

# THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTING PROGRAM TO STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL QUEST

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**Abstract:** Private and public schools are partners in the delivery of quality education in the Philippines. In order to decongest overcrowded public junior high schools, the government provided the Educational Service Contracting (ESC) and the Teachers' Salary Subsidy (TSS) programs as its commitment to maintain the viability of private education. Hence, this study was conducted to ascertain the outcome and impact of ESC program to school performance of the private schools. The participants of this study were the school heads, teachers, parents and ESC recipient graduate of ESC schools in the First District of Iloilo, Philippines. The instruments used in this study is composed of interview questions pertaining to the success stories of the ESC recipient graduates. This study employed the qualitative method of research. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark) was used to determine the impact of ESC program to students' academic quest, as well as to determine the challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program. Based on the findings of this study, various themes as to the impact, challenges, issues and concerns of ESC program were identified and formulated.

**Keyword:** Educational Service Contracting, Teacher Salary Subsidy, Fund for Assistance in Private Education, Private Education Assistance Committee, Impact of ESC Program.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Through the Educational Service Contracting (ESC) program, the government has been paying for the fundamental education of pupils enrolled in private junior high schools since 1968. In accordance with the Constitution's mandate, certified private high schools have been utilising this government programme for 51 years to promote and make quality education available to all Filipino citizens. Currently, DepEd Order 20, Section, stipulates how the programme would be implemented. Guidelines for the Implementation of the Teachers' Salary Subsidy and Educational Service Contracting Programs in Junior High School for the Academic Year 2017–2018 were published in 2017.

The ESC program of the government is associated with varied issues as it is implemented in the private schools. These are the number of slots, qualifications and requirements of students, teacher salary subsidy and re-certification results. Each ESC participating school is given a maximum allocation of fifty (50) slots and the minimum slots for currently participating schools of good standing is equal to the number of billed Grade 7 grantees in the previous school year. However, some schools have limited number of slots to accommodate qualified students to the program.

In selecting ESC grantees, the school shall give preference to graduates of public elementary schools. However, some schools tend to accept students in order to maximize the number of slots given although their parents can afford to pay the tuition. In profiling and assessing the students, the school committee shall select grantees based on the need considering the limited slots allocated to the school. Yet, some students whose parents have high financial capacity are still selected and accepted to the program by the school committee and are enjoying the same privileged with that of less-privileged ones.

The government provides an annual subsidy of eighteen thousand pesos (Php18,000.00) per teacher to each ESC participant school or TSS beneficiary. However, the subsidy causes considerable resentment among teachers because it is insufficient to increase their pay at private schools. Additionally, it causes disagreement amongst the staff in the school because certain employees who work to meet the ESC and TSS requirements are not paid under the program and some teachers are not eager to share the subsidy. Additionally, teachers from private schools are moving to public schools for a variety of reasons, including the security of tenure and the observable advantages. Officer-in-Charge (OIC) and spokesperson for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), J. Prospero De Vera III claimed that many private higher education institutions (HEIs) are "losing their good faculty" to state universities and colleges (SUCs). (Hernando-Malipot, 2018). A major concern is the exodus of instructors and students from private to public high schools, which is causing an increase in the number of private schools going down for lack of students and staff. According to De Vera, one of the issues private universities are currently facing is that they are losing their top faculty to public universities and colleges. He continued, "Private universities are losing a lot of their top faculty because they are unable to offer them salaries that are competitive."

Incentive slots are offered or awarded to junior high schools that are ESC participants and have received a rating of 3.0 or above on their most recent certification or have been recognized by one of the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) members. However, in order to enhance their performance and maintain their program offers, several schools with minimal ratings desperately require new slots and government funding. At worst, several small private schools close their doors as a result of their inability to compete with the salaries of teachers at public schools and pupils who transfer to public schools.

The researcher has noted that four schools in Iloilo's first district currently participate in ESC and have done so for more than ten years. The researcher discovered that a campaign has been launched to end the ESC program. Every three years, the FAPE certifies these schools to ensure that their program offerings meet the standards of the ESC member schools. However, there was no organization that kept track of how the ESC program was being implemented and assessed its effects on these schools. Every three years, the school is required to uphold the standard. The award must be phased out if the rating is below 2. The researcher noted that the teacher needed to be in sync with the subject matter they were teaching. Some instructors' performance in the classroom is impacted by their lack of alignment with their respective areas of competence. There are questions and concerns arising from these difficulties that have been experienced during the program's implementation that require answers and solutions. It leads to the conclusion that the Expanded GASTPE Law needs to be improved in order to better meet the requirements of students with limited resources in both public and private schools. This necessitates improving the current government programs, particularly the Educational Service Contracting (ESC) and Teacher Salary Subsidy (TSS).

It is in these premise that the researcher would like to determine the impact of the ESC program to students' academic quest based on the gathered data.

### ***Research Questions***

This study aims to determine the impact of ESC program to students' academic quest. Specifically, this study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of ESC program in terms of student's academic quest?
2. What are the challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program?

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### ***A. Research Design***

This study employed qualitative method of research.

### ***B. Materials/Instrument***

The impact of the ESC program to students' educational quest were taken from the responses to the interview questions of the participants who are ESC recipient graduates through face to face and/or online. Challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program will be based on the data to be collected through face to face or online interview with school heads of the ESC participating schools, ESC recipient graduates and the parents of the existing ESC grantees.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark) was used to determine the impact of ESC program to students' academic quest as well as to determine the challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program.

### C. Results

#### The Impact of ESC Program in Terms of Student's Educational Quest

Impact of ESC program was based on the data collected through interview conducted by the researcher through face-to-face and online. The participants are given 10 to 30 minutes to respond to the interview questions given to them by the researcher at their most convenient time, location and online platform.

Seven (7) themes were formulated under the impact of ESC program as perceived by the school heads, parents and grantees. The following themes are: Theme 1: Sense of Gratitude; Theme 2: Financial Security; Theme 3: Advocacy to Private Education; Theme 4: High Quality Education; Theme 5: Positive Outlook in Life; Theme 6: Faculty Retention; Theme 7: Responsible Individual.

##### Theme 1: Sense of Gratitude

Based on the interview, the participants expressed how grateful they were because of the subsidy under the Educational Service Contracting program of the government. The following statements are some of the ESC recipient graduates' sharing on the impact of the ESC program.

*I am grateful that I studied in a private school and I am happy that I belonged to this program. Without the ESC program, maybe I am not able to finish my study and I can't focus well on my academic career because of worrying financially.*

*I won't get this far without the help of ESC in high school. I am thankful to be an ESC recipient because somehow my parents have saved money to buy our other needs.*

*I am able to be more grateful in everything and in every way possible because this is the best lesson I learned through this program.*

The researcher personally believed with the maxim that life is better when you live it with an "attitude of gratitude" and for good reason. Practicing gratitude can lessen stress, improve physical health, bolster relationships, and create a culture of collaboration and respect. Gratitude has also been proven to enhance empathy, boost self-esteem, and reduce aggression. For students, cultivating a sense of thankfulness can even improve learning outcomes (Ramos, 2018).

In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships (Giving thanks can make you happier, 2021).

##### Theme 2: Financial Security

Education is expensive. The participants expressed how finances burden their daily lives, especially in school finances. With the ESC subsidy, the participants, particularly, parents and ESC recipient graduate, were able to cope and manage their finances with peace of mind as they support their children's education. Here are some of their sharing:

*ESC helped me in my educational quest in a manner that it gave me and my family a leeway to prioritize other things aside from my tuition like books, school supplies, financing my projects and other extracurricular activities.*

*After graduating high school, through the help of ESC, it provided me financial stability to afford and continue my academic journey in college.*

*During the time of hardship, it was the moment that me and my brothers are still studying so coherently there is a struggle in financial terms, so the ESC was a really big help not only for me but to my parents as well. Through that, I was able to afford to buy my own books that help me in my academic life in high school.*

*It financially augments to parents especially. It also helps to encourage the parents and the students to avail the private school curriculum of teaching, etc., it really helps.*

As to government support, our country is guided by the dictum, “public money shall be used for public purposes”. While this protects government money against corruption, it blocks government support of students in the private schools. Government subsidy to private education should not be viewed as violative of this principle. Education is a public good and a public function even when it is delivered in the private sector. Thus, public and private schools should compete for quality of their educational services and not for government resources (Estrada, 2017).

#### Theme 3: Advocacy to Private Education

Many participants believed that private schools offer more advanced and quality education in the secondary level. Parents were given a chance to afford private education with the help of ESC program. It became more accessible to students especially in a low-income family. Moreover, the program motivates parents to send their children to private schools. The following are some of their responses.

*The financial assistance provided by the Education Service Contracting (ESC) program had really helped my parents in sending us to school. It was a tough time for my mom and dad because they are financing 3 kids to private schools. It is not a secret to everyone that being in a private school without scholarship is quite expensive.*

*We could avail better education in a lesser cost, it is affordable. Being a parent of an ESC is a budget friendly decision.*

*Without the ESC program, I could hardly sustain the finances of my family because some amount might go to the full payment of the tuition fee. This program of the government had contributed to the realization of my dream to send my children to private school which I believe offers more advancement and quality education.*

An article suggested that government subsidies should be provided for private schools because it would make private schools more affordable. Further, the cost an education in public or in a private school on average is about the same. That private schools however, using the same amount of dollars achieve much better results for graduates. With more money from the government, private schools will be able to open their doors more to lower income families and graduate more students (Should government subsidies be provided for private schools?, 2021). Another post stated that the government should fund private schools so they can lower the price of the entry fees. It will provide more choices for the parents to choose which school they go to, otherwise, only richer students would afford the private education (Should government subsidies be provided for private schools?, 2021).

#### Theme 4: High Quality Education

Every Filipino deserves a high-quality education. The government partnered with the private institutions to decongest the public schools in the secondary level through its ESC program. This is to ensure that the quality of education is provided. Private schools all over the Philippines are leading towards high standard education in order to participate in the ESC program. It is indeed a great motivation to this institution to improve their program offerings even better. The following are some feedbacks of the participants.

*ESC has a greater impact in school management. It motivates the school management to maintain and uplift the standards of the school, upgrade facilities and management concerns and operate with quality standards.*

*Kun mangayo ikaw additional slots, nga i-fill-up mo ang form nanda, gina grant nanda basta kung ang school nami bala haw, ga maintain man ka standards, amo pa gid na ang maka motivate. [If the school requests for additional slots, the program grants it, as long as the school is very good or of high standard level and if it is maintained, that's what motivates more.]*

*Looking back as an ESC grantee, I was able to finish my high school years in a quality institution that provided the best learning experience for me which had also built a great foundation of learning in my college years.*

Based on the studies from the World Bank, it all showed the superiority of private education in terms of raising cognitive abilities. In Columbia, private schools were 1.13 times more effective than public schools, averaging for verbal and mathematical achievement. In Dominican Republic, about one-and-a-half times more effective in raising achievement in mathematics and in Thailand, for mathematics, private schools were 2.63 times more effective than the public schools (Government and The Changing Role of Education, 2015). However, a study found out that the higher subsidy from the government does not lead to better education quality as Taiwan private universities' subsidy has a negative correlation with education quality (Shih, 2012).

#### Theme 5: Positive Outlook in Life

ESC recipient graduates have varied reactions of the grant they have availed during their high school. They are more motivated to graduate, determined to succeed in life, inspired to study and finish school. As high school students, they worry less about financial aspect and to their parents who have lighter financial preoccupation because of the ESC program. They were more focused on their studies which helped improved their academic performance and become happier in their high school life. Other participants seemed to become self-directed and responsible students. The following are some of their statements.

*I don't have to worry about money problems anymore and just focus on school and on being a well-rounded student. The program made me realize that achieving better education needs a lot of work and if somehow, opportunities like this come knocking on your door, you have to give your best to study more and to achieve more.*

*It made our life smoother and less complicated. The ESC grant did not just help my family alleviate our financial burden, but it given me more inspiration and drive to create a rewarding education experience for myself.*

*I really pursued my studies for me to not disappoint the people behind this program. ESC served as one of my inspirations not just in high school but also in college. It gave me hope to strive and to fight for my dreams in life. It opened doors for me to be able to see things with wider perspective and with a clearer vision.*

Teachers have known that fostering a positive learning environment is crucial to their students' success, and most go to great lengths to ensure that their classrooms are places where students will feel supported and engaged. A recent study from the Stanford School of Medicine found that a positive attitude towards learning has the potential to boost the functions of the brain's memory centre and predict performance independent of confounding factors such as a student's IQ (Stenger, 2018). The study made clear that students who had a positive attitude toward math performed better in the subject compared to students with a negative outlook. The brain-imaging results also showed that while students were busy solving math problems, their positive-attitude scores correlated with activation in the hippocampus, which is an important memory and learning centre in the brain.

#### Theme 6: Faculty Retention

One of the worries of the private schools in maintaining the high standard level in ESC certification status is the retention of the faculty which is an important area of the program. Some of the school participants have issues in retaining their faculty as they transfer to the public schools or state universities due to higher compensation, benefits and security of tenure. With the help of Teacher Salary Subsidy (TSS) of the government, these problems and concerns of the private schools were minimized. Teachers' salary was augmented by the subsidy and it somehow satisfies their needs. Some teachers are hopeful that the subsidy will increase and that they have to stay in the private school in order to enjoy it. The following are some of the statements of the participants.

*About the TSS, teachers are also thankful that they have additional income aside from their salary in school. They are happy with the amount they receive and very hopeful that the amount will increase.*

*Tani maka help gid sa teachers para nga maka retain kaw ka teachers eh. Because if you are only to depend on the tuition fees, medyo hina gid sya. [it's a big help (TSS) in retaining teachers. Because if you are only to depend on the tuition fees, it is weak.]*

Low salary, poor work benefits and no security of tenure were some of the reasons cited by the private school teachers for the exodus of their colleagues to the public schools. Moreover, some of the private school teachers revealed that government teaching positions are currently the better, if not, the only option over issues of security of tenure, higher paying job and other perks (SAMBALUD, 2014).

#### Theme 7: Responsible Individual

One of the ultimate goals of parents and educational institutions is to produce successful graduates. At some point, being successful means an individual was able to achieve his/her goals in life. Some of the participants, particularly the ESC recipient graduates, were able to succeed in life, fulfilled their dreams and were able to help their family by improving the standard of living. They become responsible individuals. The following are some of their sharing.

*Being an ESC recipient graduate, I was able to fulfill my goal. I graduated with a degree and I am now currently working.*

*I helped my parents financially as of now. The ESC program is such a big help in my entire high school life and also to my college days until I finished my study. Thank you for the financial assistance that help me succeed in my journey.*

Being responsible pays big dividends. Responsible individuals have much less stress and chaos in their lives and gain the respect of others. Each step they take towards being responsible and productive helps top raise their self-esteem and relationships with friends, family and co-workers improve ten-fold (The Benefits of Being Responsible, 2021).

### **The Challenges, Concerns or Issues in the Implementation of the ESC Program**

Challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program was based on the data collected through interview conducted by the researcher through face-to-face and online. The participants are given 10 to 30 minutes to respond to the interview questions given to them by the researcher at their most convenient time, location and online platform.

There were seven (7) themes that resulted in the categorization of themes under the challenges, concerns or issues in the implementation of the ESC program as perceived by the school heads, parents and ESC recipient graduate. The following themes are: Theme 1: Financial Demands; Theme 2: FAPE Certification Pressures; Theme 3: Low Salary; Theme 4: Subsidy Equality; Theme 5: Tax Fury; Theme 6: Delayed Grant; and Theme 7: Insufficient Subsidy.

#### **Theme 1: Financial Demands**

The ESC program has an impact to both the participating schools and the ESC recipients and their parents. In order to participate in this program, the school applicants must invest on. One of the challenges that affect much to the participants, particularly, the participating schools, was the financial aspect of the program. There were financial demands on the part of the school in participating to the ESC program because only the students were subsidized. No amount or financial support whatsoever was given to the school in facilitating and processing the needed documents and requirements of the ESC grantees. Moreover, the participating schools spent for the faculty and administrators' conventions, trainings and seminars required by the program. These activities are annual at the expense of the school to maintain the program grants. Some school heads even admitted that they have budget deficit due to teachers' trainings and seminars when they reviewed their expenses. The following are some of the responses of the participants.

*I doubt to participate in the program. I realized later that, aside from financial, the demands on the school were huge such as the requirements and paper works.*

*Before, honestly speaking, we pay for the expenses that's why sometimes, we got budget deficit due to the trainings which we conduct which we can't get any amount from it.*

With these responses of the participants, the fear of losing the participation to the program or losing the school operation seemed intense. If schools close because of revenue losses, teachers and personnel will lose their jobs and students could migrate to overstretched public schools as stated by Senator Win Gatchalian. He added that when teachers lose their jobs or shift careers, the shortage of teachers nationwide will impede learning continuity (Gatchalian, 2020).

#### **Theme 2: FAPE Certification Pressures**

One of the requirements in maintaining the ESC program of a participating school was ESC certifications and re-certifications after a certain duration. This process brought so much pressures on the part of the school heads. Some participants shared the anxieties they experienced as they prepare and undergo the certification and re-certification so their ESC will continue to enjoy the grant. The following are some of their sharing.

Ang demand ng certification grabe. How much we have spent and how many papers that we have to produce, etc. [The certification was very demanding]

*During the certification, the agony was there, you fear not to pass the certification. Psychologically, emotionally, physically and financially anxious about the certification that we might not pass. But in the end, you can actually pass, and the least, you will be given a low rating. But there is still warning of re-evaluation which would mean another expense.*

The ESC-participating Junior High Schools are expected to provide grantees with education that meets or exceeds the minimum standards set by DepEd. In complying with these, the participating schools face challenges at various level, one of which is the FAPE certification. It is because they have to prepare documents, the teachers, the students, and the various areas of concerns. In addition to their responsibilities under the ESC program, they shall orient grantees and their parents on the ESC, encode correct and complete information in the ESC IMS, prepare billing statement packages and comply with these guidelines (Educational Service Contracting (ESC), 2021).

#### Theme 3: Low Salary

Teachers' salary in the private schools highly depends on the tuition fees and enrolment of the students. The higher the enrolment and the tuition fees, the higher the salary and vice versa. Good for those teachers in private universities and big private schools who are much more compensated compared to those smaller ones. Likewise, public school teachers are well compensated with better benefits as compared to the teachers in the private institutions. Some participants in this study expressed how difficult it was to retain their teachers in the school for a number of years. It was also a challenge to force them to attend the seminars and trainings in their own expense or even a portion of it because of their low salary. Training new teachers every school year is another challenge, as the school continue to operate and invest. The following are some of the responses of the participants.

*In other schools especially, kapag ang teachers ay mag a-attend ng seminar as a teacher, bayaran mo, iyo yan eh pero ayaw ko nang ganun, ang liit-liit na nga ng sweldo, oobligahin ko pa. Basta magtulungan lang tayu, babayaran ko muna, bawasan mo nang paunti-until, ganun lang. [if the teachers will attend a seminar, they have to pay for it, I can't oblige my teachers to pay for it due to their very low salary. We have to help each other in the expenses, the school pays first and they pay for it gradually until they fully paid.]*

*Kailangan kasi required sila na mag-attend nag training. Pagka hindi ka nag attend, lagot ka. Kasi yung inaano nila yung kanilang subsidy. Sasabihin ko na lang na, okay ganito kasi it is a requirement especially you are new, kung wala ka pang pambayad, gusto ko hati tayu, na half-half, na kung wala ka pang pambayad, kami muna. So ganun ang arrangement na ginagawa ko kasi ayaw kong ma burden ang mga teachers.*

Marque (2017) shared his opinion being a private school teacher in his blog as to how much do private school teachers make. He shared that as the Philippine education system led to a higher demand for certified teachers and promising work and retirement benefits, private school teachers have been making a massive migration or exodus to public schools. It has been reported (in an online local news portal) that around 200,000 private school teachers have already joined the public school system since 2010, hence putting private schools in a question of faculty qualification and sufficiency. While public school teachers enjoy the competitive and attractive compensation package, private school teachers remain in qualms about low salary, poor work and retirement benefits, and tenure security issues (Marquez, 2017).

#### Theme 4: ESC Subsidy Equality

The guidelines in the implementation of the Educational Service Contracting and the Teacher Salary Subsidy programs in Junior High School as amended in January 2018 provides that the amounts of the ESC grant are changed depending on the location of the ESC-participating Junior High School. The amount of Php13,000.00 be given to the grade 7 of schools in National Capital Region (NCR) while Php11,000.00 in the Highly Urbanized Cities (HUC) outside NCR and Php9,000.00 in all other locations. One of the participants expressed how unfair it was to other ESC participating schools in the province. The participant strongly suggested to have an equal amount of ESC subsidy in all participating schools regardless of location. The following were the statements shared.

*Sa Junior High School ang kanilang voucher system my category pa eh may discrimination, pag rural area ganito lang, pagka urbanized iba, iba sa Manila. [In Junior High School, their voucher system has category, there is discrimination, there were different amount granted to rural area, urbanized cities and Manila.]*

*Mas very expensive a probinsya, yun nga lang ang lifestyle mas mahal talaga sa Manila pero pareho lang eh. Dapat iparehas nila, iba eh, dependi nga sa location. Sana nga equal. [It is more expensive in the province; as to lifestyle, it is more expensive in Manila but the expenses are still the same. The amount must be the same. I wish it will be equal.]*

Making sure that all students have equal access to resources necessary for a high-quality education is an important goal. In the recent guidelines of ESC program, the amount of the ESC grant varies per location of the participating schools. As per DO 01, 2. 2018 – Amendment to DepEd Order No. 20, S. 2017, schools in National Capital Region (NCR) for grade 7

starting SY 2017-2018 will have an ESC grant of Php13,000.00 per student per school year; Php11,000.00 for Highly Urbanized Cities (HUCS) outside NCR; and Php9,000.00 in all other locations (DO 01, S. 2018 – AMENDMENT TO DEPED ORDER NO. 20, S. 2017 (GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTING AND TEACHERS’ SALARY SUBSIDY PROGRAMS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018), 2018).

Regardless of the wisdom behind these guidelines, some participants of this study are not happy with it. They insist on having an equal amount per ESC grantee regardless of the location.

#### Theme 5: Tax Fury

The TSS recipient of the ESC participating schools are happy with this assistance of the government. It somehow augments their salary to sustain their basic needs. But a participant felt bad with the tax deducted on the subsidy of the TSS recipient. Some of them wished to remove the tax. The following was the sharing of a participant.

*I don't like the requirement of the program like the tax deduction on TSS. The teachers' salary is already low, yet, they will still be deducted with tax on their subsidy.*

Private schools are seeking tax relief measures and other forms of aid from the government as they prepare for a widespread shift to distance learning under the new normal in education. Lawyer Joseph Noel Estrada, managing director of Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), asked authorities to include the private school teachers and personnel in the next wave of COVID-19 cash subsidy (Staff, 2020).

#### Theme 6: Delayed Grant

Time element is very important in processing the requirements for ESC subsidy and TSS. First come first serve is the norm in releasing the grant. The early the requirements the early the release of the subsidy. That's why the participating schools put so much efforts in preparing the documents and other requirements to be in the first batch of release. The following are some of their responses.

*You have to submit earlier as possible so that your subsidy be released earlier.*

*Sometimes, the subsidy is late and all we have to do was to pray for it.*

*Only that the subsidy is deducted in December, I wish it will be automatically deducted early in the next payment period after enrolment to lessen early our financial concerns.*

Delayed grant can be caused by delayed processing of the ESC participating schools of the requirements in the ESC IMS and documents submissions. Moreover, erroneous and/or multiple entries of learners are subject to validation which will delay processing and payment of the grant (DepEd Order No. 20, S. 2017, 2017).

#### Theme 7: Insufficient Subsidy

The private schools who are participating to ESC program were thankful on this assistance of the government to private education. However, some participating schools still have concerns in its implementation. Being in this program means a lot of demands and requirements which were not compensated. The following are some of the participants' responses.

*They are happy with the amount they receive and very hopeful that the amount will increase.*

*The financial subsidy, I think is not enough. They have a lot of demands and other requirements*

*I hope for additional amount in TSS. Actually, they appeal naman sa government through the DepEd nga dagdagan, pero ang approval is on the DepEd, it's a long wait. [Actually, there is an appeal already to the government to increase the subsidy but the approval is on the DepEd, it's a long wait.] Tani maka help gid sa teachers para nga maka retain kaw ka teachers. Because if you are only to depend on the tuition fees, medyo hina gid sya. [It would be a great help to the teachers in retaining them. If you are only to depend on the tuition fees, its very weak.]*

As a director of COCOPEA, Joseph Noel Estrada pointed out that private schools are already struggling to sustain the new online system, despite the Php600 million allocation under the Bayanihan 2 Law to fund institutions. He added that the amount will never be enough if the amount will be distributed to all the private institutions (P600M tuition subsidies not enough for students of private, public schools, group says, 2020).

### III. CONCLUSION

The Educational Service Contracting (ESC) program of the government has an impact to the students' academic quest in the private education. Its impact to the school heads, parents and ESC recipient graduates must be a motivation to the government to enhance the program policy and guidelines to better respond their needs. It will have more positive impact in the long run-in nation building.

The identified challenges, concerns and issues in this study shows that the program has a lot to improve in order to enhance the impact to students' academic quest. The said program of the government helps a lot in making the private education more accessible for public consumption, particularly those who cannot afford financially. As students are the beneficiaries of the ESC program, it is very important that they'll maximize the opportunities given to them by finishing a degree. They must also support or initiate a program that provides or improve the quality of education in the Philippines when they graduate.

It calls for the collaboration of Private schools and the government in realizing its educational objectives and goals towards nation-building and providing quality education to students across the country and have an impact to their lives as future leaders.

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