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In the Midst of Change: A Phenomenological Study on Secondary School Teachers' Adaptation to the MATATAG Curriculum

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A B S T R A C T

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in Parang, Maguindanao del Norte. Specifically, it examined teachers' experiences, challenges encountered, and coping strategies employed during curriculum implementation. Five secondary school teachers handling Grades 7 and 8 from selected public schools participated in the study through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers viewed the transition as meaningful despite experiencing emotional strain, instructional pressures, limited instructional time, and learner readiness concerns. To address these challenges, participants employed strategic planning, curriculum-aligned instruction, continuous preparation, and adaptive teaching practices. The study highlights the importance of sustained professional development, institutional support, and collaborative learning opportunities to strengthen teachers' adaptation and ensure the successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

The Education systems continuously undergo curriculum reforms to address evolving societal demands, technological advancements, and educational priorities. These reforms aim to improve the quality of instruction and ensure that learners acquire competencies necessary for lifelong learning and active participation in society. However, the success of curriculum reforms largely depends on teachers, who serve as the primary implementers of educational policies within the classroom. Research has shown that curriculum transitions require teachers to adjust their instructional practices, classroom management approaches, and professional responsibilities while simultaneously responding to learners' diverse needs.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education introduced the MATATAG Curriculum as a revised and streamlined framework designed to strengthen foundational learning, reduce curriculum congestion, and focus on essential competencies. The curriculum emphasizes literacy, numeracy, and character development while providing learners with meaningful and relevant educational experiences. The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum began in phases, with Grades 7 and 8 among the early grade levels involved in the transition. As a result, secondary school teachers were required to adapt their teaching practices, learning materials, and assessment strategies to align with the new curriculum standards.

Within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), curriculum implementation presents unique challenges due to contextual factors such as limited instructional resources, varying levels of learner preparedness, and the need for culturally responsive educational practices. While the goals of the MATATAG Curriculum are aligned with improving educational quality and foundational learning, teachers are expected to navigate these contextual realities while ensuring effective classroom implementation. Understanding how teachers experience and respond to these changes is essential in identifying the support mechanisms necessary for successful curriculum implementation.

Previous studies on curriculum reform have emphasized that adaptation extends beyond technical compliance and involves teachers' perceptions, emotions, professional growth, and meaning-making processes. Phenomenological inquiry provides an opportunity to examine these lived experiences and gain deeper insights into how teachers understand and navigate educational change. Despite growing literature on curriculum reforms, limited studies have explored the experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly within the BARMM context.

This study explored the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in Parang, Maguindanao del Norte as they adapted to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Specifically, it sought to understand teachers' experiences, the challenges they encountered during implementation, and the coping strategies they employed in responding to curriculum reform. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge on

curriculum adaptation and may provide valuable insights for policymakers, school administrators, teacher education institutions, and future researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' Adaptation to Curriculum Reforms

Curriculum reforms are essential mechanisms for improving educational quality and responding to emerging societal, technological, and pedagogical demands. However, the effectiveness of these reforms largely depends on teachers, who serve as the primary agents responsible for translating policy into classroom practice. According to Fullan (2016), educational change becomes successful when teachers understand, accept, and effectively implement new curriculum expectations. Adaptation often requires modifications in instructional methods, assessment practices, classroom management strategies, and the development of new learning materials aligned with curriculum standards.

Several studies have demonstrated that teachers frequently encounter challenges during curriculum transitions. These challenges include increased workload, insufficient instructional resources, limited professional preparation, and uncertainty regarding curriculum expectations. Despite these difficulties, teachers often demonstrate resilience by engaging in collaboration, professional learning, and reflective teaching practices. Such adaptive behaviors enable educators to respond positively to reform initiatives while maintaining instructional effectiveness and learner engagement.

Phenomenological Perspectives on Teachers' Experiences

Phenomenology focuses on understanding individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they assign to particular phenomena. Within educational research, phenomenological inquiry provides valuable insights into how teachers perceive, interpret, and respond to curriculum changes. Rather than examining curriculum implementation solely from a policy perspective, phenomenology emphasizes teachers' personal experiences, emotions, and reflections during periods of educational transition.

Studies have revealed that teachers commonly experience a mixture of emotions during curriculum reform, including anxiety, uncertainty, motivation, and professional fulfillment. These emotional responses significantly influence teachers' willingness to embrace change and their capacity to implement reforms effectively. Teachers' lived experiences also shape their instructional decisions, professional identity, and commitment to educational improvement. Therefore, exploring teachers' perspectives through a phenomenological lens contributes to a deeper understanding of the realities associated with curriculum implementation.

Teacher Readiness and Support Systems

Teacher readiness is a critical factor in the successful implementation of educational reforms. Readiness encompasses teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence in applying curriculum innovations within the

classroom. Research suggests that adequately prepared teachers are more capable of adapting instructional practices and responding to emerging educational demands.

Professional development programs, curriculum orientation activities, mentoring initiatives, and collaborative learning communities serve as important support mechanisms that strengthen teacher readiness. Educational institutions that provide continuous support enable teachers to better understand curriculum objectives and develop effective implementation strategies. Furthermore, supportive leadership and access to instructional resources contribute significantly to teachers' confidence and professional growth during curriculum transitions.

Challenges in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum

The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum has introduced both opportunities and challenges for teachers across the Philippines. While the curriculum aims to reduce content congestion and strengthen foundational learning, educators have reported various implementation concerns. These include limited instructional time, difficulties aligning learning activities with curriculum competencies, insufficient training opportunities, and challenges related to resource availability.

Recent studies on MATATAG Curriculum implementation have identified additional concerns involving learner readiness, foundational learning gaps, and increased instructional demands. Teachers often encounter students who lack prerequisite knowledge and skills necessary for mastering grade-level competencies. Consequently, educators are required to revisit basic concepts while simultaneously meeting curriculum expectations. These challenges highlight the importance of providing teachers with adequate institutional support and professional development opportunities.

Coping Mechanisms and Professional Growth

To address the challenges associated with curriculum reform, teachers employ various coping mechanisms that support professional adaptation and instructional effectiveness. Common strategies include systematic lesson planning, time management, collaboration with colleagues, continuous professional learning, and reflective teaching practices. These approaches enable teachers to manage workload demands while maintaining instructional quality.

Research has shown that peer support, mentoring relationships, and professional learning communities enhance teacher resilience during educational reforms. Collaborative environments provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and emotional support. Additionally, self-directed learning and reflective practice encourage teachers to evaluate their instructional approaches and make necessary adjustments based on learners' needs. Through these strategies, teachers strengthen their professional competence and develop greater confidence in implementing curriculum innovations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives that explain how teachers adapt to curriculum reform.

The first is Lewin's Change Theory, which describes change as a process involving three stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. During the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, teachers experienced the unfreezing stage as they moved away from previous instructional practices. The changing stage involved learning new competencies, adjusting teaching strategies, and adapting classroom routines. Finally, the refreezing stage occurred as teachers gradually integrated the curriculum into their daily professional practice.

The second framework is Fullan's Educational Change Theory, which emphasizes that successful educational reforms depend on teachers' active participation, understanding, and commitment. Fullan argues that curriculum implementation is not merely a technical process but also a social and professional experience that requires continuous support, collaboration, and learning. This theory provides insight into how teachers navigate challenges and develop adaptive responses during curriculum transitions.

The third framework is Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction, collaboration, and contextual influences in learning and development. Within the context of curriculum implementation, teachers acquire knowledge, skills, and coping strategies through interactions with colleagues, school leaders, and professional learning communities. The theory explains how collaborative support systems contribute to teachers' professional growth and adaptation.

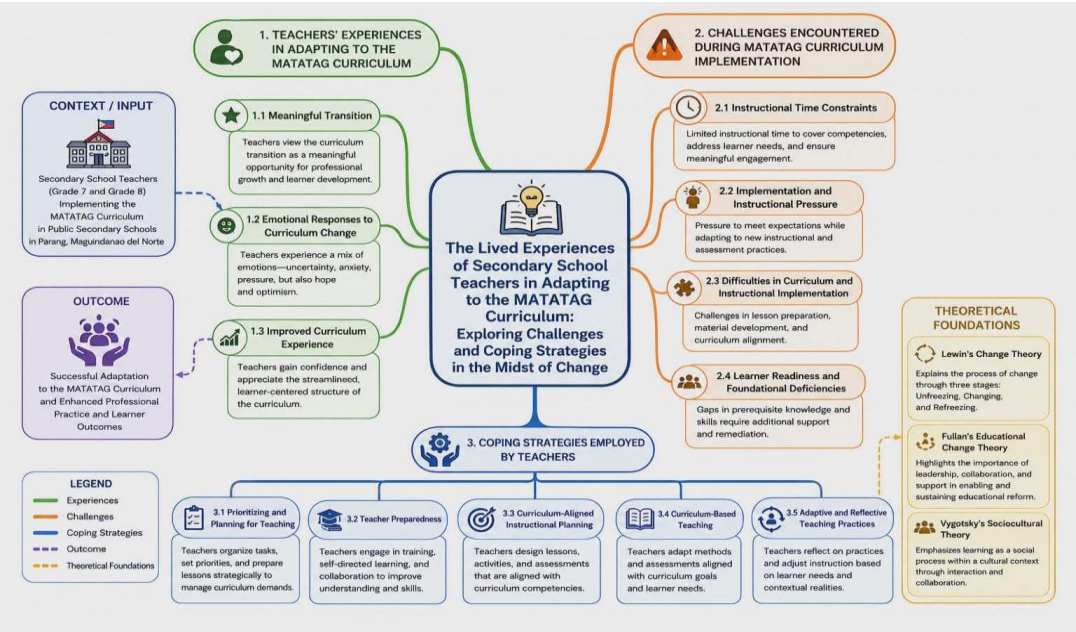


Figure 1. Mind Map

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Phenomenology is an appropriate approach for investigating individuals' perceptions, meanings, and interpretations of a particular phenomenon. Through this design, the researchers gained an in-depth understanding of how teachers experienced curriculum transition, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they utilized to adapt to educational change.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in Parang, Maguindanao del Norte, Philippines. The locale was chosen because it was among the areas implementing the MATATAG Curriculum during its initial phase, providing a relevant context for examining teachers' adaptation experiences. The schools involved in the study serve diverse learners and operate within educational conditions that reflect the realities of curriculum implementation in the region.

Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of five (5) secondary school teachers handling Grade 7 and Grade 8 classes under the MATATAG Curriculum. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that those included possessed direct experience with curriculum implementation. Eligibility criteria required participants to be currently teaching under the MATATAG Curriculum and willing to share their experiences and insights regarding the transition. The selected participants represented various teaching experiences and professional backgrounds, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Their firsthand experiences provided valuable information regarding curriculum adaptation in actual classroom settings.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers. The interview questions focused on three major areas: teachers' experiences during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, challenges encountered throughout the transition process, and coping strategies employed to address implementation concerns. The semi-structured format allowed participants to express their experiences freely while ensuring that relevant information aligned with the study's objectives was obtained. Follow-up questions were utilized when necessary to clarify responses and elicit richer descriptions of participants' lived experiences.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researchers secured the necessary permissions from school authorities and obtained informed consent from all participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature

of their participation, and the confidentiality of the information they provided. Individual interviews were conducted at mutually convenient times and locations. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to openly discuss their experiences related to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Responses were documented and transcribed for analysis. To ensure accuracy, the researchers reviewed and organized the interview data immediately after each interview session.

Data Analysis

The study utilized thematic analysis to examine and interpret the collected data. The analysis followed a systematic process involving familiarization with the data, coding of significant statements, identification of recurring patterns, development of themes, and interpretation of findings. Interview transcripts were carefully reviewed multiple times to identify meaningful statements related to teachers' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. Similar codes were grouped into categories, which were subsequently refined into broader themes. This analytical process enabled the researchers to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences and generate a comprehensive understanding of teacher adaptation to the MATATAG Curriculum.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researchers employed several qualitative research strategies. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants and careful verification of interview responses. Dependability was achieved by maintaining a systematic record of data collection and analysis procedures. Confirmability was ensured through objective interpretation of participants' narratives, while transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that the information they shared would be used solely for academic purposes.

The researchers respected participants' rights to privacy, anonymity, and withdrawal from the study at any stage without penalty. All collected data were securely stored and handled with utmost confidentiality to protect the integrity of the research process and the welfare of the participants.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study explored the lived experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, twelve major themes emerged across the

three research questions. The findings are presented according to the experiences, challenges, and coping strategies reported by the participants.

Teachers' Experiences in Adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum

Three themes emerged regarding the experiences of secondary school teachers during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum: (1) Meaningful Transition, (2) Emotional Responses to Curriculum Change, and (3) Improved Curriculum Experience.

Table 1. Teachers' Experiences in Adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum

Theme	Description
Meaningful Transition	Teachers viewed the curriculum transition as a significant professional experience that introduced new opportunities for growth and development.
Emotional Responses to Curriculum Change	Participants experienced varying emotions, including anxiety, uncertainty, excitement, and motivation during the adaptation process.
Improved Curriculum Experience	Teachers observed positive changes in curriculum organization, content delivery, and instructional focus.

Theme 1: Meaningful Transition

Participants described the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum as a meaningful transition that required them to adjust their instructional approaches and professional practices. Despite the challenges associated with change, teachers perceived the transition as an opportunity to improve their teaching competencies and provide more focused learning experiences for students.

The findings suggest that teachers recognized the value of curriculum reform in enhancing educational quality. They viewed adaptation not merely as compliance with policy requirements but as a professional responsibility that contributed to learner development and educational improvement.

Theme 2: Emotional Responses to Curriculum Change

The transition generated a range of emotional responses among participants. While some teachers expressed feelings of uncertainty and apprehension regarding the new curriculum requirements, others demonstrated enthusiasm and optimism about the potential benefits of the reform.

Participants acknowledged that adapting to new instructional expectations required considerable effort and adjustment. However, as they gained familiarity with the curriculum, many reported increased confidence and a stronger sense of professional accomplishment.

Theme 3: Improved Curriculum Experience

Teachers reported that the MATATAG Curriculum provided a more focused and manageable framework for instruction. The streamlined

competencies enabled educators to concentrate on essential learning outcomes while reducing content congestion.

Participants observed that the revised curriculum structure allowed them to allocate more attention to foundational skills and meaningful learning experiences. As a result, they perceived improvements in lesson delivery and curriculum implementation.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers During MATATAG Curriculum Implementation

Four themes emerged regarding the challenges experienced by participants: (1) Instructional Time Constraints, (2) Implementation and Instructional Pressure, (3) Difficulties in Curriculum and Instructional Implementation, and (4) Learner Readiness and Foundational Deficiencies.

Table 2. The Challenges Encountered by Teachers During MATATAG Curriculum Implementation

Theme	Description
Instructional Time Constraints	Limited instructional time affected lesson delivery and competency coverage.
Implementation and Instructional Pressure	Teachers experienced pressure associated with meeting curriculum expectations and educational demands.
Difficulties in Curriculum and Instructional Implementation	Participants encountered challenges related to instructional planning, materials preparation, and curriculum alignment.
Learner Readiness and Foundational Deficiencies	Students' limited foundational knowledge and skills created barriers to effective curriculum implementation.

Theme 1: Instructional Time Constraints

One of the most frequently reported challenges involved insufficient instructional time. Teachers expressed concerns regarding the limited time available to address learning competencies while simultaneously accommodating diverse learner needs.

Participants indicated that balancing curriculum requirements with classroom realities often required additional effort in lesson planning and instructional delivery. Time constraints also affected opportunities for remediation and enrichment activities.

Theme 2: Implementation and Instructional Pressure

Teachers reported experiencing pressure related to fulfilling curriculum expectations and ensuring successful implementation. Participants described the responsibility of meeting instructional targets while adapting to unfamiliar curriculum structures.

The pressure was further intensified by the need to prepare instructional materials, adjust teaching strategies, and monitor student progress within a changing educational environment.

Theme 3: Difficulties in Curriculum and Instructional Implementation

Participants encountered various implementation difficulties, including challenges in interpreting curriculum requirements, preparing appropriate learning resources, and aligning instructional activities with curriculum competencies.

Teachers noted that adapting existing instructional materials to meet new curriculum standards required additional preparation and continuous learning. These challenges highlighted the complexity of curriculum transition at the classroom level.

Theme 4: Learner Readiness and Foundational Deficiencies

Another significant challenge involved learners' readiness for the revised curriculum. Participants observed that some students lacked the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to engage effectively with grade-level competencies.

Teachers frequently adjusted instructional strategies and revisited prerequisite concepts to address learning gaps. This situation increased instructional demands and influenced the pace of curriculum implementation.

Coping Strategies Employed by Teachers

Five themes emerged regarding the coping strategies used by participants to address implementation challenges: (1) Prioritizing and Planning for Teaching, (2) Teacher Preparedness, (3) Curriculum-Aligned Instructional Planning, (4) Curriculum-Based Teaching, and (5) Adaptive and Reflective Teaching Practices.

Table 3. Coping Strategies Employed by Teachers

Theme	Description
Prioritizing and Planning for Teaching	Teachers managed curriculum demands through effective planning and prioritization.
Teacher Preparedness	Continuous learning and professional preparation strengthened implementation capacity. Curriculum-Aligned Instructional Planning
Curriculum-Aligned Instructional Planning	Participants ensured alignment between lessons, activities, and curriculum standards.
Curriculum-Based Teaching	Instructional practices were adjusted according to curriculum requirements and learner needs.
Adaptive and Reflective Teaching Practices	Teachers continuously reflected on and modified their approaches to improve effectiveness.

Theme 1: Prioritizing and Planning for Teaching

Participants emphasized the importance of careful planning in managing curriculum demands. Effective scheduling, lesson preparation, and prioritization enabled teachers to maximize available instructional time and maintain curriculum alignment.

Theme 2: Teacher Preparedness

Teachers highlighted the value of professional preparation in supporting adaptation. Participation in trainings, self-directed learning activities, and collaborative discussions enhanced their understanding of curriculum expectations and instructional strategies.

Theme 3: Curriculum-Aligned Instructional Planning

Participants demonstrated commitment to aligning learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment practices with MATATAG Curriculum standards. Such alignment facilitated more organized and purposeful instruction.

Theme 4: Curriculum-Based Teaching

Teachers adjusted their classroom practices to ensure consistency with curriculum goals and competency requirements. This involved selecting appropriate teaching strategies, learning resources, and assessment approaches that supported learner achievement.

Theme 5: Adaptive and Reflective Teaching Practices

Participants reported regularly evaluating their instructional practices and making necessary adjustments based on classroom experiences. Reflection enabled teachers to identify effective strategies, address emerging challenges, and continuously improve curriculum implementation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how secondary school teachers experience and adapt to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. The results reveal that curriculum adaptation is a multidimensional process involving professional growth, emotional adjustment, instructional challenges, and strategic coping mechanisms. The discussion of findings is organized according to the three major areas explored in the study: teachers' experiences, challenges encountered, and coping strategies employed.

Teachers' Experiences in Adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum

The findings indicate that teachers generally perceived the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum as a meaningful transition despite the demands associated with educational change. Participants recognized the reform as an opportunity to improve instructional practices and enhance learner outcomes. This finding supports Fullan's Educational Change Theory, which emphasizes that meaningful educational reform occurs when teachers actively engage in the change process and recognize its value in improving educational quality.

The theme of Meaningful Transition suggests that teachers viewed curriculum adaptation not merely as compliance with institutional requirements but as a professional undertaking that contributes to educational improvement. This perspective reflects teachers' commitment to their professional

responsibilities and their willingness to embrace innovation in teaching and learning.

The emergence of Emotional Responses to Curriculum Change further highlights the human dimension of educational reform. Participants reported experiencing uncertainty, anxiety, and pressure during the initial stages of implementation while simultaneously expressing optimism regarding the curriculum's potential benefits. These findings align with Lewin's Change Theory, particularly the unfreezing stage, where individuals encounter uncertainty as they move away from familiar practices and begin adapting to new expectations.

As teachers gained experience with the curriculum, they reported an Improved Curriculum Experience characterized by greater familiarity, confidence, and appreciation of the curriculum's streamlined structure. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that sustained engagement with curriculum reforms often leads to increased teacher competence and positive perceptions of educational change. The finding also reflects Lewin's refreezing stage, wherein new practices gradually become integrated into routine professional behavior.

Challenges Encountered During Curriculum Implementation

The findings reveal that teachers encountered several significant challenges while implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Among these, Instructional Time Constraints emerged as a major concern. Participants reported difficulties balancing curriculum competencies, learner needs, and available instructional time. Although the MATATAG Curriculum seeks to reduce curriculum congestion, teachers still experienced challenges in ensuring adequate competency coverage and meaningful learner engagement.

This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that curriculum reforms often require teachers to accomplish substantial instructional responsibilities within limited timeframes. The challenge becomes more pronounced when teachers must provide remediation and differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse learner abilities.

The theme of Implementation and Instructional Pressure reflects the demands associated with curriculum transition. Participants experienced pressure to meet curriculum expectations while simultaneously adapting to new instructional approaches and assessment practices. This finding supports Fullan's assertion that educational change is a complex process that involves not only technical adjustments but also emotional and professional challenges for educators.

Similarly, Difficulties in Curriculum and Instructional Implementation demonstrate the practical realities teachers face during reform initiatives. Participants encountered challenges in lesson preparation, instructional material development, and curriculum alignment. These difficulties illustrate that successful implementation requires more than policy directives; it also necessitates adequate support systems, professional development opportunities, and accessible instructional resources.

The theme of Learner Readiness and Foundational Deficiencies further highlights contextual factors influencing curriculum implementation. Teachers observed that many learners struggled with prerequisite knowledge and foundational skills, requiring additional instructional support. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs within developmental and social contexts. The need to address learner deficiencies before introducing more advanced competencies demonstrates the importance of responsive and learner-centered instructional approaches.

Coping Strategies Employed by Teachers

Despite encountering numerous challenges, participants demonstrated resilience through the use of various coping strategies. The themes of Prioritizing and Planning for Teaching and Curriculum-Aligned Instructional Planning illustrate teachers' proactive efforts to manage curriculum demands effectively. Through careful organization, lesson preparation, and alignment of instructional activities with curriculum competencies, participants were able to navigate implementation challenges while maintaining instructional quality.

The emergence of Teacher Preparedness as a coping strategy underscores the importance of continuous professional learning. Participants relied on training programs, self-directed learning, and professional collaboration to strengthen their understanding of curriculum expectations. This finding supports existing literature emphasizing the role of professional development in facilitating successful curriculum implementation.

The theme of Curriculum-Based Teaching demonstrates teachers' commitment to ensuring that instructional practices remain aligned with curriculum goals. Participants adapted teaching methods and assessment strategies to support learner achievement while complying with curriculum standards. Such adaptive behavior reflects teachers' professional competence and dedication to educational improvement.

Finally, Adaptive and Reflective Teaching Practices emerged as an essential strategy for addressing implementation challenges. Teachers continuously evaluated their instructional approaches, reflected on classroom experiences, and modified practices based on learner needs and contextual realities. This finding supports both Fullan's Educational Change Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasize continuous learning, collaboration, and professional growth as critical components of successful educational change.

Implications of the Findings

The findings suggest that successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum depends not only on curriculum design but also on teachers' capacity to adapt to change. Educational leaders and policymakers should therefore prioritize sustained professional development programs, mentoring initiatives, collaborative learning opportunities, and resource support systems that strengthen teacher readiness and confidence.

Furthermore, the challenges associated with learner readiness indicate the need for targeted interventions that address foundational learning gaps.

Strengthening support mechanisms for both teachers and learners may contribute to more effective curriculum implementation and improved educational outcomes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while curriculum reform presents significant challenges, teachers possess the resilience, adaptability, and professional commitment necessary to facilitate meaningful educational change when provided with appropriate institutional support and professional development opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study explored the lived experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in selected public secondary schools in Parang, Maguindanao del Norte. The findings revealed that teachers generally perceived the curriculum transition as a meaningful professional experience that contributed to their growth and development as educators. Despite experiencing emotional uncertainty and adjustment challenges during the early stages of implementation, participants gradually developed confidence and appreciation for the curriculum's streamlined structure and learner-centered focus.

The study further revealed that teachers encountered significant challenges, including instructional time constraints, implementation pressures, curriculum-related difficulties, and learner readiness concerns. These challenges affected instructional delivery and required teachers to exert additional effort in planning, preparation, and classroom management.

Nevertheless, teachers demonstrated resilience and adaptability through various coping strategies. Effective planning, continuous professional preparation, curriculum-aligned instruction, and reflective teaching practices enabled participants to navigate implementation challenges and maintain instructional effectiveness. The findings underscore the critical role of teacher adaptability, professional commitment, and institutional support in ensuring the successful implementation of curriculum reforms.

Overall, the study concludes that while the MATATAG Curriculum presents implementation challenges, it also provides opportunities for professional growth and instructional improvement. Successful curriculum implementation is strengthened when teachers are supported through continuous learning opportunities, adequate resources, and collaborative professional environments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School administrators should strengthen support mechanisms for teachers through continuous monitoring, mentoring programs, and professional development activities that address curriculum implementation concerns.
2. The Department of Education and other educational stakeholders should provide sustained training and capacity-building initiatives to enhance

teachers' understanding of MATATAG Curriculum standards, instructional strategies, and assessment practices.

3. Schools should encourage professional collaboration through learning action cells, peer mentoring, and professional learning communities to promote knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving among teachers.
4. Additional instructional resources and curriculum support materials should be developed and made accessible to teachers to facilitate effective classroom implementation.
5. Educational interventions should be designed to address learner readiness issues and foundational learning gaps to ensure that students can effectively engage with curriculum competencies.
6. Policymakers should continuously evaluate the implementation process and consider teachers' experiences and feedback when refining curriculum policies and support programs.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

While this study provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of secondary school teachers adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum, several areas remain worthy of further investigation.

Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving larger participant populations and multiple geographic locations to provide broader perspectives on curriculum adaptation across different educational contexts. Comparative studies may also be undertaken to examine differences in adaptation experiences among elementary, junior high school, and senior high school teachers implementing curriculum reforms.

Additionally, quantitative or mixed-method studies may be conducted to investigate the relationship between teacher readiness, professional development, instructional effectiveness, and learner outcomes under the MATATAG Curriculum. Such studies may provide empirical evidence regarding factors that influence successful curriculum implementation.

Future research may likewise explore the perspectives of school administrators, curriculum coordinators, parents, and learners to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation process. Investigating long-term impacts of the MATATAG Curriculum on teaching practices and student achievement

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