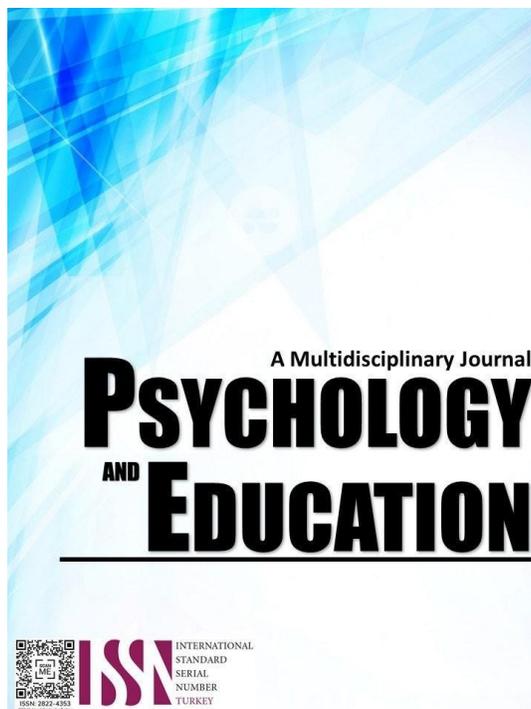


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Paradigm Shift in Education: Teachers as MATATAG Curriculum Implementers

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Abstract

A curriculum is a structured plan of learning experiences, subjects, and assessments designed to guide education. It includes content, teaching methods, and learning objectives to ensure systematic knowledge and skill development. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of Grade 7 teachers in handling MATATAG subjects in the school year 2024 -2025 as a basis for a teacher support plan. A descriptive research design was employed, with a sample of 38 Grade 7 teachers through complete enumeration sampling. Data were analyzed using a weighted mean to measure the level of agreement among teachers as curriculum implementers. The findings revealed an average weighted mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.56, in terms of productivity interpreted as the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum, "Strongly Agree" that the teachers on average do feel that they are effective in their functions. In terms of well-being, the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum with an average weighted mean and standard deviation of 3.22 and 0.57 respectively, is interpreted as the work environment and culture within schools significantly influence the teacher's well-being. The findings indicate that teachers are capable of adopting and fully implementing educational reforms. However, differences in support, workload, and time availability highlight the necessity of targeted interventions to ensure fair distribution of responsibilities and adequate support, empowering teachers as key agents in the evolving educational landscape. Finally, personalized support should be provided to teachers who need extra help, using data to track performance and address specific challenges. This plan ensures that teachers have the necessary resources, time, and support to implement the curriculum effectively while maintaining their well-being.

Keywords: *developing research skills, academic writing, analytical competency, investigative proficiency*

Introduction

A curriculum is an instrument that governs the operations of any educational system (Alebiosu 2005, as cited in Obilo & Sangoleye, 2010). It defines educational goals and standards, guides teaching methods, shapes students' learning experiences, and ensures alignment with objectives, thereby shaping outcomes and maintaining system effectiveness. This guarantees that the educational outcomes are in line with the objectives of the system by defining goals and standards as well as guiding teaching methods and shaping students' learning experiences. When the curriculum is well-designed and aligned with clear objectives, it not only guides learning but also ensures that the entire educational system works effectively to achieve the best possible outcomes for everyone involved.

Education is going through a major change, with a big shift in how curricula are designed and delivered. The MATATAG curriculum is a prime example of this change, offering a fresh approach to tackling the current challenges in Philippine education. It focuses on putting students at the center of learning, giving teachers the flexibility to adapt lessons to better fit each student's individual needs. According to Estrellado (2023), curriculum changes are not just responses to challenges but proactive measures to meet evolving demands and needs, which it emphasizes the need for forward-thinking in curriculum development, allowing educators and policymakers to integrate new trends and technologies for more effective and relevant learning.

In this new paradigm, teachers are envisioned not just as implementers but as co-designers of the learning experience. They are given the autonomy to tailor lessons, integrate local cultural and community elements, and employ diverse pedagogical techniques to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. This approach recognizes the critical role of teachers in bridging the gap between curriculum objectives and student experiences.

MATATAG Curriculum is a marker of immense educational transformation that promotes not only enhanced learning outcomes but also an improvement in the teaching process through making use of teachers as dynamic implementers of the curriculum. Making this shift requires an adaptation of curricula to meet the diverse needs of students' educators need to stop being traditional content deliverers and turn into learning facilitators.

For a clear understanding of the effects of this paradigm shift on educators and the entire educational ecosystem, relevant literature must be examined that discusses teacher autonomy, continual learning opportunities for teachers, curriculum hurdles, and consequences on students' performance in comparable settings.

Thus, this research explored the level of perceptions of Grade 7 teachers in handling MATATAG Subjects in School Year 2024-2025 as a foundation for the proposed teacher's support plan. The aim was to gather insights into their experiences, challenges, and needs related to the implementation of the curriculum. This research aims to contribute by examining these perceptions as a groundwork for developing a comprehensive support plan for teachers that addresses the identified challenges, enhances teaching practices, and provides targeted resources and assistance, ultimately supporting teachers in effectively delivering the MATATAG curriculum.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of Grade 7 teachers in handling MATATAG Subjects in School Year 2024-2025 as a basis for a teacher support plan. This sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum regarding their productivity and well-being?
2. What teacher support plan can be proposed based on the findings?

Literature Review

In implementing the MATATAG curriculum, training teachers started changing entirely from the 21st-century perspective on derivatives of teachers' methods. Teachers are facing both obstacles and chances brought about by this reform. Findings from related studies carried out by Darling-Hammond (2020) and Hargreaves (2021) indicate a strong connection between teacher performance in the classroom and their mental and physical health, work-life balance, and continued education.

The latest literature review seeks to examine how these factors intersect with the requirements of the MATATAG curriculum, drawing from previous studies to assess their consequences for teacher morale, time management, and overall teaching effectiveness. The study intends to suggest a complete assistance strategy customized to the teacher's needs, allowing them to apply the MATATAG curriculum effectively without compromising their well-being and productivity.

One hypothesis that backs up the research on "Paradigm Shift in Education: Teachers as MATATAG Curriculum Implementers" is the Situated Learning Theory by Lave and Wenger. It offers appropriate fundamentals for comprehending the pragmatic components of curriculum implementation and the teacher encounters connected to it. According to the Situated Learning Theory of Avenue and Wenger, this theory provides a relevant context to examine how the MATATAG curriculum is actualized by teachers due to its emphasis on learning and modification through participation in defined locations within social and contextual structures. This indicates that teachers can only learn better or modify their practices when they are in the situation by being involved in their area of teaching, associating with fellow teachers, and implementing new strategies as they go along.

Ancheta (2024), highlights that these features ensure effective modification of The MATATAG curriculum meant for K-10 levels so that it could be less complicated. However, teachers lack complete rights and principles to verbalize and demonstrate values. In that case, there will always be possibilities for returning to the K-12 system, which does not work. The MATATAG curriculum simplifies lessons so people will forget everything they previously knew. In other words, if teachers don't have full power and rights to express and implement it, whatever simplifications are intended herein may not produce quality education for all. On the other hand, the lack of teacher autonomy might take us back to the K-12 system; this old approach to teaching has drawn criticism due to its failure to cater to all aspects of learner diversity.

In addition to the fact that these are some of the school executives' and teachers' misunderstandings, they also faced strains like irritability. Yet, their involvement was paramount for the execution of the agenda (Domingo et al., 2024). The problems of communication and emotion experienced by school managers and teachers, like annoyance, represent the hurdles faced whenever there is a significant change in education. Such difficulties involving emotions and minds may interfere with the timely carrying out of the syllabus, making those executed unwilling and unfocused.

On the other hand, Aguas (2020), underlines that curriculum congestion, resource scarcity, and low levels of teacher preparedness have made its delivery ineffective. To ensure that the MATATAG curriculum can be better implemented, policymakers and educational leaders must prioritize professional development, make resources available, and focus on core competencies to streamline the curriculum. This will help provide a more unified educational experience across all public schools.

A shortage of vital resources in textbooks, aids for teaching, and classroom facilities are the characteristics exhibited by most schools across the Philippines (Cruz, 2019). Policymakers and educational authorities must prioritize resource allocation and infrastructure development for schools, particularly those in areas that have received less funding. Textbooks, teaching materials, and classroom facilities are essential investments to provide all schools with the resources they need to implement the MATATAG curriculum effectively. The curriculum implementation will be inconsistent unless such investments are made; consequently, its effect on improving the Philippine education system could be significantly reduced.

Kilag et al. (2024) emphasize curriculum relevance, alignment, and future-oriented skills development in Philippine education. This highlights the enormous need for educational reforms to prepare students for a changing world. The emphasis on curriculum relevance, alignment, and future-oriented skills development underscores the need for thorough educational reforms that prepare students for the complexities of the modern world. While such changes entail careful implementation and persistent support, they will likely enhance educational quality and adequately equip learners for future success.

Even though much research has been done about broad changes made in the education sector and how teachers can adjust, not much has been done specifically on the MATATAG curriculum. This study aims to examine how grade 7 teachers perceive/and their responses toward novel requirements essential for MATATAG implementation, especially their well-being and productivity levels. Most studies that have been conducted have generally discussed teachers' welfare as well as their productivity without addressing the

issue in connection with the specific modifications in the syllabus. In these aspects, this study fills a niche for context-specific research by examining the effects of the MATATAG curriculum.

In conclusion, the review of related literature underscores the critical need to understand the practical implications of implementing the MATATAG curriculum, mainly focusing on teachers' perceptions, well-being, and productivity. The influence of teacher well-being on teacher effectiveness will be investigated in this paper with a particular focus on the MATATAG curriculum. The literature reveals gaps in understanding the specific impacts of the MATATAG curriculum on teachers, particularly regarding their well-being, productivity, and the need for targeted support plans. This study aims to fill these gaps through an in-depth assessment of Grade 7 teachers' understanding and handling of the MATATAG curriculum and to develop an all-encompassing support mechanism that resonates with their preferences and problems.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive research design is a vital methodology in various fields, including social sciences, education, healthcare, and business, as it objectively observes and analyzes characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena without manipulation (Hassan, 2024). Thus, the researchers used a descriptive approach to explore the perceptions of Grade 7 teachers in handling MATATAG subjects in School Year 2024-2025.

Respondents

The study's respondents consisted of all 38 Grade 7 teachers at Talisay National High School in the school year 2024-2025, selected through complete-enumeration sampling. They were chosen as respondents because they were the first-hand implementers of the MATATAG curriculum.

Instrument

The tool utilized in this study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire. To ensure its validity a pilot test was taken, evaluation of academic peers, and validation of the experts was made. The questions were closed-ended with defined responses. Likert scale was also utilized to measure the level of agreement, Bhandari & Nikolopoulou, (2023) stated that respondents are given a variety of options for responses.

The Likert scale, with responses ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree,' was used as the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum regarding productivity and well-being. This scale is commonly employed in research to quantify subjective opinions and perceptions, providing reliable measures for analysis. The researchers determined the level through the following categories: (5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

Procedure

The data was gathered through the following steps: First, the researchers sought permission from the office of the principal to conduct the study at Talisay National High School by submitting a formal letter. Once approval was granted, the researchers administered the survey to the participants. Respondents were given ample time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience.

After collecting the responses, the researchers proceeded with data tabulation and analysis. The data was encoded in Microsoft Excel and analyzed by obtaining the weighted mean and the level of agreement among teachers as curriculum implementers. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Additionally, statistical computations were conducted with the assistance of a statistician. Finally, the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data were carried out as the last step in the data-gathering procedures.

Ethical Considerations

In the conduct of the study, the researcher complied with ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were fully informed of the study's objectives, duration, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Before of this study, it underwent ethical review and approval by the concerned authorities. The respondents were informed about the purpose, expected duration, and benefits of the research.

The researchers ensured that all research activities, particularly in gathering data such as face-to-face distribution of the survey questionnaire, conform to the highest degree of protecting human rights and safety and all responses were kept confidential. The data gathered was anonymized before the analysis.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study's research question, the data gathered, the statistical analysis done and the interpretation of findings are presented in this section. These are presented in tables following the sequence of the specific research problem regarding the evaluating the research skills development.

Table 1. *Teacher's Productivity*

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
I have effectively integrated the MATATAG curriculum core objectives into my daily teaching practices.	3.37	0.48	Strongly Agree
I adapted various instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of my students.	3.43	0.50	Strongly Agree
I used different ways to measure and evaluate productivity and effectiveness in applying the MATATAG curriculum.	3.47	0.51	Strongly Agree
I collaborated with my colleagues and stakeholders to enhance the MATATAG implementation and address challenges.	3.50	0.51	Strongly Agree
I need various types of professional development and support to maximize productivity in delivering the MATATAG curriculum.	3.67	0.55	Strongly Agree
I tracked and responded to students' progress and feedback in the context of the MATATAG curriculum through systematic monitoring and adjustments.	3.27	0.52	Strongly Agree
I use modified approaches/techniques/strategies to improve educational outcomes.	3.57	0.50	Strongly Agree
I can balance the demands of the MATATAG curriculum with other educational responsibilities and priorities.	3.17	0.70	Agree
I still have ample time to prepare for my next class	3.23	0.73	Agree
I can still find time to work with my other responsibilities as a teacher and/or a classroom adviser.	3.37	0.61	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.41		Strongly Agree
Average Standard Deviation		0.56	

Table 1 shows the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum in terms of productivity, with an average weighted mean and standard deviation of 3.41 and 0.56 respectively, interpreted as "Strongly Agree" that the teachers on average do feel that they are effective in their functions. The most compelling result is the statement "I need various types of professional development and support to maximize productivity in delivering the MATATAG curriculum" with a mean of 3.67, interpreted as "Strongly Agree" which implies that there are very few curated opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their teaching practice. This suggests that there is an urgency for well-planned and lasting capacity-building interventions targeted at teachers about the MATATAG curriculum.

Nonetheless, despite these favorable results, the rating of 3.17 for different responsibilities alongside core curriculum delivery reveals a lack of time management assistance. There is a chance that teachers are finding it hard to balance different educational responsibilities with the rigorous demands of the MATATAG curriculum.

Furthermore, the statements had standard deviation values below 0.55, indicating strong agreement among teachers on these aspects, reflecting their high confidence in implementing the MATATAG curriculum and collaborating effectively. In contrast, statements with standard deviation values above 0.60 suggest varied experiences concerning workload and time availability.

This implies that assistance such as time management training for teachers or changing the allocation of work should be put in place to enable the teachers to achieve maximum output without harming them health-wise. Moreover, although collaboration and innovation are demonstrated as strong points, these areas could be even enhanced by encouraging peer mentorship and support in schools to remove the strain from individuals and enable everyone to grow.

Garma (2024) posits that a well-structured teacher support implementation plan—encompassing scheduled technical assistance, capacity-building initiatives, and psychological support—is essential for educators to effectively sustain the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. Without proper support, teachers may struggle to adapt, hindering the curriculum's effectiveness.

Additionally, implementing extensive teacher training initiatives, strengthening support systems for educators, overcoming infrastructural challenges, and fostering inclusive approaches that accommodate the diverse needs of students (Kilag et al., 2024). Hence, institutions and policymakers must prioritize teacher support systems.

As shown in Table 2, the teacher's perception of implementing the MATATAG curriculum in terms of well-being, with an average weighted mean and standard deviation of 3.22 and 0.57 respectively, is interpreted as "Strongly Agree". A notable indication is the high score of 3.47 regarding the influence of the school environment on well-being, which emphasizes that the work environment and culture within schools significantly influence well-being. This indicates that school culture, be it positive or negative, can influence how supported teachers feel about their environment regardless of official policies and systems in place. Nonetheless, it is concerning that there is a considerably low score given on the construct administrative acknowledgment of well-being (3.00) as well as that of perception of workloads being manageable (3.20). These data underscore that there is a high tendency for teachers to take care of their well-being with personal responsibility, but they are not being sufficiently supported by the school leadership in so many ways, such as recognition of efforts towards well-being, workload distribution, and stress-relieving resources. In addition, the standard deviation of 0.61 for "I feel supported in implementing the new curriculum" suggests mixed perceptions—some feel well-supported, while others may lack necessary guidance while workload perception with the standard deviation of 0.61 varies among teachers, indicating differences in workload distribution or coping mechanisms.

Table 2. *Teacher's Well Being*

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Feedback and concerns regarding my well-being are acknowledged by my school administrator in various ways.	3.00	0.53	Strongly Agree
I feel supported and valued by my school to varying extents in implementing the new curriculum.	3.20	0.61	Strongly Agree
I perceived my workload under the MATATAG curriculum as manageable in various ways, and this perception impacted my overall well-being.	3.20	0.61	Strongly Agree
I have varying levels of access to resources and support systems that help me manage stress and prevent burnout.	3.03	0.49	Strongly Agree
I used various strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance while adhering to the demands of the MATATAG curriculum.	3.30	0.60	Strongly Agree
The work environment and culture within schools significantly influence my well-being.	3.47	0.57	Strongly Agree
	Average Weighted Mean	3.22	Strongly Agree
	Average Standard Deviation	0.57	

Li (2024) emphasizes that school leadership practices are shaped by both external results-driven accountability and the personal and professional backgrounds of school leaders. These leadership approaches significantly impact teachers' professionalism, professionalization, and overall well-being. In addition, Cann (2021) highlights that strong, supportive relationships between school leaders and teachers are fundamental in fostering teacher well-being and professional growth. Effective leadership goes beyond administrative duties; it involves demonstrating genuine care, valuing teachers' contributions, and integrating well-being support into daily school interactions

Conclusions

The findings revealed Grade 7 teachers' perceptions of their productivity and well-being regarding the 1st phase of the MATATAG curriculum implementation, indicating that they generally agree on their confidence in implementing the curriculum and collaborating effectively. The results suggest that the teachers can adopt any educational reform and ensure its full implementation. However, the variations in support, workload, and time availability emphasize the need for targeted interventions to provide equitable support and workload distribution for teachers and empower them as curriculum implementers in the paradigm shift in education.

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