



# Perspectives and Experiences of Students and Teachers on the Senior High School Curriculum

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**Abstract**—This study examined the perspectives and experiences of students and teachers on the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum under the K to 12 reform implemented by the Department of Education. Employing a multi-method research design, the study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of curriculum implementation. The participants consisted of 242 Grade 12 students and 180 SHS teachers from nine public secondary schools in Santiago City, Philippines. Data were collected using an adapted structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items and open-ended questions, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that both students and teachers generally have positive perceptions of the SHS curriculum in terms of satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support. Students viewed the curriculum as engaging, relevant, and helpful in developing critical thinking and life skills, although they also described it as demanding. Teachers, on the other hand, demonstrated high levels of confidence and preparedness in implementing the curriculum and recognized its role in enhancing professional growth. Qualitative results further highlighted shared experiences, including the demanding yet meaningful nature of the curriculum, its effectiveness in preparing learners for future pathways, and the importance of teacher support and collaboration. However, concerns regarding resource adequacy, workload, and curriculum alignment were also identified. The study concludes that while the SHS curriculum is largely effective, continuous improvements in support systems, resource provision, and curriculum refinement are necessary to enhance its implementation and responsiveness to learner and teacher needs.

**Index Terms**—Senior High School curriculum, K to 12 education, student perspectives, teacher experiences, curriculum implementation, Philippines.

## 1. Introduction

The Senior High School (SHS) curriculum represents a central component of the K to 12 educational reform in the Philippines, aimed at enhancing learners' competencies and preparing them for higher education, employment, and entrepreneurship (DepEd, 2016). By extending secondary education to Grades 11 and 12, the reform introduces specialized tracks, including Academic, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), Arts and Design, and Sports, to provide students with more diversified opportunities to develop knowledge and skills relevant to real-world contexts. Beyond merely adding two years of schooling, the SHS curriculum

requires comprehensive adjustments in instructional planning, assessment strategies, classroom management, and administrative coordination. The effectiveness of its implementation is influenced not only by curriculum design but also by the ways students engage with learning materials and how teachers interpret and deliver content across diverse learning environments (Setiawan & Qamariah, 2023; Ejjami, 2024; El-Sabagh, 2021).

Globally, research shows that stakeholder perceptions are essential indicators of curriculum effectiveness. Students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes are strongly influenced by the perceived relevance, clarity, and support structures of curriculum reforms (Danial, et al., 2024; Wei, et al., 2024). Teachers' knowledge, pedagogical skills, and access to professional development are equally critical in shaping curriculum delivery, fostering instructional innovation, and improving student outcomes (Edu, 2025; Nugroho, 2024). In the Philippines, despite the promise of the SHS curriculum, challenges remain in terms of teacher preparedness, instructional resources, and learner readiness (Salayo, et al., 2020; Rodriguez Jr., 2021). According to the Department of Education (2024), there are currently over 900,000 SHS students and approximately 45,000 teachers nationwide, enrolled across more than 4,500 public and private schools, highlighting the scale and complexity of implementing the curriculum across diverse contexts. These figures underscore the need to systematically examine both student and teacher perspectives to better understand the curriculum's strengths, limitations, and practical implications.

Students' engagement and learning outcomes are closely linked to teachers' competence and the availability of instructional support. Studies indicate that when teachers are confident, knowledgeable, and equipped with resources to implement curriculum requirements, students exhibit higher participation, motivation, and achievement (Jacob, et al., 2020; Nurzen, 2022; Anwar, et al., 2021). Conversely, inadequate support, lack of resources, and insufficient teacher preparation can negatively affect student learning experiences, engagement, and outcomes (Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2025; Dursun & Aykan, 2025). Teachers' experiences provide valuable insights into practical challenges such as workload management, instructional design, assessment strategies, and the integration

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of innovative teaching methods. Capturing both student and teacher perspectives allows for a comprehensive understanding of how curriculum policies are translated into classroom practice and the factors that facilitate or hinder successful implementation (Gouedard, et al., 2020).

Research further highlights the importance of teacher professional development in ensuring curriculum effectiveness. Continuous training, mentoring, and collaborative learning opportunities enable teachers to adapt instructional strategies to meet diverse learner needs and to integrate pedagogical innovations into their practice (CG, 2024; Rahmawati & Al-Rashid, 2025). In the Philippine SHS context, studies reveal variability in teachers' preparedness across schools and tracks, with some teachers feeling inadequately trained to deliver specialized content effectively (Capulong, et al., 2025; Bernardo, et al., 2021). Similarly, students' experiences vary according to school resources, track specialization, and teacher competency, affecting their perception of curriculum relevance, engagement, and readiness for subsequent education or employment (Khanal, 2024). These findings suggest that examining both groups' perspectives is essential for identifying gaps in curriculum delivery, designing targeted professional development programs, and informing policy decisions that support effective implementation.

Despite the acknowledged importance of stakeholder perspectives, research on the SHS curriculum in the Philippines has predominantly focused either on student outcomes or teacher readiness, without integrating these viewpoints in a single, cohesive study (Salayo, et al., 2020). Limited attention has been given to capturing lived experiences, including challenges, coping strategies, and innovative practices that emerge as teachers and students navigate curriculum demands. Moreover, few studies have explored the alignment between teacher practices and student perceptions to identify areas of convergence and divergence, which are critical for improving instructional strategies, curriculum design, and learning outcomes (Holzer, et al., 2023; Wu, 2025). Addressing this research gap is particularly important given the scale and diversity of the SHS program across the Philippine archipelago, where contextual factors such as school resources, student socioeconomic backgrounds, and regional disparities influence curriculum implementation and effectiveness.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the perspectives and experiences of students and teachers regarding the Senior High School curriculum in a city in Northern Philippines. By situating the study within both international literature and the realities of Philippine education, this research will contribute to theory by expanding understanding of curriculum perceptions and experiences in senior high school contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to inform policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training institutions on strategies to improve curriculum delivery, enhance teacher preparedness, and increase student engagement. Ultimately, the study will support more effective, responsive, and learner-centered implementation of the SHS curriculum across Philippine schools. Specifically, this study will seek to answer the following questions: what are the perceptions of students

regarding the Senior High School curriculum in terms of satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support; what are the perceptions of teachers regarding the curriculum in terms of satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support; what similarities and differences exist between students' and teachers' perceptions; and how do students and teachers describe their experiences in engaging with or implementing the curriculum, including challenges and best practices.

## 2. Methods

### A. Research Design

This study employed a multi-method research design to examine the perspectives and experiences of students and teachers regarding the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines. The multi-method approach combined quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the curriculum was perceived, experienced, and implemented in diverse school settings. The quantitative phase utilized structured questionnaires to assess levels of satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support among both students and teachers, allowing for the identification of patterns, trends, and potential similarities or differences between the two groups. Complementing this, the qualitative phase employed open-ended questions to explore in greater depth the experiences, challenges, and adaptive strategies that students and teachers encountered in engaging with or implementing the curriculum.

### B. Research Setting

The study was conducted in Santiago City, an independent city in the province of Isabela, Northern Luzon. Specifically, the research focused on the nine public secondary schools offering the Senior High School (SHS) program under the Division of Santiago City. As a key educational center in the Cagayan Valley region, Santiago City implemented the SHS curriculum across various public schools that offered multiple tracks, including the Academic and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood strands.

### C. Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 242 Grade 12 students and 180 Senior High School teachers from the nine public secondary schools offering the SHS program under the Division of Santiago City. Two groups of participants were included to capture both learner and implementer perspectives on the Senior High School curriculum. The first group comprised Grade 12 students who were in the final year of the SHS program, while the second group included teachers who were directly involved in teaching and implementing the SHS curriculum in public schools.

Participation was voluntary, and ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with parental consent secured for Grade 12 students who were minors. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any

stage without any academic or professional consequences.

#### *D. Research Instruments*

Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from the instrument developed and used by Sales *et al.* (2023) in their examination of Senior High School curriculum implementation. The questionnaire was developed to capture the perspectives and experiences of key curriculum stakeholders and had been employed in a peer-reviewed international study, thereby providing a sound empirical and theoretical basis for its adaptation in the present research. The use of an established instrument helped ensure construct clarity, content relevance, and methodological rigor in examining perceptions of the SHS curriculum.

The adapted questionnaire consisted of two parallel versions, one for Grade 12 students and one for Senior High School teachers, structured to allow comparison across stakeholder groups. Both versions measured perceptions of the SHS curriculum across four major dimensions: satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support. These dimensions reflected widely recognized indicators of curriculum effectiveness and implementation quality and aligned with existing literature on curriculum evaluation and educational reform (Sales *et al.*, 2023). Responses to the closed-ended items were measured using a Likert-type scale, enabling the quantification of perceptions and the analysis of patterns and differences between students and teachers.

For the Grade 12 student questionnaire, items were framed to assess learners' satisfaction with curriculum content, confidence in applying acquired knowledge and skills, perceived preparedness for academic or career pathways, and the level of instructional and institutional support received during curriculum implementation. For the teacher questionnaire, items focused on educators' satisfaction with the curriculum structure, confidence and knowledge in teaching SHS competencies, adequacy of preparation and training, and the availability of administrative and instructional support for effective curriculum delivery. The parallel structure of the two instruments facilitated meaningful comparison of perceptions across the same curriculum dimensions.

In addition to the closed-ended items, the instrument included open-ended questions for both students and teachers. These questions allowed participants to describe their experiences with the SHS curriculum, identify challenges encountered in learning or implementation, and share perceived best practices within their school contexts. The inclusion of open-ended responses provided qualitative insights that enriched the interpretation of quantitative findings and offered a deeper understanding of curriculum engagement in public Senior High School settings.

Minor adaptations were made to the wording of selected items to ensure contextual relevance to public Senior High Schools in the Division of Santiago City, Philippines, without altering the original constructs measured by the instrument. These modifications focused on clarity and contextual alignment with Department of Education policies and practices. The questionnaire was administered in English, the official

medium of instruction in Senior High School, to ensure consistency and comprehensibility among respondents.

#### *E. Data Gathering Procedure*

The data gathering for this study was conducted following a systematic and ethical procedure to ensure the reliability, validity, and integrity of the data collected. Prior to data collection, formal approval was sought from the Schools Division Office of Santiago City. Upon approval, coordination was undertaken with the principals of the selected public Senior High Schools to secure permission for the administration of the research instruments and to determine appropriate schedules that would not disrupt regular instructional activities.

After securing institutional consent, the researcher oriented participating teachers and Grade 12 students regarding the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the procedures involved in answering the questionnaire. Ethical considerations were clearly explained, including voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, anonymity of participants, and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any academic or professional consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with parental consent secured for Grade 12 students who were below the age of 18.

The questionnaires were administered to teacher and student participants during designated periods agreed upon with school administrators. The instrument was distributed in either printed or electronic form, depending on school resources and accessibility, to ensure maximum participation and accurate data collection. Participants were given sufficient time to respond to both the closed-ended items and the open-ended questions, and clear instructions were provided to minimize response bias and misunderstanding. The researcher was available during the administration of the questionnaires to clarify instructions but did not influence participants' responses.

Upon completion of the data collection, all accomplished questionnaires were retrieved and securely stored by the researcher. Data were reviewed for completeness and accuracy, and responses were encoded for analysis. Qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were transcribed and organized for thematic analysis. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic and research purposes.

#### *F. Data Analysis*

Quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire items were encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean, were used to determine the overall levels of perceptions of students and teachers regarding the SHS curriculum in terms of satisfaction, knowledge and confidence, preparation, and support. To examine the degree of association between student and teacher perceptions of the SHS curriculum, correlational analysis was employed. This analysis determined whether a significant relationship existed between the perceptions of the two groups across the identified curriculum

dimensions.

Qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were carefully reviewed, coded, and grouped into emerging themes that reflected common experiences, challenges, and perceived best practices related to engagement with or implementation of the SHS curriculum. This process involved repeated reading of responses to ensure accuracy and consistency in coding. The identified themes were used to enrich and explain the quantitative findings, offering contextual insights into how students and teachers experienced the curriculum in public school settings.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The findings in Table 1 indicate that students generally hold a positive view of the senior high school curriculum, particularly in terms of how it supports their learning and engagement. Students perceive that the curriculum provides meaningful resources and presents lessons in ways that sustain their interest. This suggests that the curriculum is not merely content-driven but is experienced by learners as relevant and engaging, which is a critical factor in promoting sustained academic motivation. Studies have shown that when students find instructional materials engaging and aligned with their goals, they are more likely to demonstrate deeper learning and persistence (Agger & Koenka, 2020; Chisunum & Nwadiokwu, 2024).

In terms of knowledge and confidence, students appear to have a strong understanding of how the curriculum operates and what is expected of them. They are generally aware of learning goals and demonstrate a level of confidence in navigating their lessons. However, some aspects of usability and full mastery suggest a more cautious level of confidence. This implies that while the curriculum is conceptually clear, there may still be areas where students require additional scaffolding to fully maximize their learning potential. This aligns with the work of

Maharani & Purnama (2023) who emphasized that students' self-efficacy and understanding of learning processes significantly influence their academic success.

With respect to preparation, students report that they have developed personal strategies for learning and are generally able to manage their preparation time. However, the availability of resources for preparation appears to be less consistent. This points to a potential gap between curriculum design and resource accessibility. In the context of the Philippine senior high school program, resource adequacy has been identified as a persistent concern, particularly in ensuring equitable learning opportunities across different schools (Gumilao, 2024). When students lack sufficient preparatory materials, it may limit their ability to fully engage with the intended curriculum outcomes.

Regarding curriculum supports, students acknowledge the importance of teacher interactions, such as feedback and consultations, in helping them understand the curriculum. These forms of support appear to play a more significant role than formal orientations, which were perceived less strongly. This suggests that ongoing, interactive support mechanisms are more effective than one-time informational sessions. The findings are consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, which highlights the importance of guided interaction and feedback in the learning process (Mishra, 2023). Teacher support, therefore, remains a critical component in bridging gaps between curriculum design and actual student understanding.

The results in Table 2 show that teachers generally view the senior high school curriculum in a favorable light, particularly in terms of its ability to support instruction and student learning. Teachers perceive that the curriculum provides adequate guidance and content that allow them to address diverse learners and strengthen their subject matter expertise. This suggests that the curriculum is not only serving as a guide for instruction but is also functioning as a professional resource that contributes to teachers' ongoing development. This finding is

Table 1  
Students' perspectives on the senior high school curriculum

Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<i>Student Satisfaction with the Curriculum</i>		
1. The curriculum provides resources that help me reach my learning goals.	3.58	High
2. The lessons in the curriculum are interesting.	3.67	High
3. The curriculum helps me learn effectively.	3.47	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Student Knowledge and Confidence with the Curriculum</i>		
4. I understand how to learn using the curriculum.	4.15	High
5. The curriculum is easy to use.	3.36	Moderate
6. I am confident in my ability to learn the curriculum in full.	3.30	Moderate
7. I am confident in my ability to fully learn every lesson within the curriculum.	3.47	High
8. I understand the goals of every unit I am learning.	3.50	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Student Preparation with the Curriculum</i>		
9. I have a system for preparing to learn lessons that works for me.	3.47	High
10. I have sufficient time to prepare to learn the lessons.	3.40	High
11. I have the resources I need to prepare for learning the lessons.	3.38	Moderate
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Student Satisfaction with Curriculum Supports</i>		
12. Orientation about the curriculum helps me understand the materials for learning.	3.27	Moderate
13. Observations and feedback from my teachers help me understand the curriculum.	3.58	High
14. Meetings with my teachers help me understand and use the curriculum materials.	3.45	High
15. Sufficient time is provided for me to learn the lessons in the curriculum.	3.50	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2  
Teachers' perspectives on the senior high school curriculum

Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<i>Teacher Satisfaction with the Curriculum</i>		
1. The curriculum provides resources that help me reach all students.	3.58	High
2. The curriculum has helped me build knowledge in my content area.	3.67	High
3. The curriculum is helping my students learn effectively.	3.70	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Teacher Knowledge and Confidence with the Curriculum</i>		
4. I understand how to use the curriculum.	4.45	Very High
5. The curriculum is easy to use.	3.58	High
6. I understand where to find information in the curriculum when I need it.	3.45	High
7. I am confident in my ability to teach a full lesson using the curriculum.	4.15	High
8. I understand the learning goals of every unit I am teaching.	4.25	Very High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Teacher Preparation with the Curriculum</i>		
9. I have a system for preparing to teach lessons that works for me.	4.56	Very High
10. I have sufficient time to prepare to teach lessons.	4.52	Very High
11. I have the resources I need to prepare for teaching lessons.	4.25	Very High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>Very High</b>
<i>Teacher Satisfaction with Curriculum Supports</i>		
12. Trainings on the curriculum help me understand and use the materials.	3.56	High
13. Observations and feedback from my colleagues help me understand the curriculum.	3.80	High
14. Meetings with my coordinator help me understand and use the curriculum.	3.45	High
15. Observations and feedback from my principal help me understand and use the curriculum.	3.50	High
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>High</b>

consistent with the view that well-structured curricula can enhance both teaching quality and student outcomes when aligned with clear standards and learning competencies (El-Annan & Hassoun, 2025; AKPAN & Wisdom, 2024).

In terms of knowledge and confidence, teachers demonstrate a strong sense of familiarity with the curriculum and a clear understanding of its structure and goals. They appear confident in delivering lessons and navigating curriculum materials, indicating that the design and organization of the curriculum are accessible to practitioners. This level of confidence is important, as teacher clarity and mastery of content are closely linked to effective instruction and improved student achievement (Fryer & Leenknecht, 2023; Pollock & Tolone 2020). When teachers are confident in what and how they teach, classroom instruction tends to be more focused, purposeful, and responsive to student needs.

Preparation emerges as a particularly strong area in the findings. Teachers report having established systems for lesson preparation, along with sufficient time and access to necessary resources. This implies that, at least within the context of the study, structural and institutional support mechanisms are in place to allow teachers to plan effectively. Adequate preparation time and access to instructional materials are critical components of successful curriculum implementation, as emphasized in earlier evaluations of the K to 12 reform under the Department of Education (2016), where teacher readiness and resource provision were identified as key determinants of program success.

Despite these positive perceptions, the findings on curriculum supports suggest that while trainings, collegial feedback, and administrative guidance are present, their impact may be more moderate compared to other areas. Teachers acknowledge the value of these supports, particularly peer collaboration and instructional supervision, but the results imply that there is still room to strengthen these mechanisms. Professional learning communities and sustained coaching have

been widely recognized as more effective forms of teacher support than one-time trainings, as they provide continuous opportunities for reflection and improvement (Shand & Batts, 2023; Zamiri & Esmaeili 2024).

The role of instructional leaders, such as coordinators and principals, also appears to be important in helping teachers interpret and implement the curriculum. However, the findings suggest that these interactions could be further enhanced to maximize their impact. Strengthening instructional leadership practices such as regular feedback, mentoring, and collaborative planning can contribute to more consistent and effective curriculum delivery across classrooms.

#### A. Student's Experiences on the Senior High School Curriculum

Based on the responses of Grade 12 students, several recurring themes emerged regarding their experiences with the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum. The analysis revealed both positive and challenging experiences, highlighting how students perceive the curriculum in relation to learning, preparation, and support.

##### 1) Challenged but Motivated

Many students described the curriculum as demanding and sometimes overwhelming due to heavy workloads, deadlines, and expectations. However, these challenges also motivated them to become more responsible and resilient learners. Some of the responses are as follows:

*“The SHS curriculum makes me feel challenged but motivated.”*

*“Sometimes it is overwhelming because of many requirements, but it helps me grow.” “There are many activities and deadlines, but I learned how to manage my time.”*

*“It is stressful sometimes, but it pushes me to do better.”*

## 2) Preparation for College and Future Career

Students perceived the curriculum as helpful in preparing them for higher education and future careers by aligning lessons with their chosen strands and future goals. Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

*“It helps me become more responsible and prepared for my future.”*

*“It prepares me for college and future work.”*

*“The lessons are useful for my chosen course in college.”*

*“I feel more ready for the future because of the knowledge and skills I gained.”*

## 3) Development of Critical Thinking and Life Skills

Students emphasized that the curriculum helps develop essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, time management, and independence. Some of the responses of the respondents are as follows:

*“It teaches me how to think, not just what to memorize.”*

*“It helps me improve my thinking, communication, and research skills.”*

*“I learned how to solve problems and work independently.”*

*“The curriculum helped me become more confident in speaking and presenting ideas.”*

## 4) Importance of Teacher Guidance and Learning Support

Teacher feedback, guidance, meetings, and orientation were identified as significant support mechanisms that help students better understand lessons and curriculum expectations. Some of the responses of the respondents are as follows:

*“My teachers also guide me to understand the topics better.”*

*“Orientation helps me understand the materials for learning.”*

*“Teacher feedback helps me improve my performance.”*

*“Consultations with teachers make learning easier and less stressful.”*

## B. Need for More Focused and Specialized Learning

Some students expressed concern that the curriculum is too broad and contains too many general subjects, suggesting the need for more strand-focused and specialized content. Some of the responses of the respondents are as follows:

*“The curriculum feels too broad and filled with general subjects.”*

*“It should be more focused and specialized.”*

*“Some subjects are not related to my strand and future career.”*

*“I hope there will be more specialized subjects that match our chosen field.”*

The qualitative responses of the students provide a more nuanced view of how the senior high school curriculum is experienced in actual classroom contexts. While the earlier quantitative results suggest generally positive perceptions, the

narratives reveal a more complex picture, one that reflects both the strengths of the curriculum and the areas that require further refinement. A recurring theme that emerged is that students find the curriculum both demanding and motivating. The presence of multiple requirements, performance tasks, and deadlines appears to create a sense of pressure among learners. However, rather than discouraging them, these challenges seem to foster a sense of discipline and perseverance. Students recognize that the rigor of the curriculum pushes them to develop time management skills and a stronger sense of responsibility. This finding supports the idea that appropriately challenging academic environments can promote resilience and self-regulated learning, as emphasized by Wolters & Brady, (2021). It also reflects the intent of the K to 12 reform under the Department of Education to produce learners who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptable and self-directed.

Another important theme is the perceived role of the curriculum in preparing students for college and future careers. Students clearly associate their learning experiences with their chosen strands and long-term goals, suggesting that the curriculum is effective in establishing relevance and direction. This alignment between curriculum content and career pathways is a key feature of senior high school education, as it is designed to bridge basic education and higher education or employment. The findings resonate with previous studies which argue that when students see the practical value of what they are learning, their engagement and commitment to schooling increase (Maki, 2023; Sá, 2023; Gillen-O’Neel, 2021).

Students also highlighted the development of critical thinking and essential life skills as one of the most valuable outcomes of the curriculum. Rather than focusing solely on content acquisition, the curriculum appears to encourage higher-order thinking, communication, and independent learning. These skills are crucial in preparing learners for the demands of higher education and the workplace. The emphasis on 21st-century skills aligns with global educational frameworks that prioritize critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration as core competencies (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). The students’ responses suggest that these competencies are not only embedded in the curriculum but are also being meaningfully experienced in the classroom.

The importance of teacher guidance and support also emerged strongly in the findings. Students consistently pointed to feedback, consultations, and teacher-led discussions as essential in helping them navigate the demands of the curriculum. This highlights the central role of teachers as facilitators of learning, particularly in a curriculum that requires higher levels of student independence. The findings are consistent with study of Remorosa et al., (2024), which underscores the importance of guided learning and social interaction in cognitive development. It also suggests that even a well-designed curriculum requires effective teacher mediation to be fully understood and appreciated by students.

Despite these positive experiences, some students expressed concerns about the breadth of the curriculum. The perception that there are too many general subjects, some of which are not aligned with their chosen strands, indicates a possible mismatch

between curriculum design and student expectations. This suggests that while the curriculum aims to provide a holistic education, it may benefit from further refinement to ensure greater specialization and relevance. Previous evaluations of the senior high school program have similarly pointed out the need to continuously review subject offerings to better align them with industry demands and student career paths (Department of Education, 2016).

### C. Teachers' Experiences on the Senior High School Curriculum

The thematic analysis of teachers' experiences on the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum provides deeper insights into how educators perceive and navigate curriculum implementation in the school setting. As primary implementers of the curriculum, teachers play a crucial role in translating curriculum goals into meaningful classroom instruction and student learning experiences. Their perspectives are essential in understanding both the strengths and limitations of the SHS curriculum. Based on the qualitative responses gathered from teacher respondents, several recurring themes emerged that reflect their lived experiences in implementing the curriculum. These themes include the demanding yet meaningful nature of teaching, the curriculum's role in preparing students for future success, the enhancement of teaching competence and professional growth, the importance of administrative and collegial support, and the need for improved resources and curriculum alignment.

#### 1) Demanding yet Meaningful Teaching Experience

Teachers described the Senior High School curriculum as challenging due to workload, lesson preparation, and diverse learner needs. Despite these challenges, they found teaching meaningful because they could contribute to students' growth and future readiness.

*"Teaching SHS is challenging because of the preparation needed, but it is fulfilling." "There are many responsibilities, but seeing students learn makes it worthwhile."*

*"The curriculum demands much effort, but it gives meaning to our work as teachers." "Managing different learners is difficult, but it helps me grow professionally."*

#### 2) Curriculum as Preparation for Students' Future

Teachers viewed the curriculum as an important foundation for preparing students for college, employment, and real-life responsibilities. They believed that the curriculum supports learners in becoming future-ready.

*"The curriculum prepares students for college and future careers."*

*"It helps learners develop the competencies needed for higher education."*

*"Students become more prepared for real-world challenges."*

*"The SHS curriculum bridges basic education and future employment opportunities."*

#### 3) Enhancement of Teaching Competence and Professional Growth

Teachers shared that the curriculum helped them strengthen their teaching strategies, subject mastery, and professional confidence. It encouraged them to continuously improve and adapt their instructional approaches.

*"The curriculum helped me improve my teaching strategies."*

*"It pushes me to become more knowledgeable in my field."*

*"I became more confident in handling lessons and student needs."*

*"It encourages continuous learning and professional development."*

#### 4) Importance of Administrative and Collegial Support

Support from school heads, coordinators, and colleagues was seen as essential for effective curriculum implementation. Trainings, meetings, feedback, and professional collaboration helped teachers better understand and deliver the curriculum.

*"Trainings help me understand how to implement the curriculum better."*

*"Feedback from my principal improves my teaching practices."*

*"Meetings with coordinators provide clarity and support."*

*"Collaboration with colleagues makes curriculum implementation easier."*

#### 5) Need for Improved Resources and Curriculum Alignment

Some teachers expressed concerns regarding limited resources, insufficient time for lesson preparation, and the need for better alignment between subjects and student needs. They emphasized the need for stronger institutional support.

*"Sometimes resources are limited for effective teaching."*

*"There is not always enough time to prepare quality lessons."*

*"Some parts of the curriculum need better alignment with students' needs."*

*"Additional support and materials would improve curriculum delivery."*

The qualitative accounts of teachers provide a grounded perspective on how the senior high school curriculum is enacted in real classroom settings. While the quantitative findings reflect generally favorable perceptions, the narratives reveal the day-to-day realities of implementation—highlighting both the demands placed on teachers and the professional meaning they derive from their work.

One dominant theme is that teaching within the senior high school curriculum is both demanding and meaningful. Teachers consistently describe the workload, preparation, and need to address diverse learners as challenging. However, these demands are not viewed negatively in isolation; rather, they are framed as part of a purposeful and fulfilling professional experience. Teachers find value in seeing students develop and

succeed, which reinforces their sense of commitment to the profession. This reflects the idea that teacher motivation is closely tied to perceived impact on student learning, as discussed by Mullen *et al.* (2010), who emphasized that meaningful engagement in teaching sustains teacher resilience even in demanding environments.

Another key insight is the strong belief among teachers that the curriculum effectively prepares students for future academic and career pathways. Teachers view the curriculum as a bridge that connects basic education to higher education and employment, aligning with the intended goals of the K to 12 reform under the Department of Education. This perception suggests that teachers recognize the broader purpose of the curriculum beyond content delivery, seeing it as instrumental in shaping learners who are equipped for real-world challenges. Such alignment between curriculum intent and teacher understanding is critical for successful implementation, as it ensures that instructional practices remain focused on long-term learner outcomes (Gouëdard, 2020; Little & Paul, 2021).

The findings also point to the curriculum's role in enhancing teaching competence and professional growth. Teachers report that the demands of the curriculum push them to refine their instructional strategies, deepen their content knowledge, and become more adaptive in addressing student needs. This suggests that the curriculum functions not only as a guide for teaching but also as a catalyst for professional development. Continuous learning and reflective practice are essential characteristics of effective teaching, and these are often strengthened when teachers are challenged to meet evolving educational standards (Iqbal & Ali, 2024; Nugroho, 2024). In this sense, the curriculum contributes to building a more competent and confident teaching workforce.

Support systems within the school environment emerge as another critical factor in teachers' experiences. Teachers emphasize the value of administrative guidance, collegial collaboration, and professional development activities such as trainings and feedback sessions. These forms of support appear to ease the complexities of curriculum implementation and provide clarity in instructional expectations. The importance of collaborative professional cultures is well-documented, with research showing that schools that promote shared learning and peer support tend to have more effective curriculum implementation (Liou *et al.*, 2025). The findings suggest that when teachers are supported through consistent and meaningful interactions, they are better able to translate curriculum goals into effective classroom practices.

Despite these positive experiences, teachers also raised concerns regarding resource adequacy and curriculum alignment. Limitations in instructional materials and time constraints for lesson preparation point to structural challenges that may affect the quality of teaching and learning. Additionally, some teachers noted that certain aspects of the curriculum could be better aligned with students' needs and contexts. These concerns highlight the ongoing need for curriculum review and institutional support to ensure that implementation conditions match curriculum expectations. Previous assessments of the senior high school program have

similarly underscored the importance of adequate resources and contextualized curriculum design in achieving desired educational outcomes (Department of Education, 2016).

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the Senior High School curriculum under the K to 12 reform of the Department of Education is generally perceived by both students and teachers as relevant, purposeful, and effective in promoting learning, skill development, and future readiness. Students experience the curriculum as engaging and growth-oriented, despite its demands, while teachers view it as a meaningful yet challenging framework that enhances their professional competence and instructional practices. The convergence of these perspectives highlights the curriculum's strength in fostering critical thinking, independence, and preparation for higher education and employment. However, the findings also reveal areas that require attention, particularly in terms of resource availability, curriculum alignment with learner needs, and the strengthening of support systems such as teacher training and instructional guidance. Overall, the effectiveness of the SHS curriculum is not only rooted in its design but also in how it is experienced and implemented in schools, underscoring the need for continuous improvement to ensure a more responsive, balanced, and learner-centered educational program.

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