Applicability of the Proposed Policy Guidelines on the Acceleration for the Filipino Gifted Learners

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Abstract

The Department of Education (DepEd), in its diligent efforts to respond to the diverse learning needs of all learners by providing them with access to quality basic education, has proposed a policy on acceleration for gifted learners. Through a mixed-method study design, 14 teachers, 14 principals, and 17 supervisors from various regions of the country were invited to participate. In effect, the focus group discussions (FGDs) gathered insights, suggestions, and recommendations for possible integration in the policy, while the quantitative aspect of the study yielded a composite mean of 2.315, thereby reflecting the view that, among the participants, the policy was deemed to be acceptable and beneficial. Furthermore, the consistency of the participants' position regarding the acceptability of the policy is further demonstrated by the p-value of 0.24074, which exceeds the alpha level of 0.05, which further demonstrates that there are no significant differences in the participants' responses. While the participants are unanimous in their agreement relative to the proposed policy containing the essential components and standards, necessary for a successful implementation, it was also mentioned that the following enabling conditions would effectively enhance its feasibility: (1) capacity and capacity-building for field implementers; (2) clarification of the incentive system to strengthen advocacy and sustained support; (3) establishment of enabling mechanisms with clear operational guidelines, and (4) provision of instructional support, particularly through technical assistance and improved instructional delivery.

Keywords: Acceleration, policy, gifted education, giftedness, intervention programs

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1. Introduction

Gifted learners require educational programs that address their unique needs, such programs must be designed and implemented in such a way that caters not only to their specific abilities but also to their learning context. Countries such as the United States (Assouline, Colangelo, & VanTassel-Baska, 2015), China (Zhang, 2017), Australia's island state of Tasmania (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2016), Canada (Kanevsky & Clelland, 2013), Norway (Smedsrud, 2018), Singapore (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2018), and the Philippines have sought to maximize the potential of gifted learners by affording them with the educational experiences that matches their advanced capabilities through the *acceleration program*.

In particular, the Philippine Basic Education System supplements its acceleration program with the establishment of special science and mathematics high schools. Earlier iterations of how the acceleration program was administered can be observed in how children as young as five years old were directly admitted to the first grade without requiring them to attend pre-school or kindergarten. In effect, acceleration was meant to bring a student's advanced abilities and the level of challenge in the curriculum into a greater degree of alignment. It also seeks to meet the needs of highly gifted learners who might be insufficiently engaged or extended by differentiated offerings at their grade level. It is also important to note that the benefits of implementing an acceleration program is not confined to the gifted and talented but extend to learners who possess high ability and readiness for advanced placement.

Section 9 of the Regulatory Framework for the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533), mandates DepEd to develop policies on acceleration programs, thereby making it available to learners from both public and private institutions. However, it initially lacked the formal and definitive guidelines that the Philippine education system needs to address the desirability of acceleration as well as the procedures that could guide critical implementation decisions for individual students. In response, the DepEd, through the Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD), proposed policy guidelines on acceleration for gifted learners in 2022. While the proposed guidelines set basic standards for the efficient implementation of acceleration programs in public schools nationwide, it was consequently imperative to examine their acceptability among program implementers. This, in turn, led to the conception of the present study.

Current Acceleration Options under the Philippine Basic Education System.

Acceleration, as an intervention program, has been well established and empirically validated for its effectiveness in providing advanced students with instructional practices that increase the pace or level of learning beyond grade-level expectations. (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004)

In the Philippines, there have been three primary forms of acceleration, developed and implemented since the 10 year structure of basic education: (a) early entry to Kindergarten at ages 4 - 5, (b) single-grade skilling, typically at Grade 4 or 5, and (c) a telescoping scheme where the curriculum for Grades 4 and 5 are compressed into a single academic year, followed by the completion of the Grade 6 curriculum in the subsequent year.

Representing the first of these initiatives, the HEADSTART Program was pilot-tested in 2006, allowing gifted learners aged 4-5 to enroll in a specialized Kindergarten curriculum designed to transition into SPED-Gifted Grade 1 classes. By 2009, this program was institutionalized through the Department of Education Order number 99, s. 2009, which in turn expanded its implementation from 44 to 89 classrooms nationwide.

To address concerns surrounding the restructuring of the basic education program that introduced the K to 12 curriculum, the Accelerated Learning Program for Public Elementary Schools (ALPPES) was introduced in 2002 and formally implemented in 2003. However, there were programs such as the ACCE that have been operational since 1990 across 13 public elementary schools under the Division of City Schools, Manila. Students under this program were rigorously prepared so that they could join Manila's top-performing public secondary schools. Unfortunately, these acceleration models were discontinued due to the legal and structural shifts vis-à-vis the education of the gifted under DepEd. To ensure that consequent programs for gifted learners would be consistent with the new K to 12 system, DepEd Order No. 44 has been put in place to re-classify gifted education under the "special curricular programs."

DepEd Policy Guidelines

Education policies facilitate inclusive practices through guidelines on pedagogy, learner support, and leadership, which together underpin quality education for all students (UNESCO, 2015b). In order to be effective, policies should be developed from the ground up i.e. from the concrete experiences in the field which entails recognizing that challenges faced by students are often linked to elements of the education system itself, including but not limited to, its organizational setup, the nature of teaching and learning environments, and the processes that guide student support and assessment. In conjunction with the grass-roots approach, policy-development initiatives should also be systematic and research-driven for this, participatory mechanisms and procedures have been instituted to support the formulation, adoption, and review of policies developed by the Department's Central Office, which led to the release of DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, otherwise known as the Guidelines on the Establishment of the Policy Development Process in the Department of Education. These established processes serve as a framework for the Central Office and its stakeholders in preparing and issuing policies

aligned with the Department's vision, mission, mandate, and core values, while ensuring the effective and efficient attainment of educational goals. In this context, the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners was crafted in accordance with the mechanisms outlined in the said policy development framework.

Similarly, Colangelo, Assouline, & Marron (2010) emphasized the importance of writing and modifying acceleration policies that meet local needs and are aligned with research-based practices. In their seminal work, the authors advocate the inclusion of clearly articulated processes on planning, referral and screening, assessment and decision-making. Thus, policy development initiatives and its consequent output should not only be evidence-based but also acceptable to the field implementers in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness.

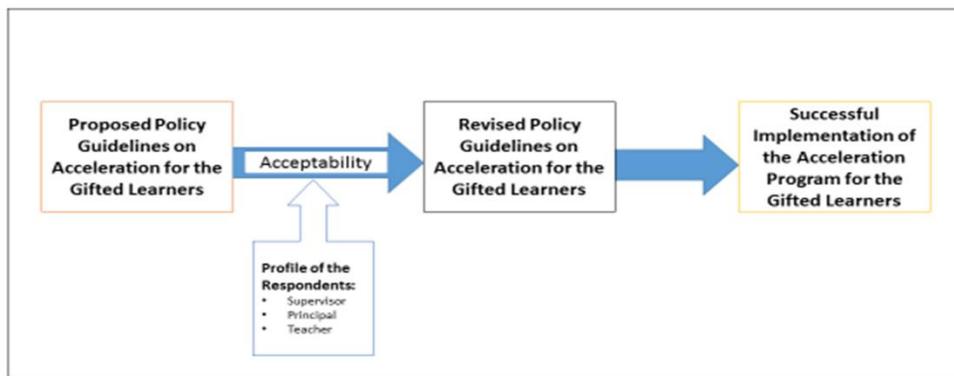### *Conceptual Basis of the Research*

Figure 1: Conceptual Basis

The standard mechanisms and procedures relative to the implementation of acceleration programs for gifted learners including support for teachers, administrators, and other education implementers, were designed to effectively and efficiently organize and manage acceleration programs in accordance with the K to 12 curriculum reform. These mechanisms can be observed in the Conceptual Paradigm of the study, which can be seen in Figure 1. More specifically, the policy aims to guide field implementers in the establishment, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the program to adequately respond to the diverse interests, skills, abilities, educational needs, and contexts of gifted learners. In effect, teachers, principals, and supervisors play a crucial role in the implementation of this policy. Therefore, to determine the acceptability of the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners, it was necessary to examine the respondents' profile, particularly their educational background, position or designation, and length of experience in managing the program. The results of this study will inform further revisions of the policy guidelines to ensure stronger alignment with the K to 12 curriculum and support the successful implementation of academic acceleration. The

suggested policy seeks to cater to the requirements of gifted learners by permitting them to move forward in alignment with their individual abilities. It provides teachers, administrators, and other education stakeholders with clear guidelines to manage acceleration programs effectively and efficiently.

Since the success of any policy depends not only on its design but also on its acceptance and implementation in the field, this study highlights the importance of examining how the policy is received by those tasked with carrying it out. This ensures that the acceleration policy is both contextually practicable and sustainable in impact.

Furthermore, the findings will guide teachers in properly implementing acceleration programs, assist school administrators in establishing mechanisms and procedures to strengthen stakeholder coordination, and help researchers refine the design of education policies for broader nationwide application.

II. Methodology

This section outlines the research question, research design, enumerating: the instruments used, the selection of cases, and the procedures employed to gather and analyze data. The proposed acceleration policy, no matter how well-designed is bound to face challenges in practice when stakeholders are not sufficiently consulted, informed, or convinced of its feasibility. If program implementers were to perceive the policy as impractical, misaligned with their context, or too burdensome to apply, then the intended benefits for learners may not be realized. This has all too well been observed as a critical gap between policy formulation and implementation. This brings us to the heart of this study to ensure the acceptability of the proposed policy among program implementers.

Research Questions

This research is anchored on the following key-questions: :

1. To what extent do the respondents find the proposed policy acceptable, in terms of the:

    1.1 Elements of the Rationale

    1.2 Elements of the Scope

    1.3 Definitions of terms

    1.4 Elements of the Policy Statement

    1.5 Elements of the Implementing Structure

    1.6 Elements of the Monitoring and Evaluation

2. Is there a significant difference among the supervisors, principals and teachers in terms of acceptability on the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners?

3. What policy provisions can be proposed to successfully implement the policy on acceleration for the gifted learners?

Research Design

The research questions were addressed using a quantitative approach used to test objective theories through the examination of relationships among variables (Creswell, 2013). In this case, a correlational design was employed to describe and measure the extent of the relationships between two or more variables or sets of scores. (Creswell, 2013).

Research Participants and Sampling Procedure

The research group for the study was the selected supervisors, principal and teachers implementing the program for the gifted. The participants were drawn from various regions in the Philippines. Convenience sampling was employed due to practical considerations such as accessibility, availability, and the assurance that the selected individuals possessed substantial understanding of, and active involvement in, the acceleration program.

Seventeen of the respondents are supervisors while fourteen percent are principals and teachers. The roles and responsibilities of the respondents vary according to their functions and/or mandate, which plays a vital part in the implementation of the policy. In carrying out the articulated basic education curriculum, supervisors offer technical support, particularly in creating instructional resources that align with the needs of their learning environments. They also provide technical assistance to the schools when it comes to curricular implementation, pedagogical supervision, and production of instructional materials as well as overall quality assurance. Principals are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school, more specifically, this entails creating an environment that is conducive to instructional and learning activities. School leaders are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the curriculum, as they are accountable for achieving higher learning outcomes. Teachers, in turn, address the needs of gifted learners in line with the standards of the National Curriculum Framework and under the direction of the appropriate educational authorities. In essence, teachers provide instruction based on learners' abilities, needs, and potential, guided by their School Head or Unit Head, who entrusts them with the instructional care of these gifted learners.

Data Gathering Instrument

The survey tool used for data collection by the DepEd in validating the policy was used to gather data on the acceptability of the acceleration policy for the gifted learners. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first covered the respondents' personal

profile, including educational attainment, position or designation, years of service, and experience in managing the program. The second section focused on indicators assessing the acceptability of the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners.

The range of values for the numerical rating used is indicated by the descriptive rating and their equivalent as follows:

Rating Scale	Range of Value	Descriptive Rating
3	2.50-3.00	Strongly Agree
2	1.50-2.49	Agree
1	1.0-1.49	Disagree

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers personally distributed the questionnaire to the respondents. Next, the accomplished instruments were collected so that the data could be tallied and interpreted. In effect, two kinds of data were collected from this study. On the one hand, the quantitative component further evaluated the participants' level of support for the proposed polic among the participants. While the qualitative component consists of suggestions and recommendations from the focus group discussions (FGDs) that need to be integrated into the policy. This study hypothesizes that there is a significant difference among the respondents' acceptability on the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners.

Data Analysis Procedure

The participants' narratives were analyzed by identifying patterns and categories across their answers that captured frequently recurring themes or patterns that emerged during the focus group discussions such as ideas, concepts, terminologies and even phrases which were further organized into coherent categories.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SAS. These include the following:

1. <u>Frequency and Percentage</u> was used to determine the profile of the respondents.
2. <u>Weighted Mean</u> was used to determine the perception of the respondents on the acceptability of the acceleration policy for the gifted learners.
3. <u>ANOVA Single Factor</u> was used because of one (1) independent variable, which is the means of the acceptability of the proposed policy.

III. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the profile of the respondents as well as the variance in their acceptance of the proposed policy for gifted learners.

1. How acceptable is the proposed policy among the respondents in terms of Rationale, Scope, Definitions of terms, Policy Statement, Implementing Structure and Monitoring and Evaluation?

Table 1.1 Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Elements of the Rationale

Elements of the Rationale	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Brief background of the issue to be addressed	2.43	A	2.43	A	2.18	A
Who is affected by the problem	2.57	SA	2.64	SA	2.65	SA
Describes the status	2.43	A	2.36	A	2.24	A
Reason/s behind the creation of the policy	2.64	SA	2.43	A	2.71	SA
Explain how the policy would address the problem	2.64	SA	2.50	SA	2.24	A
Statements necessary and sufficient	2.43	A	2.43	A	2.59	SA
	2.52	**SA**	**2.46**	**A**	**2.43**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

Overall, the indicated components of the elements of rationale is deemed acceptable to them with the weighted mean of 2.52 or strongly agree for the teachers, 2.46 or agree for the principals and 2.43 or agree for the supervisors. This suggests that with regard to

the elements of the rationale, teachers, principals, and supervisors preferred a clearly articulated design rationale, as it serves an important role in demonstrating how the proposed solution addresses the brief. Consequently, the careful selection of words, even those not immediately apparent to the reader, helps to convey the clarity of purpose, highlight the benefits of the solution, and ultimately encourage implementers to adopt the policy effectively.

As seen in Table 1.2 generally the respondents agree that the policy indicates all the needed indicators of the elements of scope with a weighted mean of 2.39 for teachers, 2.46 for principals and 2.29 for supervisors. This implies that the respondents sought to indicate in the policy in terms of the scope the clear statement of the effectivity in terms of the affected stakeholders and jurisdiction.

Table 1.2. Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Elements of the Scope

Elements of the Scope	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Identifies stakeholders involved, i.e. subject matter, target stakeholders, etc.	2.43	A	2.36	A	2.24	A
Statements necessary and sufficient	2.36	A	2.57	SA	2.29	A
	2.39	**A**	**2.46**	**A**	**2.26**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

It is shown in Table 1.3 that the proposed policy in terms of the definition of terms is deemed acceptable with a weighted mean of 2.62 or strongly agree for the teachers, principals and 2.57 or strongly agree for the supervisors. Which indicates that in the policy the availability of unfamiliar terms to readers are clearly defined and stated.

Table 1.3. Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Definition of Terms

Definition of Terms	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Terms listed are comprehensive	2.57	SA	2.57	SA	2.65	SA
Terms clearly defined	2.57	SA	2.64	SA	2.53	SA
Definitions properly cited	2.71	SA	2.64	SA	2.53	SA
	2.62	**SA**	**2.62**	**SA**	**2.57**	**SA**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

The findings presented in Table 1.4, show that the indicators outlined in the policy statement were considered acceptable by the respondents. Teachers and principals indicated agreement, obtaining a weighted mean of 2.43, while supervisors reflected agreement with a weighted mean of 2.15. This implies that the participants wanted to add and address the succinct discussion on the principles, rules, and standards of the proposed policy.

Table 1.4. Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Elements of the Policy Statement

Elements of the Policy Statement	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Subject matter defining and describing what the policy is all about (with reference to the framework and/or core message).	2.36	A	2.50	SA	2.12	A
Consistent with the provisions stated in the rationale and scope sections	2.50	A	2.36	A	2.18	A
	2.43	**A**	**2.43**	**A**	**2.15**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

Table 1.5. Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Elements of the Implementing Structure

Elements of the Implementing Structure	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Implementation plan outlines key activities to be carried to implement the policy	2.07	A	2.47	A	1.82	A
Implementation schedule of the policy is provided	2.07	A	2.36	A	1.65	A
Support system in implementing the policy is established	2.36	A	2.29	A	2.18	A
Statements include target audience of the change/s expected	2.36	A	2.36	A	2.24	A
Statements include location or site or governance level where the result is expected to occur	2.64	A	2.29	A	2.12	A
Roles of various governance levels in implementing the policy are clearly specified	2.36	A	2.29	A	1.94	A
Roles of various governance levels in implementing the policy are completely covered	2.43	A	2.29	A	2.12	A
	2.33	**A**	**2.33**	**A**	**2.01**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

Table 1.5 displays the weighted mean and interpretation on the level of acceptability under the indicators of implementing structure gathered from the answers of teachers, principals and supervisors. Overall, the indicated components of the elements of implementing structure are deemed acceptable to them with the weighted mean of 2.33 or agree for the teachers, principals and 2.01 or agree for the supervisors.

Thus, the elements under the implementing structure need improvement and should have coherent framework; or effective, administratively feasible, and politically acceptable implementation mechanism or standards.

Furthermore, Table 1.6 summarizes the weighted mean scores and their interpretations, showing how teachers, principals, and supervisors rated the level of acceptability of the monitoring and evaluation indicators.

In terms of the elements of the monitoring and evaluation the respondents rated the level of acceptability relatively low, with teachers obtaining a weighted mean of 1.94 (interpreted as Agree), principals 2.17 (Agree), and supervisors 1.58 (Agree). This implies that the elements of the monitoring and evaluation need to further improve. According to the respondents the monitoring and evaluation elements should discuss the mechanism and the responsible offices across governance levels.

Table 1.6

Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy among the Respondents in terms of the Elements of the Monitoring and Evaluation

Elements of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Teachers		Principal		Supervisor	
	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
M&E framework is established	2.07	A	2.23	A	1.65	A
M&E tools are provided	1.86	A	2.07	A	1.31	D
M&E timeframe is provided	1.86	A	2.07	A	1.59	A
Roles and functions in the conduct of M&E are clearly identified and delineated	1.86	A	2.07	A	1.65	A
Results and targets are identified	2.00	A	2.29	A	1.59	A
Results and targets are achievable	2.00	A	2.29	A	1.71	A
	1.94	**A**	**2.17**	**A**	**1.58**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

Table 1.7. Summary of the assessment on the Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Policy

COMPONENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Elements of the Rationale	2.47	A
Elements of the Scope	2.37	A
Definition of Terms	2.6	SA
Elements of the Policy Statement	2.33	A
Elements of the Implementing Structure	2.22	A
Elements of the Monitoring and Evaluation	1.9	A
TOTAL	13.89	
Composite Mean	**2.315**	**A**

Legend: 2.50-3.00-Strongly Agree (SA), 1.50-2.49-Agree (A), 1.0-1.49-Disagree (D)

Meanwhile, Table 1.7 presents an overview of how teachers, principals, and supervisors evaluated the proposed policy's degree of approval. Colangelo, Assouline, and Marron (2010) highlight that a policy on advanced learning progression should provide direction for implementation, encourage the use of objective and well-rounded decision-making tools, and include clear guidelines for policy development. Such a framework promotes the organized integration of accelerated learning practices across schools, making it both acceptable and workable for program implementers.

As seen in this table, the respondents agree that the proposed policy on acceleration for the gifted learners is beneficial and will guide the program implementers in the implementation of the policy with a composite mean of 2.315. Hence, the strong agreement over the definitions of terms with a mean value of 2.6. They agree that the policy reflects the elements of rationale with a mean value of 2.47, elements of the scope with a mean value of 2.37, elements of the policy statement with a mean value of 2.33, elements of the implementing structure with a mean value of 2.22 and elements of monitoring and evaluation with a mean value of 1.9.

2. Is there a significant difference among the respondents' acceptability on the proposed acceleration policy for gifted learners?

Table 3. Summary of ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.204149677	2	0.102074839	1.568208096	0.24074	3.68232
Within Groups	0.97635166	15	0.065090111			
Total	1.180501337	17				

Note: ANOVA single factor because of 1 independent variable which is the means of the acceptability of the proposed policy

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test if the three groups of people/categories whether they have the same perspective on the policy (variances) or not. The calculated F-value of 1.5668 falls below the critical value of 3.68232, suggesting that the null hypothesis remains valid. Similarly, since the p-value of 0.24074 exceeds the 0.05 level of significance, the results indicate that the differences in the respondents' mean scores are not statistically significant. This implies that the teachers, principals and supervisors who participated in the study even though they have different roles and functions they were able to understand the purpose of the policy. Thus, they perceived that the policy has the needed components and standards to implement successfully and therefore, acceptable to them.

3. What policy provisions can be proposed to successfully implement the policy on acceleration for the gifted learners?

To address research question number four, a structured data analysis was carried out, drawing inspiration from Saldana's (2012) method of coding. Insights and feedback gathered from the focus group discussions involving teachers, principals, and supervisors were carefully examined. The process began with multiple readings of interview transcripts, observation notes, and other pertinent materials. From these, key points were annotated and refined into initial categories. These coded sections were then

organized into broader classifications, allowing recurring patterns and overarching ideas to emerge and form cohesive themes.

Based on the result of the focus group discussion that participated in by the teachers, principals and supervisors four major themes were classified. These are the following: "Capacity/ capability-building, Incentive system/ Leverage, Enabling mechanisms, and Instructional support".

Capacity/capability-building: Some of the participants shared that "*The policy was never in our seminar in the region*", "*We were not properly oriented*", and "*There was no orientation on the policy*". The participants also shared that there were some operational issues concerning the program. They shared that "*It would have been better to include the higher ups in the orientation*" and "*It was not rolled out*, and *we did not receive any training or orientation about acceleration*". Since the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program was implemented in 2013, this has been a great opportunity for the Department of Education to evaluate the implementation of the different programs, and one of these is the acceleration program for the gifted learners. Gifted learners are a special group within the scope of the special education; field implementers need a number of special techniques and teaching methods to properly implement the program and address these types of learners. However, most of the gifted implementers do not receive any training and do not understand how to implement the said program. The focus group discussion also revealed that they only know one type of acceleration, which is ability grouping; however, this type of acceleration is no longer valid because presently the class organization of each learner in the public schools are already heterogeneous, not based on ability of the learners. In this situation, the implementer's lack of necessary education can cause gifted students to underachieve or quit the school. That is why it is important that before the implementation of the program there should be consultation and conduct of a capacity/ capability training for them to be adequately equipped in the said program.

Incentive system/ Leverage: In educational contexts, acceleration serves as a specialized strategy that enables students to progress through learning stages at a pace exceeding that of typical classmates. This approach seeks to adjust both the intensity and depth of instruction to correspond with an individual learner's capability and readiness for advanced study (Colangelo et al., 2004). The results showed that teachers, principals and supervisors believe in the importance and the opportunities that the gifted learners will experience in the acceleration program. Gifted learners have the potential to make significant contributions to our country, if they are able to achieve their full potential. Therefore, appropriate policy on acceleration for the gifted learners should be provided to engage and challenge their abilities

This is backed up by the significant statements coming from the teachers, principals and supervisors such as:

"They can learn at their own pace without sacrificing their time".

"(This) might give impression to the learners that they have more opportunities over the general education.

"Acceleration creates opportunities for the gifted learners".

"The program will help our gifted pupils to have proper placement".

"This can also address their needs; the program will help the gifted learners to level up".

"(One of the) benefits of acceleration is that the pupils' level of intellect will be levelled with what grade or group it should belong".

"Learning more will be satisfied".

"It acknowledges their performance and capability to the next level, promoting and recognizing their capacity to graduate on the next level, lessening the no. of years in school, increasing the opportunity of the learner to develop and enhance more, encourage learners to strive and work hard, strongly support the assessment part and collaborate with the LGU for the supports, to maximize their potential, more productive and can contribute better in nation building in the future".

Enabling mechanisms: Admittedly, there are gray areas in the implementation of the acceleration program, but the field should strictly adhere to the policy on acceleration. There is a lack of technical assistance on how to go about the process, and systems to ensure continuity of the implementation. Some concerns also arose from the discussion. These include the implementation of the acceleration process after the school year ended, and not just within the school year. The field implementers also shared that they were unable to receive support towards understanding the policy further, such as clarification and communication and advocacy. This means that information and advocacy campaigns for the program, supported by a concrete criteria and assessment for acceleration are in order.

These are supported by significant statements from the teachers, principals and supervisors such as:

"(The guidelines are) not clearly defined in the field".

"(The) guidelines is (are) not properly disseminated".

"(Person in authority or implementer) varies in the interpretation of the policies".

"(The) acceleration process in my region is not carefully set".

"(There were) only (a) few acceleration (cases) that happened".

"(There are) rigid criteria for acceleration".

"(We are) waiting for a clear policy on acceleration".

"(There is a) lack of policies and clear cut guidelines".

Instructional support: Some of the significant statements of the teachers, principals and supervisors were *"Intensified differentiated instructions", "(I) equip myself with proper training and education" and "DepEd (should have a) specific role and program for the gifted acceleration".* Aside from the need to capacitate the field implementers on the acceleration program, the teachers, principals and supervisors also noted the importance of the instructional support coming from the higher authorities, which translates into how they can properly implement the said program and be provided with proper instructional resources that they will need. They also wanted to identify and be familiar with the differentiated roles and responsibilities of the regional, division, and school in the implementation of the program.

IV. Conclusion

Learners identified as gifted possess distinct intellectual, educational, and social-emotional requirements. They need to be challenged academically and to be afforded greater opportunities to develop their skills and talents. However, any educational intervention for gifted students (and for all special children, for that matter) should be administered from a humanist perspective, which entails taking a learner-centric approach with a strict adherence with a "first, do no harm" policy. When applied to gifted learners, acceleration programs should neither hinder their development not put them in a position of disadvantage when it comes to access to future educational opportunities. The foregoing analysis of the acceptability of the proposed policy among the teachers, principals and supervisors plays a vital role because they are in the forefront of the implementation. Every word and letter written in the policy can make or break the learner. That is why a policy that is backed by research with documented cases of success and failure of acceleration should be strongly considered. A policy that is well defined and understood by the implementers is important in securing its successful implementation. Overall, the present study provided empirical evidence for demonstrating the perceptions of the teachers, principals and supervisors in the proposed policy guidelines on the acceleration for the gifted learners.

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