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Teachers' Readiness and Challenges in MATATAG Curriculum in the Division of Abra: Basis for Teacher Training and Development

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ABSTRACT

This research focused on the readiness, efficacy, effectiveness, and issues encountered by Grade 7 Technology and Livelihood Education teachers in the Division of Abra utilizing the MATATAG Curriculum as the basis for a teacher training program. A descriptive-correlational study was employed, and the data was gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire distributed to Grade 7 TLE teachers. The results showed efficacy and effectiveness in planning, instruction, assessment methods, and the use of learning materials. However, teachers moderately to seriously faced issues due to a lack of instructional materials and equipment, insufficient training, concerns about student preparation, and administrative support. Significant correlations were found between selected factors of a teacher profile and levels of efficacy and effectiveness. In general, the results underscore the importance of continuous training, appropriate resources, and improved institutional support.

Keywords: *MATATAG Curriculum, Technology and Livelihood Education, teacher readiness, teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation*

INTRODUCTION

The quest for excellent education is greatly dependent on the successful implementation of educational programs that have a significant impact on improving the performance of learners. In a bid to address the introduced the MATATAG Curriculum, which is a competency-based curriculum that aims to improve foundational competencies and enable learners to learn in a real-world setting in various subjects such as Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE). TLE is one of the major subjects taught in secondary education that equips learners with the necessary skills to get a job and build their livelihood.

However, the effective implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum is greatly reliant on the capability, training, and ability of teachers to implement the curriculum goals. Teachers are significant in

closing the gap between the design and implementation of the curriculum, and their effectiveness in teaching has a great influence on the learning outcomes of students. Based on research, age, experience, and views on technology have been found to influence teaching capability and the efficiency of implementing the curriculum. Despite the MATATAG Curriculum's effectiveness, teachers are still faced with training and teaching capabilities, lack of teaching resources, large class sizes, and learner readiness, which hinder the application of innovative approaches and authentic assessments (Rosal, 2024).

These challenges are further aggravated in a geographically and economically diverse region, like the Division of Abra. The teachers in this environment are faced with contextual constraints like the absence of access to teaching materials, the absence of opportunities for professional development, and the need to develop localized teaching practices that are sensitive to the needs of the learners. As per a study, participation in professional development activities enhances the teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of the curriculum and encourages their intention to carry out reforms efficiently (Yu et al., 2021).

In support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims for inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education (United Nations, 2015), the TLE curriculum plays a crucial role in developing students' technical and vocational skills. But achieving this target depends on the preparation and competence of teachers, especially in Grade 7, who lay the foundation for students' technical skill development. Empirical studies have found that teacher competence is a major predictor of student development and a crucial element in achieving SDG 4 (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Continuous professional development is essential in technical-vocational education because of the ever-changing demands of the industry and technologies (UNESCO, 2021). However, countries like the Philippines, which are considered poor nations, still face challenges in the absence of training opportunities, outdated teaching materials, and resource constraints (World Bank 2020).

The MATATAG Curriculum, launched in 2023, seeks to decongest the learning competencies and enhance technical-vocational education through competency-based and industry-aligned instruction (DepEd, 2023). Although literature on curriculum change highlights teacher readiness as a precursor to a successful implementation process (Fullan, 2020; Guskey, 2002), current training initiatives often neglect the specific needs of TLE teachers, especially in rural areas (Salandanan, 2022). Moreover, there is a lack of localized research on the perceived effectiveness and issues of Grade 7 TLE teachers in using the MATATAG Curriculum.

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the perceived efficacy and challenges of Grade 7 TLE teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in the Division of Abra. Through the documentation of the experiences, challenges, and needs of the teachers, this research hopes to provide empirical support for the development of teacher training and development programs. In the end, this research hopes to improve the implementation of the curriculum, empower teachers, and help provide quality skills-oriented education for a sustainable livelihood.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine the application of the MATATAG Curriculum in Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) among Grade 7 teachers in the Division of Abra. The specific objectives of the study are to determine the demographic and professional profiles of the teachers, their efficacy and effectiveness in the implementation of the curriculum, and the seriousness of the issues they encounter. The study also aims to determine the relationships and variations among the characteristics of

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the teachers' profiles, including their efficacy, effectiveness, and encountered obstacles. Finally, the study aims to develop an intervention strategy to enhance the teachers' preparedness, strengthen their practices, and ensure the effective and sustained implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in TLE.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a descriptive-correlational research design was used to explore the readiness and challenges of Grade 7 TLE teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in the Division of Abra, which formed the foundation for a teacher training and development program. In the descriptive part of the study, a systematic exploration of the teachers' readiness and the challenges they encountered in implementing the curriculum in terms of instructional planning, curriculum materials, assessment, and administrative support was conducted, offering a clear description of the situation that needs to be addressed. In the correlational part of the study, the relationship between the teachers' readiness and the challenges they encountered in implementing the curriculum was explored, focusing on the interaction of these two variables and their impact on the implementation of the curriculum. Through the combination of descriptive and correlational research designs, the study was able to provide factual and relational information and develop empirical evidence for the design of a training program that aims to improve the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

Participants

The study was conducted in the Bucay-Manabo District, under the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Abra, which included several public secondary schools in the rural municipalities of Bucay and Manabo. These schools were part of the first-year implementation of the Grade 7 Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) component of the MATATAG Curriculum for School Year 2024-2025. The target population included all Grade 7 TLE teachers of the junior high schools in the district, as they were directly involved in the implementation of the curriculum and had firsthand experience with the challenges and demands of the program. Total enumeration sampling was used, which included all Grade 7 TLE teachers as respondents. This method allowed the study to obtain a complete and accurate set of data on the teachers' readiness, experiences, and challenges, which served as a reliable basis for the design of training programs.

Research Questionnaire

To acquire the needed information, the researcher used a self-constructed survey questionnaire that is valid and reliable to address the research questions and gather information on the profile of Grade 7 TLE teachers, their efficacy in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, the challenges they faced, and possible interventions. The survey questionnaire has four sections. The first section gathered information on the respondents' demographic profile, including age, gender, position, highest educational attainment, years of service, and trainings on the MATATAG Curriculum. The second section measured the teachers' efficacy in lesson planning, teaching, assessment, use of learning resources, and technology integration using a Likert scale. The third section probed the challenges, while the fourth section asked the teachers for

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their suggestions on possible interventions. Validation and reliability were ensured through expert judgment and pilot testing, respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

After getting permission from the Schools Division Office and the principals of the sampled schools, the researcher developed the final validated and reliability-tested questionnaire. To get permission to collect data, a formal request was made, which was approved by the school principal. After getting approval, the researcher introduced the purpose of the study, the contents of the questionnaire, and the respondents' responsibilities to the Head Teachers and Master Teachers. The questionnaire was administered in a face-to-face manner, which enabled the researcher to clarify items and provide complete responses. The completed questionnaires were gathered, sorted, and prepared for analysis. The ethical standards were carefully observed, including obtaining written informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity through coded responses, informing respondents of their right to withdraw at any time, and ensuring their well-being to alleviate any psychological distress.

Statistical Treatment

The researcher employed appropriate statistical procedures for the analysis of the acquired data. The demographic profile of the respondents was presented using frequency and percentage distributions. The weighted mean determined the teachers' efficacy and the severity of problems encountered during the implementation of the TLE MATATAG Curriculum in Abra. Pearson correlation (r) determined the relationship between the teachers' perceived efficacy and the problems encountered, while the chi-square test examined the association between the demographic variables and efficacy. The independent t-tests and one-way ANOVA determined the significant differences in problems encountered by the instructor profile groups. All tests were conducted at a significance level of 0.05. This approach allowed for a comprehensive, accurate, and interpretable evaluation of the teachers' readiness, efficacy, and the factors that affect the implementation of the curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The picture of Grade 7 TLE teachers in the Division of Abra reveals a teaching force that is concentrated in the early and late career phases, with most teachers belonging to the 26-30 years old (32.14%) and 46 years old and above (28.57%) age groups. Most of them are females (75%), with a bachelor’s degree and master’s units (64.29%), while only a few have completed master’s degrees and none have a PhD. They are mostly Teacher I (46.43%) and Teacher III (32.14%), while their participation in professional growth activities is limited, with half of them attending school-based trainings and the rest benefiting from division, regional, or national programs.

Despite the demographic challenges faced, teachers demonstrate remarkable confidence (overall mean of 4.68) and effectiveness (overall mean of 4.69) in bringing the MATATAG Curriculum to life. They create engaging classrooms, skillfully use teaching materials, assess learning thoroughly, and help students master competencies. These results echo the work of Reyes and Villanueva (2022), who highlight how clear

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communication, student-focused activities, and diverse teaching strategies enhance learning. Similarly, Cruz and Alipio (2021) found that active and collaborative approaches boost student participation. Teachers in this study not only design classes that are curriculum-aligned and centered on learners they also blend technology and use a broad range of assessments. This reinforces the findings of Salandanan (2021) and Santos (2023): formative and performance-based assessments play a key role in improving student outcomes.

Curriculum coverage, resource availability, and ongoing professional development still present real challenges for teachers challenges that echo the findings of Mbwile, Mjenda, and Mrema (2025), who identified limited resources as a major barrier to successful curriculum implementation. To help overcome these obstacles, the MATATAG-TLE Capability Enhancement Program (MT-CEP) is being proposed. MT-CEP focuses on building teacher skills, strengthening assessment practices, developing better teaching materials, integrating ICT, and fostering mentoring relationships.

Grounded in social cognitive theory and pedagogical content knowledge, the MT-CEP aims to sustain high teacher efficacy, boost student engagement, and ensure the MATATAG Curriculum continues to be implemented effectively especially in rural schools where these challenges are most acute.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that Grade 7 TLE instructors in Abra demonstrate strong efficacy and effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. These teachers excel in instructional design, engaging students, conducting assessments, and integrating both learning materials and ICT into their teaching. However, they still encounter significant challenges including limited instructional resources, insufficient professional development, lack of administrative support, and concerns about student preparedness challenges that are especially pronounced in rural schools. These obstacles make it harder for teachers to fully realize curriculum goals and adopt innovative teaching strategies.

To bridge these gaps, the MATATAG-TLE Capability Enhancement Program (MT-CEP) is recommended. MT-CEP prioritizes ongoing professional growth, better instructional materials, greater ICT integration, mentoring, and collaborative teacher networks. By strengthening institutional support, implementing regular monitoring, and providing targeted interventions, schools can help teachers remain effective, deliver the curriculum more successfully, and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.

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