

Dilemmas Immanent in Curriculum Planning and Implementation: Unpacking the Lived Experiences of Language Educators in Private HEI's

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Abstract

Curriculum planning and implementation are essential processes in education that involve designing, organizing, and delivering instructional content to meet students' learning needs. Effective curriculum planning ensures that educational goals are aligned with standards, while successful implementation focuses on adapting teaching methods and materials to engage students and foster academic growth. This qualitative study employing transcendental phenomenological approach investigated the lived experiences of language educators in private HEIs in Tacurong City. The study involved eight language educators coming from NDTTC, VMC, SKEI, SCMCSTI and SMIT. In the collection of the comprehensive data, in-depth interviews and thematic analysis of Braun

and Clarke (2006) were employed to generate and interpret the gathered information.

The result implies that in navigating dilemmas immanent in curriculum planning and implementation, school administrators support is deemed vital and necessary. However, imperfections in the curriculum are inevitable that is why teacher's role is not just focus solely in planning and implementation alone but also in figuring out how should they meet the curriculum standards without sacrificing quality learning. Hence, the result of the study has brought awareness to school administration about the unheard and unseen problems that teachers experience in the curriculum leading to a decisive programs and policies in solving curriculum dilemma.

Keywords: curriculum planning, curriculum implementation, instructional content, educational goals, teaching methods, academic growth, qualitative study, transcendental phenomenology, lived experiences

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum planning and implementation are vital in education as they guide effective teaching and ensure meaningful learning experiences. As a language instructor and curriculum implementer, the researcher have observed that while the OBE curriculum has received positive feedback, its classroom implementation raises concerns about teacher challenges and the quality of learning. Personally, the researcher struggles to keep up with lesson content even when students have not fully met the desired outcomes, which affects their performance. Although the curriculum aims to develop competencies, it often feels too rigorous and burdensome, especially for teachers who lack sufficient training and orientation.

This claim was evident in the case of private HEIs where the developing the OBE curriculum as a shift from the old curriculum has conformed to be lengthy, challenging, and exhausting, compounded by limited time, training, and resources available to teachers. Nevertheless, inconsistencies have emerged, particularly regarding students' mastery of skills and the time required for them to produce outputs. Students do not consistently demonstrate the intended outcomes, in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes simultaneously or uniform (Alata, 2019).

Meanwhile, in the Department of Education, the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum has introduced multiple challenges for teachers, affecting their ability to effectively plan and deliver lessons. A primary issue is the inadequate training provided to educators regarding the new curriculum. Research suggests that many teachers feel unprepared to implement K to 12 due to brief and insufficient training sessions. For instance, Vilches (2018) found that many teachers experienced confusion about their roles and responsibilities within the curriculum framework, hindering effective execution. Similarly, Combalicer (2016) highlighted the lack of access to specialized seminars and resources tailored to K to 12, which are essential for developing effective and engaging instructional strategies. Furthermore, insufficient professional development opportunities have contributed to poor understanding and compliance with curriculum requirements, as noted by Tus (2020).

In Tacurong City, teachers at Notre Dame of Tacurong College (NDTC) initially adopted blended instruction during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. While this approach offered some benefits, it resulted in low student engagement, as reported by Arzagon et al. (2022). Eventually, as the COVID-19 situation improved, colleges transitioned back to fully face-to-face classes. Although this shift was seen as beneficial, college instructors faced challenges in readjusting to in-person teaching, managing extended teaching hours, updating learning materials such as textbooks and journals, and diversifying classroom activities to improve student engagement.

Given these challenges, the researcher aimed to explore the experiences of teachers in private higher education institutions (HEIs) concerning curriculum planning and implementation. By understanding these experiences and identifying potential strategies, the study sought to contribute to addressing curriculum-related issues and propose necessary improvements to enhance the effectiveness and success of curriculum implementation.

Statement of the Problem

This study generally aimed to explore the experiences and challenges faced by private Higher Education Institution (HEI) instructors.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the lifeworld of the selected private HEI instructors in curriculum planning and implementation?

2. What is the context of the lived experienced of the selected private HEI instructors in curriculum planning and implementation?
3. How do the teachers view the dilemmas immanent in curriculum planning and implementation in the years to come if remain unsolved?
4. What potential strategies teachers may recommend to achieve academic growth and to sustain successful curriculum planning and implementation.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods utilized in this study. Moreover, it discussed the research design, study locale, participants, research instrument, data gathering procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, role of the researcher and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research approach, specifically emphasizing Transcendental Phenomenology. This design was particularly effective in examining the experiences and challenges encountered by college instructors in private higher education institutions regarding curriculum planning and implementation. Transcendental Phenomenology focused on understanding human experiences without preconceived notions.

Locale of the Study

This study took place in Tacurong City, specifically within the following private educational institutions: Notre Dame of Tacurong College (NDTC), Southern Mindanao Institute of Technology (SMIT), STI College Tacurong, Valdez Mother and Child Asian College Foundation Incorporated (VMC), and South Central Mindanao College of Science and Technology (SCMCSTI).

Participants of the Study

This study involved eight (8) college instructors from private educational institutions in Tacurong City. To qualify for participation, individuals had to meet several criteria. First, they needed to be willing to participate. Second, participants were required to have familiarity with the curriculum used at their institution, including practical experience in applying it in the classroom. Lastly, participants had to have taught for a minimum of three consecutive years at a private college institution.

Research Instrument

This study utilized in-depth interviews as its primary data collection method, employing a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended and flexible questions, allowing researchers to explore new ideas and insights that emerged during discussions (Kallio et al., 2016).

Data Gathering Procedure

The study adopted a systematic approach to ensure that the collected information was both reliable and relevant. Prior to data collection, the researcher follow these steps, first asking permission from the Dean of Graduate Schools at Sultan Kudarat State University to conduct the study. Second, securing approval from school presidents and lastly having participants signed the informed consent

Data Analysis

In conducting data analysis for this study, the researcher employed thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as the detection, interpretation, and reporting of patterns and themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the study's findings and discussed the implications of the data collected through the interview guide questionnaire during the interview conducted with the participants.

Presentation of Findings

This section presented and discussed the findings. The relevant themes derived from the dilemmas experience by language educators in private HEIs in Tacurong City.

The findings are organized around key themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the participants' responses. The results discussed existing literature and related studies about dilemmas in relation to curriculum planning and implementation, roles of teachers as key implementers, challenges face by educators in relation to curriculum planning and implementation, views on effects of unresolved curriculum and the suggested effective programs and strategies in sustaining academic growth and curriculum sustainability.

Emerging Themes on the Life World of the Selected Private HEI Instructors in Curriculum Planning and Implementation

Four (4) emerging themes were identified through thorough analysis of data. They are the following: **instructors experiences and challenges in curriculum delivery, teacher involvement and adaptation in curriculum planning and implementation, challenges in curriculum adaptation and student engagement and teacher adaptation in performance evaluation in response to challenges**

Emerging Themes on Context of the Lived Experienced of the Selected Private HEI Instructors in Curriculum Planning and Implementation

Four (4) emergent themes were articulated through rigorous procedural data analysis and interpretation. They were all synthesized from 23 formulated meanings, 22 initial and 22 clustered themes. The emergent themes were the following: Supportive Institutional Environment for Curriculum Planning and Implementation, Institutional Policies Supporting Teaching and Excellence and Curriculum Alignment, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Adaptation to Student Diversity and Administrator Support and Faculty Development in Curriculum Planning and Implementation.

Emergent Theme on Instructors view the dilemmas immanent in curriculum planning and implementation in the years to come if remain unsolved

Three emergent theme were created out of in-depth analysis interpretation of data. They were synthesized from 8 formulated meanings, 5 clustered and 5 initial themes. The relevant themes are the following: **impact of curriculum quality on student success, pressure of academic performance and institutional consequences and socio-economic challenges and barriers to education.** These themes

highlighted instructors perception on the long term effects of unresolved curriculum dilemmas for both students and instructors.

Emergent Themes on Potential Strategies Instructors may Recommend to Achieve and Sustain Academic Growth and Sustainability in Curriculum Planning and Implementation

Three clustered themes were formulated after a rigorous analysis and interpretation of data. These themes were synthesized from 9 formulated meanings, 6 clustered and 6 initial themes. The emergent themes were as follows: **outcome-based education (OBE) and real-world application for curriculum sustainability, time management and resource optimization, institutional support for faculty and student development.** These themes highlighted some of the best strategies and programs the participants have shared which they taught were effective for curriculum development and sustainability.

Conclusions

The conclusions are drawn from the synthesized emerging themes and insights gained from the participants' responses.

Language educators in private HEIs experience various challenges which highlighted important roles that goes beyond being just a curriculum implementer. These challenge have shaped and impacted their teaching performance and were manifested in their students learning.

Moreover, there are contextual factors that boost language educators' involvement and participation in the curriculum. These factors became instructors guiding star and strength in battling curriculum dilemmas. They also entail instructors' versatility and flexibility in terms of adapting to curriculum changes and challenges that tested them holistically. Moreover, among those contextual factors, institutional support ranks highest. Thus, it only implies that school administrators played a huge part in solving curriculum dilemmas.

In addition, despite instructors' perseverance and dedication for curriculum success and development it is important that their voices must not be heard especially that they are the first one to observe and experienced those curriculum dilemmas. Thus, it is necessary to include them in decision making and benchmarking on the things and matters that needs to be resolved before classes start in order to avoid future problems.

Also, continued support of the institutions served as wings for instructors to implement curriculum successfully. Through their support instructors could be able to apply strategies without hesitations, fears and anxiety leading to students success and institutions victory.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Institutions may provide trainings and seminars on how the instructors faced and solved curriculum dilemmas as they encountered them to foster hope and resilience to instructors varied challenges within the curriculum.
2. Language educators may submit themselves for continued attendance in seminars, trainings and workshops to keep them abreast with updated or latest teaching strategy leading them to adopt quickly to curriculum changes and students diverse needs.

3. School administration may consider involving instructors in decision making such as, choosing the right and appropriate learning material, mode of instruction, plotting subjects in line with CHED memorandum, giving of subject loads, syllabi making and revisions.
4. The school heads may ensure continued support through provision of financial, professional and resource support that cater teachers and students needs leading them to hurdle curriculum dilemmas easily
5. Other studies may venture other field of study under curriculum planning and implementation which were not explored yet such as the integration of Artificial Knowledge in planning and implementation and many more.

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