

## Curricular Insights: Exploring the Impact of Philippine K to 12 on PISA 2022 Reading Literacy Achievement

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### Abstract

This systematic literature review explores the nexus between the Philippine K to 12 educational reform and the reading literacy achievement of students, as elucidated by the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Initiated in 2013, the K to 12 program aimed to extend

basic education, enhance critical skills, and align the Philippines with international education standards. However, the study reveals a noticeable gap between the program's goals and the actual reading literacy outcomes, prompting a nuanced examination of curricular components. The global significance of the PISA framework is emphasized, positioning it as a vital tool for evaluating student proficiency on an international scale. Challenges in reading literacy achievement among Filipino students are identified, underlining the complexity of translating educational objectives into tangible results. The study delves into the alignment between the K to 12 curriculum and the PISA framework, elucidating the need for a closer examination of curricular elements influencing reading literacy outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of scrutinizing curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and advocating for targeted interventions to address specific challenges. As the Philippines endeavors to enhance its education system, these insights offer a foundational understanding for evidence-based interventions and reforms, fostering continuous improvement in reading literacy achievement.

*Keywords:* K to 12 educational reform, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Reading literacy achievement, Curriculum alignment

## Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of global education, nations strive to enhance their educational systems to meet the challenges of the 21st century. One significant benchmark for evaluating a country's education performance on an international scale is the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The Philippines, having participated in the 2022 PISA, finds itself at a critical juncture as the results reveal substantial gaps in learning competencies, particularly in reading literacy.

The introduction of the K to 12 educational reform in the Philippines marked a paradigm shift in the country's approach to education. This comprehensive reform aimed to align the Philippine education system with international standards, providing students with a more holistic and globally competitive learning experience. However, despite these transformative efforts, the recent PISA 2022 results indicate that challenges persist, particularly in the realm of reading literacy (OECD, 2023).

The significance of reading literacy cannot be overstated, as it forms the bedrock of academic achievement and real-world problem-solving. The PISA 2022 results position the Philippines in a context where reading literacy achievement is a cause for concern, with the nation ranking among the lower tiers globally. This study seeks to delve into the curricular aspects of the Philippine K to 12 system, aiming to unravel the impact of these reforms on the reading literacy achievement of Filipino students in the international arena.

The K to 12 program, initiated in 2013, extends the basic education cycle in the Philippines to encompass kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school. The reforms were designed to enhance critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills among students. However, the 2022 PISA results suggest that the anticipated positive impact on reading literacy achievement may not have materialized as expected (OECD, 2023).

While the Philippines faces challenges common to many nations due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the study recognizes the need for a nuanced examination of the specific curricular components influencing reading literacy. This research will provide insights into whether the K to 12 reforms adequately address the requirements of the PISA assessment in the domain of reading, shedding light on potential areas for improvement.

As the Philippines grapples with the challenges posed by the PISA 2022 results, this study endeavors to contribute valuable insights that transcend numerical rankings. By focusing on curricular insights, we aim to facilitate informed discussions and evidence-based decisions that will propel the nation towards a more robust and globally competitive education system.

## **Literature Review**

Education is a dynamic and evolving field, and the Philippines, like many nations, has undergone substantial reforms to adapt its system to the demands of the 21st century. The introduction of the K to 12 educational reform in 2013 represented a significant shift in the Philippine educational landscape, aiming to align the country's system with international standards (Alonzo, 2015). As the nation eagerly awaits the potential benefits of these reforms, the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results prompt a critical examination of the impact of the K to 12 program on reading literacy achievement.

### **K to 12 Educational Reform in the Philippines**

The K to 12 program was a response to the longstanding challenges in the Philippine education system. Before its implementation, the country's basic education cycle was notably shorter than the global standard. The new curriculum extends basic education to 12 years, encompassing kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school (Republic Act No. 10533).

The K to 12 program was designed with multifaceted goals, including enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills among students. It sought to produce graduates better equipped for higher education and the workforce by aligning the curriculum with international benchmarks (DepEd, 2013).

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a globally recognized benchmark developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA assesses the proficiency of 15-year-old students in reading literacy, mathematics, and science. The framework is designed to evaluate students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life situations, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving (OECD, 2018).

PISA results have become a crucial measure of a country's education system's effectiveness on the international stage. Countries use PISA scores to identify strengths and weaknesses in their education systems and inform policy decisions. The 2022 PISA results position the Philippines in a challenging position, prompting a deeper exploration of the factors influencing reading literacy outcomes (OECD, 2023).

## **Reading Literacy Achievement in the Philippines**

The ability to comprehend and analyze written text is foundational to academic success and real-world application. The Philippines' performance in reading literacy, as revealed by the PISA 2022 results, indicates a gap between the goals set by the K to 12 program and the actual outcomes achieved by Filipino students (OECD, 2023).

While the K to 12 program aimed to enhance critical thinking and communication skills, the reading literacy outcomes suggest a need for a nuanced examination of the curricular components that influence students' ability to comprehend and analyze written texts. This literature review aims to explore these components to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the Philippine education system.

Curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping students' competencies. Analyzing the alignment between the K to 12 curriculum and the PISA framework for reading literacy is essential for understanding how well the educational reforms address the demands of international assessments (Mamba, et al., 2020).

To comprehensively explore the impact of the K to 12 program on reading literacy achievement, it is crucial to identify potential curricular factors that contribute to the observed gaps. The literature reviewed highlights the historical context and goals of the K to 12 program, the significance of PISA as an international benchmark, and the challenges posed by the reading literacy outcomes in the 2022 assessment.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed for this study involved a systematic literature review to comprehensively analyze existing research and scholarly discussions on the impact of the Philippine K to 12 educational reform on reading literacy achievement, as revealed by the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The systematic literature review was conducted in past tense to provide a thorough and retrospective examination of the available literature.

A systematic search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including PubMed, ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The search strategy involved a combination of keywords and phrases, including "Philippine K to 12," "PISA 2022," "reading literacy achievement," "curriculum alignment," and related terms. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were utilized to refine the search and ensure relevance.

The inclusion criteria for this study encompass peer-reviewed articles, academic papers, and conference proceedings. Specifically, the focus is on publications that delve into the Philippines' K to 12 educational reform and its ramifications on reading literacy. Additionally, the research scope includes studies that investigate the correlation between the K to 12 curriculum and the PISA framework.

Conversely, certain criteria are set for exclusion from consideration. Non-academic sources, such as news articles and opinion pieces, are excluded. Moreover, publications not directly addressing the Philippine K to 12 program or the reading literacy outcomes of PISA 2022 are not included. Finally, studies lacking a clear emphasis on curricular aspects influencing reading literacy are also excluded from the purview of this investigation.

A two-step screening process was employed. In the initial screening, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess relevance to the research questions and inclusion criteria. In the second screening, full-text articles were examined for eligibility. The screening process was conducted independently by two researchers, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Data extraction involved systematically gathering relevant information from selected studies, including key findings, methodologies employed, and theoretical frameworks. A thematic synthesis approach was utilized to identify common themes, trends, and gaps in the literature. This facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the curricular aspects influencing reading literacy achievement in the context of the Philippine K to 12 program.

The quality of selected studies was assessed using established criteria relevant to each study design. This involved evaluating the rigor of research methodologies, sample sizes, and the clarity of findings. Studies with methodological limitations were acknowledged, and their impact on the overall synthesis was considered.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Historical Evolution of K to 12 and its Goals:**

The findings from the systematic literature review provide a nuanced understanding of the historical evolution and goals of the Philippine K to 12 educational reform. Initiated in 2013, the reform emerged as a response to enduring challenges within the Philippine education system. The central focus was the extension of basic education to a 12-year cycle, encompassing kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school. The reform sought to address longstanding issues and usher in transformative changes aimed at enhancing the critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills of students (Stuart, et al., 2021).

The historical evolution of the K to 12 reform underscores a strategic shift in the Philippines' approach to education, aligning it with global standards. By extending the basic education cycle, the reform aimed to provide students with a more comprehensive and internationally competitive learning experience. The literature review emphasizes that the overarching objective was to position the Philippine education system on par with international benchmarks, reflecting a commitment to excellence and relevance in the 21st-century landscape.

The goals outlined in the literature underscore the multifaceted nature of the K to 12 reform. Enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills among students reflects a recognition of the changing demands of the modern world. These skills are not only crucial for academic success but also for preparing students to navigate complex real-world challenges. The alignment of the Philippine education system with international standards signifies a strategic

move to ensure that graduates are well-equipped to participate and excel in a globalized society (Malbas, et al., 2023).

The historical evolution and goals of the Philippine K to 12 educational reform, as illuminated by the systematic literature review, highlight a deliberate and ambitious effort to transform the nation's education landscape. The extension of the basic education cycle and the emphasis on critical skills underscore a commitment to providing students with a well-rounded and globally competitive education. As the study delves deeper into the impact of this reform on reading literacy achievement, these historical and goal-oriented insights provide a crucial backdrop for understanding the broader context of the Philippine education system.

### **PISA Framework and Global Significance:**

The systematic literature review underscores the global significance of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) framework, with a particular focus on its role in assessing reading literacy. Developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA has become a cornerstone in the evaluation of 15-year-old students' proficiency in crucial domains such as reading, mathematics, and science (OECD, 2023).

PISA's global importance is magnified by its role as a crucial benchmark in the assessment of education system effectiveness on an international scale. The 2022 PISA results, as highlighted in the literature, reinforce its standing as a key influencer in shaping global education rankings. The framework provides valuable insights into a country's educational strengths and weaknesses, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing student performance on an international stage (OECD, 2023).

As a comprehensive tool, PISA transcends national boundaries, offering a standardized platform for comparing educational outcomes across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. This standardized assessment not only aids in gauging academic proficiency but also plays a pivotal role in informing evidence-based policy decisions. Countries worldwide use PISA results to identify areas for improvement, align their education systems with global standards, and strategically position themselves in the evolving landscape of international education (OECD, 2023).

Its comprehensive assessment of reading literacy, coupled with its influence on global rankings, positions PISA as a valuable tool for understanding and improving education systems worldwide. The insights garnered from PISA results play a crucial role in shaping educational policies and practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation to the demands of a rapidly changing world.

### **Challenges in Reading Literacy Achievement:**

As evidenced by the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. Despite the articulated goals of the Philippine K to 12 program, the outcomes underscore a discernible gap between anticipated expectations and the actual performance of students in the realm of reading literacy. This disjunction points to complex factors that warrant a nuanced examination, especially regarding curricular components that influence students' proficiency in comprehending and analyzing written texts (OECD, 2023).

The challenges identified in the literature suggest a multifaceted interplay of factors influencing reading literacy outcomes. The nuanced examination required delves into the intricate details of the curricular elements integrated into the K to 12 program. The literature underscores the need to scrutinize how these elements interact with the overarching goals of the reform and whether they effectively contribute to enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, particularly in the domain of reading (OECD, 2023).

One key challenge highlighted in the findings is the existing gap between the set objectives of the K to 12 program and the observed proficiency of students in reading literacy. This misalignment prompts a critical evaluation of the efficacy of the implemented curricular strategies, emphasizing the necessity for targeted interventions to address deficiencies (Abragan, et al., 2022). The literature review suggests that the challenges faced by Filipino students in reading literacy may be indicative of broader issues within the education system, necessitating strategic reforms and evidence-based adjustments in curriculum design and delivery methods (OECD, 2023). The identified gaps prompt a reevaluation of curricular components and a strategic alignment with the overarching goals of the K to 12 program. This synthesis of challenges sets the stage for further exploration and evidence-based interventions to enhance reading literacy achievement among Filipino students.

### **Curricular Alignment and Influencing Factors:**

The literature review provides insights into the alignment between the Philippine K to 12 curriculum and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) framework, specifically in the context of reading literacy. While the K to 12 program set ambitious goals to enhance critical thinking and communication skills among students, the literature identifies a need for closer scrutiny of curricular components that influence reading literacy outcomes. This scrutiny is essential to bridge the observed gaps between the program's objectives and the actual achievement levels of students (DepEd, 2013; OECD, 2022).

The review emphasizes the importance of evaluating various factors contributing to the observed disparities in reading literacy achievement. One key factor explored is the design of the curriculum itself, assessing how well it aligns with the demands and expectations of the PISA framework. Additionally, the literature delves into teaching methodologies employed within the K to 12 program, recognizing their potential impact on students' reading proficiency. The need for targeted interventions is underscored, suggesting that addressing specific challenges within the curriculum and teaching methods is essential for improving reading literacy outcomes among students (DepEd, 2013; OECD, 2022).

The findings highlight a critical link between curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and reading literacy outcomes. The systematic evaluation of these factors provides a foundation for evidence-based interventions and reforms. By addressing these key components, education policymakers can strategically enhance the alignment between the K to 12 curriculum and international benchmarks, fostering improved reading literacy achievement among Filipino students (Oracion, et al., 2020).

These four key findings underscore the complexity of the relationship between the Philippine K to 12 program and reading literacy outcomes on the global stage. The nuanced exploration of historical, curricular, and assessment aspects provides a foundation for understanding challenges and opportunities in the Philippine education system. These findings, in turn, pave the way for evidence-based recommendations and interventions to enhance reading literacy achievement among Filipino students.

## **Conclusion**

This systematic literature review offers a comprehensive exploration of the impact of the Philippine K to 12 educational reform on reading literacy achievement, as revealed by the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The study delved into the historical evolution and goals of the K to 12 program, emphasizing its initiation in 2013 as a response to persistent challenges within the Philippine education system. The articulated goals aimed at extending basic education to 12 years, enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, and aligning the country's education system with international standards (DepEd, 2013).

The global significance of the PISA framework, as highlighted in the literature, positions it as a crucial benchmark for evaluating students' proficiency in reading literacy on an international scale (OECD, 2023). The challenges identified in the reading literacy achievement of Filipino students underscore the complexity of translating educational goals into measurable outcomes. Despite the objectives set by the K to 12 program, there exists a discernible gap between expectations and actual student performance, necessitating a nuanced examination of curricular components influencing reading literacy outcomes (OECD, 2023).

Furthermore, the literature review explored the alignment between the K to 12 curriculum and the PISA framework. It revealed that while the program aimed to enhance critical thinking and communication skills, curricular components influencing reading literacy outcomes require further scrutiny. The factors contributing to observed gaps include curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and the imperative for targeted interventions to address specific challenges (DepEd, 2013; OECD, 2022).

The findings from this study underscore the need for ongoing evaluation and refinement of educational policies and practices. The identified challenges and areas for improvement provide a foundation for evidence-based interventions to enhance reading literacy achievement among Filipino students. As the Philippine education system navigates its commitment to international standards, these insights serve as a call to action for education stakeholders to collaboratively work towards a more robust and effective learning environment. The synthesis of historical, curricular, and assessment aspects provides a valuable backdrop for informed discussions and evidence-based recommendations that can contribute to the continuous improvement of the Philippine education system.



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