

Perceptions of Implementers on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Vis-À-Vis the Achievement of Grade I Pupils in the Pilot Schools of Agusan Del Norte

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Abstract: *Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) has been institutionalized in the schools in the Philippines which uses the child's first language (L1) in teaching and delivering learning outcomes. Almost two years since its implementation, MTBMLE is still gaining significant ground, however, has created issues of unpreparedness on the part of the implementers and made a fuss on the educational setting. Therefore, the study aimed to assess its practice through the perceptions of implementers in the pilot schools of MTBMLE in the Division of Agusan del Norte in relation to the achievement of grade one pupils. It was found out that there is a highly negative correlation between their perception and beliefs on a specific aspect in MTBMLE and the performance of their pupils. The findings hence will be of help on how to enrich the program with emphasis on instruction, materials and assessment of pupil performance.*

Keywords: mother tongue, achievement, curriculum implementation,

1. Introduction

The quality of education epitomizes the progress of a nation. Thus, education must bring into being a citizenry, who will uphold the country's ideals and will lead economic prosperity.

The Philippine government, through Department of Education (DepEd), has been pursuing the national goal toward universal primary education, the Education for All (EFA) program. This is one of the vital instruments in conquering the impediments in the country's progress and education. But, the educational system from ethnolinguistic communities like the Philippines is still facing problems, according to Malone (2007).

Some children have no access to education at all. Those who do have access to school but do not speak the official language when they enter the education system find that their knowledge, experience, and language—rather than serving as a foundation for learning—are treated as a disadvantage. Their language skills do not serve them because their language has no place in the classroom. Instead, textbooks and teaching are in a language they neither speak nor understand. Their learning and problem-solving experiences and their knowledge of “how things work” in their own culture and social setting do not serve them because the culture of the classroom, the teachers, and the textbooks is that of the dominant society (Malone, 2007).

According to Martin (2011), the nation needs to improve the learning competencies in all subject areas. The educational system has to move forward following a roadmap drawn by experts in language and education based on empirical proofs and this path is by using the child's first language or mother tongue in teaching and delivering desired learning outcomes.

MTB-MLE (Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education) is the use of the first language in basic education through the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No.74 series of 2009. The mother tongue is considered the most effective bridge to and foundation for the learning of other languages like English.

In the field, almost two (2) years after the Department of Education pushed for the use of first language in basic education, the MTB-MLE is still gaining significant ground. However, it has created issues of unpreparedness on the part of the supervisors, school administrators and teachers, especially those who are handling Grade One, which has surged across the country and made a fuss on the educational setting (Martin, 2011).

While the DepEd has continuously conducted and is still organizing series of trainings and seminars to prepare supervisors, school heads/administrators, and teachers on the implementation of the MTB-MLE, pilot testing has been done in some selected divisions across the country. In this context, assessment of the implementation of the new curriculum is then needed to be carried out. Assessment should be conducted and incorporated as a formative process within the curriculum because it becomes an extension of needs analysis. These needs that should be addressed are instrumental to enable the implementation of the MTB-MLE achieve its set goals and by providing the basis for enhancement so that the curricular goals will be realized.

The sixth area that needs to be given careful attention according to DepEd strategic plan are the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in the implementation process of MTB-MLE in order to ensure quality outcomes. Therefore, the researcher felt the need to assess its implementation through the perceptions of implementers in relation to the achievement of Grade One pupils in the pilot schools and to

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generate feasible recommendations that will be useful before the onset of the full implementation of the program in 2012. This drove the researcher to pursue the conduct of this study in the three MTB-MLE pilot schools of Agusan del Norte.

The MTB-MLE program is following the Phases of a Three Language Education Program by Malone (2007). This is shown in Figure 1 below.

2. Literature Survey

Mother tongue is considered the most effective bridge to and foundation for the learning of other languages like English.

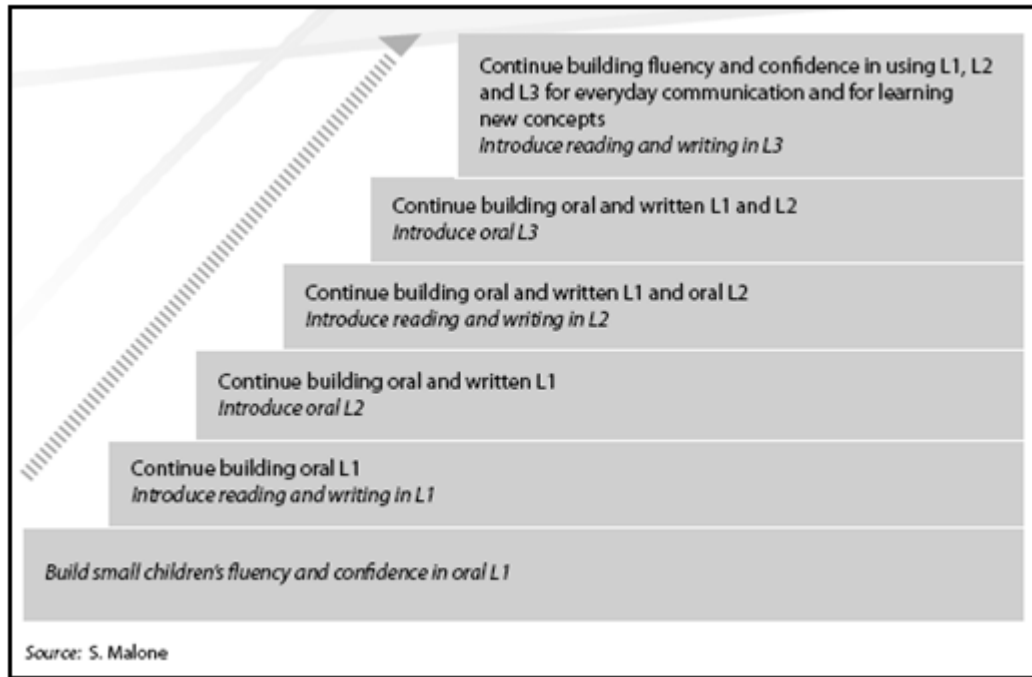


Figure 1

Phases of a Three Language Education Program

In the above figure, the Filipino children develop a strong foundation in their L1; children are gradually introduced to the official languages, Filipino and English, as separate subjects, first orally, then in the written form. When the Filipino child reaches the higher levels, s (he) would have gained enough proficiency in their L2 and L3 for these to be used as primary media of instruction. By this time too, the Filipino learner can now transfer his/her knowledge encoded in their L1 to the nationally prescribed languages-Filipino and English. The L1 can be taught as a separate subject or under the Filipino subject and used as an auxiliary medium.

Problem Definition

The study aimed to determine the perceptions of implementers on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) vis-à-vis the achievement of Grade One pupils in the pilot schools of Agusan del Norte.

The study sought to answer the following specific questions:

- 1) What is the profile of the implementers in terms of the following:
 - Age;
 - Position;
 - Educational attainment;
 - Years of teaching experience/ service; and
 - Training attended on MTB-MLE?
- 2) What is the profile of the pupils in the pilot schools in terms of the following:
 - Sex;
 - Language spoken at home; and
 - Socio-economic status (SES) ?
- 3) What are the perceptions of the respondents on the status of MTB-MLE implementation in terms of the following:
 - Curricular content;
 - Instruction and strategies used; and
 - Physical facilities?
- 4) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the implementers when grouped by roles of implementation?
- 5) What are the problems encountered by the respondents in the MTB-MLE implementation in terms of the following:
 - Curricular content;
 - Instruction and strategies used; and
 - Physical facilities?
- 6) What are the suggested solutions or strategies by the respondents to solve the problems on MTB-MLE implementation in terms of the following:
 - Curricular content;
 - Instruction and strategies used; and
 - Physical facilities?
- 7) What is the achievement of the grade one pupils in the MTB-MLE pilot schools in Agusan del Norte when

grouped according to sex and socio-economic status (SES) ?

- 8) Is there a significant difference in the achievement of Grade one pupils when grouped according to sex and socio-economic status (SES) ?
- 9) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the implementers when grouped by school?
- 10) Is there a significant relationship in the perceptions of the implementers and the achievement of the pupils?

3. Methodology

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the prevailing conditions in the implementation of MTB-MLE in relation to the achievements of Grade One pupils in the pilot schools of Agusan del Norte, thus the descriptive-survey method was used in determining the perceptions of implementers. Focused-group discussion was also used to verify further the status, the problems and strategies that implementers applied on MTB-MLE implementation.

The researcher utilized the total population sampling in determining the participants in the study. The respondents of this study were three (3) pilot schools of MTBMLE in Agusan del Norte, namely: Buhang Elementary School (ES) at Magallanes; Humilog ES at Romualdo T. Romualdez (RTR); and Punta ES at East Nasipit. The division supervisor in English elementary, as the program coordinator, was also included-a total of four (4) supervisors, three (3) school heads, and eight (8) Grade One teachers as the implementers of MTB-MLE program. All Grade Two pupils who underwent the MTB-MLE program during their Grade One level were tested.

The primary tool in this study was an adaptation of the perception questionnaire by Manuel (2006) in her assessment on Basic Education Curriculum (BEC). The questionnaire is composed of four parts. Part I sought information on the profile of the implementers. Part II dealt with the status of the implementation of MTB-MLE, which covered the curricular content, instruction/ teaching strategies used and physical facilities and equipment. Part III covers the same areas where the focus is on the problems met by the implementers in the MTB-MLE implementation. The last part deals with the three (3) areas on how the problems can be given solutions as perceived by the implementers

The achievement tests used in the study were the Regional Achievement Test (2007) for Grade One in the four (4) subjects; English, Mathematics, Filipino and Makabayan. To supplement the result of the achievement of the pupils, a corresponding teaching observation was recorded on video and transcribed.

Focus group discussion (FGD) among the implementers was also conducted. The administrators and teachers in each pilot school were grouped and interviewed. Their discussions and responses were recorded and transcribed. In transcribing the FGD, the Jefferson Transcription System was used. Square brackets [] were used to mark the start and end of speech and parentheses () were used to indicate the translation in English. Each speech line was numbered to ensure

readability and usefulness. The responses are marked in the discussion with the speech turn followed by the corresponding line number.

The Primer and Manuals, including the circulars and memoranda, pertaining to the implementation of MTB-MLE was carefully examined. The analysis of the documents furnished information and insights on the background, target developments, and objectives of the pilot implementation of the program was done

Based from the suggestions and remarks made by the experts, revisions of the said tool followed. The researcher then sought the approval of the respondents to allow the conduct of the study. She personally distributed the questionnaires, conducted the focus group discussions (FGD). The recorded discussions were transcribed and written down using the Jefferson Transcription System.

The obtained data were tallied, coded, and analyzed. The arithmetic mean, F-test Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), T-test for significance of a correlation coefficient were the statistical treatments used in the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents: The respondents of this study were from the three (3) pilot schools of MTB-MLE in Agusan del Norte, namely: Buhang Elementary School (ES) at Magallanes; Humilog ES at Romualdo T. Romualdez (RTR); and Punta ES at East Nasipit. A total of 15 implementers; six (6) from Magallanes District, four (4) from RTR District, four (4) from Nasipit and one (1) division supervisor participated in this study. The Grade Two pupils of the current school year who underwent the MTB-MLE program during their grade one level were the one who took the Regional Achievement Test (2007) for Grade One.

Profile of Implementers: Teachers with age above 50 comprised most of the number of implementing teachers, with three (3) teachers or 20% of the total teacher-respondents. This is followed by teachers from 25-29 and 30-34 age range, with two (2) teachers or 13.3% for each age bracket. Only one teacher or 6.7% belonged to the 35-39 age range for the teachers. On the other hand, majority of the administrators who participated in the study are aged above 50, with 6 of them or 40% of the administrator-respondents belonging in the said category. Only one (1) or 6.7% of the administrators belonged to the 40-44 age range. In general, nine (9) or 60% implementers are aged above 50. This implies that most of the teachers and the administrators are already experienced professionals in the field of teaching, with many of them serving the education sector for many years already.

Highest Educational Attainment: This variable is categorized into five, namely: Doctorate Degree; Master's Degree; Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED) with Master of Arts (M. A.) units; BEED; and Others. It indicates that for the teacher-respondents, 5 or 33.3% are BEED graduates, while only two (2) or 13.3% have their M. A. units. One (1) or 6.7% of the respondents has a degree other

than the specified categories. On the other hand, three (3) or 20% of the administrators have their doctorate degree already. This is followed by teachers having BEED degree and M. A. units, comprising two (2) or 13.3% of the administrators. Only one (1) or 6.7% have a Master's Degree and a BEED degree only for the administrators. In general, six (6) or 40% of the implementers are having their BEED degree. This means some of the implementers still need more professional development. However, it can be noted that four (4) or 26.7% are already taking up their M. A. units, while three (3) or 20% have their doctor's degree already. It follows then that a number of teachers are pursuing post-graduate degrees for them to effectively function in their respective schools.

Years in Service: The implementers' years of service is being profiled in the study. Three (3) or 20% of the implementers has been in the field of teaching for 0-4 years, 15-19 years, and 30-above years. The 5-9 years and 25-29 years categories both got two (2) or 13.3% implementers. It follows then that the teaching force of the schools where MTB-MLE is implemented is composed equally of implementers who are new in the service and educators who has been in the service for many years. The teaching force is apparently a combination of novice and experienced teachers.

Highest Level of Trainings Attended on MTB-MLE: It shows that for the teacher respondents, three (3) or 20% have attended national and regional level trainings. On the other hand, two (2) or 13.3% respondents participated already in district-sponsored trainings on MTB-MLE. Meanwhile, both national and regional level trainings were attended by three (3) or 20% of the administrators. One or 6.7% of the administrators attended MTB-MLE training sponsored by the district. Moreover, a total of six (6) or 40% of the implementers participated already in national and regional level trainings, and three (3) attended only district level trainings about MTB-MLE program. This means that majority of the implementers were trained by experts coming from the national and regional offices of the Department of Education (DepEd), which has greatly augmented their knowledge about how to effectively carry out the MTB-MLE curriculum to their students.

Profile of Pupil Respondents

Sex and Language Profile of Pupil Respondents. Pupils speaking Bisaya/Cebuano comprise most of the pupil respondents, 204 or 98.6% of them speaking the said language. Of the 204 pupils, 95 or 45.9% of them are male and 109 or 52.7% of them are female. Meanwhile, pupils speaking both Cebuano and Tagalog are only two (2) or 1% of the total 207 pupil respondents and only one pupil speaks only Filipino/Tagalog at home. This is in consonance to the profile of Agusan del Norte Provincial Government (2004) where most of the Agusanons use Cebuano as their medium of communications and about 1% of the population use or speak Tagalog (Provincial Report, 2004).

Socio-Economic Status. Result showed pupils speaking Bisaya/Cebuano 133 or 64.3% of them have parents whose monthly earnings amounts to Php 5, 999 and below. 44 or 21.3% of them have parents whose monthly salary is equal

to Php 6, 000 to Php 10, 999. Pupils whose parents earn Php11, 000-15, 999 comprise 14 or 6.8% of them. Also, 7 of the respondents or 3.4% have parents who earn Php 16, 000-20, 999 monthly and 6 of the respondents or 2.9% have parents who earn Php 21, 000 and above every month. Meanwhile, pupils speaking both Cebuano and Tagalog have parents who earn only Php 5, 999 and below. Pupils who speak only Filipino/Tagalog have parents whose monthly earnings ranges from Php11, 000 to Php15, 999. In general, 135 or 65.2% of the 207 pupil-respondents have parents whose monthly earnings amounts only from Php 5, 999 and below. This implies that more than half of the pupil respondents belong to lower socio-economic status.

5. Findings

As regards the age of the implementers, it was found out that three (3) or 20% of the teacher-implementers are aged 50 above. On the other hand, majority of the administrators who participated in the study are aged above 50, with six (6) of them or 40% of the administrator-respondents belonging in the said category.

As to the educational attainment of the implementers, it was found out that five (5) or 33.3% of the teacher-implementers are BEED graduates. On the other hand, majority of the administrators who participated in the study have their doctor's degree already, with three (3) of them or 20% of the administrator-respondents belonging in the said category.

With regard to the years of service of the implementers, three (3) or 20% of the teacher-implementers have been in the service for 2-4 years already. Meanwhile, two or 13.3% of the administrators have been in the service for each of the following categories: 15-19 years, 20-24 years, 30-above.

As to the highest level of trainings attended of the implementers on MTB-MLE, it was found out that three or 20% of the teacher-implementers have attended national and regional level trainings. On the other hand, majority of the administrators who participated in the study have attended national and regional level trainings already, with three (3) of them or 20% of the administrator-respondents in the said category.

As regards the sex and language profile of the pupil-respondents, it was found out that 204 or 98.6% of the pupil-respondents primarily speak Bisaya/Cebuano. Of the 204 pupils, 95 or 45.9% of them are male and 109 or 52.7% of them are female. Of the total 207 pupil-respondents, 98 or 47.3% of them are male and 109 or 52.7% are female. As to the socio-economic status of the pupil-respondents, majority of the pupil-respondents who speak Bisaya/Cebuano have parents whose monthly earnings amount to 5, 999 and below, with 133 or 64.3% of them belonging in the said category. In general, 135 or 65.2% of the 207 pupil-respondents have parents whose monthly earnings amounts to 5, 999 and below.

With regard to the perceptions of the implementers on the status of implementation of MTB-MLE, on curricular content, both teachers and administrators perceived the implementation as much observed with the rating 4.275 for

teachers and 3.857 for administrators. In terms of Instruction/Teaching Strategies, both teachers and administrators perceived the implementation as much observed with the rating 3.90 for teachers and 4.11 for administrators. In general, they perceived the implementation as much observed, as suggested by the overall mean which is 4.00.

As regards the perceptions of the implementers on the status of implementation of MTB-MLE, in terms of Physical Facilities and Equipment, both teachers and administrators perceived the implementation as observed with the rating 3.24 for teachers and 3.06 for administrators. The respondents perceived the implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of Physical Facilities and equipment as observed, with an overall mean of 3.15.

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of implementers in the status of implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of curricular content since the P value of 0.333 is greater than predetermined level of significance 0.05. The null hypothesis pertaining to curricular content is accepted. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of implementers in the status of implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of instruction/teaching strategies since the P value of 0.579 is greater than predetermined level of significance 0.05. The null hypothesis pertaining to instruction/teaching strategies is accepted. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of implementers in the status of implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of physical facilities and equipment since the P value of 0.708 is greater than predetermined level of significance 0.05. The null hypothesis pertaining to physical facilities and equipment is accepted.

As regards the problems encountered by implementers in terms of curricular content, both teachers and administrators perceived the problems as not so much of a problem with the mean of 2.975 for teachers and 2.571 for administrators. In general, the respondents perceived the problems encountered in terms of curricular content as not so much of a problem as suggested by the overall mean of 2.787. As to the problems encountered by implementers in terms of instruction/teaching strategies, teachers perceived it as not so much of a problem, while administrators perceived it as not so much a problem with 2.429 as their mean. In general, the respondents perceived the problems encountered on instruction/teaching strategies as not so much of a problem with an overall mean of 2.853. With regard to the problems encountered by implementers in terms of physical facilities and equipment, both teachers and administrators perceived the problems as not so much of a problem with the mean of 3.388 for teachers and 3.414 for administrators. In general, the respondents perceived the problems encountered in terms of curricular content as not so much of a problem as suggested by the overall mean of 3.400.

Based on the FGD, these problems encountered by the implementers were found out; grading system, resistance from parents, lack of monitoring from the division/region, inconsistency of the program implementation, time frame of lesson planning, lack of linkages from other pilot schools, and lack of program planning.

With regard to the suggested solutions or strategies by the implementers to solve problems on MTB-MLE implementation in terms of curricular content, both teachers and administrators perceived the suggested solutions and strategies as more effective with the rating 4.450 for teachers and 4.229 for administrators. In general, they perceived the solutions and strategies used as more effective, as suggested by the overall mean which is 4.347. As regards the suggested solutions or strategies by the implementers to solve problems on MTB-MLE implementation in terms of instruction/teaching strategies, teachers perceived the solutions and strategies as most effective, with the mean of 4.525, while administrators perceived it as more effective, with a mean of 4.257. Both groups of respondents perceived the solutions and strategies used as more effective as suggested by the overall mean of 4.400. As regards the suggested solutions or strategies by the implementers to solve problems on MTB-MLE implementation in terms of physical facilities and equipment, teachers perceived the solutions and strategies as most effective, with the mean of 4.76, while administrators perceived it as more effective, with a mean of 4.21. Both groups of respondents perceived the solutions and strategies used as most effective as shown by the overall mean of 4.51.

With regard to the achievement of pupil-respondents when grouped according to sex, it was found out that the male with 54.63 has a higher mean compared to the females with a mean of 52.91. On the other hand, the overall mean for the two groups is 53.72. As regards the achievement of pupils according to their socio-economic status, the group with the highest mean of 70.11 is the one who have parents with earnings range of 11, 000-15, 999. The lowest mean of 48.45 belongs to the pupils with parents who have monthly earnings of 16, 000-20, 999. On the other hand, their overall mean is 53.72. There is no significant difference in the average achievements in four subject areas between male and female as indicated by the P value of 0.508, which is greater than the predetermined level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the achievements of pupils when grouped according to sex is accepted. There is a significant difference in the average achievements in four subject areas of pupils when grouped according to Socio-Economic Status because the P value of 0.000 is less than the predetermined level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the achievements of pupils when grouped according to their socio-economic status is rejected. As regards the implementers' perceptions on the status of implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of curriculum content when grouped by school, implementers from the three pilot schools perceived the curriculum content in the status of MTB-MLE implementation as much observed, with the rating of 4.071. The P value of 0.626 implies that there is no significant difference in their perceptions. Therefore, null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

There is a highly negative correlation between English and Instruction/Teaching Strategies, Filipino and Instruction/Teaching Strategies, Makabayan and Curriculum Content and, Makabayan and Physical Facilities and Equipment. These mean that the higher is the perception of

the implementers on a specific aspect; the lower is the performance of pupils in the corresponding subjects.

6. Conclusion

The implementers of the MTB-MLE curriculum are mostly made up of teachers and administrators who are aged above 50 and so are experienced enough after being in the service for many years to handle the pilot implementation of the said curriculum. It can be noted that although most of teachers are BEED graduates, this is compensated by the majority of administrators are having their doctoral degrees. Majority of the teachers have also attended national and regional trainings also which are of help for them to fully and effectively implement the MTB-MLE curriculum.

The pupil-respondents who participated in the study are composed by a majority of Bisaya/Cebuano speakers, with the number of girls slightly higher than the number of boys. Also, most of the pupils have parents whose monthly earnings amounts only to 5, 999 and below. This suggests that most of the pupil-respondents are living in the threshold of poverty line.

The teachers and administrators perceived the status of implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of curricular content and instruction/teaching strategies as *much observed*, while in terms of physical facilities and equipment, as *observed*. The teachers and administrators do not significantly differ in their perceptions regarding the status of implementation in terms of curricular content, instruction/teaching strategies used and physical facilities and equipment on the implementation of the MTB-MLE in the pilot schools of Agusan del Norte. The teachers and administrators perceived the problems encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of curricular content, instruction/teaching strategies and physical facilities and equipment as *not so much of a problem*. The teachers and administrators perceived the suggested solutions and strategies in the problems encountered in the implementation of MTB-MLE in terms of curricular content, instruction/teaching strategies used as *more effective*, and in terms of physical facilities and equipments as *most effective*.

Pupils' achievement manifests difference when pupils are grouped according to predetermined categories. Male pupils are found to be slight higher in achievement than females. Finally, pupils coming from middle-class families, specifically with parents who earn 11, 000-15, 999 are found to be the highest performers among the pupil-respondents. The pupil-respondents do not significantly differ in their achievements in the four (4) subjects areas when grouped according to sex. However, a significant difference is present when their achievement is grouped according to their SES. This is due to the difference of performance among pupils coming from well-off and middle-class families and those pupils from families from poverty line. The teachers and administrators perceived the status of implementation in terms of curricular content as *much observed* when they are grouped by the schools where they teach. This suggests that their perception does not differ significantly when they are grouped by school.

There is a negative correlation between implementers' high perception on the curricular content, instruction/teaching strategies and physical facilities and equipment on the status of implementation of MTB-MLE and the pupils' achievement on English, Filipino, and Makabayan. This means that the higher is the perceptions of implementers on the aspects of implementation of the said curriculum; the lower is the pupils' achievement in the aforementioned subjects.

7. Future Scope

Based on the results and conclusions of the study the following are recommended:

The teachers, administrator, supervisors and other stakeholders should look into feasibility on how to enrich the MTB-MLE program with the emphasis on instruction, materials and assessment of pupil performance which greatly affect the implementation of the program.

Teachers, as direct implementers of the program, must look on the different needs of the learners and take into consideration their socio-economic status in preparing and giving activities to the class. They should provide learning situations that reflects the culture and way of life of the children and their community. Lesson guides, textbooks, and other supplementary materials must be provided that would make the instruction easier for the implementers and desired outcomes would be realized.

The Teacher Education Institution (TEI) must prepare their students and graduates in the implementation of MTB-MLE in the basic education. They must include MTB-MLE program in their respective curriculum. There must be sufficient consultation of the implementers' need for in-service training, seminar/workshop on multilingualism. They must be well versed in the theory and methods of MTB-MLE and be able to access necessary resources and materials to implement MTB-MLE in their schools or classrooms.

The administrators and teachers must hold small group meetings to discuss the problems encountered during the implementation of MTB-MLE. In this way, they can initiate solutions to their identified problems and bring about an effective program implementation.

The Department of Education (DepEd) and its partners should have proper monitoring and evaluation as to how the pilot implementation is done and facilitated in the respective pilot schools. Well defined protocols and measurements must be used to assess, monitor, evaluate, and accredit various MTB-MLE activities.

The MTB-MLE strategic plan made by the DepEd and its partners must be followed and adhered to in order to achieve a single overall impact that is improving the quality of education the country has. There should be a comparative study on the achievement between a MTB-MLE and a non MTB-MLE implementing school.

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