

Filipino students' perceptions on the implementation of K-to-12 program: Qualitative text analysis



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Abstract The perceptions of Filipino students regarding implementing the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 or the K-to-12 Program in the Philippines, introduced in 2012 to enhance educational competency and global competitiveness, are examined in this research. Employing a qualitative approach enhanced using the Voyant Tool, the study meticulously collects and analyzes textual data to understand students' reactions, perceptions, and challenges associated with the K-to-12 Program. The findings of the study reveal that students generally regard the K-to-12 Program as a pivotal foundation for their future academic and career pursuits. They emphasize the enjoyable learning experiences provided by the program, along with its distinctive advantages over the previous educational system. Students express particular appreciation for the program's emphasis on the development of essential skills, and critical thinking, and its more comprehensive and globally aligned curriculum, which they perceive as a step forward in preparing them for opportunities in a competitive world. However, despite these positive views, the study uncovers critical concerns. Foremost among these is the financial burden imposed by the program's additional costs and requirements, which often create economic strain on families. This issue highlights the need for strategic interventions to make the program more accessible and sustainable. To address these challenges, the research underscores the importance of fostering robust collaboration among various stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, families, and local communities. Strengthened partnerships and open communication are crucial for reducing financial strains and creating a supportive academic environment where students can flourish. By presenting these insights, the study significantly contributes to understanding student perspectives on educational reforms in the Philippines, emphasizing the necessity of addressing these concerns for the successful and sustainable implementation of the K-to-12 Program.

Keywords: voyant tool, opportunities, challenges, curriculum

1. Introduction

A country's quality of graduates is strongly reliant upon the strength of its educational system. Consequently, countries around the world implement educational reforms through a consistent review and evaluation of educational policies and programs to ensure that curricula are at par with global standards. For developing and underdeveloped countries, benchmarking is not uncommon because measuring educational programs by comparing them against the world's best educational systems, such as those of the United States, Finland, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada, has been a proven step forward.

To increase the competency of Filipinos and make them globally competitive, the Philippines took a similar path in 2012. After years of careful study and thorough review by experts, the country, which was one of the last three countries in the world with a K+10 educational ladder, introduced a major reform through the enactment of Republic Act 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Considering one of the most important educational reforms in the country, the K-to-12 Program features an additional two years of Senior High School, the Mother-Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) for Grade 1-3 learners, and free access to early childhood education through the Universal Kindergarten, among others.



Moreover, the institutionalization of the K-to-12 Program, which is based on DepEd Order 21 s. 2019 or the Policy Guidelines on the K-to-12 Basic Education Program, seeks to provide Filipino learners with the necessary skills and competence to prepare them to take on the challenges of the 21st century. Specifically, graduates of the K-to-12 curriculum are expected to be college- and job-ready, globally competitive, and lifelong learners.

Despite the noble goals of the K-to-12 Program, its initial implementation has raised some social concerns (Montebon, 2014). Among these concerns identified by Burila in his paper (in Montebon, 2014) were the readiness of the government to undergo transition, poverty, availability of technology, teachers' training, and the low salary of the workforce in the academe.

Similarly, in the study of Natividad (2019), teachers of Integrated and Stand Alone Senior High Schools identified challenges such as insufficient learning materials such as books and readers' guides, the preparation of more than one Daily Lesson Log (DLL), a lack of laboratories and other teaching and learning facilities, difficulties in assessing Student-Transferee from other educational institutions offering different subjects, teaching materials, and a lack of established partnerships with the local industry. Barrot (2021) noted that the commitment of teachers and school leaders can also be a potential implementation challenge.

Among the different issues raised, the K-to-12 Program is now in its seventh year of implementation, and some studies have shown that it is beneficial to the national economy. In the study of Abueva (in Dizon et al., 2019), for example, implementing the K-to-12 Program was considered the key to the growth of our country, citing that although the government has faced many problems as it has implemented the program for several years, it has been a necessary improvement, as it has been critical to the success of the nation to increase the quality of education.

However, critics of the program say that it has fallen short in fulfilling its promise to produce employable graduates. There are claims that senior high school graduates lack job-specific competencies such as oral and written communication skills and are not confident enough to compete with college graduates. Research conducted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) in 2018 revealed that SHS graduates faced challenges integrating into the labor market, with 22 of 26 companies surveyed thinking that they lack adequate preparedness for employment.

Moreover, the study conducted by the Philippine Business for Education (PBE), which was cited in a news article by the Manila Bulletin, showed that "out of the 70 leading companies across all sectors in the Philippines, only 20 percent were inclined to hire SHS graduates with most companies opting to hire job applicants with at least two years of college education, thereby effectively excluding SHS graduates." In a separate study by the Department of Labor and Employment in 2019, it was also noted that employers have little knowledge of the Senior High School Program, although they expressed openness to hire its graduates.

In defense, the Department of Education released the results of its tracer study, which was conducted from 2017-2018. According to the study, only 10 percent of Senior High School graduates of the said school year were employed, while 83 percent of them went on to pursue higher education. However, the program continues to draw mixed reactions from the public. In fact, in the June 2022 survey commissioned by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, which was published on the news website of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the data revealed that 44% of Filipinos are not satisfied with the K-to-12 Basic Education Program. This figure is significantly greater by 16 percentage points than the result of the survey conducted in September 2019.

Owing to recent studies showing an increased number of Filipinos who are dissatisfied with the K-to-12 Program, calls for its revision have recently resurfaced and gained traction. Recently, Representative Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo filed House Bill 7893, which seeks to amend important provisions of RA 10533, in the House of Representatives. In this bill, the present curriculum will be replaced by the "K+10+2 Program", which is intended primarily to make senior high school voluntary.

Amidst proposals to revise the K-to-12 Program, the Department of Education has recently formed a task force to review it, particularly the Senior High School Program. In the review of educational programs and policies, consultancies will be made with educational stakeholders from different sectors to ensure the validity of the results.

On this premise, this study was conceptualized. By delving into the perceptions of Senior High School students regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 Program, policymakers can obtain more accurate and timely qualitative data on how present learners, the direct beneficiaries, perceive the K-to-12 Program. Specifically, this research employed a text analytics approach to analyze students' reactions, perceptions, and problems regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. Furthermore, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the reactions of the students regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 Program?
2. What are the perceptions of the students about the implementation of the K-to-12 Program?
3. What are the problems encountered by the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

This study employed qualitative research to explore students' perceptions of the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. In-depth interviews and open-ended questions were utilized as the primary data-gathering tools. These techniques enable participants to express their thoughts in their own words, providing rich insights into their experiences, perspectives, and behaviors (Turner, 2010). This approach allowed researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the students' feelings and attitudes, capturing their perceptions related to personal and family welfare, individual reactions, and the challenges they faced during the implementation of the K-to-12 Program.

2.2. Respondents of the study

The participants in this study included 1,700 junior and senior high school students from various secondary schools. Availability sampling was employed to select the sample, ensuring a diverse representation of student experiences. Table 1 outlines the names of the schools and the number of participants from each institution, providing a clear overview of the study's demographic distribution.

Table 1 Distribution of participants across various secondary schools.

| Name of Schools | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| Alibeng National High School | 200 |
| Angela V. Ramos National High School | 400 |
| Baguinay National High School | 200 |
| Balungao National High School | 100 |
| Bautista National High School | 200 |
| Coloscaoayan National High School | 200 |
| Don Ramon E. Costales Memorial National High School | 200 |
| Nagpandayan National High School | 200 |
| Total: | 1,700 |

2.3. Instrument

The research instrument for this study was designed to align with the qualitative approach, with a focus on exploring students' perceptions of the K-to-12 program. In-depth interviews and open-ended questions were employed through a Google Form to elicit detailed responses, enabling students to share their experiences, feelings, and attitudes freely. The collected data were subsequently analyzed via the Voyant Tool, which facilitated the visualization of responses and helped identify key themes related to personal and family welfare, individual reactions, and challenges associated with the K-to-12 Program. According to Kairaityté-Užupė et al. (2023), researchers can leverage the Voyant tool to identify dominant research areas, uncover key discourse themes, and effectively visualize data. This approach yielded a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences.

2.4. Data collection procedure

The data gathering process started by securing approval from the Schools Division Office, the Public Schools District Supervisor Office, and the School Principal's Office. This step was essential for ensuring ethical standards, legal compliance, and transparency in conducting the research.

After approval was obtained, the researchers informed the participants by providing consent forms and information sheets, ensuring that the participants understood their rights, including the voluntary nature of their involvement and confidentiality measures.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and open-ended questions via a Google Form, allowing participants to freely share their experiences and perceptions. This method ensured comprehensive and authentic responses, providing rich qualitative data for the study.

The Voyant tool was used for text analysis, helping visualize and organize the data efficiently. It identified significant themes and patterns, offering deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. This approach ensured a comprehensive analysis and facilitated the development of meaningful conclusions and recommendations.

The collected data underwent a systematic coding process, starting with open coding to identify key themes, followed by axial coding to group related concepts, and ending with selective coding to highlight central themes. This process allowed a structured understanding of the participants' insights.

2.5. Statistical analysis

For the statistical analysis of the qualitative data, the researchers utilized the Voyant tool, which is widely recognized for its effectiveness in textual analysis. As noted by Hetenyi et al. (2019), the Voyant tool is particularly beneficial for qualitative

research, providing both quantitative analysis and visualization capabilities that enhance the understanding of textual data. This tool offers a range of sophisticated statistical features that do not require advanced programming skills or user registration, making it accessible for researchers.

One of the key components of the Voyant tool is the TermsBerry feature, which combines the visualization of high-frequency terms with the analysis of their co-occurrence. This functionality allows researchers to explore how often specific terms appear together in the text, thereby providing insights into the relationships and themes within the data. Additionally, the Collocates Graph visualizes keywords and their associated terms in a force-directed network graph. In this representation, keywords highlighted in green are linked to their collocates displayed in maroon, illustrating the connections between frequently used terms.

Moreover, the Document Terms feature provides a tabular view of term frequencies for each document analyzed. This table allows researchers to assess the frequency of specific words and phrases across different texts, further aiding in the identification of patterns and themes within the data. Collectively, these features of the Voyant Tool facilitate a comprehensive statistical analysis of the qualitative data, enabling researchers to draw meaningful conclusions from the students' responses regarding the K-to-12 Program.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Frequent reactions words used by students regarding the K-to-12 program

On the basis of the results presented here, the most frequently used reaction words by students regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 Program reveal a generally positive perception. Figure 1 highlights the top words: "program" (432), "students" (388), "college" (360), "happy" (315), "years" (170), "agree" (168), "implementation" (156), "education" (150), "learning" (144), and "lot" (135). These words collectively indicate that students view the K-to-12 Program favorably, associating it with their educational experiences and future aspirations.

Further analysis of these findings provides insight into the specific aspects of the program that resonate with students, underscoring their overall satisfaction and agreement with its implementation. The details of these salient findings are discussed in the subsequent sections.

| | Term | Count |
|----|----------------|-------|
| 1 | program | 432 |
| 2 | students | 388 |
| 3 | college | 360 |
| 4 | happy | 315 |
| 5 | years | 170 |
| 6 | agree | 168 |
| 7 | implementation | 156 |
| 8 | education | 150 |
| 9 | learning | 144 |
| 10 | lot | 135 |
| 11 | good | 131 |
| 12 | curriculum | 122 |
| 13 | help | 120 |
| 14 | school | 115 |
| 15 | learn | 115 |

Figure 1 Frequent reaction words used by the students regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

3.2. Students' reactions in the implementation of the K-to-12 program

The figures presented in this paper summarize the major themes and their categories, which are represented as the reactions of the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. Poring the data, the words "program", "college", and "student" are the most frequent words; however, these terms are relevantly connected with other terms that signal the positive reactions of the respondents in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program.

As highlighted in Figure 2, the words "going", "prepare", "knowledge", "ready", and "help" was highly correlated with the core term "college". As underscored in the analysis of the data, it was revealed that the students responded that the K-to-12 Program helps them acquire knowledge that will prepare and make them ready to attend college. Thus, the specific finding

highlighted in the link tool is that students noted that the K-to-12 Program helps them acquire knowledge. This implies that the program is seen as effective in equipping students with the information, skills, and understanding necessary to succeed in a college setting. Furthermore, the word link indicates that the knowledge acquired through the K-to-12 Program is perceived by students as instrumental in preparing them for college. This finding also demonstrates that students recognize the value of the education they receive during their K to 12 years as a foundation for their future higher education endeavors. This claim is supported by the statement below.

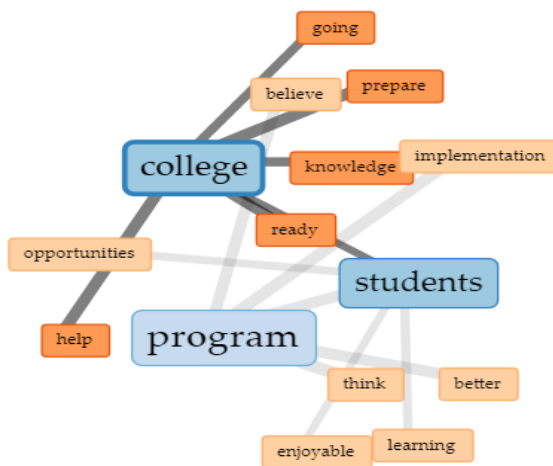


Figure 2 Student’s reaction in the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

“I think the K-to-12 program will lead to better prepared students for higher education and will provide students with a smoother transition from school to college.” (Participant 64)

Parallel to the aforementioned discussion, Conley (2017) noted that these takeaways of college readiness have led the K-to-12 Program stakeholders to delve into how to adequately prepare students in transitioning from high school to higher education, with the ultimate goal of succeeding in their chosen careers. Consequently, worldwide studies on college readiness reveal the need for students to be prepared for college.

Figure 3 shows students’ perceptions of the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. The link tool displays “enjoyable”, “learning” and “opportunities” as connected terms to form the theme “enjoyable learning opportunities”, which is evidently shown in the segments. Thus, this emerges as a positive perspective of the respondents that “K to 12 yields enjoyable learning opportunities among the students”. The emerging theme emphasized that students perceive the learning opportunities in the K-to-12 Program as enjoyable. This suggests that the educational activities, teaching approaches, and classroom environment within the program are designed to be engaging, interesting, and possibly even fun for the students. Moreover, when students find learning opportunities enjoyable, they can have several positive effects. It can enhance their motivation to learn, promote active participation and involvement in the learning process, and potentially lead to better academic performance. Enjoyable learning experiences can also contribute to the overall development of students, fostering love for lifelong learning. This claim is supported by the statement given below.

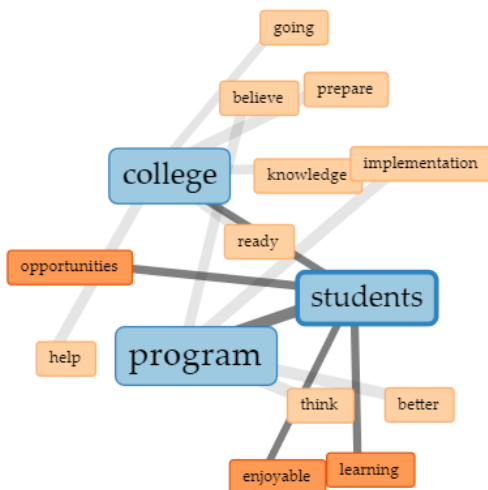


Figure 3 Student’s reaction in the implementation of the K-to-12 program.



"I believe the K-to-12 program will promote a more student-centered and interactive learning environment". (Participant 106).

"I am happy because it will help us to be more knowledgeable and it will let us enjoy our life as a student" (Participant 217).

Similarly, McCombs & Whistler (2017) emphasized that learners find the learning process more meaningful when topics are relevant to their lives, needs, and interests and when they are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge. In other words, the learning environment has learner responsibility and activity at its heart, in contrast to the emphasis on instructor control and the coverage of academic content found in much conventional, didactic teaching (Cannon, 2020).

As shown in Figure 4, the words "think", "believe", "implementation", and "better" were highly correlated with the core term "program". Poring through the analysis of the themes that emerged in the students' responses, it could be derived that "Students think and believe that the implementation of the K-to-12 Program is better than the previous curriculum". This shows that students claimed that the K-to-12 Program is more than adding two (2) years in basic education, but there has been increasing emphasis in recent years on moving away from traditional teaching toward student-centered learning. Moreover, the emerging theme suggests that the previous curriculum, which was replaced by the K-to-12 Program, was considered less favorable or satisfactory by students. This implies that students have identified specific strengths or benefits in the K-to-12 Program that they believe are superior to the previous educational approach. This is supported by the claim given below.

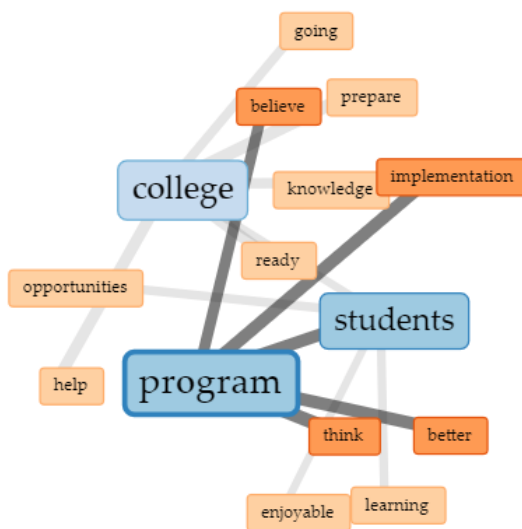


Figure 4 Student’s reaction in the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

"Unlike the old system, K-12 can make students more prepared in joining the workforce. The new curriculum has this benefit because they compel each student to be enthusiastic." (Participant 268)

Likewise, Atweh (2017) noted that a change in any curriculum would not be effective if somebody in the implementation aspect/component was not removed from its traditional restrictions. He also mentioned the need for synergy among the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. However, time is an essential factor to consider, as it is equally important to appreciate and take as one of the elements of synergy in the field. Teachers cannot simply maintain synergy without considerable time and effort. In relation to the premise of this paper, the implementation of the new curriculum is rushed such that the synergy is often forgotten. In fact, there was a brave shift in institutional goals where learner-centered goals were highlighted.

3.3. Students’ perceptions of the implementation of the K-to-12 program

As presented in Figure 5, the study reveals the major themes and their categories represented as the perceptions of the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. Poring the data, the words "program", "college", and "student" are the most frequent words; however, these terms are significantly linked with other terms that signal the positive perceptions of the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program.

As shown in Figure 6, strong correlations can signal collocation of word pairs such as "prepare" and "knowledge", and "help", "ready", and "going" are linked to the term "college". Therefore, basic themes such as "knowledge preparedness" and "helping to be ready" going to college emerged as the researchers went through in-depth analysis of the data. This implies that students generally perceive that the K-to-12 Program recognizes the specific demands and expectations of college education.



“As a student, the K-12 program helped me prepare for my future-entering college. Thinking that at the age of 16, I will enter as a college student without any preparation and that sufficient knowledge makes my college life miserable. Therefore, I’m grateful that the K-12 program was implemented in the Philippines.” (Participant 225)

A study by Caup and Buda (2017) revealed that students “strongly agreed” that K-to-12 offers a balanced approach to learning, and they believed that the K-to-12 Program would help them become equipped with the skills and competencies necessary for higher education or employment opportunities.

Figure 7 highlights the relevant correlations in which signal linkages of words such as “enjoyable”, “learning”, and “opportunities” were connected to the term “students”. This generally entails positive perceptions of the learners toward the K-to-12 Program, as enjoyable learning opportunities emerged as a specific theme shown in the word links.



Figure 7 Students’ perceptions of the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

Enjoyable learning opportunities contribute to positive attitudes toward education. The fact that students perceive their education as enjoyable implies the development of a positive mindset, view challenges as opportunities for growth, and approach learning with enthusiasm. Positive attitudes toward learning can lead to increased academic performance and a lifelong love for acquiring knowledge. Moreover, the findings suggest that the K-to-12 education system offers students engaging and pleasurable experiences that make the learning process enjoyable. The support of the claim stated above is given below.

“K-12 makes learning very enjoyable and easier for students. I appreciate the additional years in the K-12 Program, as it allows students to explore their interests before college.” (Participant 9)

Similarly, McCombs & Whistler (2017) emphasized that learners find the learning process more meaningful when topics are relevant to their lives, needs, and interests and when they are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge. In other words, the learning environment has learner responsibility and activity at its heart, in contrast to the emphasis on instructor control and the coverage of academic content found in much conventional, didactic teaching (Cannon, 2020).

3.4. Problems encountered by learners in the implementation of the K-to-12 program

The findings depicted in Figure 8 summarize the frequently used words that signal the problems encountered by the respondent in the implementation of the K-12 Program. The figures revealed that the frequently used words under this category are as follows: students (311), lack (304), financial (269), problem (234), school (201), money (192), program (142), problems (139), learning (133), years (132), insufficient (114), additional (95), and expenses (94). Thus, insufficient financial resources are the primary problem for students in the implementation of the K- to-12 Program.

Figure 9 below summarizes the major themes and their categories, which are represented as the problems encountered by the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program. Poring the data in the figure, the words “students”, “lack”, and “financial” are the most frequent words; however, these terms are relevantly connected with other terms that signal the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the K-to-12 Program.



| | | |
|----|--------------|-----|
| 1 | students | 311 |
| 2 | lack | 304 |
| 3 | financial | 269 |
| 4 | problem | 234 |
| 5 | school | 201 |
| 6 | money | 192 |
| 7 | program | 142 |
| 8 | problems | 139 |
| 9 | learning | 133 |
| 10 | years | 132 |
| 11 | insufficient | 114 |
| 12 | preparation | 100 |
| 13 | additional | 95 |
| 14 | expenses | 94 |
| 15 | support | 93 |

Figure 8 Frequency of words used to express the problems encountered by the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

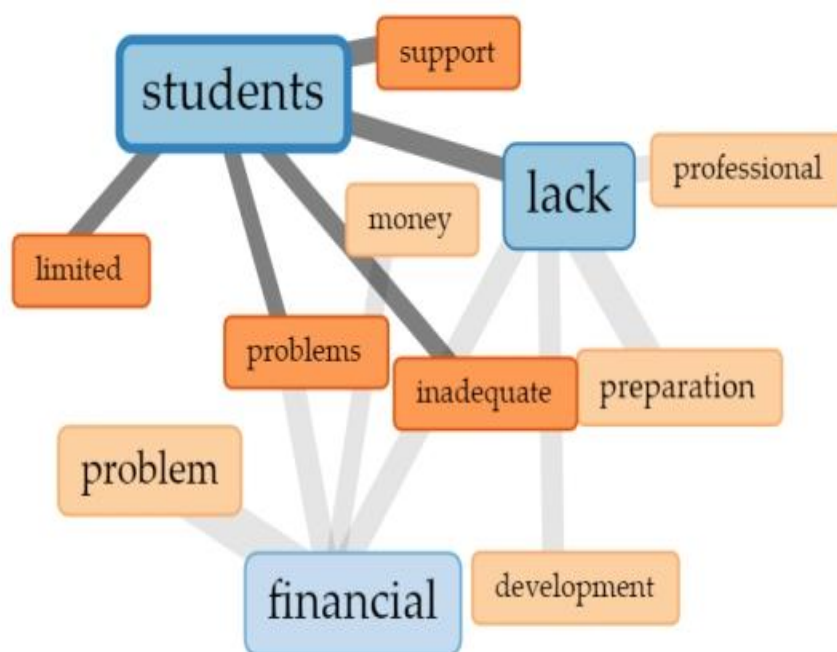


Figure 9 Problems encountered by the students in the implementation of the K-to-12 program.

As shown in Figure 9, strong connections can signal collocation of word pairs such as “problems”, “limited”, “inadequate”, and “support”, which are coupled with the term “students”. As such, underlying themes emerged, with the “limited and inadequate support problem” being perceived by the students. This implies that students’ problems are rooted in limited and inadequate support systems.

Inadequacy of necessary support and assistance can lead to difficulties in addressing their unique learning needs and hinder their overall academic success. The insufficiency of support systems and resources is essential for students to thrive in their educational journeys. This problem manifests in various ways and affects students' overall learning experiences and outcomes. Specifically, insufficient emotional support, parent assistance, and inadequate learning materials and resources are frequent problems perceived by students in their educational journeys. Hence, this can lead to learning gaps, decreased motivation, and hindered academic growth. This claim is supported by the statement given below.

“Lack of parental involvement and support.” (Participant 7)

“Insufficient support for students' social and emotional well-being.” (Participant 69)

Similarly, Ho (2018) describes parental involvement as a “rich vein” of continued parental influence in the lives of children as they develop through the elementary, middle and high school years. This implies that the benefits of a strong home-school relationship do not end with children’s achievement in the early years of education but rather persist through their adult life.



As illustrated in Figure 10, the relevant correlations that signal linkages of words such as “money” and “problems” were connected to the term “financial”. Generally, this entails that one of the struggles encountered by the students in the implementation of K-to-12 Program is having insufficient financial resources.

This highlights a significant challenge faced by students during the implementation of the K-to-12 education system. In this context, students perceived that the implementation of the K-to-12 Program often involves additional costs and requirements for students and their families, which can strain their financial resources. These financial struggles can have various implications for students' educational experiences and outcomes.

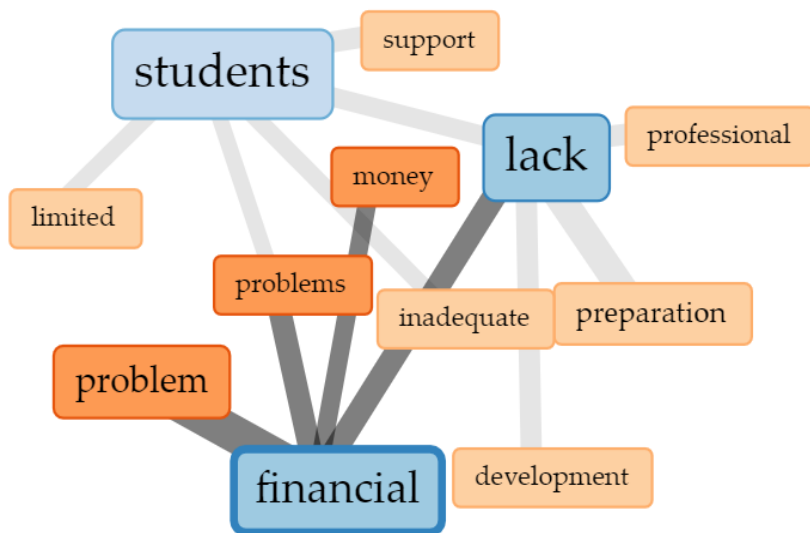


Figure 10 Problems encountered by the students in the implementation of the K to K-to-12 program.

“The problems that I encounter are the money or expenses because if you do not have enough money, you cannot do the other activities, projects, etc.” (Participant 281)

Mohammad (2016) stressed that some parents viewed this program in a negative light, which gave them and their children a different burden both physically and financially, but some parents viewed the program positively and thought that it helped learners choose and decide the career that best suits their skills.

According to the data presented in Figure 11, the words "help", "welfare" and "additional" in the context of family collocates and the implementation of the K-to-12 Program suggest that families perceive the program as having both positive and negative impacts on their welfare.

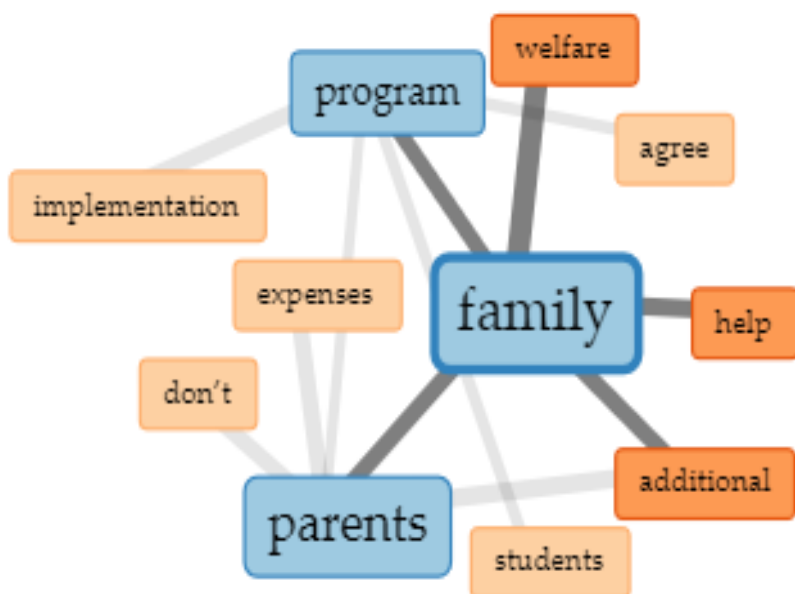


Figure 11 Family's perception of the implementation of the K-to-12 program.



Families see the K-to-12 Program as a way to help their children develop more holistically and prepare them for the college and workforce. Notably, gleaned from the corpus, the K-to-12 Program is considered a way for families to help them in return once their children have successfully completed the program.

On the other hand, families regard the K-to-12 Program as an additional financial burden. Tuition, books, and other expenses may increase as a result of the extra two years of schooling. Furthermore, the K-to-12 Program can add to students' and families' stress levels since they may feel pressure to achieve well academically.

Consistent with the earlier analysis, the perceptions of parents and students in the Philippines regarding the implementation of the K-to-12 Program were mixed. Mohammad (2017) discovered that some parents and students had both positive and negative reactions to the program, whereas Laguidong (2017) discovered that stakeholders understood the program but believed that there were still areas that needed to be improved. According to Barceló (2019), the implementation of the curriculum created numerous issues, including a scarcity of classrooms, tables, chairs, books, specialist teachers, computer laboratories, audio-visual instruments, and Tech-Voc equipment. The study also revealed that students' monthly family income was strongly associated with the various challenges they encountered.

4. Final Considerations

This qualitative study aimed to investigate students' views on the implementation of the K-to-12 Program, focusing on three key aspects: their reactions to the program, their perceptions of its value, and the challenges they encountered during its implementation. By employing text analysis methodologies, the research utilized an interview guide containing carefully crafted questions to elicit detailed responses from students regarding their experiences with the K-to-12 Program. Data collection was conducted through both written and online interviews via the Google form, allowing for a diverse range of student inputs, which were then analyzed via the Voyant Text Analysis tool.

The findings of the study revealed that students largely view the K-to-12 Program as an essential foundation for their future higher education endeavors. They expressed a sense of excitement about the program, identifying various enjoyable learning opportunities that they felt were integral to their educational experience. Additionally, the students noted specific strengths of the K-to-12 Program, such as enhanced skill development and a more comprehensive approach to learning, which they perceived as superior to the previous educational system. This positive outlook was accompanied by a recognition of the importance of being adequately prepared with relevant knowledge and skills to successfully navigate their future academic and professional paths.

However, the implementation of the K-to-12 Program also presented several challenges. Students reported that the additional costs associated with the program—such as materials, supplies, and extracurricular activities—posed significant financial burdens on themselves and their families. These challenges have the potential to strain resources, leading to heightened academic pressure and stress among students.

To increase the effectiveness of the K-to-12 Program and mitigate the challenges identified by students, several comprehensive recommendations have been proposed. First, educational institutions should prioritize the consistent delivery of enjoyable learning opportunities that not only engage students but also equip them with the necessary skills for higher education and the workforce. This includes incorporating innovative teaching methods, experiential learning, and extracurricular activities that foster holistic development.

Second, enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the educational process, including educational institutions, policymakers, families, and community organizations, is crucial. By fostering partnerships, stakeholders can collectively address the financial burdens and academic pressures associated with the K-to-12 Program. Initiatives such as financial aid programs, community support systems, and resource sharing can help alleviate some of the economic strains faced by students and their families.

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can create a more supportive environment that enables students to thrive within the K-to-12 framework. Ultimately, such measures will contribute to realizing the program's overarching goals of improving educational quality, accessibility, and student preparedness for future challenges.

Ethical Considerations

All the student participants provided informed consent to take part in the research, acknowledging that their involvement would contribute to the study's completion. They received comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose and procedures, as well as their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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