4.27 | | | |

Furthermore, the respondents confirmed that their personal needs are often set aside and that they are currently suffering from financial difficulty due to this curriculum as manifested by their mean score of 3.64. They claimed that they need to engage in extra-income generating endeavor and even see the need to borrow money to sustain the education of their children. This is because they confirmed with a mean score of 3.63 that the curriculum makes it hard for them to attend to other school needs of the rest of their children. In spite of this, the respondents confirmed that they can still manage to extend financial assistance to their needy friends and relatives, and attend to their social obligations regularly.

Parents in the urban center are receptive of this curriculum although some of them are appealing for its abolition. In general, they confirmed of being bothered by the volume of school projects and requirements of their children, and that their children are unable to rest due to school activities even during weekends. Parents with children in private school appealed that voucher amount has to be increased, while those in public school appealed that voucher program should be expanded to cover those in the public school. They assailed that the curriculum has to be re-structured, especially with the offering of subjects. The respondents pointed out that most subjects taught in senior high have already been taught in the junior high school and that some subjects taught in college are just duplication of subjects being taught in senior high. As such, they manifested that subjects taught in senior high must

be given academic credit in college for the students to save time, energy, and expenses.

The interview sessions with the senior high principals/coordinators/directors of the six selected schools in urban center disclosed the following findings:

Senior high school officials in the urban center strongly believed that the curriculum boasts the learners' competence and skills.

While most of them confirmed that parents are immensely affected by the implementation of the curriculum in terms of their financial expenses, some assailed that it is natural that parents have to shoulder the cost of education.

Most of them asserted that if the government cannot come up with other scheme that can mitigate the economic effects of the curriculum aside from voucher system, parents will be forced to stop sending their children to school.

All senior high officials confirmed that the curriculum is full flaws and needs to be further studied and restructured. Its implementation has to be closely monitored. Some asserted that standards have be instituted such as mandatory civil service examination for graduating students and national examination of competence for TVL graduating students as one of the requirements for graduation.

They all believed assailed that unless necessary support systems are provided accordingly and more school buildings are constructed, the curriculum cannot be expected to attain its desired goals.



Significant Difference of the Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents grouped according to Area Status

The parent-respondents under this group are composed of one hundred fifteen. Fifty nine of them are in the rural area with Php5,000-10,000 monthly income, and fifty six are in the urban center earning Php5,000-10,000 per month.

The .109 probability of chance (sig. 2 tailed) being greater than .05 level of significance indicated that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Area Status. This means that the perceptions of parents in rural area and urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The grand mean scores of 4.42 and 4.27 respectively attested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both areas is slight.

The Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents grouped according to (a) Children's Grade Level, and (b) Children's School Type in Rural Area and Urban Center

Children's Grade Level

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's Grade Level are composed of fifty nine. Thirty of them; with children enrolled as G11, are earning Php1,000-5,000 every month, and twenty nine; with children enrolled as G12, are earning Php1,000-5,000 each month.

Given the probability of chance of .088, the data confirmed that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's Grade Level in rural area. This entails that the perceptions of parents with children enrolled as G11 and G12 in rural area of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant

difference is accepted. The total mean scores of 4.42 and 4.26 respectively manifested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both grade levels is slight.

Children's School Type

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's School Type are composed of fifty nine. Thirtynine of them; with children enrolled in Public School, are earning Php5,000-10,000 each month, and twenty; with children enrolled in Private School, are with Php10,000-20,000 monthly income.

Since the probability of chance of .001 being lesser than .05 level of significance, it is confirmed that there is a significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's School Type in rural area. This means that although the perceptions of the parents with children enrolled in Public School and Private School in rural area of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same, the extent/intensity of its implications differed between them. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. The total mean scores of 4.16 and 4.85 respectively ascertained that while the extent/intensity is slight to parents with child/children enrolled in Public School is slight, it stays moderate to those with child/children enrolled in Private School.

Urban Center

Children's Grade Level

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's Grade Level are composed of fifty six. Twenty seven of them; with children enrolled as G11, are earning Php5,000-10,000 monthly income, and twenty nine; with children enrolled as G12, are earning a monthly income of 5,000-10,000.

The probability of chance of .590 attested that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's Grade Level in urban center. This means that the perceptions of parents with



children enrolled as G11 and G12 in urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The total mean scores of 4.23 and 4.31 confirmed that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both grade levels is slight.

Children’s School Type

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children’s School Type are composed of fiftysix. Fortysix of them; with children enrolled in Public School, are earning Php5,000-10,000 monthly income, and ten; with children enrolled in Private School, earned Php5,000-10,000 every month.

With the probability of chance of .399, the data confirmed that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children’s School Type in urban center. This implies that the perceptions of the parents with children enrolled in Public School and Private School in urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference

is accepted. The over total mean scores of 4.22 and 4.34 respectively manifested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both school types is slight.

The Senior High School -Associated Factors causing Financial Difficulty to Parents in Rural Area and Urban Center

Whenever an educational reform is conceived, spending for its implementation is anticipated. In like manner, the financial impacts of such reform in terms of educational finances of parents are likewise inevitable. This portion presents the parents’ expenses and SHS-Associated Factors that caused them financial difficulty.

Rural Area

Table 3 below revealed the pre-determined SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to parents in rural area. These factors were ranked by the respondents according to the extent/intensity of its impact to them using the ordinal scales of 1st to 15th – i.e. 1st being the one they are mostly struggling to cope with.

Table 3. SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to Parents in Rural Area

| Factors | Mean Score | Rank |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Income | 14.64 | 1 st |
| Tuition Fee (private school) | 14.53 | 2 nd |
| Transportation | 13.02 | 3 rd |
| Miscellaneous Fee | 12.99 | 4 th |
| School Projects and Requirements | 12.88 | 5 th |
| Child’s Grade Level | 12.03 | 6 th |
| School Supplies | 11.58 | 7 th |
| Books and Hand-Outs | 11.33 | 8 th |
| School Uniforms | 10.97 | 9 th |
| School Type | 10.17 | 10 th |
| Educational Gadgets | 9.35 | 11 th |
| Child’s Strand | 9.26 | 12 th |
| Area Status | 8.29 | 13 th |
| Educational Tours/Field Trips | 8.27 | 14 th |
| Work Immersion Expenses | 7.66 | 15 th |



In terms of their specific expenses per semester, the respondents claimed that they need to disburse Php1,000-5,000 for the daily baon of their children that covers snacks and lunch allowances. For transportation, they are spending Php500-1,000, while are they shelling-out the same amount for the school projects and requirements. They are also spending the same amount for the school supplies, and Php1,000-5,000 for the books and hand-outs each year. Parents in private schools asserted that they are disbursing Php5,000-10,000 for the books and photocopy of hand-outs. The same amount is likewise used for tuition and miscellaneous fees of

their children. They also confirmed of spending Php500-1,000 for the school uniforms each year.

Generally, parents in rural area asserted with a mean score of 4.87 that they are shelling-out an average amount of Php35,000-45,000 every year for the senior high education of their children.

Urban Center

Table 4 below exposed the ranking of the pre-determined SHS-Associated Factors causing economic difficulty to parents in urban center.

Table 4. SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to Parents in Urban Center

| Factors | Mean Score | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Tuition Fee | 13.90 | 1 st |
| Income | 12.90 | 2 nd |
| School Projects and Requirements | 11.72 | 3 rd |
| Miscellaneous Fee | 11.69 | 4 th |
| Educational Gadgets | 10.57 | 5 th |
| School Uniforms | 10.56 | 6 th |
| School Supplies | 10.03 | 7 th |
| Transportation | 10.00 | 8 th |
| Books and Photo Copies of Hand-Outs | 9.43 | 9 th |
| Educational Tours/Field Trips | 8.35 | 10 th |
| Child's School Type | 8.11 | 11 th |
| Child's Strand | 5.90 | 12 th |
| Child's Grade Level | 4.99 | 13 th |
| Area Status | 4.89 | 14 th |
| Work Immersion Expenses | 4.80 | 15 th |

As to their expenses every semester, parents in urban center claimed that they are shelling-out Php1,000-5,000 for the daily baon of their children which covers snacks and lunch allowance. They claimed of disbursing Php500-1,000 for the transportation allowance, Php1,000-5,000 for school projects and requirements, and Php500-1,000 for the school supplies per semester. In addition, the respondents also claimed that they are spending Php1,000-5,000 for the school uniforms of their children every year. Parents in private school claimed that they are disbursing Php1,000-5,000 for the books and hand-outs and Php1,000-5,000 for the tuition and miscellaneous fees each semester.

In general, parents in urban center assailed with a mean score of 5.44 that they are spending an average of amount of Php35,000-45,000 for the senior high education of their children every year.

With the in-depth scrutiny of the study findings, the researcher formulated a model as his contribution to this research. Simply known as Cycle of Despondency, this model states: "The Senior High School Curriculum that is designed to ostensibly curtail unemployment and alleviate the burgeoning poverty incidence will only aggrandize the escalation of these social pestilences a bit more – an educational debacle and a perfect ingredient for underdevelopment." This notion is methodically delineated in the ensuing discussions.



Flawed Curriculum

SHS is a sub-standard curriculum hastily forged and implemented during Aquino administration in order to meet less resistance from fellow party members who dominated the political system during that period. It is laden with imperfections as indicated by several glitches in its implementation. In a paradox, while it aims to develop students' job skills through work immersion, it is devoid of necessary support system from the government and stakeholders. Above all, the curriculum does not turn students into confident, job-ready, and employable students/graduates.

The curriculum is a replica of the senior high school system of American with only few modifications. Patterning a system after a progressive nation as America - an indication of our never-ending dependency - having its own dynamics and distinct socio-political-economic and natural endowments then transfer that system for mandatory adoption into an under-privileged country with its surrounding limitations and underdevelopment will only result to the waste of limited resources in the latter. As

Crisotomo further commented, the K to 12 program is “flawed, problematic framework which will only worsen the education crisis unlike what Aquino is promising. It is not a solution to education and employment woes. Instead, it will further worsen and deepen the problems.”

Misallocation of Public Resource

Typically, in a developing society the ‘social’ cost of education (i.e. the opportunity cost to society as a whole resulting from the need to finance costly educational expansion at higher levels when these limited funds might be more productively used in other sectors of the economy) increases rapidly as students climb the educational ladder (Todaro,1983:259). Operating under the pretext of constitutional mandate, the new educational system in the country in regard to public school offers free basic education from kindergarten to senior high school which subsequently leads to the rising social costs of education. Table 5 below indicates this trend with senior high in effect.

Table 5. DepEd Five Years Consecutive Annual Budget (Tabulated by the researcher from different sources)

| Fiscal Year | Amount in Billion | Yearly Differential |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2014 | 309.43 | - |
| 2015 | 367.1 | 57.67 |
| 2016 | 433.38 | 66.28 |
| 2017 | 543.86 | 110.48 |
| 2018 | 553.313 | 9.453 |

For three consecutive fiscal years starting in 2015 to 2018, DepEd has been receiving the highest budget among national departments. One of the alarming issues in this sense is the tendency towards misallocation of resources. As asserted by Crisostomo, “the government spending for education, as it is, is not enough to meet the shortages at present. The shortages will worsen and we will be faced with greater problems; that tuition rates for tertiary education will further hike as the government’s K to 12 will also mean abandonment for tertiary education.” Public policy

begins when the problem is perceived as urgent and gets on the policy agenda. Of the multi-dimensional and interconnected issues in Philippines society, problem identification/prioritization becomes a difficult venture for policy makers. Consequently, as Kingdon (1984) observed, there are many problems in society that are not part of the policy agenda because they have not gotten the attention of the authoritative actors in the government and therefore do not cause any policy response. In addition, policy agenda setting



is determined by the ever changing political actors having their own programs and priorities.

When agenda setting fails to identify and place into policy agenda the actual problems, misallocation of resources occurs. Consequently, millions of pesos go to waste, yet the problems linger still. Being an average income nation with ballooning national debts, spending with lesser thinking is a luxury we should not dare to enjoy. Besides, investments made in education at the expense of other poverty-alleviating programs will also widen the existing gap of income distributions among the population. As Breton (2012) emphasized, the evidence also indicates that human capital is more likely to be the limiting factor in economic development. For instance, while the extension is allegedly for a greater good, it unfortunately shakes the parents' daily budget for another two years.

Rising Private Costs of Education and Loss of Opportunity Cost and Benefit

Parents as the catch basin of the financial impacts of this reform are bound to shoulder the private costs of education. Private costs of education pertain to the out-of-pocket expenses of parents such as baon, school uniform, transportation, school projects, etc. These are educational costs that are not reflected in the tuition fees covered by voucher program. Extending the educational cycle by two years entails the exacerbation of its private costs for parents. In particular, parents in both areas need to spend 35,000.00 to 45,000.00 every year for the senior high education of their children. This coincides with the data provided by the Kabataan Party-List Rep. Sarah Elagoin an article by Janvic Mateo in Philippine Star that, "parents would have to shell-out an additional PhP100,000.00 to PhP200,000.00 for a student to finish senior high." These amounts are hard to bear, if not impossible, by many Filipino families who are sunk in economic deprivation.

Just as private costs of education increases, the curriculum robs parents of the child's labor

contribution (opportunity cost) to the family. In poor families, children of primary school age are needed to work family farms or at any family income-generating endeavours, usually at the same time they are required to be at school. If a child cannot work because he/she is at school, the family will either suffer a loss of a valuable subsistence output or he be required to hire paid labor to replace the absent child. Either way, it caused financial loss to the family. In any case, there is a real cost to poor family of having an able-bodied child attending school when there is a productive work to be done on the farm. As Todaro (1982:267) explained why: First, the private costs of primary education, especially the "opportunity cost" of a child's labor to poor families, are higher for poor students than for rich students. Second, the expected benefits of primary education are lower for poor students than for rich students. Together, the high costs and lower expected benefits of education for the poor means that a family's rate of return from investment in a child's education is lower for the relatively poor than for the relatively rich.

Another implication of the curriculum to the parents is the loss of potential opportunity benefits bring about by their children. With the old curriculum, students would graduate after four years and can proceed to college and earn degree four years later (for four-year degree program). This gives them the opportunity - by saving two years - to find job with attractive credential. Consequently, they can contribute to family income, lessening the burden parents' for daily sustenance and make parents save money they are supposed to spend for two years in senior high.

Intensifying Poverty

Poverty is one of the perennial problems in Philippine society. In 2015, poverty incidence among Filipinos was recorded at 27.6 percent. The subsistence incidence among Filipino families was estimated at 6.2 percent in the first semester of 2018. This is alternatively called as the proportion of Filipino



families whose incomes fall below the food threshold. In the same period, the proportion of families who are food poor was recorded at 9.9 percent. Four years later, Under Secretary Berales revealed that the proportion of poor Filipinos is registered at 21.0 percent in the first semester of 2018. Poverty incidence among Filipino families in the first semester of 2018 was estimated at 16.1 percent. This is defined as the proportion of families whose income is below the poverty line to the total number of families. The poverty incidence among Filipino individuals in the first semester of 2018 was estimated at 21.0 percent. This is referred to as the proportion of the individuals living below the poverty line to the total population.

When this study was launched, 47.4 percent of the parents in rural area do not have fixed monthly income, so as 55.3 percent of those in the urban center. Generally, 54 percent of parent-respondents in both areas only earned 1,000-5,000 every month. These statistics clearly attest to the fact that economic deprivation is prevalent among families in both areas. Roberto de Vera and Jennifer Aimee Tan disclosed that the private costs of senior high education (excluding tuition fee) for students studying in metro Manila is 4,560 per month. Granting said amount is a bit lower in the City of Zamboanga and more so in the Municipality of Jolo - say only 3,000 each month - parents in both areas still find themselves struggling with their senior high expenses given their monthly earning.

Poverty restricts one's view of the future. Poor children have minimal opportunities. They have less time and resources to discover their passion and interests. Their parents are constantly preoccupied and struggling to satisfying family basic needs. With economic deprivations, what time is there left for parents to guide the children in fixing school home works and projects when they are out the entire day finding ways for daily sustenance? What amount is there left to finance the education of their children for another two years when their income is not even enough for basic daily necessities? As reported in the

recent Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) of the NSCRG in 2019, Filipino families prioritize spending are merely for food and other basic necessities. This implies that there are many school-related needs of the students that parents are unable to supply thereby adversely affecting their scholastic performance. More than a few studies divulged that children belonging to poor families tend to perform poorly in the class, sometimes making them an ideal target for bullying by fellow students and in some instances, for hounding by teachers. To avoid becoming the center of inimical attention and the ordeal of being embarrassed every day, absenteeism becomes a routine, and eventually, dropping out of school.

Rising Dropout Incidence

The concern over high school dropouts stems from the importance of having an educated workforce. However, with senior high the acceleration of high school dropout incidence is inevitable. From 2015 to 2016 alone - the time senior high was launched - DepEd accounted 4.8 million out of school high school-age from. The agency averred that said figure is likely to increase at 11 percent rate for the next five years. The Philippine Business for Education (PBE), an advisory group, also confirmed in 2016 that due to financial reasons, many high-school graduates today cannot proceed to college which contributes to the aggregate of about 15 million out-of-school-youth in the country. Several surveys likewise observed the deterioration in the number of enrollees since it was senior was implemented. In 2018 Batasan Hills High School recorded more than 2,600 Grade 10, but only 89 have enrolled for senior high. The school has a capacity rate of 670 Grade 11. In Lagro High School, of the 1,600 Grade 10 completers, only 500 of the 800 senior high school slots have been filled. The same case was recorded at the Commonwealth High School where only around 330 of 650 slots were filled. The school had over 1,000 Grade 10 completers.



The chance of completing the 13 years basic educational cycle among poor students becomes slimmer due to poverty. AS Ellin (2015) emphasized, whether the government accepts it or not, poor parents, especially in the countryside, would only grumble over the extended education cycle when they can barely send their kids to school, even with the four-year secondary education. Although, there are factors that are not economic-related such as lack of passion for schooling, early marriage, dangerous vices, and the likes, studies showed that economic realities remain the major factor of quitting school. Looking keenly at the larger picture, one cannot help but notice that said non-economic variables were triggered by economic realities. It is nearly impossible for an individual to be passionate for schooling, develop desirable study habit and attain satisfactory academic performance on an empty stomach. Without money for transportation, and for school projects and requirements, schooling is surely not enjoyable.

Unemployable Graduates

One of the curriculum exits of senior high is Employment. But the questions remain: Are they truly employable? Is the labor market ready for them? No less than the Education Undersecretary Tonisito Umali who asserted that employers are concerned about the non-readiness of graduates of K to 12 program for employment. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Human Resources Development Foundation, Inc. (PCCI-HRDF) for disclosed that the hesitance of employers to hire fresh graduates may be due to the absence of the necessary skills and trainings that industries need but not yet provided by the current SHS curriculum. Philippine Business for Education (PBEd) in 2018 likewise revealed that even most of the senior high school students are ready to work the market is not prepared to receive or employ them. While "the first batch of SHS graduates possess "theoretically" 93 percent of the competencies suitable to the needs of the nation's industries . . . only about 20 percent of the 70 of the

country's leading companies across all sectors were inclined to hire senior high graduates." Even if senior high graduates are job-ready, the insufficiency of job offerings for them as posted in Philjobnet.com and JobStreet.com – the two major online job posting sites of the Department of Labor and employment (DOLE) – indicated that the labor market is not prepared to accommodate them.

Employers frequently raise the educational specifications of jobs in reaction to an increase in the supply of better educated workers. And better educated workers receive the preferred positions within the job structure. As the gap between supply and demand for college graduates continues to increase, competition between them extends to further down in the labor market, leaving those with less education with the wariest job opportunities. In addition, despite the government's assertion that the economy has become robust and the labor market excellently growing, unemployment problem remains as pervasive as ever. In truth, the country continues to have the highest jobless citizens among the 10-member states of the ASEAN as exposed by the International Labor Organizations (ILO). ILO predicts no improvement in the unemployment rate in 2018, the year when the first batch of senior high school had graduated.

In a nutshell, the country started implementing SHS curriculum in a state beleaguered by

ominous learning competence of its graduates, mounting rates of unemployment, rising poverty incidence, and ballooning national debts, only to find itself in the exact same circumstances or shoddier in the coming years - only to find itself stuck in a rancorous Cycle of Despondency. As the former Minister of Education of Upper Volta Joseph Kizerbo averred, "The school in many underdeveloped countries is a reflection and a fruit of the surrounding underdevelopment, from which arises its deficiency, its quantitative and qualitative poverty. But little by little, and there lies the really serious risk, the school



in these underdeveloped countries risks becoming in turn a factor of underdevelopment.”

4. Conclusion

For the past two decades, learning competence of Filipino students has been deteriorating as evidenced by their awful standing in many benchmarking assessments of competence initiated across the country. As always, this trend undermines the employability of Filipino graduates both in local and global labor market. These circumstances were attributed to our half century-old basic education curriculum being obsolete and irrelevant, and that we remained the only country in Asia with ten-year education cycle. As a result, SHS curriculum was launched. Inescapably, the added years entails added expenses parents have to endure for another two years. Its implementation has been met with reluctance and dismay by parents. With economic deprivations thriving among Filipino families, this extension prompted parents to stop sending their children to school against their will – the very core of their opposition of the curriculum. Since its implementation in 2016, no single study delved on tackling the economic impact of the curriculum to parents particularly in two distinct areas simultaneously. Thus, this descriptive cross-sectoral survey generally focused on finding out the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents in rural area of Jolo and the urban center of Zamboanga City.

The old secondary curriculum can no longer ride along with the tides of the current social dynamism both at the micro and macro level in which education is expected to alleviate people’s economic hardships more than ever and educational outputs are regarded as yardstick of excellence. Change is inevitable and it is required to make the curriculum more responsive. Indeed, to refuse change is to become irrelevant - to become dysfunctional.

SHS curriculum is a product of educational innovation to cope with the inexorable forces of globalization. It is an ill-planned educational reform

hastily implemented to please the member states of the ASEAN community. It is plagued with profuse impediments in its very design of which the school system, parents, and students are feebly left to deal with. Being patterned after America’s senior high system with only few modifications, SHS has little or no chance at all in realizing its desired outcomes.

With the curriculum, the educational system; instead of becoming a general force for equality, will inevitably tend to act to increase rather than decrease income disparities. This places the entire educational system in an unlikely position of becoming a stumbling block to economic parity rather than a champion of national progress.

The inability of the government to establish enough public senior high school paves the way for the massive de-facto privatization of senior high school education across the country. Hundreds of thousand students are affected thereby defeating the constitutional provision on free secondary education for all Filipino youth.

However, education is made free, the longer time of schooling boiled down to more expenses on the part of the parents thereby worsening their economic condition. Being at the receiving end of the economic impacts of senior high, parents are compelled to carry the burden of the inherent costs of its implementation – i.e. costs that are not covered by any government assistance schemes. No matter how it is made accessible for the youth, there are always those who are lagged behind due to economic deprivation. Hence, the added years in secondary education entails exacerbation of parents’ financial ordeal and acceleration of high school dropout incidence. Upgrading educational standard by prolonging the years of schooling and providing the students with opportunity of choosing their own career path may sound appealing to parents with good monthly income. But for those with ill-fated economic status where their children’s daily baon is a struggle, the added years is reason a plenty to stop sending their children to school.



Parents in both areas are financially affected by SHS curriculum regardless of the area they lived in, their children's grade level, and school status. Its implementation increases the educational expenses of the parents. It does not only affect their capability to deal with their senior high expenses, it also bothers their capacity to sustain the school-related needs of the rest of their non-senior high school children. It likewise affects their means to sustain their personal, family, and social needs.

School officials in both areas are optimistic of the curriculum's potentiality in enhancing students' competence and skills thereby making them employable. However, they acknowledged the fact that the parents are compelled to shoulder the financial burden that goes along with its implementation for another two years. They also see the curriculum as laden with several impediments and lacked support systems from the government and stakeholders.

The implementation of the curriculum remains a formidable matter for schools not well prepared to embrace the program. More time and government supports are needed for parents, students, senior high school officials and stakeholders to adopt and cope with the shift from the old system to the new school set-ups.

In spite of its profuse flaws, the curriculum can still be a forerunner of social transformation and prosperity. Abolishing the curriculum will not only undermine the integrity of the educational system in shaping didactic paradigms for the country, but may as well result to a nation-wide outrage from the affected parents and students especially the pioneering batch. However, perpetuating its implementation will only lead to the incessant waste of resources on a large scale, and continuously burden the parents economically.

Whether or not this new curriculum managed to deliver its envisioned potentials and paybacks remain to be a crucial point of analysis for intellectuals in the field of social sciences. But one thing is certain - the need to produce high caliber citizens have always been

the constant concern of countries the world over. This explains why educational systems have been undergoing transformation. It only attests to the truism that even the advanced societies where its educational system is closely matched with its manpower requirement there is always the phenomenon of a shortage of educational manpower.

5. Recommendation

The curriculum has to be restructured in line with the country's natural endowments and aligned with the demands of the local market. National whims have to be the target of the curriculum. Attending to the clamour of global or regional community at the expense of national interests is definitely not a practical plan worth considering. It must undergo extensive review of its vital components. Nevertheless, curriculum planners should undergo massive modifications of several features and components of this scheme with particularly reference to enhancing Career Guidance and Work Immersion system.

All the necessary support systems have to be adequately provided to the school system to ensure that its mandate of developing students' skills and competence to the fullest level possible is attained. More school buildings must be constructed to accommodate the increasing number of senior high enrollees each year to prevent shifting of classes which can impede students' learning brought about by insufficient classroom instruction period. Standardization of hiring standard for senior high teachers has to be formulated and stringently enforced.

Scheme design to diminish the financial impact of the curriculum to parents must be devised should dropout incidence is to be minimized. In particular, cover two years regardless if it is consecutive or not. This motivates students to continue rather than halt their study. Since it is a needs-based with no grade ceiling, it has to be extended to students enrolled in public school in the form of stipend to alleviate their parents' burden. It should be noted that students



enrolled in public school most belong to low-earning family as opposite of those in the private school.

The distribution of voucher amount/grant should not be made area-based but rather it should be made income-based, if equal distribution seems to be illogical. Sending children to private school in spite of free the education in public school is a parental choice made by those who have the financial capability to sustain their decision even without the government assistance. Most importantly, the DepEd and the CHED have to step forward in order to regulate the high-top school fees and charges imposed by private schools offering senior high education. Refusal to comply after series of prior notices should result to permanent revocation of license to operate.

A grades-based scheme has to be developed. Assistance in this type should come in the form of a scholarship grant that will cover not only tuition fee but other senior high-related expenses of parents. This will not only prevent dropout incidence but also generate highly competent graduates as it will encourage students to excel in their chosen career path.

Job educational requirements have to be reviewed and adjusted by CSC in coordination with DepEd, CHED, and TESDA. The commission should clear up whether or not the job's educational requirement of "high school graduates" pertains to the previous four-year high school graduates, senior high graduates or the junior high completers. It should also be clarified whether or not the additional years in senior high is considered as equivalent to second year level in college. In so doing, a nation-wide information dissemination drive has to be initiated by the commission across line agencies and corporate entities in the country.

The commission, in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), has to mandate private establishments to assume adjustments of their prevailing job-standard requirements and practices especially for the first level

positions where senior high graduates are likely to fit in.

More researches on senior high have to be launched by government instrumentalities, educational institutions, and private corporations and individuals. Because work of this kind can improve the chances of realizing the benefits, if there is any; that a reform of this kind is expected to deliver for future generations.

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