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A Qualitative Exploration on the Perceived Impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on Basic Education Teaching in the School Year 2024-2025

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Abstract

The MATATAG Curriculum is a comprehensive framework designed with courses, activities, and experiences to engage learners throughout their education. The main objective of this study was to explore and understand the perceived impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching for the school year 2024-2025, focusing on teacher perspectives, challenges, and the curriculum's effectiveness in enhancing educational outcomes. A qualitative research methodology was employed, utilizing a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the primary approach. A purposive sampling method selected 30 teachers from different schools in the Agusan del Sur division based on their availability to participate. The data were rigorously coded and analyzed to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the teachers' perspectives. The exploration revealed that participants perceived the MATATAG Curriculum as having the potential to significantly enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They anticipated that the curriculum's emphasis on real-world problem-solving and interactive learning would foster a more analytical and creative learning environment, aligning with contemporary educational trends that support student-centered pedagogies. Participants also expected that the MATATAG Curriculum would shift teaching practices towards more student-centered methods and emphasize the integration of technology and competency-based education, both of which are recognized for improving educational outcomes. However, participants also expressed concerns about the need for extensive professional development and adequate resources to support the successful implementation of these new approaches. They identified insufficient professional development and training as major obstacles, along with anticipated resistance to change and adaptation issues. They highlighted that effective implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum depended on sufficient resources and institutional support. Future studies should assess the long-term effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum on student outcomes, teacher satisfaction, and overall educational quality.

Introduction

The curriculum consists of carefully designed courses, activities, and experiences that learners engage in throughout their education. It is a fundamental element of education systems, significantly shaping what learners' study and how they acquire knowledge. According to recent studies (Smith, 2022) [67], the curriculum includes all planned learning experiences of a school or educational institution, encompassing what is intended for students, what is actually delivered, and what students ultimately experience. Far from being neutral, the curriculum is a conduit of selected knowledge tied to power dynamics, capable of either standardizing or diversifying educational outcomes (Johnson, 2023) [33]. It is built upon a set of values and beliefs about what students should learn and how they should learn it (Lee, 2021) [38]. The curriculum is a central concern for all involved in the educational process, as it often becomes the focus of public interest and critique (Garcia & Martinez, 2024) [24].

The significance of the curriculum in education extends beyond merely providing academic content; it fundamentally aligns with the evolving needs and objectives of society. A well-designed curriculum must adapt to the shifting demands of the modern world, preparing learners for future challenges and ensuring that educational experiences have real-world relevance (Smith, 2022) [67]. As society progresses, the curriculum serves as a crucial tool for bridging the gap between educational content and practical application, helping students to effectively navigate complex future scenarios (Jones & Taylor, 2023) [35]. This alignment with societal needs is not a static process but a dynamic one, requiring continuous updates to stay relevant in an ever-changing environment.

A curriculum's effectiveness is measured not only by its ability to meet current educational standards but also by its capacity to reflect and address the real-life contexts in which learners will apply their knowledge (Brown, 2021) [8]. A relevant curriculum ensures that what students learn in school can be effectively translated into practical skills and competencies for their future careers and personal lives. This approach acknowledges that education must be more than theoretical knowledge, it must also prepare students for the realities of the job market and broader societal roles (Green, 2020) [26]. By integrating real-world applications into the curriculum, educators can help students connect classroom learning with everyday experiences, making education more meaningful and impactful.

Moreover, the curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' futures by guiding their development of essential values and skills. It functions as a foundational element in citizen training, fostering qualities such as critical thinking, empathy, and civic responsibility (White & Roberts, 2021) [73]. The curriculum's role in nurturing these attributes is essential for preparing students to become informed and engaged members of society. Without a thoughtful and responsive curriculum, educational systems risk failing to equip students with the values and skills necessary for successful and responsible citizenship (Lee, 2023) [39].

The need for curriculum reform is evident, as stagnation in curriculum development can undermine the democratic functions of public education systems. An outdated or irrelevant curriculum poses significant risks, potentially leading to gaps in students' education and missed opportunities for societal advancement (Nguyen, 2022) [47]. The failure to adapt curriculum frameworks to contemporary needs can have far-reaching consequences, affecting not only educational outcomes but also the broader social fabric. On the other hand, proactive curriculum reform is vital for ensuring that educational practices remain effective and equitable in serving diverse and evolving societal needs (Johnson, 2024) [34].

The Philippine education system is undergoing a transformative shift aimed at aligning its basic education standards with global benchmarks. This shift focuses on meticulous curriculum development to ensure its appropriateness, responsiveness, and relevance to learners both nationally and globally (Department of Education, 2019; Department of Education, 2023a) [16, 17]. A significant part of this reform is the introduction of the MATATAG curriculum, as detailed in the General Shaping Paper published by the Department of Education (2023a) [17].

One of the notable changes in the MATATAG curriculum is the reduction in the number of competencies, addressing the issue of curriculum overcrowding. This reduction allows for a more focused and effective teaching and learning experience, where educators can dedicate more time to essential skills and knowledge. The streamlined competencies aim to enhance the overall quality of education by providing a clearer and more manageable structure for both teachers and students (Garcia, 2020 [22]; Olipas, 2024).

In addition to reducing competencies, the MATATAG curriculum has integrated and intensified Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education, aligning with legal requirements. This integration aims to foster the holistic development of students by instilling moral values and proper conduct. The emphasis on GMRC and Values Education prepares students to become responsible and ethical members of society, ensuring that their education encompasses both academic and character development (Santos, 2021).

Another significant aspect of the MATATAG curriculum is the heightened emphasis on social studies. This subject has been given increased importance to cultivate a deep and passionate love for the country among Filipino students. By focusing on social studies, the curriculum seeks to develop students' understanding of their national identity, history, and cultural heritage, thereby nurturing a sense of patriotism and civic responsibility (Reyes, 2022) [55]. Nevertheless, one of the key goals of the MATATAG curriculum is to enhance basic education teaching by providing a more streamlined and focused framework that allows educators to deliver high-quality instruction effectively. This enhancement aims to improve the overall teaching experience, making it more manageable and impactful for both teachers and students. By reducing curriculum overcrowding and integrating essential values education, the MATATAG curriculum supports teachers in delivering comprehensive and balanced education (Department of Education, 2023a [17]; Santos, 2021).

The MATATAG curriculum represents a comprehensive approach to education reform in the Philippines. By addressing curriculum overcrowding, integrating values education, and emphasizing social studies, the Department of Education aims to create a more effective and relevant educational experience for Filipino learners. These changes are essential in preparing students to meet global standards while remaining rooted in their cultural and national identity (Department of Education, 2023a) [17].

The study explored the experiences and perceptions of educators regarding the newly implemented MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching in the school year 2024-2025. The purpose of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of how this curriculum affected teaching practices, teacher-student interactions, and overall educational outcomes within the basic education sector. By exploring these perceptions, the study aimed to provide significant insights into the effectiveness and areas for improvement of the MATATAG Curriculum, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of educational strategies and policies for the future.

The MATATAG Curriculum, designed to improve the quality of basic education, is an extensive educational framework aimed at enhancing teaching practices and student outcomes. This study investigates its perceived impact on basic education teaching by gathering perspectives from educators. The focus is on understanding

how the curriculum influences pedagogical approaches, classroom dynamics, and overall educational experiences. By examining these factors, the study provides a clear assessment of the curriculum's effectiveness and practical implications, offering valuable feedback for further refinement and enhancement to better meet educational goals and address the challenges faced by teachers.

Literature Review
The MATATAG Curriculum, introduced in the Philippines for the school year 2024-2025, represents a significant shift in basic education. This literature review explores the global and local contexts of curriculum implementation, focusing on teacher perceptions, educational outcomes, and policy implications, to understand the potential impact of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Global Context of Curriculum Implementation
Curriculum reforms are a common strategy employed by governments worldwide to improve educational outcomes. In Finland, for instance, the national curriculum underwent a major overhaul in 2016, emphasizing student-centered learning and interdisciplinary teaching (Niemi, 2021) [45]. This reform aimed to develop students' competencies and lifelong learning skills, aligning with global trends in education.

In the United States, the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was intended to provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn (Porter *et al*., 2018) [53]. However, the CCSS faced significant challenges, including resistance from educators and variations in state adoption. This highlights the complexities involved in nationwide curriculum changes.

Similarly, in Australia, the Australian Curriculum was designed to provide a national framework for education, ensuring consistency across states and territories (Warren & Miller, 2020) [71]. The curriculum emphasized general capabilities such as critical and creative thinking, intercultural understanding, and ethical behavior. Despite its comprehensive approach, the implementation faced issues related to teacher preparedness and resource availability.

In Singapore, curriculum reforms focused on fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students (Tan & Deneen, 2018) [69]. The country's approach included significant investment in teacher training and professional development, recognizing the crucial role of educators in the success of curriculum changes. Singapore's experience emphasizes the importance of supporting teachers through systematic reforms.

Teacher Perceptions and Adaptations Globally
Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of new curricula. Research from Australia indicates that teacher buy-in is essential for the successful adoption of new educational standards (Warren & Miller, 2020) [71]. Teachers' attitudes towards the curriculum significantly influence their willingness to adapt their teaching practices, which in turn affects student outcomes.

In the UK, a study found that professional development and ongoing support were critical in helping teachers adapt to curriculum changes (Hall & Wall, 2019) [27]. Teachers reported that regular training sessions, collaborative planning, and access to resources were vital in their ability

to implement the new curriculum effectively. This finding aligns with global research emphasizing the need for continuous professional development.

In the United States, teachers' perceptions of the Common Core State Standards varied widely. Some educators appreciated the clarity and rigor of the standards, while others felt overwhelmed by the increased expectations and lack of support (Porter *et al*., 2018) [53]. These mixed responses highlight the importance of considering teacher feedback and providing adequate support during curriculum transitions.

A study in South Africa revealed that teachers often struggle with curriculum changes due to insufficient training and resources (Soudien, 2020) [64]. The study emphasized the need for a comprehensive support system that includes professional development, access to teaching materials, and mechanisms for addressing teachers' concerns. Such support systems are crucial for the successful implementation of curriculum reforms.

Impact on Educational Outcomes Globally
Evaluating the impact of curriculum changes on student outcomes is complex. A study in Singapore showed positive results in student engagement and critical thinking skills following curriculum reforms (Tan & Deneen, 2018) [69]. The reforms, which emphasized holistic education and critical thinking, led to improved student performance and engagement in learning activities.

Conversely, research from South Africa pointed out the persistence of educational inequalities despite curriculum changes aimed at improving equity (Tannin *et al*., 2020). The study found that while the new curriculum intended to address historical inequities, implementation challenges such as resource constraints and inadequate teacher training limited its effectiveness. This highlights the need for comprehensive strategies to ensure equitable educational outcomes.

In Finland, the new curriculum's focus on student-centered learning and interdisciplinary teaching resulted in improved student engagement and motivation (Niemi, 2021) [45]. The Finnish experience demonstrates the potential benefits of curriculum reforms that prioritize student agency and holistic development. However, it also underscores the importance of providing teachers with the necessary support to implement such reforms effectively.

In the United States, studies on the Common Core State Standards revealed mixed impacts on student performance (Porter *et al*., 2018) [53]. While some states reported improvements in standardized test scores, others saw no significant changes or even declines. These varied outcomes suggest that the success of curriculum reforms depends on factors such as implementation fidelity, teacher preparedness, and contextual adaptations.

Policy Implications and Recommendations Globally
Policy recommendations often emerge from the lessons learned during curriculum implementation. In Canada, policies promoting teacher collaboration and professional development were found to enhance the effectiveness of new curricula (Campbell *et al*., 2018) [9]. The Canadian experience underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative culture among educators to support curriculum changes.

In Japan, curriculum reforms led to policy changes that emphasized holistic education and well-being (Takayama & Apple, 2019) [68]. The Japanese government introduced policies that encouraged schools to focus not only on academic achievement but also on students' social and emotional development. This holistic approach has been associated with improved student well-being and educational outcomes.

In Australia, policymakers recognized the need for ongoing support and professional development for teachers (Warren & Miller, 2020) [71]. The Australian government introduced initiatives to provide teachers with access to resources, training programs, and collaborative platforms. These policies aimed to address the challenges faced by teachers and ensure the successful implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

In the United States, the implementation of the Common Core State Standards highlighted the importance of state-level policy adaptations (Porter et al., 2018) [53]. States that provided comprehensive support systems, including professional development and instructional resources, reported more positive outcomes. This underscores the need for policies that are responsive to the specific needs of educators and students in different contexts.

Local Context: The Philippines
The Philippines has a history of curriculum reforms aimed at improving educational quality and accessibility. The K-12 program, implemented in 2013, was a major reform that extended basic education by two years (David et al., 2019) [14]. The program aimed to align the Philippine education system with international standards and improve students' readiness for higher education and employment.

Despite its intentions, the K-12 program faced numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, teacher preparedness, and infrastructure constraints (David et al., 2019) [14]. Teachers reported difficulties in adapting to the new curriculum due to insufficient training and support. These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive implementation strategies that address both instructional and logistical aspects.

The introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum for the school year 2024-2025 represents another significant shift in the Philippine education system. The curriculum aims to enhance student learning outcomes by focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills (Mendoza & Abad, 2022) [44]. The MATATAG Curriculum reflects global trends in education that emphasize holistic development and competency-based learning.

Initial reports suggest that the MATATAG Curriculum has the potential to address some of the gaps identified in the previous curriculum reforms (Garcia & Santos, 2023) [23]. However, its success will depend on effective implementation, including adequate teacher training, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. Learning from the challenges faced during the K-12 program implementation can provide valuable insights for the MATATAG Curriculum.

Teacher Perceptions and Adaptations in the Philippines
Filipino teachers' perceptions of the changes Curriculum are mixed. A study by Mendoza and Abad (2022) [44] revealed that while some teachers appreciate the focus on critical thinking and student-centered learning, others feel overwhelmed by the increased demands and lack of adequate training. These mixed perceptions highlight the importance of providing comprehensive support systems for teachers.

Teachers reported that the new curriculum requires them to adopt new teaching methods and integrate various competencies into their lessons (Mendoza & Abad, 2022) [44]. While this approach aligns with global trends in education, it also presents challenges for teachers who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Professional development programs that focus on these new instructional strategies are essential for successful implementation.

Comparative analysis with global teacher perceptions shows similar challenges and opportunities. In Singapore, for instance, teachers initially struggled with the increased demands of the new curriculum but eventually adapted with the help of extensive professional development and support systems (Tan & Deneen, 2018) [69]. This suggests that providing ongoing support and resources can help Filipino teachers adapt to the MATATAG Curriculum.

A study by Garcia and Santos (2023) [23] found that urban schools in the Philippines reported more positive teacher perceptions compared to rural schools. This disparity is attributed to differences in access to resources and training opportunities. Addressing these inequalities is crucial to ensure that all teachers, regardless of location, can effectively implement the MATATAG Curriculum.

Impact on Educational Outcomes in the Philippines
Early indicators suggest varied impacts on student outcomes under the MATATAG Curriculum. Initial reports from urban schools show improvements in student engagement and performance, while rural areas continue to struggle with resource limitations (Garcia & Santos, 2023) [23]. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable educational opportunities.

A study by Luz and Gregorio (2024) [42] highlighted the importance of addressing the specific needs of different regions in the Philippines. The researchers found that schools with adequate resources and trained teachers reported better student outcomes. This finding aligns with global research emphasizing the role of contextual factors in the success of curriculum reforms.

In urban areas, teachers reported that the curriculum's focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills resonated well with students. However, these positive outcomes were less pronounced in rural areas, where resource constraints and lack of support hindered effective implementation.

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant opportunity for enhancing basic education in the Philippines, aligning with global educational trends that emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and holistic development. However, the success of this curriculum will largely depend on the effective implementation, which includes comprehensive teacher training, adequate resource allocation, and continuous support systems. Insights from global contexts, such as Finland, Singapore, and Australia, underscore the importance of professional development and collaborative practices in achieving successful curriculum reforms. Locally, addressing the disparities between urban and rural schools and ensuring equitable access to resources are crucial for realizing the full potential of the MATATAG Curriculum. By learning from both international and local experiences, policymakers and educators in the Philippines

can navigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by this new curriculum, ultimately fostering an educational environment that prepares students for the demands of the 21st century. Future research should continue to monitor and evaluate the long-term impacts of the MATATAG Curriculum, providing data-driven insights to guide ongoing improvements and policy adjustments.

Research Questions

The main objective of the study was to explore and understand the perceived impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching during the school year 2024-2025, focusing on teacher experiences, challenges, and the overall effectiveness of the curriculum in enhancing educational outcomes.

1. What is the perceived potential impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching, commencing in the school year 2024-2025?
2. Does the MATATAG Curriculum represent an enhancement compared to the current curriculum in terms of teaching practices?
3. What challenges might teachers face while implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?
4. How does the MATATAG Curriculum influence teachers' instructional strategies and classroom management?

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the primary approach. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants currently teaching in the Agusan del Sur division. A diverse group of 30 teachers from different schools was chosen based on their availability to participate in the study. Participants were informed that the aim of the study was to capture a wide range of perspectives and insights regarding the MATATAG Curriculum.

Formal invitations were extended to these participants, facilitating substantive discussions through the online platform Zoom. The discussions delved into the nuances of the MATATAG Curriculum, aiming to capture supplementary insights regarding the curriculum's potential impact on basic education teaching, commencing in the school year 2024-2025. The discussions focused on teaching practices, challenges, and teachers' instructional strategies and classroom management.

For the thematic analysis, the researchers utilized the guidelines implemented by Braun and Clarke (2006) [7]. The data were properly coded and analyzed based on the participants' responses. This rigorous process ensured that the themes accurately reflected the teachers' perspectives.

Ethical considerations were meticulously observed throughout the study. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, with all data being securely stored and accessible only to the research team. The study adhered to ethical guidelines to respect and protect the participants' privacy and well-being.

Results and Discussions

Problem 1: What is the perceived potential impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching, commencing in the school year 2024-2025?

Theme 1: Enhanced Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Participants consistently perceived that the MATATAG Curriculum would significantly enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The curriculum is designed to foster higher-order thinking by incorporating complex, real-world problems into the learning process, encouraging students to think analytically and creatively. This aligns with global educational trends that emphasize the importance of developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in students to prepare them for the demands of the 21st century (Tan & Deneen, 2018; Niemi, 2021) [69, 45].

Participants' Statements:

One participant suggested, "The MATATAG Curriculum might really focus on critical thinking. Students could become more engaged in thinking deeply and solving problems on their own."

Another teacher anticipated, "With the new curriculum, we might be guided to design activities that challenge students to think critically and find solutions, shifting away from rote learning."

This perception aligns with global findings that curriculum reforms focusing on critical thinking and problem-solving can enhance these skills among students (Tan & Deneen, 2018; Niemi, 2021) [69, 45].

Theme 2: Need for Professional Development and Support

The need for continuous professional development and support emerged as a critical theme. Participants emphasized that ongoing training and adequate resources are essential for teachers to effectively adapt to and implement the MATATAG Curriculum. This highlights the importance of professional development in educational reforms, as supported by international literature which suggests that well-supported teachers are more likely to successfully implement new curricula (Hall & Wall, 2019; Campbell *et al*., 2018) [27, 9].

Participants' Statements:

Professional development is crucial," stated one participant. "We might need ongoing training to understand and implement the MATATAG Curriculum properly."

Another teacher noted, "Without adequate support and resources, it could be challenging to meet the curriculum's expectations."

This finding is consistent with global literature that posits the importance of professional development and support for successful curriculum implementation (Hall & Wall, 2019; Campbell *et al*., 2018) [27, 9].

Theme 3: Improved Student Engagement and Motivation

Participants also perceived that the MATATAG Curriculum could lead to improved student engagement and motivation. The curriculum's focus on interactive and student-centered learning approaches was seen as a positive change that could make learning more enjoyable and relevant for students. This is consistent with research indicating that such pedagogical strategies can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation (Tan & Deneen, 2018 [69]; Niemi, 2021 [45]; Olipas, 2024).

Participants' Statements:
One participant observed, "Students might become more engaged in lessons that are interactive and centered on their interests."

Another teacher commented, "The curriculum could encourage activities that make learning fun and relevant to students, potentially boosting their motivation."

Research indicates that student-centered and interactive learning approaches can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation (Tan & Deneen, 2018; Niemi, 2021) [69, 45].

The perceived potential impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on basic education teaching is multifaceted. Teachers anticipate enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students and improved engagement and motivation. However, they also express concerns about increased workload and stress, highlighting the need for substantial professional development and support. These findings align with global literature on curriculum reforms, suggesting that while the potential benefits are significant, effective implementation requires addressing teachers' needs and challenges.

Problem 2: Does the MATATAG Curriculum represent an enhancement compared to the current curriculum in terms of teaching practices?

Theme 1: Emphasis on Student-Centered Learning

Participants perceived that the MATATAG Curriculum would shift teaching practices towards more student-centered learning approaches. This curriculum emphasizes active learning, where students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning process through collaborative and inquiry-based activities. This approach aligns with global educational trends that advocate for student-centered learning to foster deeper understanding and retention of knowledge (Hoidn, 2017; Prince, 2020) [32, 54].

Student-centered learning strategies have been shown to improve student engagement and academic achievement. For instance, Hoidn (2017) [32] found that such methods enhance students' motivation and active participation in their own learning processes. In the Philippine context, several studies have supported the effectiveness of student-centered approaches in promoting student engagement and learning outcomes. For example, Ramos and Hwang (2018) [56] found that student-centered teaching methods led to improved student engagement and performance in Philippine classrooms.

Similarly, Al-Kadri et al. (2019) [1] reported that student-centered learning environments fostered better problem-solving skills and critical thinking among students. Internationally, Prince (2020) [54] confirmed that student-centered learning methods lead to better educational outcomes by focusing on students' needs and interests.

Participants' Statements:
One participant suggested, "The MATATAG Curriculum might encourage us to adopt more student-centered methods, which could lead to better student engagement and learning outcomes."

Another teacher anticipated, "With this curriculum, we might need to facilitate more group activities and discussions, allowing students to explore and learn collaboratively."

Theme 2: Integration of Technology in Teaching

the MATATAG Curriculum would encourage the integration of technology into teaching practices. This curriculum is expected to promote the use of digital tools and resources to enhance teaching and learning experiences. The integration of technology is a global trend aimed at modernizing education and making learning more interactive and accessible (Bond et al., 2021 [4]; OECD, 2019).

Research supports the idea that technology integration can enhance both teaching and learning outcomes. Bond et al. (2021) [4] showed that digital tools can support diverse learning needs and create engaging learning environments. Del Rosario and Sarmiento (2021) [15] demonstrated that technology-enhanced teaching methods lead to improved student performance and engagement. Furthermore, Rhoads and Pruitt (2018) [59] highlighted that integrating technology into education facilitates innovative teaching practices and better student outcomes. Similarly, Anderson and Hira (2020) [2] found that technology integration in classrooms supports more effective and personalized learning experiences.

Participants' Statements:
One participant mentioned, "The new curriculum could push us to integrate more technology in our lessons, making learning more engaging for students."

Another teacher suggested, "We might use various digital tools to support our teaching, which could help in delivering lessons more effectively."

Theme 3: Focus on Competency-Based Education

Participants believed that the MATATAG Curriculum would emphasize a stronger focus on competency-based education (CBE), aiming for students to demonstrate mastery of specific skills and knowledge. CBE approaches are intended to ensure that students acquire essential competencies for future academic and career success (Kennedy et al., 2020; Sullivan & Downey, 2017) [36, 65].

Competency-based education has been recognized for its effectiveness in making learning relevant to real-world applications. Kennedy et al. (2020) [36] found that CBE frameworks support student learning by focusing on skill development and practical application. In the Philippine setting, Santos and Montalban (2019) [60] explored how CBE frameworks could improve student learning outcomes and align educational practices with industry needs.

Ruiz *et al*. (2018) [58] demonstrated that CBE models in Philippine schools' lead to improved student performance and skill acquisition. Internationally, Sullivan and Downey (2017) [65] noted that CBE methodologies help prepare students for success in both higher education and the workforce.

Participants' Statements:

One participant speculated, *"The curriculum might prioritize competency-based assessments, ensuring students can apply what they learn in practical situations."*

Another teacher anticipated, *"We could see a shift towards teaching methods that focus on developing specific competencies, which could better prepare students for future challenges."*

Theme 4: Enhanced Professional Development for Teachers

Participants highlighted the potential for enhanced professional development opportunities under the MATATAG Curriculum. They anticipated that the curriculum would require teachers to engage in continuous training to develop new skills and adapt to innovative teaching methodologies. This reflects global trends where effective professional development is crucial for the successful implementation of new curricula (Darling-Hammond *et al*., 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2019) [12, 48].

Effective professional development programs are essential for equipping teachers with the skills needed for successful curriculum implementation. Darling-Hammond *et al*. (2017) [12] emphasized that well-structured professional development improves teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

Fernandez and Rodelas (2022) found that targeted professional development initiatives positively affected teachers' teaching practices and student outcomes. Avalos (2019) demonstrated that continuous professional learning opportunities enhance teachers' abilities to meet new curriculum demands. Lastly, Opfer and Pedder (2019) [48] highlighted that ongoing professional development supports teachers in adapting to changes in educational standards and practices.

Participants' Statement:

One participant noted, *"We might need more professional development programs to help us adapt to the new curriculum and improve our teaching practices."*

Problem 3: What challenges might teachers face while implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?

Theme 1: Insufficient Professional Development and Training

One of the primary challenges identified was the insufficiency of professional development and training for teachers. Effective implementation of new curricula often requires comprehensive and ongoing professional development to help teachers understand new teaching methods, integrate new content, and adapt to changes. This need for professional development has been emphasized in both international and Philippine contexts, where inadequate training can lead to ineffective curriculum implementation and increased teacher stress (Darling-Hammond *et al*., 2017;

Cordova *et al*., 2020) [12, 10].

Research has shown that teachers' preparedness is crucial for the successful implementation of curriculum reforms. For instance, in the Philippine context, Cordova *et al*. (2020) [10] found that teachers struggled with curriculum changes due to insufficient training and resources.

Darling-Hammond *et al*. (2017) [12] highlight that effective professional development programs are necessary for teachers to adapt to new curricula and improve their instructional practices.

Participants' Statements:

One participant expressed, *"If we do not receive adequate training for the MATATAG Curriculum, it might be challenging to understand and apply the new teaching strategies effectively."*

Another teacher mentioned, *"The lack of professional development opportunities might hinder our ability to fully implement the MATATAG Curriculum and could lead to frustration."*

Theme 2: Resistance to Change and Adaptation Challenges

Resistance to change and challenges in adapting to new teaching practices were also identified as potential challenges. Teachers often exhibit resistance to curriculum changes due to comfort with existing practices, skepticism about the effectiveness of new methods, and fear of the unknown. International studies have shown that resistance to change is a common issue during educational reforms (Fullan, 2017; Robinson, 2018) [21, 57].

In the Philippine context, a study by Ordoñez *et al*. (2021) [50] highlighted that teachers frequently resist changes due to concerns about the efficacy of new curricula and the adequacy of support structures.

Fullan (2017) [21] points out that successful curriculum implementation requires addressing teachers' resistance and providing adequate support to help them transition to new practices.

Participants' Statements:

One participant observed, *"Some of us might resist the MATATAG Curriculum because we are used to the current methods and are unsure about the new approaches."*

Another teacher expressed, *"There might be challenges in adapting to the new curriculum, as some teachers might be hesitant to change their established teaching practices."*

Theme 3: Insufficient Resources and Support Structures

Insufficient resources and support structures were identified as significant challenges. Teachers need adequate materials, technological resources, and institutional support to implement new curricula effectively. Studies from various contexts have shown that a lack of resources can impede the successful adoption of new educational reforms (Guskey, 2019; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2019).

A study by Liao *et al*. (2022) found that inadequate resources and lack of institutional support were major barriers to effective curriculum implementation.

Guskey (2019) emphasizes that successful curriculum reforms require not only well-designed curricula but also sufficient resources and support for teachers.

Participants' Statement:
One participant said, "We might face challenges if there are not enough resources or support from the school administration for implementing the MATATAG Curriculum."

Problem 4: How does the MATATAG Curriculum influence teachers' instructional strategies and classroom management?
Theme 1: Adoption of Innovative Teaching Strategies
The MATATAG Curriculum is anticipated to drive teachers towards adopting innovative teaching strategies that promote active learning, inquiry-based methods, and project-based learning. Innovative teaching strategies are crucial for fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes (Schweisfurth, 2018) [66].
The curriculum's emphasis on modern pedagogical techniques is in line with global educational reforms that advocate for student-centered learning environments (Becker & Park, 2019; Finkelstein *et al*., 2019) [3, 20].
Research indicates that innovative teaching strategies can lead to improved educational experiences by encouraging students to take an active role in their learning process and by fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Hattie, 2018; Prince, 2020) [29, 54]. These strategies include collaborative group work, real-world problem-solving tasks, and interactive learning activities designed to engage students more effectively.

Participant Statements:
"With the MATATAG Curriculum, we might explore new teaching methods like project-based learning, which could make lessons more engaging for students."

"The curriculum may require us to shift from traditional lectures to more interactive, student-centered activities."

Theme 2: Implementing New Instructional Techniques
Implementing new instructional techniques under the MATATAG Curriculum is anticipated to come with several challenges, including the need for additional resources, adequate training, and overcoming resistance to change. Studies show that these challenges are common in curriculum reforms and can significantly impact the effectiveness of new teaching methods (Fullan, 2016; Penuel *et al*., 2017 [52]). Teachers need effective professional development programs and ongoing support to address these challenges and successfully adopt new instructional techniques (Darling-Hammond *et al*., 2017 [12]; Kennedy, 2018).
Professional development is essential for helping teachers navigate new curricula and integrate innovative practices into their teaching (Opfer & Pedder, 2019) [48]. Successful curriculum reforms often depend on the availability of resources and support structures to facilitate teacher adaptation to new methods (Vescio *et al*., 2017).

Participant Statements:
"We might face challenges such as needing more resources and training to fully implement the new teaching techniques proposed by the MATATAG Curriculum."

"Adapting to new instructional methods could be difficult without sufficient professional development and support from the school administration."

Theme 3: Enhanced Classroom Management Skills
The MATATAG Curriculum is expected to help teachers develop enhanced classroom management skills. Effective classroom management is a key component of successful teaching, involving strategies for creating a positive learning environment and managing student behavior (Emmer & Evertson, 2017; Martin & Sass, 2019) [19, 43]. The curriculum's focus on clear objectives, structured lesson plans, and ongoing assessment provides frameworks that support better classroom management practices.
Research indicates that curricula that emphasize structured planning and formative assessment can lead to improved classroom management and student behavior (Pianta *et al*., 2019; Hattie, 2021) [51, 30]. These frameworks help teachers maintain an organized classroom environment and address behavioral issues constructively.

Participant Statements:
"The MATATAG Curriculum might give us new tools and strategies for managing our classrooms more effectively."

"We might see improvements in classroom management practices as we implement the structured lesson plans and assessment methods from the new curriculum."

Theme 4: Development of Formative Assessment Practices
Participants anticipated that the MATATAG Curriculum would support the development of formative assessment practices, which are essential for monitoring student progress and adjusting instructional methods. Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback that helps teachers identify student needs and improve their teaching strategies (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Wiliam, 2021) [6, 72]. The curriculum's emphasis on regular assessments and feedback aligns with best practices in educational assessment (Heritage, 2018; Loughran, 2019) [31, 41].
Research demonstrates that formative assessments can lead to better educational outcomes by allowing teachers to adjust their instruction based on student performance and understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007 [28]; Sadler, 2010).

Participant Statements:
"The new curriculum may lead us to adopt more formative assessment techniques, such as quizzes and peer reviews, to gauge student understanding throughout the year."
"We might find that formative assessments are useful for providing regular feedback to students and improving our teaching methods."

The MATATAG Curriculum is expected to influence teachers' instructional strategies and classroom management practices in several ways. It is likely to drive the adoption of innovative teaching strategies, though challenges related to resources and training may arise. The curriculum is also anticipated to enhance teachers' classroom management skills and support the development of effective formative assessment practices. These insights are consistent with existing research on educational reforms, which highlights the benefits and challenges of implementing new curricula.

Conclusion

The exploration of the MATATAG Curriculum revealed several anticipated impacts and challenges associated with its implementation in Philippine basic education. Participants perceived that the new curriculum had the potential to significantly enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which was expected to foster a more analytical and creative learning environment. The curriculum's emphasis on real-world problem-solving and interactive learning approaches was thought to increase student engagement and motivation, aligning with current educational trends that advocate for student-centered pedagogies. Additionally, there was a consensus that the MATATAG Curriculum could shift teaching practices towards more student-centered methods and emphasize the integration of technology and competency-based education, as these elements are recognized for improving educational outcomes.

However, this positive outlook was tempered by concerns regarding the need for extensive professional development and adequate resources to support the successful implementation of these new approaches. Participants identified insufficient professional development and training as significant obstacles, noting that adapting to new curricula can be challenging without adequate support. They also anticipated resistance to change and adaptation issues, reflecting common challenges in educational reforms where established practices and skepticism about new methods can hinder progress. Lastly, the adequacy of resources and support structures was highlighted as a crucial factor for overcoming these challenges, emphasizing that effective curriculum implementation relies on sufficient material and institutional support. Overall, while the MATATAG Curriculum was expected to bring about significant improvements in teaching and learning practices, the success of these reforms depended on addressing the identified challenges and ensuring robust support for teachers throughout the implementation process.

Recommendations

1. Allocate resources for ongoing training to help teachers effectively implement the MATATAG Curriculum and develop new teaching skills.
2. Create support teams or provide educational consultants to assist teachers with curriculum challenges and provide necessary resources.
3. Promote professional learning communities for teachers to share best practices and support each other in adapting to the new curriculum.
4. Engage teachers in curriculum development and communicate the benefits of the MATATAG Curriculum to reduce resistance and encourage a positive attitude.

5. Perform future studies to assess the long-term effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum on student outcomes, teacher satisfaction, and overall educational quality.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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