

Constructive Examination of Curriculum Evaluation of Senior High School

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Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive evaluation of the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum at DLSAU, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of both students and teachers. Through a mixed-method approach, the research employed survey questionnaires and focused group discussions (FGDs) to gather data from 107 students and 4 teachers. Four key domains were assessed: satisfaction with the curriculum, knowledge and confidence with the curriculum, preparation with the curriculum, and satisfaction with curriculum supports. The findings indicate a high level of satisfaction among both students and teachers with the SHS curriculum. Students praised the resources provided and the engaging lessons, expressing confidence in their ability to

meet curriculum goals. Teachers reported comfort with curriculum implementation and its positive impact on their content knowledge. Furthermore, students felt well-prepared for higher education or skilled job opportunities upon graduation, attributing their success to the curriculum's ability to broaden their horizons and foster critical thinking. While the study highlights positive aspects, recommendations for improvement are proposed, including aligning competencies, updating content, enhancing teacher professional development, integrating interactive approaches, leveraging technology, and implementing regular feedback mechanisms. By addressing these recommendations, DLSAU can create a more inclusive, relevant, and student-centered SHS curriculum, better preparing students for future challenges and opportunities.

Keywords: Senior High School curriculum, curriculum evaluation, student perceptions, teacher perceptions, critique paper

Introduction

The introduction of the research paper sets the context for the study on curriculum evaluation, specifically focusing on the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum at DLSAU. While the introduction addresses the importance of curriculum evaluation, there are several salient points that need improvement to enhance the clarity and comprehensiveness of the study. The introduction lacks a clear problem statement that explicitly states the research gap or problem that the study aims to address. It is significant to bear in mind that problem is the heart of the research, thus it must be clearly stated at the beginning of the paper (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). This problem often stands as the main thesis of the paper. In addition, while it mentions the limited evaluation of the SHS curriculum in the Philippines, it does not clearly identify the specific issues or challenges faced by students and teachers in relation to the curriculum. Providing a well-defined problem statement will help readers understand the significance of the study and its potential implications better (Cairney, 2021).

The other thing is that, the introduction briefly mentions the recent implementation of additional two years in basic education in the Philippines; however, the researchers fail to provide comprehensive background information about this change. Thus, in this regard, further elaboration on the reasons, goals, and objectives of the curriculum reform would provide readers with a more comprehensive understanding of the context in which the research is conducted.

Furthermore, while the introduction mentions the research questions, they appear pretty vague. For instance, the first question asks about the "perceptions of students and teachers about the SHS curriculum." To improve the research questions, they should be more specific, measurable, and aligned with the objectives of the study. This will help ensure that the research outcomes directly address the identified problem and contribute meaningfully to the existing literature.

Aside from the abovementioned critiques, although, the researchers did mention the employed methodology of the study which is a descriptive evaluative design with a mixed method approach; however, the problem it does not provide an impactful justification for the reasons behind for selecting this particular research design, such as a question that what makes this approach the best method to employed.

Thus, the researcher of this critique suggests starting the introduction with a clear and concise problem statement that outlines the specific issues or gaps in the SHS curriculum evaluation that the research aims to address. Aside from this it is better to incorporate a theoretical framework that informs the research design and helps guide the analysis and also reframe the research questions to be specific, measurable, and aligned with the study's objectives.

Furthermore, methodology is the backbone of the researcher paper, henceforth, it is essential to provide grounded justifications on the chosen research design, justifying why a descriptive evaluative design with a mixed method approach is the most suitable for the study.

Constructive Critique of the Literature Review:

Undeniably the authors provided a well-versed literature review of this study on the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum in the Philippines, particularly at De La Salle Araneta University (DLSAU) and explored the importance of curriculum evaluation. However several issues need to be addressed to enhance its clarity, coherence, and academic rigor.

The first thing the author noticed in the study is its lacks of a deeper analysis of the existing literature on the Philippine Senior High School Curriculum and the K-12 program. It primarily relies on direct quotations from cited sources, without critically synthesizing the information or comparing and contrasting different viewpoints. Henceforth, an in-depth analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the existing literature would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic (Kraus, et al., 2020).

The other thing that the author noticed is that the majority of cited sources are relatively old, with some dating back to 2016 and earlier. As known in the academic community, lack of recent sources raises concerns about the relevance and currency of the information presented. Incorporating more up-to-date literature will ensure the literature review reflects the latest developments in the field of curriculum evaluation and SHS education (Kilag, et al., 2023).

Thirdly, the literature review lacks a clear organizational structure, making it challenging for readers to identify the main themes and key findings. It should be organized logically, with related topics grouped together, and subheadings used to delineate different sections of the review. Furthermore, certain points, such as the structure of the SHS curriculum and the importance of curriculum evaluation, are reiterated throughout the literature review. Repetition should be minimized to maintain conciseness and coherence.

Fourthly, the literature review briefly mentions curriculum evaluation but does not delve into the various approaches, methodologies, and best practices for evaluating the effectiveness of the SHS curriculum at DLSAU. A more comprehensive exploration of curriculum evaluation methodologies and their applicability to the specific context of DLSAU would enhance the review's value. Moreover, certain statements in the literature review lack proper citations, making it challenging for readers to verify the accuracy and credibility of the information presented. Every claim should be supported by relevant and credible sources to ensure academic integrity.

Constructive Critique of the Methodology:

It has been noticed that the sample size for both students and teachers is relatively small, with 107 students and 18 teachers answering the questionnaires, and only 7 students and 4 teachers participating in focused group discussions (FGDs). This small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the voluntary participation might introduce bias as those who choose to participate might have different experiences and perspectives from those who opted not to take part. In addition, the study only involves students and teachers, neglecting the perspectives of other stakeholders such as parents, school administrators, and curriculum developers. Considering the multifaceted nature of curriculum implementation, it is essential to gather insights from a diverse group of stakeholders to obtain a more comprehensive picture (Beagon, et al., 2023).

Also, the research design is described as "descriptive evaluative design employed the mixed method approach," but the specific components of the mixed-method approach are not clearly outlined. It is crucial to specify the qualitative and quantitative components and explain how they are integrated to ensure a robust and coherent methodology. In fact, the Likert scale questionnaires used to assess student and teacher perspectives lack clear response options and anchors, making it difficult to interpret the results accurately. The wording of the Likert scale items should be improved to ensure respondents' understanding and facilitate meaningful analysis. Aside from that, although the study mentions the use of descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, there is a lack of detail on how the researchers performed these analyses. A more comprehensive explanation of the data analysis process, including the specific statistical tests used and how themes were identified, would strengthen the methodology (Kilag et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the questionnaires and interview guides used in the study do not mention any piloting or pre-testing process to ensure their clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Piloting is essential to identify potential issues and refine the instruments before the actual data collection. The study only relies on the perspectives of students and teachers through questionnaires and FGDs, respectively, without triangulating the findings with other data sources or methods. Triangulation would enhance the credibility and validity of the study by corroborating the results through multiple approaches.

Constructive Critique of the Results and Discussion:

The presentation of results for students and teachers differs, with the student data presented in tabular format and the teacher data presented in paragraph form. This inconsistency makes it challenging to compare and synthesize the results. It is recommended to present the teacher data in a tabular format similar to the one used for students for better clarity and consistency. Aside from the inconsistency, the section provides the mean and standard deviation for each Likert scale item, but there is no explanation of how these values are interpreted. The authors should clarify the interpretation of the mean and standard deviation to help readers understand the level of agreement or disagreement with the statements.

Although the FGD summaries are presented separately for students and teachers, there is limited integration of these qualitative insights with the quantitative results. The authors should provide more comprehensive discussions that link the qualitative findings from the FGDs with the quantitative results from the surveys to provide a deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of both students and teachers.

The overall results indicate positive perceptions and experiences with the SHS curriculum, there are a few items where respondents were neutral or disagreed. These discrepancies should be discussed in more detail to understand the reasons behind them and their potential implications for curriculum improvement. One thing that has been obvious is that results and discussion section lacks a robust comparative analysis between students' and teachers' perceptions. Identifying similarities and differences between the two groups would offer valuable insights into potential areas of alignment or misalignment in curriculum implementation (Kilag et al., 2023).

While some areas for improvement are mentioned, the section lacks specific recommendations based on the findings. It is essential to provide clear and actionable recommendations that can inform curriculum enhancement and address the concerns raised by both students and teachers.

Methodology

The methodology employed for critiquing a study involves a systematic and comprehensive approach to evaluate its research design, data collection methods, data analysis, and presentation of results and discussions. The critiquing process aims to provide a constructive assessment of the study's strengths and weaknesses, while also considering its overall validity and reliability.

The researcher begin by thoroughly reading and understanding the research paper to gain a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, research questions, and key findings. The researcher assess the appropriateness of the chosen research design in addressing the study's objectives. Considering whether the design (e.g., experimental, descriptive, qualitative, quantitative) aligns with the research questions and if it provides sufficient information to draw valid conclusions.

The researcher also evaluates the characteristics of the study participants and the sampling method used: Checking for potential biases or limitations in the sample size and selection process to determine the generalizability of the findings. The researcher also examines the data collection procedures, including the research instruments used (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations), and assess their validity and reliability. The author consider whether the instruments effectively measure the variables of interest and whether they were appropriately administered.

The researcher rigorously reviews the data analysis methods employed to process and interpret the collected data. He assesses the appropriateness of the statistical tests or qualitative analysis techniques used and whether they align with the research questions. Furthermore, the critique evaluates how the study's results are presented and organized. I check whether the findings are clear, supported by data, and directly address the research questions. I also assess whether the

discussions offer a meaningful interpretation of the results, acknowledge limitations, and relate the findings to the existing literature.

Findings

It has been mentioned that the study lacks a detailed explanation of why this design was chosen and how the combination of methods contributes to the research aims. The researchers should, therefore, provide a clearer rationale for choosing the mixed-method approach and explain how the combination of data enhances the study's outcomes.

The sample size for both teachers and students is reasonable, considering the scope of the study. However, the sampling method is not adequately described, raising questions about the representativeness of the participants and the potential for selection bias. Thus in this regard, the authors should provide a detailed explanation of the sampling process, including how participants were recruited and any potential limitations in sample representativeness. Also to enrich the data collected, the authors should consider providing more open-ended questions in the survey, allowing participants to express their perspectives more freely. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis could benefit from a more robust approach, such as thematic analysis, to identify patterns and themes more effectively. Thus, adopting a rigorous qualitative analysis method, like thematic analysis, will enhance the study's credibility and provide a deeper understanding of participants' experiences (Kilag et al., 2023).

The presentation of results lacks clarity and conciseness. The authors should consider organizing the findings in a more structured manner, using tables and graphs to facilitate understanding. Additionally, the discussions should be more in-depth, addressing the implications of the results and linking them to relevant literature. Thus, to improve the presentation of results and discussions, the authors should use visual aids and provide a more comprehensive analysis of the findings' significance.

In addition, in regards with the ethical consideration, the study claims to have obtained permission and ethics clearance; however, the specifics of the ethical review process and informed consent procedures are not described in detail. The authors should provide a clear and explicit account of the ethical considerations, including how informed consent was obtained, and the steps taken to protect participants' confidentiality and rights.

Comparative Findings: Author-Conducted Study vs. External Research on Educational Systems

The comparative study between Finland and the Philippines reveals significant differences in their educational philosophies, exams and assignments, pre-primary and secondary education systems, educational curriculum, and teacher qualification and training.

1. Educational Philosophy:

Finland's educational system is based on pragmatism, focusing on the practical usefulness of propositions in everyday life. In contrast, the Philippine system follows eclecticism, drawing on various best practices from essentialist and existentialist ideologies. Finland emphasizes diverse

teaching methods, while the Philippines emphasizes learner-centered education and essentialist teaching.

2. Exams and Assignments:

In Finland, there are no standardized tests, and students are graded based on their own performance and teacher-set standards, allowing flexibility in assessments. On the other hand, the Philippines has a tradition of assigning homework, but recent policies aim to limit its quantity due to potential negative impacts on student well-being.

3. Pre-Primary Education:

Finland offers free and mandatory pre-primary education to enhance a child's capacity for learning and prepare them for comprehensive school. In contrast, the Philippines has younger entry ages for students, and while kindergarten is mandatory, preschool for three to four-year-olds is not required.

4. Secondary Education:

Finland offers nine years of compulsory education, after which students can choose between high school, vocational secondary school, or entering the workforce. In comparison, the Philippines' secondary education consists of junior high school (grades 7-10) and senior high school (grades 11-12), with senior high school being mandatory.

5. Educational Curriculum:

Finland's curriculum focuses on early childhood education, character development, problem-solving abilities, and play-based learning. In contrast, the Philippines' curriculum undergoes frequent changes and emphasizes values formation, character education, civic responsibility, and practical and vocational courses.

6. Teacher Qualification and Training:

In Finland, becoming a teacher is considered prestigious, requiring a Master's degree, and only the top 10% of applicants are accepted for teacher training. Conversely, in the Philippines, teacher qualification requires student practice teaching and passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET).

The research findings indicate that both countries are committed to providing quality education, but they have different methodologies and challenges in achieving their goals. Finland's emphasis on pragmatism, student-centered approach, and rigorous teacher qualifications contribute to its high-quality education system. On the other hand, the Philippines faces challenges in curriculum changes, teacher qualifications, and ensuring equitable access to education.

Additionally, the evaluation of the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum at DLSAU in the Philippines showed positive perceptions among both students and teachers. They reported high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum, feeling prepared for future endeavors, and enhancing critical thinking skills. However, areas for improvement were also identified, such as revisiting the relevance of certain competencies and updating content. Addressing these concerns could further enhance the effectiveness of the SHS curriculum.

In conclusion, understanding the differences and findings from the comparative study between Finland and the Philippines can inform education policymakers and stakeholders in both countries to make informed decisions for their respective educational systems. Improving teacher qualifications, revisiting curriculum content, and addressing challenges will contribute to the continuous development and enhancement of their education systems.

Conclusion

The comprehensive evaluation of the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum at DLSAU has provided valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of both students and teachers. The study explored four key domains: satisfaction with the curriculum, knowledge and confidence with the curriculum, preparation with the curriculum, and satisfaction with curriculum supports. Through a mixed-method approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative focused group discussions (FGDs), we gained a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the curriculum implementation.

The findings reveal an encouraging level of satisfaction among students and teachers with the SHS curriculum. Students expressed appreciation for the resources provided, the engaging lessons, and the overall effectiveness of the curriculum in facilitating their learning journey. Equipped with newfound knowledge and confidence, students reported being well-prepared for college or skilled job opportunities after graduation. Moreover, students highlighted the benefits of the curriculum in broadening their horizons, fostering critical thinking skills, and enhancing their social abilities.

Similarly, teachers conveyed high levels of satisfaction with the SHS curriculum, finding it comfortable to implement and instrumental in building their content knowledge. Their confidence in effectively teaching the curriculum was evident, and they acknowledged the learning goals of each unit. Teachers emphasized the importance of continuous professional development and collaboration to enhance curriculum implementation.

While the study highlights positive aspects of the SHS curriculum, there are opportunities for improvement. The research design could be strengthened by providing a clearer rationale for the mixed-method approach, and data collection should include more open-ended questions to capture diverse perspectives. Utilizing thematic analysis would enhance the qualitative data analysis, offering deeper insights into the experiences of students and teachers. Additionally, the presentation of results and discussions could be more organized, employing visual aids to enhance clarity and understanding.

Furthermore, ethical considerations should be explicitly outlined, and limitations should be discussed in greater detail to provide a comprehensive view of the study's scope and constraints.

In light of the study's findings, we propose several recommendations for enhancing the SHS curriculum. First, there should be a focus on aligning competencies to reduce the overwhelming workload on both students and teachers. Additionally, updating certain topics to reflect current

trends and societal needs would make the curriculum more relevant and responsive to the ever-changing world.

Furthermore, the school should invest in more professional development opportunities for teachers to continuously enhance their skills and pedagogy. This would ensure that teachers feel well-equipped to effectively deliver the curriculum and support their students' learning.

To create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment, the curriculum should integrate more interactive and student-centered approaches. This could include project-based learning, real-world applications, and collaborative activities, which would foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

Moreover, the school should explore ways to leverage technology in curriculum delivery to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Incorporating digital resources, interactive platforms, and online learning opportunities could enhance students' learning experiences and better prepare them for the digital age.

Lastly, regular feedback mechanisms, such as student and teacher evaluations, should be implemented to continuously monitor and improve the curriculum's effectiveness. This iterative process would allow for timely adjustments and ensure the curriculum remains responsive to the needs of its stakeholders.

This study's insights into the SHS curriculum have shed light on its strengths and potential for improvement. By considering the recommendations and implementing necessary changes, DLSAU can foster a more engaging, relevant, and student-centered learning experience for its SHS students. Empowering teachers and promoting a culture of continuous improvement will lead to a curriculum that prepares students holistically for their future endeavors, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in an ever-changing world. Through collaboration, innovation, and dedication, DLSAU can shape a transformative educational journey for its students and contribute to their success in higher education and beyond.

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