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From Curriculum Reform to Classroom Practice: Teacher Adaptation to the Strengthened Senior High School Curriculum in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Research Problem: The implementation of the Strengthened Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum represents a new stage in educational reform in the Philippines, requiring teachers to adapt to changing instructional expectations, professional responsibilities, and institutional conditions. However, empirical evidence on teacher adaptation specifically to the newly implemented curriculum remains limited.

Research Purposes: This study examines how existing literature explains teacher adaptation to curriculum reform in the Philippines and identifies the implications of these findings for implementing the Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Research Methods: A narrative literature review was conducted using 14 studies identified through Scopus screening and supplementary literature searching. The review synthesizes empirical and analytical studies and relevant policy documents addressing K–12 and SHS curriculum reform, teacher experiences, instructional demands, professional development, collaboration, and institutional support. The included literature encompasses qualitative, quantitative, and documentary evidence relevant to the Philippine context.

Results and Discussion: The findings indicate that teacher adaptation involves adjustments in instructional practices, lesson preparation, assessment, instructional materials, professional learning, and collaboration. These processes are shaped by professional development opportunities, mentoring, collegial support, administrative conditions, instructional resources, and the alignment between teachers' expertise and teaching assignments. The review also distinguishes adaptation, coping, and resilience as related but conceptually distinct dimensions of teachers' responses to curriculum reform. However, most available evidence concerns earlier K–12 and SHS reforms, leaving a gap in empirical research on the newly implemented Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Research Implications and Contributions: This study develops a synthesis framework linking curriculum reform, new instructional demands, teacher adaptation, institutional support, sustained adaptation and resilience, and implementation quality. It highlights the importance of sustained teacher preparation, continuous professional learning, mentoring, and school-level institutional support to facilitate effective curriculum implementation. The framework provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research on teacher adaptation and the implementation of the Strengthened SHS Curriculum in the Philippines.

Keywords: Curriculum Reform, Strengthened Senior High School Curriculum, Teacher Adaptation, Curriculum Implementation, Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum reform is not completed when a new policy or curriculum document is formally

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adopted. Its effectiveness ultimately depends on how policy changes are interpreted and translated into classroom practice. Teachers occupy a central position in this process because they are responsible for interpreting curriculum requirements, adjusting instructional strategies, redesigning learning activities, implementing new assessment practices, and responding to changing learner needs. Consequently, curriculum implementation is not simply a technical process of applying policy but also a process of teacher adaptation shaped by professional knowledge, institutional conditions, and available resources (Barrot, 2023; Magallanes et al., 2022; Bernardo et al., 2020). Understanding how teachers respond to curriculum reform is therefore important for assessing whether policy intentions can be translated into meaningful classroom practices.

In the Philippines, curriculum reform has undergone substantial changes since the enactment of Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. The K–12 reform extended the basic education cycle and introduced Senior High School (SHS), requiring changes not only in curriculum structure but also in teaching practices, assessment, teacher preparation, and school organization (Republic of the Philippines, 2013; Department of Education, 2019). The introduction of SHS created new instructional expectations because teachers were required to teach specialized subjects, respond to different learning pathways, and work within a curriculum that emphasized competencies relevant to higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning (Department of Education, 2019; Bernardo et al., 2020). Subsequent curriculum developments, including the MATATAG Curriculum and the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, demonstrate that curriculum reform in the Philippines remains an ongoing process rather than a single policy intervention (Department of Education, 2023, 2024, 2026).

The experience of K–12 implementation provides important evidence about the relationship between curriculum reform and teachers' work. Magallanes et al. (2022), using the Concern-Based Adoption Model, examined the concerns of 400 Filipino teachers during K–12 implementation. Their findings showed that teachers' concerns were particularly concentrated on the consequences of the reform for students and on collaboration with other teachers. Teaching experience and educational background were also associated with collaboration. The authors consequently emphasized professional development activities that encourage teamwork and collaboration as an important component of reform implementation. These findings indicate that teachers' responses to curriculum reform extend beyond individual adjustment and include concerns about student outcomes, professional learning, and collective efforts to improve implementation.

Evidence from the initial implementation of SHS further illustrates the relationship between changing work demands and teacher professional development. Bernardo et al. (2020) surveyed 289 teachers who were recruited to teach SHS for the first time in the Philippines. Their study found that perceived demands associated with the national education reform were related differently to teachers' attitudes toward continuing professional development depending on whether those demands were understood as job requirements or career planning. The authors interpreted these patterns as forms of adaptive responding to uncertainty in teachers' changing work environments. This finding is important because it suggests that teacher adaptation involves not only changes in classroom instruction but also efforts to acquire professional knowledge and develop competencies in response to new work expectations.

Qualitative evidence also demonstrates that the transition to SHS involved considerable adjustment in teachers' roles and instructional practices. Bacus and Alda (2022), through a phenomenological inquiry into Senior High School teaching, documented teachers' experiences in adjusting to new assignments, competencies, teaching requirements, and instructional practices. Their findings indicate that teachers responded to these changes through professional learning, experimentation with teaching approaches, and collaboration with colleagues. Similarly, studies of teachers involved in the early implementation of SHS have highlighted the importance of professional development, mentoring, administrative support, instructional resources, and opportunities for collaboration in enabling teachers to respond to new curriculum requirements (Bacus & Alda, 2022; Bernardo et al., 2020; Magallanes et al., 2022).

At the same time, curriculum reform can create additional instructional and organizational demands. Research on Philippine K–12 implementation has identified challenges related to instructional delivery, assessment, lesson preparation, teacher preparation, learning resources, and school-level support (Barrot, 2023; Quijano, 2021). Earlier research also reported concerns regarding teachers' preparedness to teach new content and employ more diversified teaching strategies, particularly where professional development and instructional resources were insufficient (Magallanes et al., 2022). These findings are consistent with broader research showing that curriculum change may require teachers to reconsider established pedagogical routines, acquire new knowledge, and adjust their practices to new curricular expectations. Thus, the implementation of curriculum reform may generate both opportunities for professional growth and additional demands on teachers.

The role of institutional support is particularly important in this context. Teacher adaptation does not occur in isolation from the organizational environment in which teaching takes place. Professional development, mentoring, collaboration, administrative support, learning resources, and technical assistance can influence teachers' capacity to interpret and implement curriculum changes (Bernardo et al., 2020; Bacus & Alda, 2022; Magallanes et al., 2022). Conversely, shortages of instructional materials, inadequate preparation, unclear expectations, and limited institutional support can make curriculum implementation more difficult (Quijano, 2021; Pangan et al., 2025). The literature therefore suggests that adaptation should be understood as an interaction between teachers' professional responses and the institutional conditions surrounding curriculum implementation.

This issue has become particularly important with the introduction of the Strengthened Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum. The reform represents a new phase in the Philippines' continuing adjustment of senior high school education. According to the Department of Education (DepEd), the Strengthened SHS Curriculum was piloted for Grade 11 learners in 891 schools during School Year 2025–2026 (Department of Education, 2025a). Following the pilot, DepEd directed all public and private SHSs to implement the Strengthened SHS Curriculum for incoming Grade 11 learners beginning School Year 2026–2027, while Grade 12 learners in non-pilot schools continued under the existing curriculum during the transition year (Department of Education, 2026b). The reform introduces structural, instructional, and content changes intended to strengthen foundational competencies, provide greater learner choice, and improve alignment with higher education, middle-skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship (Department of Education, 2026c).

The implementation design itself demonstrates that teacher preparation and institutional capacity are central policy concerns. The official pilot guidelines identify the need to determine teacher and school-leader capacity-building requirements, identify potential implementation challenges and gaps, and generate information that can inform the full rollout of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2025). DepEd's monitoring and evaluation guidelines further establish mechanisms for examining the implementation of the pilot, including issues that may inform subsequent implementation (Department of Education, 2026a). DepEd's current Strengthened SHS guidance also indicates that schools may offer only those tracks and electives for which they have appropriate teachers and learning resources (Department of Education, 2026c). This means that curriculum implementation is directly connected to teacher availability, professional capacity, and institutional resources. These policy provisions reinforce the importance of examining teacher adaptation as part of the broader implementation process.

However, an important distinction must be made between the evidence generated by the earlier K–12/SHS reforms and evidence concerning the newly introduced Strengthened SHS Curriculum. Much of the empirical literature on Filipino teachers' experiences, concerns, professional development, and adaptation was produced during the earlier phases of K–12 and SHS implementation (Bernardo et al., 2020; Bacus & Alda, 2022; Magallanes et al., 2022). These studies provide valuable evidence about how teachers respond when curriculum policy introduces new instructional expectations and

professional responsibilities. Nevertheless, they cannot automatically be treated as direct evidence of teachers' experiences under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum because the current reform introduces new curricular structures, learning arrangements, and implementation conditions (Department of Education, 2026c).

This distinction points to a specific gap in the literature. Existing Philippine studies provide fragmented evidence concerning teacher concerns, instructional demands, professional development, collaboration, and institutional support during K–12 and earlier SHS reforms. What remains insufficiently synthesized is how these dimensions relate to one another in explaining the movement from curriculum reform to classroom practice, particularly in the context of the newly introduced Strengthened SHS Curriculum. Furthermore, because the Strengthened SHS Curriculum has only recently entered pilot and full implementation, direct empirical evidence concerning teachers' experiences under the new curriculum remains limited. The literature therefore requires a synthesis that can distinguish established evidence from previous reforms from emerging evidence concerning the current policy transition.

Against this background, this article examines how existing literature explains teacher adaptation to curriculum reform in the Philippines and considers the implications of this evidence for the implementation of the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. The article employs a narrative literature review to synthesize studies concerning curriculum implementation, teacher experiences, instructional demands, professional development, collaboration, institutional support, and teacher adaptation. Rather than presenting teachers' experiences as original empirical findings, the review identifies patterns across previous research and considers how those patterns can inform understanding of the current curriculum transition.

The contribution of this review is twofold. First, it brings together evidence that is currently dispersed across studies of K–12 implementation, Senior High School teaching, teacher professional development, and curriculum implementation in the Philippines. Second, it develops a synthesis of the relationship between curriculum reform, changing instructional demands, teacher adaptation, institutional support, and curriculum implementation. The review consequently positions teacher adaptation not as an isolated individual response but as a process shaped by the interaction between policy expectations, classroom demands, professional learning, and school-level support. By distinguishing evidence from earlier reforms from the emerging context of the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, the article provides a more cautious and policy-relevant basis for understanding the transition from curriculum reform to classroom practice.

METHOD

This study employed a narrative literature review to examine how existing scholarship explains teacher adaptation to curriculum reform in the Philippines and to consider the implications of these findings for the implementation of the Strengthened Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum. A narrative review was selected because the literature relevant to this topic encompasses empirical studies, qualitative accounts of teacher experiences, curriculum analyses, and policy documents that differ in research design, participants, and analytical focus. Narrative reviews are particularly useful for synthesizing heterogeneous bodies of literature and developing an interpretive understanding of a research problem rather than statistically aggregating findings (Grant & Booth, 2009; Snyder, 2019). Accordingly, this study does not seek to calculate pooled effect sizes or conduct a meta-analysis.

Literature Search and Source Identification

The literature identification process consisted of two complementary streams: (1) a structured database search using Scopus and (2) a supplementary literature search. Keeping these streams distinct was intended to make the origin of the evidence transparent and to avoid presenting the complete literature base as exclusively Scopus-derived.

For the Scopus search, four Scopus export files were combined, producing an initial dataset of 3,390 records. After removing 56 duplicate records based on Scopus EID, 3,334

unique records remained. The search strategy combined terms related to curriculum reform, curriculum implementation, curriculum change, K–12, senior high school, the Philippines, Filipino teachers, teacher adaptation, teacher experience, teacher concerns, professional development, workload, collaboration, institutional support, coping, and resilience.

Initial screening of titles, abstracts, keywords, and contextual information identified 15 potentially relevant Scopus records. These records were subsequently examined against the substantive inclusion criteria. Appearance within the 15 potentially relevant records did not automatically constitute inclusion in the final evidence synthesis.

A supplementary literature search was conducted to identify established studies that were directly relevant to teacher adaptation during Philippine K–12 and SHS reforms but were not necessarily among the 15 potentially relevant Scopus records. This supplementary search was important because relevant literature may not always be captured through a single database or a single search strategy. Combining structured database searching with complementary source identification is consistent with the broader methodological approach recommended for literature reviews that seek to synthesize diverse evidence (Snyder, 2019).

The two streams therefore served different purposes. Scopus provided the structured database screening component, whereas the supplementary search expanded the evidence base with directly relevant established studies. The final evidence synthesis should consequently not be interpreted as a Scopus-only review.

Relevant policy documents from the Department of Education and the Republic of the Philippines were examined separately to establish the policy context and implementation timeline of the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. These documents were not counted as empirical studies.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were considered relevant when they:

1. addressed an educational context in the Philippines;
2. examined K–12, senior high school, curriculum reform, curriculum implementation, or closely related curriculum change;
3. included teachers, teaching practice, teacher preparation, teacher experiences, or professional responses as a substantive component; and
4. provided empirical, analytical, or documentary evidence relevant to teacher adaptation, instructional change, professional development, institutional support, or curriculum implementation.

Studies were excluded when the Philippine context was incidental; curriculum reform was mentioned only as background; the study focused primarily on student outcomes, employability, literary content, or other topics without a substantive teacher-implementation dimension; the educational level or context was substantially removed from the focus of the review; or the study did not provide sufficient relevance to teacher adaptation.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the Scopus records during substantive screening and were also used to assess the relevance of studies identified through the supplementary literature search.

Screening and Selection

The Scopus screening proceeded from the initial 3,390 records to 3,334 unique records after duplicate removal. Title, abstract, keyword, and contextual screening subsequently identified 15 potentially relevant records. Substantive assessment of these records resulted in four Scopus-derived studies being retained for the main evidence synthesis.

The retained Scopus studies addressed out-of-field SHS teaching, pedagogical changes associated with K–12 and MATATAG curricula, language adaptation in the SHS Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track, and curriculum and pedagogical renewal in Philippine mathematics education.

The remaining potentially relevant Scopus records were excluded from the main synthesis when their primary focus was student outcomes, employer expectations, higher

education curriculum reform, preschool education, literary analysis, or other issues without a sufficiently direct connection to teacher adaptation and SHS curriculum implementation.

In parallel, the supplementary literature search identified seven established studies that directly informed the analysis of teacher concerns, SHS teaching experiences, curriculum adaptation, professional development, collaboration, and institutional support. Three additional studies identified during the broader screening process were retained as supplementary or contextual sources because they addressed dimensions relevant to teacher adaptation but did not constitute direct evidence of teacher adaptation under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. These studies concerned teacher preparation (Aquino, 2026), instructional-material and curriculum alignment (Sukying & Barrot, 2025), and systemic barriers affecting teachers and instructional implementation (Megio et al., 2026).

Thus, the substantive evidence base presented in Table 1 consists of 14 studies: four identified through the Scopus screening stream and ten identified through supplementary or contextual literature. The studies were synthesized according to their evidentiary role rather than treated as a homogeneous empirical sample.

To improve transparency in reporting the identification and screening process, the review follows relevant principles of the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework (Page et al., 2021). However, PRISMA is used here as a reporting and transparency framework rather than as a claim that the present study constitutes a systematic review or meta-analysis.

Data Extraction and Evidence Synthesis

For each study included in the substantive synthesis, information was extracted on author and year, source-identification stream, country or educational context, participants or unit of analysis, research design or method, curriculum-reform context, principal findings, and relevance to teacher adaptation.

The source-identification stream was explicitly recorded to distinguish studies originating from the Scopus screening process from those identified through supplementary literature searching. This distinction was maintained in Table 1 so that the review would not imply that the complete evidence base originated from Scopus.

The evidence was organized around five analytical questions:

1. What changes in instructional practice are associated with curriculum reform?
2. What concerns and professional challenges do teachers encounter during curriculum implementation?
3. How do teachers adapt their instructional and professional practices?
4. What forms of professional development, collaboration, and institutional support facilitate or constrain adaptation?
5. How are adaptation, coping, and resilience related to sustained curriculum implementation?

The extracted findings were subsequently compared across studies and organized into recurring thematic categories. Thematic synthesis was used to identify patterns across studies while retaining differences in research design and context. This approach is appropriate for a heterogeneous literature base in which findings cannot be meaningfully combined statistically (Snyder, 2019). The analytical treatment of recurring themes was also informed by the broader logic of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 1. Evidence Synthesis of Literature on Teacher Adaptation to Curriculum Reform in the Philippines

Author(s), Year	Evidence Stream	Country / Context	Participants / Unit of Analysis	Method / Design	Main Finding Relevant to Teacher Adaptation	Relevance
Magallanes, Chung, & Lee (2022)	Supplementary	Philippines; K–12 education	Teachers / educational stakeholders	Empirical study	Identified challenges associated with	Direct

Author(s), Year	Evidence Stream	Country / Context	Participants / Unit of Analysis	Method / Design	Main Finding Relevant to Teacher Adaptation	Relevance
					curriculum implementation and the need for teacher preparation and institutional support during K–12 reform.	
Bernardo et al. (2020)	Supplementary	Philippines; K–12 curriculum	Teachers	Empirical study	Reported teacher concerns and adjustment challenges associated with the implementation of the K–12 curriculum.	Direct
Bacus & Alda (2022)	Supplementary	Philippines; K–12 / SHS	Teachers	Empirical study	Highlighted teacher experiences and challenges in adapting to curriculum requirements and changing instructional expectations.	Direct
Enverga & Enverga (2025)	Supplementary	Philippines; SHS	SHS teachers	Empirical study	Examined teachers' experiences in SHS implementation, including instructional challenges and the need for professional support.	Direct
Barrot (2023)	Supplementary	Philippines; K–12 / SHS	Teachers / curriculum stakeholders	Analytical / empirical study	Discussed curriculum implementation challenges and the implications of reform for teachers, instructional	Direct

Author(s), Year	Evidence Stream	Country / Context	Participants / Unit of Analysis	Method / Design	Main Finding Relevant to Teacher Adaptation	Relevance
					practices, and professional development.	
Garcia (2022)	Supplementary	Philippines; K–12 / SHS	Teachers	Empirical study	Identified teacher concerns and implementation difficulties associated with curriculum reform and changing instructional demands.	Direct
Pangan, Belches, & Fernandez (2025)	Supplementary	Philippines; SHS	SHS teachers	Empirical study	Highlighted teacher experiences, professional challenges, and adaptation requirements associated with SHS curriculum implementation.	Direct
Aquino (2026)	Supplementary / Contextual	Philippines; K–12 / MATATAG teacher preparation	24 BPED students	Qualitative descriptive; semi-structured interviews; thematic analysis	Participants emphasized learner-centered, contextualized, interactive, and practice-oriented approaches, while preparation, facilities, and resource constraints affected readiness for curriculum implementation.	Contextual
Sukying & Barrot (2025)	Supplementary / Contextual	Philippines; high school English curriculum	Two series of high school ELT textbooks	Descriptive study; quantita	Identified alignment and content mismatches	Contextual

Author(s), Year	Evidence Stream	Country / Context	Participants / Unit of Analysis	Method / Design	Main Finding Relevant to Teacher Adaptation	Relevance
		and ELT textbooks		tive and qualitative textbook analysis	between instructional materials and national curriculum standards, while also showing that textbooks may supplement curricular requirements.	
Megio et al. (2026)	Supplementary / Contextual	Philippines; public high schools in Cebu	9 public high school teachers	Phenomenological; focus group discussion	Identified interconnected barriers involving administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher workforce, infrastructure, centralization, and student-related factors.	Contextual
Capulong et al. (2026)	Scopus-derived	Philippines; SHS	SHS teachers	Empirical study	Examined teacher experiences associated with out-of-field SHS teaching and the resulting instructional and professional challenges.	Direct
Bernardo & Madrunio (2026)	Scopus-derived	Philippines; K–12 / MATATAG curriculum	Teachers	Empirical study	Identified pedagogical changes and teacher adaptation associated with the transition toward the MATATAG curriculum.	Direct
Lansang &	Scopus-	Philippines;	SHS teachers	Empiric	Students,	Direct

Author(s), Year	Evidence Stream	Country / Context	Participants / Unit of Analysis	Method / Design	Main Finding Relevant to Teacher Adaptation	Relevance
Zamora (2025)	derived	SHS Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track		al study	teachers, school administrators, and TVLE/educatio n experts	
Gadong (2025)	Scopus-derived	Philippines; mathematic s education	Mathematics teachers / curriculum context	Empiric al study	Examined curriculum and pedagogical renewal and its implications for teachers' instructional practices and adaptation.	Direct

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the reviewed literature.

Table 1 distinguishes between the Scopus screening stream and supplementary/contextual literature. The four Scopus-derived studies were selected from the 15 potentially relevant Scopus records after substantive assessment. Seven supplementary studies were identified through supplementary literature searching, while three additional studies identified during the broader screening process were retained as contextual sources because they addressed teacher preparation, instructional-material and curriculum alignment, and systemic barriers relevant to teacher adaptation. Policy documents are not included in the table because they serve as contextual and policy sources rather than as studies in the substantive evidence base.

Thematic Synthesis

The evidence was synthesized into five interconnected themes:

1. Changing instructional demands and classroom adaptation;
2. Teacher concerns, workload, and professional challenges;
3. Professional development, collaboration, and institutional support;
4. Teacher adaptation, coping, and resilience; and
5. The relationship between curriculum reform and implementation quality.

The synthesis explicitly distinguishes evidence concerning the earlier K–12 and SHS reforms from evidence directly associated with the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. This distinction is important because most of the established teacher-adaptation literature concerns the earlier reform period, whereas empirical research specifically examining teachers' experiences under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum remains limited and is still emerging.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Experiences during Curriculum Reform

The implementation of the K–12 program and the introduction of Senior High School (SHS) represented a substantial change in the professional environment of Filipino teachers. Rather than involving only changes in curriculum content, the reform altered the teaching assignments, competencies, instructional expectations, and professional responsibilities that teachers had to manage. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that teachers experienced the transition as a process of adjustment characterized by new responsibilities, uncertainty, and the need to acquire competencies appropriate to the changing curriculum.

One of the most visible changes concerned teachers' roles and teaching assignments.

Bacus and Alda (2022), through a phenomenological inquiry into SHS teaching, found that teachers experienced changes in their assignments, competencies, and teaching demands during the implementation of SHS. Teachers had to respond to new subject assignments and develop competencies relevant to SHS instruction. These changes were not simply administrative adjustments because they required teachers to reconsider how they approached classroom teaching and how they prepared themselves for their new responsibilities. The experience of entering SHS therefore involved a transition from established teaching routines toward a new professional environment in which teachers had to develop responses to unfamiliar expectations.

The experience of teachers during the early implementation of SHS was also characterized by uncertainty. The literature on the first implementation of SHS suggests that teachers had to operate while procedures, expectations, and professional routines were still developing. The study of pioneer SHS teachers, for example, found that teachers worked in an environment in which established procedures were limited and bureaucratic uncertainty was compounded by inadequate forms of institutional support. This finding is significant because it shows that uncertainty during curriculum reform does not necessarily arise from teachers' unwillingness to accept change. It can also result from the organizational conditions surrounding the introduction of a new curriculum.

Bernardo et al. (2020) provide further evidence of this transitional condition through their study of 289 teachers who were recruited to teach SHS for the first time. Their analysis examined teachers' perceptions of the demands associated with a changing work environment and their attitudes toward continuing professional development. The relationship between perceived demands and professional development attitudes suggests that teachers interpreted curriculum reform partly through the new requirements attached to their professional roles. In this context, professional development was not merely an additional activity but part of teachers' response to a changing work environment.

Teachers' experiences also involved the acquisition of new competencies and knowledge. Bacus and Alda (2022) reported that teachers had to learn competencies associated with their new SHS responsibilities and develop strategies for dealing with unfamiliar teaching requirements. Their experiences demonstrate that curriculum reform creates a learning process for teachers themselves. Teachers are expected to implement new curriculum requirements while simultaneously learning how those requirements can be translated into classroom practice. This creates a distinctive condition in which teachers are both implementers of curriculum change and learners within the reform process.

The evidence from Magallanes et al. (2022) provides another perspective on this process. Using the Concern-Based Adoption Model with 400 Filipino teachers, the study found that teachers' concerns were particularly associated with the consequences of the reform and collaboration. The pattern is important because it indicates that teachers' concerns were not confined to their own ability to adjust. Their attention also extended toward the effects of curriculum implementation on students and toward working with other teachers. Teaching experience and educational background were associated with collaboration, suggesting that teachers' professional backgrounds influenced how they engaged with the reform process.

Taken together, these studies indicate that teacher experiences during curriculum reform can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: role transition, uncertainty, and competency development. Role transition occurs when teachers move into new assignments or assume responsibilities associated with a revised curriculum. Uncertainty emerges when teachers must interpret new expectations while institutional procedures and routines are still developing. Competency development occurs as teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their changing roles. These dimensions are interconnected because new assignments create new competency requirements, while uncertainty increases the need for learning and professional interaction.

Importantly, the literature does not portray teachers only as passive recipients of curriculum reform. Teachers actively responded to the changing environment by learning, modifying their practices, and engaging with colleagues. Bacus and Alda (2022) reported that

teachers developed strategies to address new teaching demands, while Magallanes et al. (2022) identified collaboration as an important dimension of teachers' responses to reform. Thus, the experience of curriculum reform involves both external change imposed through policy and active professional responses at the teacher level.

This distinction is important when considering the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. The evidence reviewed above primarily concerns the earlier K–12 and SHS reforms rather than the current Strengthened SHS Curriculum. Therefore, these studies should not be interpreted as direct evidence of how teachers are currently experiencing the new curriculum. Instead, they provide an empirical basis for identifying the types of professional transitions that may need attention when a major curriculum reform is introduced.

The Strengthened SHS Curriculum represents another significant change in the organization and content of senior high school education. Its implementation therefore creates a new context in which teachers may again need to interpret revised expectations, develop relevant competencies, and adjust established professional routines. However, whether teachers under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum experience the same forms of uncertainty and role transition identified during the earlier K–12 and SHS reforms remains an empirical question. This limitation in the existing evidence reinforces the need to distinguish what previous research has established about teacher experiences during earlier reforms from what remains to be investigated under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Changing Instructional Demands and Classroom Adaptation

Curriculum reform becomes visible at the classroom level through changes in what teachers teach, how they organize learning, and how they respond to the characteristics of their learners. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that the instructional consequences of curriculum reform in the Philippines extend beyond the introduction of new subject content. Teachers are required to interpret curriculum standards, align instructional materials and activities with learning competencies, respond to learner diversity, and adjust pedagogical strategies to particular classroom conditions. Classroom adaptation is therefore best understood as an ongoing process through which teachers translate curriculum expectations into instructional practice.

One important dimension of this process is the alignment between curriculum expectations and classroom resources. Barrot's (2023) analysis of the Philippine K–12 curriculum identified constructive alignment, technology integration, and the specificity of curriculum components as important areas requiring pedagogical refinement. The study also identified potential implementation challenges involving instructional delivery, assessment, and lesson preparation. These findings indicate that curriculum reform does not automatically translate into coherent classroom practice. Teachers must work across several instructional components to ensure that what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed correspond to the intended curriculum.

The issue of alignment is also evident in research examining instructional materials. Sukying and Barrot (2025) examined two series of high school English language teaching textbooks in relation to the national English curriculum standards. Their analysis identified notable mismatches between the learning competencies represented in the textbooks and those specified by the curriculum. At the same time, the textbooks employed strategies to supplement the curriculum. The findings suggest that instructional materials may function as both a support and an additional interpretive layer between curriculum standards and classroom practice. For teachers, this means that curriculum implementation may require them to evaluate, supplement, or adapt available materials rather than simply use them as direct representations of the curriculum.

A second dimension concerns changes in pedagogical orientation. Recent comparative analysis of the K–12 and MATATAG English curricula identifies a movement toward learner-centered approaches, digital technology integration, and more inclusive instructional practices. Bernardo and Madrunio (2026) argue that these shifts represent an evolution in the pedagogical direction of English language education in response to changing educational demands. Although the study is based on curriculum and policy analysis rather than observations of teachers' classroom behavior, it provides evidence that curriculum reform

itself can redefine the pedagogical expectations that teachers are required to interpret and implement.

This shift toward more responsive pedagogy can also be observed in research on teacher preparation. Aquino (2026), examining the perceived pedagogical preparedness of 24 Bachelor of Physical Education students with K–12 experience, found that participants perceived growing importance in learner-centered, contextualized, interactive, and practice-oriented approaches. The study also identified inadequate facilities and instructional resources, uneven implementation, limited specialization opportunities, and differences in experiential learning as constraints on preparation. Although the participants were pre-service teachers rather than practicing SHS teachers, the findings are relevant because they demonstrate how curriculum change can influence the pedagogical capabilities expected from those entering the teaching profession.

Classroom adaptation is also shaped by learner diversity and contextual conditions. The literature suggests that teachers do not implement curriculum requirements in an identical classroom environment. In technical-vocational education, for example, Lansang and Zamora (2025) examined Filipino-language use in SHS Technical-Vocational-Livelihood instruction using data from 1,953 students, 48 teachers, school administrators, and education and TVLE experts across nine cities in Metro Manila. Their findings showed widespread code-switching between English and Filipino and the use of translation strategies to address technical vocabulary. The study interpreted these practices as adaptive responses that helped improve comprehension, engagement, and knowledge retention in specialized TVL subjects.

This finding is significant because it demonstrates that classroom adaptation is not always a matter of adopting a formally prescribed teaching method. Teachers may modify language, examples, explanations, or instructional strategies in response to learners' needs while still working within the broader curriculum framework. Adaptation therefore involves professional judgment about how curriculum requirements can be made accessible and meaningful to particular learners.

The evidence from mathematics education provides a related perspective. Gadong (2025), in a critique of mathematics curriculum and pedagogy in the Philippines, argues that although the K–12 curriculum invokes learner contexts, curriculum and pedagogical structures may still insufficiently incorporate historical, cultural, and linguistic knowledge. The study proposes ethnomathematics as a framework for renewing curriculum and pedagogy around learner autonomy, equity, and social justice. Although this is a conceptual curriculum study rather than a direct investigation of teacher adaptation, it highlights an important issue for classroom implementation: curriculum responsiveness depends not only on the competencies specified in official documents but also on how those competencies are connected to learners' cultural and social contexts.

Another dimension of classroom adaptation concerns teacher expertise and assignment alignment. The Scopus literature includes recent evidence on out-of-field SHS teachers that is particularly relevant to this issue. Capulong et al. (2026) examined 313 out-of-field SHS teachers in public secondary schools offering Academic Tracks in Northern Mindanao. The study found that challenges associated with teaching outside one's field were negatively associated with professional self-esteem and instructional knowledge. Coping mechanisms were positively associated with both outcomes but provided only a partial buffering effect. The authors therefore emphasized that individual coping cannot fully compensate for persistent misalignment between teachers' expertise and their teaching assignments.

This evidence adds an important qualification to the concept of teacher adaptation. Adaptation should not be interpreted as an unlimited capacity of teachers to compensate for structural problems. When teachers are assigned to subjects outside their areas of expertise, the instructional challenge is not simply a matter of willingness to learn or personal flexibility. The relationship between subject assignment, instructional knowledge, professional preparation, and institutional arrangements can directly influence the quality of classroom implementation.

The broader evidence on teaching conditions reinforces this point. A 2026

phenomenological study of nine public high school teachers in Cebu identified interconnected barriers involving administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher workforce, infrastructure, centralization, and student-related factors. The study associated these conditions with difficulties in instructional delivery and teacher preparedness. Although this study does not focus specifically on the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, it demonstrates that classroom adaptation takes place within a wider institutional and infrastructural environment.

Taken together, the literature indicates that classroom adaptation under curriculum reform involves at least five interconnected instructional processes: (1) aligning learning objectives, teaching activities, and assessment; (2) interpreting and adapting instructional materials; (3) adjusting pedagogical approaches toward learner-centered and context-responsive practices; (4) modifying communication and instructional strategies according to learner needs; and (5) developing or mobilizing the subject-specific knowledge required by new teaching assignments. These processes show that teacher adaptation is not a single behavioral response but a multidimensional form of professional work.

The evidence also suggests that the relationship between curriculum reform and classroom practice is mediated by teachers' professional judgment. Curriculum documents establish intended learning outcomes and pedagogical directions, but teachers decide how these expectations are operationalized within specific classrooms. This mediation becomes particularly important when curriculum standards, available instructional materials, teacher expertise, learner characteristics, and school resources do not align perfectly. The classroom therefore becomes the point at which policy expectations are interpreted, negotiated, and translated into practical teaching decisions.

This pattern has direct implications for understanding the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. The new curriculum introduces revised structures and greater flexibility in senior high school pathways and learning offerings. Such changes potentially alter the instructional decisions teachers must make regarding subject content, learning activities, assessment, and the use of available resources. However, the available evidence should be interpreted carefully. Most of the empirical studies identified in the literature concern the earlier K–12/SHS reforms or related curriculum changes such as MATATAG, rather than teachers' observed classroom practices under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum itself.

Consequently, the literature establishes a strong analytical basis but not yet a complete empirical account of classroom adaptation under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. Previous evidence shows that Filipino teachers have had to interpret curriculum standards, adapt materials, respond to learner diversity, develop pedagogical competencies, and manage assignment-related demands. Whether these same processes occur, and how they differ under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, requires direct empirical investigation. This distinction is essential because it prevents findings from earlier reforms from being presented as evidence of teachers' current experiences while still allowing previous research to inform the analysis of the new reform.

Central finding from this body of literature is therefore that curriculum reform reaches classroom practice through a process of instructional translation and professional adaptation. The nature of that translation depends not only on the formal curriculum but also on the alignment of instructional materials, teacher expertise, pedagogical expectations, learner characteristics, and institutional conditions. This provides the basis for examining the next dimension of implementation: the professional concerns and workload that emerge when teachers are required to perform these adjustments within their everyday work.

Teacher Concerns, Workload, and Professional Challenges

The instructional adjustments described in the previous section do not occur without professional consequences. Curriculum reform changes not only what teachers are expected to teach but also the amount and type of professional work required to prepare, deliver, and evaluate instruction. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that teachers' concerns during curriculum reform arise from the interaction between changing instructional expectations, professional responsibilities, available resources, and the institutional conditions in which implementation takes place. These concerns should therefore be

understood as part of the implementation process rather than as isolated individual difficulties.

One recurring issue is the expansion of professional work associated with curriculum transition. The introduction of new subjects, competencies, and instructional expectations requires teachers to spend additional effort understanding curriculum requirements, preparing lessons, developing or adapting materials, and aligning assessment with intended learning outcomes. Evidence from earlier SHS implementation indicates that teachers encountered new teaching assignments and competencies while adjusting to specialized SHS instruction (Bacus & Alda, 2022). The significance of these demands lies not simply in the amount of work involved but in the fact that much of the work is generated by the need to reconstruct existing teaching practices around a revised curriculum.

The literature also shows that teachers' concerns extend beyond immediate classroom preparation. Magallanes et al. (2022), using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model with 400 Filipino teachers, found that teachers' concerns were particularly associated with the consequences of the reform and collaboration. This is important because it suggests that teachers' concerns develop beyond the initial question of whether they themselves can cope with change. As teachers become more familiar with a reform, their attention may increasingly turn toward whether the new curriculum is producing meaningful consequences for students and how implementation can be improved collectively. Curriculum reform therefore generates both personal-professional concerns and implementation-oriented concerns.

Workload should consequently not be reduced to the number of teaching hours. Curriculum implementation may create additional preparation, documentation, coordination, training, assessment, and adaptation requirements. The existing literature on Philippine teachers identifies these activities as interconnected components of reform implementation. However, the evidence does not justify assuming that every teacher experiences an identical increase in workload. The magnitude and character of workload depend on teaching assignment, subject specialization, school resources, administrative arrangements, and the degree of change introduced by the curriculum.

The issue becomes particularly visible when there is misalignment between teachers' expertise and their teaching assignments. Recent evidence on out-of-field SHS teachers in Northern Mindanao examined 313 public secondary school teachers teaching outside their formal specialization. The study found relationships between out-of-field teaching challenges, professional self-esteem, and instructional knowledge, while coping mechanisms provided only partial buffering. This finding indicates that teachers' individual efforts to cope with new instructional demands cannot necessarily substitute for appropriate subject expertise and institutional arrangements.

This distinction is important for understanding professional challenges during curriculum reform. A teacher who is required to teach a new subject may respond through self-directed learning and professional collaboration, but the existence of such adaptation does not mean that the underlying structural problem has been resolved. In other words, teacher adaptation can coexist with continuing institutional constraints. Treating adaptation as evidence that implementation problems have been overcome risks placing responsibility for curriculum success entirely on individual teachers.

Resource availability represents another important source of professional challenge. The literature identifies infrastructure, instructional resources, teacher workforce conditions, administrative arrangements, and student-related factors as interconnected dimensions of educational implementation. A 2026 phenomenological study involving public high school teachers in Cebu, for example, identified barriers across administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher workforce, infrastructure, centralization, and student-related conditions. These findings suggest that difficulties in instructional delivery may emerge from the broader education system rather than from teachers' instructional decisions alone.

The relationship between resources and workload is particularly important because inadequate resources can increase the amount of effort required to achieve the same instructional objective. When instructional materials are unavailable or poorly aligned with

curriculum requirements, teachers may need to develop, modify, or supplement them themselves. Similarly, when teachers lack sufficient preparation for specialized subjects, additional individual learning may be required. Thus, professional workload is partly shaped by the conditions under which curriculum implementation takes place.

The literature further indicates that curriculum change can create emotional and professional uncertainty, particularly during periods of transition. Pangan et al. (2025), in a phenomenological study of adaptation to curriculum revisions, examined how educators experienced changes in curriculum expectations and the process of adjustment. Their work is relevant to the present synthesis because it situates adaptation within teachers' broader experience of navigating uncertainty and changing professional expectations. However, such evidence should be interpreted as evidence about curriculum revision generally and not automatically attributed specifically to the Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Teacher concerns also vary according to the stage of reform implementation. Early implementation may be dominated by questions about understanding new requirements, acquiring necessary competencies, and establishing workable routines. As teachers gain experience, concerns may shift toward instructional consequences, student outcomes, collaboration, and the longer-term effectiveness of the reform. This pattern is consistent with the CBAM-based evidence reported by Magallanes et al. (2022), in which teachers' concerns were particularly connected to the consequences of reform and collaboration. The implication is that teacher concerns should be viewed as dynamic rather than static.

This dynamic character helps explain why the same curriculum reform can be experienced differently by different teachers. Teachers entering a new subject assignment, teachers with extensive experience in the relevant field, and teachers working in resource-constrained schools may face substantially different implementation conditions. Similarly, teachers working in schools with strong administrative and collegial support may experience curriculum change differently from those working in schools with limited support. The literature therefore cautions against treating “teacher experience” as a uniform category.

The evidence also suggests that workload and professional challenges should be examined in relation to institutional responsibility. When teachers are required to acquire new competencies, adapt instructional materials, and modify assessment practices, the availability of relevant training and organizational support becomes consequential. The literature reviewed here therefore does not support a simple interpretation in which teachers either successfully adapt or fail to adapt. Instead, adaptation occurs along a continuum shaped by the interaction between teacher agency and institutional conditions.

For the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, these findings provide an important analytical warning. It may be reasonable to anticipate that teachers will face new preparation and adjustment demands as they work with revised curriculum structures, learning expectations, and subject offerings. However, the reviewed evidence does not yet establish the actual workload or professional stress experienced by teachers implementing the Strengthened SHS Curriculum nationwide. The current evidence base is still dominated by studies of the earlier K–12/SHS reforms and related curriculum changes. Therefore, statements about increased workload, stress, or professional burden under the Strengthened SHS Curriculum should remain analytical expectations rather than empirical findings until direct evidence becomes available.

The literature shows that professional challenges during curriculum reform emerge from the interaction of changing instructional requirements, additional professional work, teacher–assignment alignment, resource availability, and institutional conditions. These challenges do not necessarily prevent adaptation; rather, they shape the conditions under which adaptation takes place. This distinction provides a bridge to the next section, which examines how professional development, collaboration, and institutional support influence teachers' capacity to respond to curriculum change.

Professional Development, Collaboration, and Institutional Support

Teacher adaptation to curriculum reform does not occur solely through individual effort. The literature indicates that teachers’ ability to respond to changing curriculum expectations

is closely associated with opportunities for professional learning, collaboration with colleagues, mentoring, and support from school administrators. These factors are particularly important when curriculum reforms introduce new content, instructional approaches, assessment requirements, or teaching assignments that cannot be addressed adequately through teachers' existing knowledge and experience.

Professional development is one of the recurring mechanisms identified in studies of curriculum implementation in the Philippines. Bernardo et al. (2020), for example, examined the continuing professional development attitudes of 289 Filipino teachers who were recruited to teach senior high school for the first time. Their findings indicate that teachers' perceptions of the demands associated with the education reform were related to their attitudes toward continuing professional development. This suggests that professional learning should not be viewed merely as a formal requirement but also as part of teachers' responses to the uncertainties and new demands generated by curriculum reform. In this sense, professional development can function as a mechanism through which teachers acquire the knowledge and confidence required to translate policy expectations into classroom practice.

The need for professional learning is also evident in studies focusing on teachers' experiences of senior high school implementation. Bacus and Alda (2022) found that teachers assigned to senior high school had to adjust to new teaching assignments, competencies, and instructional demands. Their experiences point to the importance of learning and collaboration as part of teachers' adjustment processes. Rather than treating adaptation as an individual capacity, this evidence suggests that teachers develop their responses through interaction with colleagues and through access to opportunities that help them understand and manage new instructional responsibilities.

Collaboration is similarly important in understanding how teachers respond to curriculum change. Using the Concern-Based Adoption Model, Magallanes et al. (2022) examined the concerns of 400 Filipino teachers regarding educational reform. Their findings showed that teachers' concerns were particularly evident in relation to the consequences of reform and collaboration. The study also identified relationships between teachers' characteristics and their concerns about collaboration, indicating that teachers do not experience reform in isolation. Professional interaction can therefore become an important channel through which teachers exchange strategies, interpret curriculum requirements, and negotiate practical problems arising during implementation.

The literature further suggests that professional development needs to be connected to the actual difficulties teachers encounter in implementing particular curriculum components. Garcia (2022), in examining the implementation experiences of Media and Information Literacy teachers in Philippine senior high schools, identified implementation and institutional challenges that point to the importance of professional development responsive to teachers' needs. This has implications for curriculum reform because generic training may not adequately address the specific pedagogical, technological, or subject-matter challenges that emerge when teachers implement new curriculum requirements. Needs-based professional development is therefore more closely connected to classroom adaptation than training that is detached from teachers' actual instructional contexts.

Teacher preparation also becomes particularly important when curriculum reform changes the relationship between teachers' formal expertise and their teaching assignments. Recent evidence on out-of-field teaching among public secondary school teachers in Northern Mindanao indicates that teachers assigned to subjects outside their formal specialization may experience challenges related to professional self-esteem and instructional knowledge. Although teachers employ coping mechanisms to manage these conditions, such mechanisms do not fully eliminate the underlying difficulties associated with assignment–expertise misalignment. This finding reinforces the importance of institutional mechanisms for matching teacher expertise with curriculum demands while providing additional support when such alignment is not possible.

Institutional support extends beyond professional development. School-level leadership, mentoring, access to instructional resources, collegial cooperation, and administrative assistance can shape the conditions under which teachers interpret and

implement curriculum reform. Evidence from studies of senior high school implementation shows that teachers have encountered situations in which new responsibilities were introduced without fully established procedures or sufficient organizational support. Such conditions can shift the burden of interpretation and problem solving toward individual teachers. Conversely, when schools provide clear guidance, opportunities for collaboration, and appropriate resources, teachers have greater organizational capacity to translate curriculum requirements into instructional practice.

This relationship can also be understood through the broader evidence on systemic barriers to quality teaching in Philippine public schools. Recent qualitative evidence from public high school teachers in Cebu identifies barriers related to administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher workforce conditions, infrastructure, centralization, and student factors. These findings demonstrate that teacher adaptation is embedded within institutional and structural conditions. Even when teachers are willing to adjust their practices, limitations in resources, organizational arrangements, or administrative support may constrain what can realistically be implemented in the classroom.

Taken together, the literature indicates that professional development and institutional support should not be treated as separate components of curriculum implementation. They operate as interconnected conditions that shape teachers' capacity to adapt. Professional development provides opportunities to develop knowledge and instructional competence; collaboration enables teachers to exchange experiences and practical strategies; mentoring and administrative support help teachers interpret new expectations; and institutional resources create the material conditions necessary for implementation. The effectiveness of these mechanisms therefore depends not only on their availability but also on their alignment with the specific demands of the curriculum and the contexts in which teachers work.

For the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, these findings provide an important analytical basis but should not be interpreted as direct evidence of teachers' experiences under the new curriculum. Most of the available empirical studies concern the earlier K–12 and SHS reforms or related curriculum implementation challenges. The evidence nevertheless suggests that the transition to a strengthened curriculum requires more than disseminating new curriculum documents. Teachers need opportunities to understand the rationale and requirements of the reform, develop appropriate instructional strategies, collaborate with colleagues, and receive sustained school-level support during implementation. Direct empirical research is still needed to determine whether the support mechanisms provided during the implementation of the Strengthened SHS Curriculum adequately respond to these requirements.

Literature positions institutional support as an enabling condition between teacher adaptation and curriculum implementation. Teachers may respond to curriculum change through professional learning, collaboration, and instructional adjustment, but the extent to which these responses can be sustained depends partly on the organizational environment in which they work. This relationship provides a basis for the next dimension of the synthesis: understanding adaptation not only as adjustment to new instructional demands, but also as a process involving coping and resilience under conditions of continuing curriculum change.

Teacher Adaptation, Coping, and Resilience

Teacher adaptation to curriculum reform should be distinguished from coping and resilience, although the three concepts may appear together in teachers' experiences of educational change. Adaptation primarily refers to the adjustments teachers make in response to new curriculum expectations, including changes in instructional practices, lesson preparation, assessment, professional learning, and classroom organization. Coping concerns the strategies teachers use to manage the immediate demands, difficulties, or uncertainties associated with these changes. Resilience, by contrast, concerns the capacity to sustain professional functioning and continue responding to challenges over time. Distinguishing these concepts is important because a teacher may adapt an instructional practice without necessarily experiencing significant stress, while coping with a difficult

implementation condition does not automatically demonstrate long-term resilience.

The Philippine literature provides several indications of adaptation as an active professional process. Studies of senior high school implementation show that teachers have had to adjust to new teaching assignments, competencies, and instructional expectations. Bacus and Alda (2022), for instance, documented how senior high school teachers experienced changes in their professional responsibilities and responded by developing new forms of learning and collaboration. Similarly, Bernardo et al. (2020) found that teachers' perceptions of reform-related demands were associated with their attitudes toward continuing professional development. These findings suggest that adaptation involves acquiring and mobilizing professional resources as teachers encounter new curriculum requirements.

Adaptation can also occur at the level of everyday instructional practice. Evidence from studies of curriculum implementation indicates that teachers modify teaching strategies, instructional materials, assessment practices, and communication approaches when existing practices do not fully correspond with new curriculum expectations. Such adjustments are particularly important when teachers encounter learner diversity, limited resources, or subject-matter requirements that differ from their previous teaching experience. In this respect, adaptation should not be understood simply as compliance with a curriculum document. It involves the practical interpretation and translation of policy expectations within particular classroom conditions.

Coping represents a related but distinct process. Teachers may employ coping strategies when curriculum changes generate uncertainty, additional professional demands, or mismatches between formal expectations and available resources. The evidence on teachers working outside their formal specialization illustrates this distinction. Teachers may rely on personal strategies, peer assistance, additional learning, or other forms of adjustment to manage the difficulties associated with out-of-field teaching. However, the existence of coping strategies does not necessarily mean that the underlying organizational or structural problem has been resolved. Coping can therefore help teachers manage implementation difficulties while leaving the conditions that produced those difficulties largely unchanged.

This distinction is also relevant to the interpretation of teacher concerns. Magallanes et al. (2022), using the Concern-Based Adoption Model with 400 Filipino teachers, demonstrated that teachers' concerns vary in relation to educational reform and include concerns associated with the consequences of reform and collaboration. Such concerns should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of resistance to curriculum change. Rather, they can indicate different stages and dimensions of teachers' engagement with reform. Teachers may simultaneously recognize the need to adjust their practices, experience uncertainty about the consequences of change, and seek support from colleagues or institutions.

Resilience should therefore be treated as a broader and more sustained dimension of the adaptation process. A resilient response is not simply the ability to endure additional workload or continue teaching despite inadequate conditions. Such an interpretation risks placing responsibility for successful reform disproportionately on individual teachers. The literature reviewed in this study instead suggests that sustained teacher functioning is connected to professional learning, collaboration, administrative support, resources, and organizational conditions. Resilience is consequently better understood in relation to the environment in which teachers work rather than as an exclusively individual characteristic.

The distinction among adaptation, coping, and resilience can be represented analytically as a sequence of related but non-equivalent processes. Adaptation describes what teachers change in response to curriculum reform; coping describes how teachers manage difficulties encountered during that change; and resilience describes the capacity to sustain professional functioning and adjustment when challenges persist. The three processes may reinforce one another, but they should not be collapsed into a single construct. A teacher may adapt successfully because adequate institutional support is available, while another may rely heavily on coping strategies because organizational support is limited. Similarly, sustained adaptation may be more difficult when teachers repeatedly face

unresolved structural constraints.

This distinction has particular relevance to the Strengthened SHS Curriculum. The available literature provides substantial evidence concerning teacher adaptation during earlier K–12 and SHS reforms, as well as evidence concerning professional demands, collaboration, and institutional constraints. However, these findings should not be presented as empirical evidence that teachers implementing the Strengthened SHS Curriculum are already experiencing particular levels of stress, coping, or resilience. The new curriculum represents a distinct implementation stage, and direct evidence concerning teachers' experiences remains limited. Previous literature can therefore provide an analytical framework for examining potential adaptation processes, but empirical studies are required to establish how these processes actually unfold under the strengthened curriculum.

From this perspective, teacher adaptation should be understood as part of a broader implementation relationship. Curriculum reform generates new instructional demands; teachers interpret and respond to those demands through professional and classroom adjustments; institutional support influences the resources available for such adjustment; and sustained adaptation may affect the quality and consistency of curriculum implementation. Coping and resilience are dimensions that may emerge within this process, particularly when teachers encounter continuing uncertainty or resource constraints. This relationship provides the basis for the synthesis framework developed in the following section.

Synthesis Framework: From Curriculum Reform to Implementation Quality

The literature reviewed in this study indicates that teacher adaptation to curriculum reform is best understood as a process connecting policy change, instructional demands, individual teacher responses, and institutional conditions. Rather than treating curriculum implementation as a direct process in which policy requirements are simply transferred to classroom practice, the reviewed studies suggest that implementation is mediated by how teachers interpret new expectations, adjust their professional practices, and access organizational support. Based on the thematic synthesis, this study proposes the following analytical relationship:

Curriculum Reform → New Instructional Demands → Teacher Adaptation → Institutional Support → Sustained Adaptation and Resilience → Implementation Quality

The framework is not proposed as a causal model that has been empirically tested. Rather, it is a literature-derived synthesis intended to organize the relationships identified across previous studies and to provide an analytical basis for examining teacher adaptation to the Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Curriculum Reform as the Initial Change Driver

Curriculum reform constitutes the starting point of the process because changes in curriculum policy alter the formal expectations placed on schools and teachers. In the Philippine context, the transition from the K–12 reform toward the MATATAG and subsequently the Strengthened SHS Curriculum represents continuing efforts to modify curriculum content, organization, competencies, and learning pathways. Official policy documents establish the intended direction of these changes, but the implementation literature demonstrates that the effects of reform become visible only when these expectations are interpreted and enacted at the school and classroom levels.

The distinction between policy design and implementation is therefore essential. A curriculum document may specify new competencies, learning expectations, or instructional directions, but teachers must determine how these requirements can be incorporated into lesson planning, instructional delivery, assessment, and classroom interaction. Curriculum reform consequently creates the conditions for a subsequent set of instructional demands.

New Instructional Demands as the Immediate Mechanism of Change

Curriculum reform becomes practically consequential when it changes what teachers are

expected to teach and how they are expected to teach it. The literature reviewed in this study identifies several forms of instructional adjustment, including curriculum–assessment alignment, adaptation of instructional materials, changes in pedagogical approaches, integration of technology, modification of communication strategies, and development of subject-specific knowledge.

These demands are not necessarily experienced uniformly. Their intensity may depend on teachers' prior experience, subject specialization, familiarity with new curriculum requirements, learner characteristics, and the availability of instructional resources. Evidence concerning out-of-field teaching further indicates that the relationship between teachers' existing expertise and their assigned responsibilities can shape the difficulty of curriculum implementation. Thus, the same curriculum reform may generate different adaptation requirements across teachers and schools.

Teacher Adaptation as the Translational Process

Teacher adaptation represents the central mechanism through which curriculum policy is translated into classroom practice. Adaptation involves observable changes in teaching practices as teachers respond to new curriculum expectations. These changes may include modifying lesson preparation, selecting or developing instructional materials, adjusting assessment practices, adopting new pedagogical strategies, seeking additional professional knowledge, and collaborating with colleagues.

Importantly, adaptation should not be interpreted as passive compliance. The literature indicates that teachers actively interpret curriculum requirements and modify them according to classroom conditions. This makes teachers important actors in curriculum implementation rather than merely recipients of policy decisions. The quality of implementation therefore depends partly on whether teachers have sufficient professional capacity and organizational conditions to make these adaptations effectively.

Institutional Support as an Enabling Condition

The literature also demonstrates that teacher adaptation is embedded within organizational conditions. Professional development, mentoring, collegial collaboration, administrative guidance, instructional resources, and opportunities for professional learning can provide the support required for teachers to respond to curriculum change.

Institutional support therefore functions as an enabling condition rather than simply an additional component of implementation. Where teachers receive relevant professional development and adequate organizational assistance, adaptation can be supported through collective learning and resource sharing. Conversely, when institutional support is limited, teachers may have to rely more heavily on individual coping strategies to manage new demands.

This distinction is particularly important because the presence of teacher adaptation alone does not necessarily indicate effective implementation. Teachers may adapt because they have sufficient institutional support, but they may also adapt through substantial individual effort in contexts where structural support is inadequate. These two situations may produce different implications for the sustainability of implementation.

Sustained Adaptation and Teacher Resilience

When curriculum change involves continuing adjustment, adaptation becomes an ongoing rather than one-time process. Teachers may need to revise practices repeatedly as they receive new guidance, encounter classroom problems, or gain experience with the curriculum. Under such conditions, coping and resilience become relevant dimensions of the implementation process.

As established in the previous section, coping refers to strategies for managing difficulties, whereas resilience concerns the capacity to sustain professional functioning and adjustment under continuing challenges. The framework therefore places resilience after institutional support not because resilience is produced automatically by organizational support, but because the literature suggests that sustained professional

functioning is shaped by the interaction between teacher responses and their working conditions.

This relationship also prevents resilience from being interpreted solely as an individual responsibility. If teachers are expected to remain resilient while facing persistent resource shortages, inadequate preparation, or unresolved assignment–expertise mismatches, curriculum implementation may become dependent on individual endurance rather than sustainable institutional capacity. A more appropriate interpretation is that resilience emerges within an interaction between teacher agency and organizational support.

Implementation Quality as the Resulting Outcome

The final component of the framework is implementation quality. The literature suggests that curriculum implementation should be considered not only in terms of whether schools formally adopt a curriculum but also in terms of how consistently and meaningfully its intended objectives are translated into classroom practice.

Implementation quality is therefore associated with the extent to which teachers can understand curriculum expectations, adapt instructional practices appropriately, access professional and institutional support, and sustain these adjustments over time. The framework does not claim that these relationships are deterministic. Instead, it identifies a set of interconnected conditions that can be examined empirically in future research on the Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

Analytical Implication for the Strengthened SHS Curriculum

The framework provides a way to distinguish what is already known from what remains empirically uncertain. Research on earlier K–12 and SHS reforms provides evidence concerning teacher concerns, instructional adaptation, professional development, collaboration, workload, and institutional constraints. These studies establish a useful analytical foundation for understanding curriculum implementation in the Philippines. However, they cannot by themselves establish how teachers are experiencing the newly implemented Strengthened SHS Curriculum.

The Strengthened SHS Curriculum should therefore be examined as a new implementation context rather than simply as another example of the earlier K–12 reform. Future empirical studies can use the framework to investigate whether the new curriculum generates changes in instructional demands, how teachers adapt their practices, what forms of professional development and institutional support are available, how teachers manage continuing implementation challenges, and how these factors are associated with the quality of curriculum implementation. The resulting framework can be summarized as follows table 2:

Table 2. Synthesis Framework Linking Curriculum Reform to Implementation Quality

Framework Component	Central Question	Main Evidence Base
Curriculum Reform	What changes are introduced by the new curriculum?	Policy documents and curriculum studies
New Instructional Demands	What new expectations must teachers translate into classroom practice?	Curriculum implementation and teacher studies
Teacher Adaptation	How do teachers modify instructional and professional practices?	Empirical studies of K–12 and SHS teachers
Institutional Support	What organizational resources enable or constrain adaptation?	Studies of professional development, collaboration, leadership, and resources
Sustained Adaptation & Resilience	How do teachers manage continuing demands and	Studies of teacher concerns, coping, adaptation, and

	maintain professional functioning?	professional challenges
Implementation Quality	How effectively are curriculum intentions translated into classroom practice?	Curriculum implementation literature

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Synthesis indicates that teacher adaptation should be positioned between curriculum reform and implementation outcomes rather than treated as an isolated teacher characteristic. Curriculum reform creates new instructional demands; teachers translate those demands through professional and classroom adaptation; institutional conditions influence the resources available for that adaptation; and sustained responses to continuing demands may shape the consistency and quality of implementation. This framework provides a literature-grounded basis for examining the Strengthened SHS Curriculum while maintaining a clear distinction between evidence derived from earlier reforms and empirical evidence that still needs to be generated under the new curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This review shows that teacher adaptation to curriculum reform in the Philippines is an ongoing process through which teachers adjust instructional practices, lesson preparation, assessment, learning resources, professional learning, and collaboration in response to changing curriculum demands. The literature further indicates that adaptation is shaped not only by individual teacher capacity but also by professional development, collegial collaboration, mentoring, administrative support, instructional resources, and the alignment between teachers' expertise and teaching assignments. Coping and resilience should be distinguished from adaptation: coping concerns how teachers manage difficulties during implementation, whereas resilience refers to sustaining professional functioning and adjustment when challenges persist. Based on these findings, the review develops a synthesis framework linking curriculum reform, new instructional demands, teacher adaptation, institutional support, sustained adaptation and resilience, and implementation quality.

For the Strengthened Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum, the literature suggests that curriculum redesign needs to be accompanied by sustained teacher preparation and school-level support. However, most existing empirical evidence concerns earlier K–12 and SHS reforms rather than the newly implemented Strengthened SHS Curriculum. These studies therefore provide an analytical foundation rather than direct evidence of teachers' current experiences under the new curriculum. Further empirical research is needed to examine how teachers interpret the Strengthened SHS Curriculum, respond to its instructional demands, access professional and institutional support, and sustain adaptation during implementation. Such evidence is necessary to determine how the conditions identified in previous reforms operate within the new curriculum context.

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Author 1: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.
Author 2,3,4: Data Collection, Investigation, Writing – Review and Editing.
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Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI USE DECLARATION

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical clearance was not required for this study because the research did not involve human participants, identifiable personal data, or procedures requiring formal ethical approval.

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