

Educational Transformation in the Philippine Education System: Towards Global Competitiveness

Aggabao, B. A.,¹ Aggabao, N.T.,² Antiado, D. F.,³ Castillo, F. G.⁴

University of Fujairah, Fujairah^{1,4}, United Arab Emirates

Isabela State University², Isabela, Philippines

American College of Dubai³, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

ABSTRACT: The Philippine education system had undergone a major transformation in the last 4 years. This is a major renovation in the existing number of years in both educational and instructional time. The implementation of the K-12 is perhaps one of the biggest change that shaken the whole Philippine education system. With the move there are many flaws identified that hinders us from becoming even more competitive globally. The implementation of the K-12 plan in the Philippine Basic Education curriculum will elevate Philippine Education to the next level. Because most countries internationally and globally have a standard basic education of 12 years therefore this reform and change is necessary for us to follow. This will provide students sufficient instructional time for various subjects where they can apply their knowledge, skills and abilities. The challenges, changes and issues involved in the process are discussed in this research study in order to enhance and assess its competitive edge.

Keywords: K-12, quality, higher education, core competencies, competitiveness.

I. Introduction

The Philippine education system had undergone a major transformation in the last 4 years. This is a major renovation in the existing number of years in both educational and instructional time. The implementation of the K-12 is perhaps one of the biggest changes that had shaken the whole Philippine education system. With the move, there are many flaws identified that hinders us from becoming even more competitive globally. The implementation of the K-12 plan in the Philippine Basic Education curriculum will elevate Philippine Education to the next level. Because most countries internationally and globally have a standard basic education of 12 years therefore this reform and change is necessary for us to follow. This will provide students sufficient instructional time for various subjects that they can apply their knowledge and skills. Aside from that they have the opportunity to enhance and assess further their existing skills in the market of pool talents available. Another reason to support the K-12 program is because the graduates of this program will be more prepared to enter in the labor force/market. There is a study that high school graduates of the 10-year curriculum were not employable and marketable with their qualifications because they lack exposure and competency. This can be subjective or on case to case basis to every individual as many also excel even if they don't hold secondary degree.

Perhaps one of the most difficult issues/problems that our fellowman is facing abroad is when they want to practice their profession. Some countries require our citizen to study again as they don't recognize our degrees. In some cases, they are counting the number of years of our studies and compare it to their educational system. In some cases, the degrees earned in our country needs to apply for degree equivalency which is subject to their discretion or decision. Perhaps the best contribution of K-12 to some extent is that no need to study to cover the years that needs to be earned as it conforms to the international standard. This is a major issue that will resolve and gained recognition for our professionals locally and globally with this move.

II. The Philippine Education System: From Colonial to Global Influence

The Philippine education system has been influenced by its colonial history which includes those periods that they are under the regime of Spain, United States and Japan. The Spanish is the longest and most influential of all those countries who colonize the Philippines. It is known as the Spanish Colonial Era where Filipinos are exposed to their basic education to tertiary period. For more than 350 years Spanish rule the Philippines as one of its colony and extended territory. Its culture was adopted by people and to date some are still visible around the Philippine archipelago. The American education is the most influential in terms of educational curriculum as English as medium of instruction was used accordingly. Those years can be consider as the hallmark of Philippine Education as we know for a fact that American education model is one of the best in the world.

Before the Spaniards the Philippines has an education system of informal and unstructured. The early known education for Filipino ancestors was called "Alibata" which is a combination of vowels and consonants. It only shows that our Filipino ancestors value the education even if there is no one colonize the Republic of the Philippines. Despite the odds our fore fathers remains to be optimistic that education is the only riches that cannot be stole. This golden rule is still remain in the heart of Filipino across generations.

Philippine education can be described as traditional to liberal to modern day educational system. The foundation was lay down by our great ancestors and it is for us to continue what they've started. The influence of Spanish to American to Japanese to our education system provides rich mixture of great heritage of those super power countries. Their dominance was inherited by Filipino citizen which runs to their blood which was passed across generations. The contribution of those three influential colonizers can be summarize below:



Figure No. 1 Education System in the Philippines in Different Era

During Spanish Occupancy (period) 1521-1898 (1900)

- Formal and Organized - classroom with teacher and lessons conducted.
- Religion-centered - Theology and faith
- Spanish missionaries serve as tutor/teacher -preaching and teaching based on religion
- Christianity was introduced since 1521 Ferdinand Magellan - bible, doctrines,
- Spanish language is mandatory - Spanish language was introduce
- Education is a privilege not a right- for those who can afford/money
- Education for the elite and not for masses -social class in the society

With more than 350 years of influence in the Philippine education system without a doubt Spanish remains to be one of the highly influencer. There are many schools to date who are run and influence by priest and secular. From the island of Luzon to Visayas to Mindanao we can say that they are still highly dominant and respected. This domination is still part of the education system in the Philippines which different congregation administer their own schools, colleges and universities throughout the country.

Spanish period in the Philippines is the most influential of all because their influence is already incorporated in the culture of the people including their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs. During the Spanish era, Filipinos are treated in different way as to their class in the society and their wealth. Many Filipinos belong to different social class like upper

class, middle and lower. Normally they classify lower class has no power nor chance to push thru studies and they are just workers in the field or farm land. The middle class needs acceptance from other class in order for them to be accepted in the academic institutions. But because many citizens who belongs to the lower class wants to study, they do it on their own. They are not discourage of the treatment given to them but this serve as encouragement for them to further improve their human capability and proficiency.

III. United States of America Occupancy (period) 1900-1942

- Curriculum adopted from US- the education system was pattern to US (primary onwards)
- Secularization of education with the Motto - Love of country and God (Nationalism/Patriotism)
- Adoption of English as medium of instruction – Adoption of English as primary language
- Creation of higher learning center with emphasis on public education – public and private schools.
- Improvement of educational system thru corresponding budget priority – national budget for education (basic education to secondary level)

The American education model was introduced to the Philippines after the Spanish era. This is era considered to be the golden years of Philippine Education system because the medium of instruction English was used and academic curriculum was patterned in their system. These substantial change helps Philippine education to be more idealistic and think liberal. As separation of church and state was their primary aims during that period including democracy and equality. The teaching pedagogy introduced class recitation, participation, debate, role playing and active class involvement. The transition on this period is very relevant in the Philippine education because there is transition in the language which is very critical in the instruction. The priest and seminaries act as the frontliner in the delivery of instruction in English language. The education was widely spread across class which is a major move by the American educators. With that move, they provide across classes in the society instructions and curriculum that are American and western philosophy.

During the American occupation the American soldiers who serve as volunteers are the first teacher of Filipinos. In August 1901, 600 teachers called Thomasites arrived and their name derived from the ship they traveled on (USS Thomas). The English language remains to be the best contribution that the American contributed in the Philippine education system. Aside from that they introduce to us the value of professionalism and formality in any aspect of studies, training and development and etiquettes.

During Japanese Occupancy (period) 1942-1944 During WWII era

Japanese Devised Curriculum

Curriculum

- School and Academic calendar became longer – more emphasis on days attended
- No summer break for students – education must continue
- Class size increased to 60
- American influence curriculum was abolished - US
- Nihongo and Japanese culture was introduced

They introduced many changes in the curriculum by including Nihongo and abolishing English as a medium of instruction and as a subject. This move was welcome by Filipinos as they have no choice from Japanese rulers. They are the type of people who are strict and firm to their decision. All textbooks were censored and revised and according to Japanese culture and heritage. The Japanese-Devised curriculum caused a blackout in the Philippine education and impeded the educational progress because it is already in its higher development and progress. This is consider as set back in the Philippine education because they are moving backward because of the new leadership by the Japanese invasion. It is very visible that any colonizer always impose their national language in order to gain control of the situation. This is very true during the regime of former Philippine Pres. Jose P. Laurel which the government became puppet to the Japanese empire.

Issues, Changes and Challenges Ahead: The Philippine Education System

K (Kindergarten) + 12 Basic Education Program; Implemented School Year 2012-2013; and additional two years in high school begun in 2016

IV. Curriculum

- Total number of years of basic education had been to 12 years instead of 10
- Focuses on the mastery of basic competencies
- Encourages critical thinking rather than rote memory
- More interactive and relevant in everyday life
- Kinder is made mandatory at age five, a pre-requisite to admission to grade 1.
- Implements the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) from Kinder to Grade 3 using twelve major regional dialects: Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hilagaynon, Waray, Bahasa-sug, Maguindanaon, Maranao and Chabacano.
- English and Filipino used as medium of instruction starting grade 4.
- Added 2 years of senior High School where they follow a career track in Science and Technology, Music and Arts, Agriculture and Fisheries, Sports, Business and Entrepreneurship
- K-12 graduates will be equipped with middle level skills enabling them to gain employment
- Adopts the formal education and the alternative learning system as its modes of delivery.
- Assessment of understanding and development of skills given more emphasis than accumulation of content.
- Introduces a standard-based assessment to ensure teaching and learning

This new educational reform known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533) had established the momentum to look forward and/ address the challenges of the 21st century. A vantage point is it will provide equitable access for all, and not just for a privileged few to compete locally and globally in the workforce. Philippines just like any other countries are the home of many dialect and parlance. With that the instructions will be more easier to be understood by the pupils as it is conducted in their mother tongue. There are many studies before that suggest that this kind of teaching will eventually enrich and preserve dialects of any province or region.

The implementation of the K-12 curriculum may require major restructuring along the way, however it is perceived as an urgent and vital reform to address the ailing educational system of the country. The country needs to move forward to address the needs and priorities of a fast-changing, more complexed and interconnected global economy - preparing graduates to cope with its challenges, and become globally competitive. Further, since most of the countries worldwide follow a 12-year curriculum, the educational reform implemented is a necessary step towards boosting the graduates become more globally competitive and will put the country up to par with all these countries.

The World Economic Forum reports the Philippines as ranking 47th out of 140 countries in Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) for 2015-2016. In terms of regional rankings of emerging and developing Asia, the Philippines emerged as the 5th, Malaysia being the first, followed by China, Thailand as the 3rd, and Indonesia as the fourth.

For 2016-2017, Philippines ranked 57th among 138 countries this year, indicating that the country went backwards. In terms of the quality of primary education (one of the 4th pillars of the GCI), the Philippines ranked 75th; 53th for higher education and training (5th pillar of the GCI and in terms of flexibility and efficient use of talent (7th pillar of the GCI) the country is ranked as 88th.

The results serve as wake-up call for the country to assess where we are now and, collaboratively and strategically align all its resources towards a curriculum which is responsive to the demands and challenges of a new global economy. Health and education remain to be the top priority in any administration in the Philippines. Allocation of budget remains to be political in nature. Thanks to the new administration as they lead the country to a new direction of offering scholarship grants for state colleges and universities. The budget is always subject for release and its distribution and priorities remains to be seen.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

Since Philippine education system is the result of rich and multi-diverse culture of Spanish, American and Japanese ethos, this gives Philippine education room for improvement and development. Over the years the influence of the colonizing countries molded the Philippine education system. Rapid technological changes, more complex and interconnected global society, and stiffer competition in the Asian region and the world, calls for an educational reform that would respond to these challenges. The 2012 move by the government is a landmark decision that will prepare next generation of Filipinos to be more competitive and align to global standard as to the years of instruction and structure. They only needs to align the standard and make sure that they are not way behind in the Asian region and the world.

We know for a fact that Filipinos are known globally as competitive nationals, the extra years will prepare them to acquire relevant knowledge and skills in order to face modern day competition. These extra years will help them to assess their core competencies and level up their knowledge. With this K-12 scheme this will help future generations of Filipino learners to be more achievers in their respective field of interest and specialization. One of the problem faced in the process is the transition of the curriculum to be followed as it needs to be aligned with the following level. Therefore, we must support, advocate and embrace this new educational plan to help improve our Philippine educational system.

Philippine Education system remains to be one of the country's top priorities. Since the after math of additional years of instructions there are a lot of reforms and transformation takes place. It is very important that qualification of the teachers is being track and monitored as to their licensed and experienced. Aside from that they are required to attend continuous professional education which is governed by the Professional Regulation Commission. This is perhaps the advantage of Filipino across other countries because weregulate professionals and constantly upgrading the skills and knowledge. Perhaps our competitive advantage over our neighboring countries is that our teachers in the primary to secondary holds professional license. This ensure that they meet the minimum qualification and standard. This is not present in many countries which is advantageous to our Philippine Education system. Just recently the salary standardization and upgrades for teachers are being in the radar of the new administration. This was not the priority of previous administration which remains to be a puzzle. Mostly police and military uniform personnel are the one benefitted for the modernization. It's about time that both teachers and health professionals should be given attention. The budget allocated for them should be spend wisely for their professional growth and development. Filipinos excel in this area aside from are the home of many professionals like engineers, architects, lawyers, doctors and many more. There may be shortage of teachers back home in the Philippines but they are able to experience it in a way to survive despite the odds. Filipino teachers are known to be compassionate and always ready to put something on the table. These characteristics of Filipino teachers serve as a model of Philippine education. Even across generations the rich culture influences us to be remains visible in the Philippine Education system. We are now geared toward conquering the world of opportunities and beyond.

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