



Antecedents of Matatag Curriculum Implementation in Region XII: Creating a Model for its Future Success

Aileen A. Jamero^{1*}, Mildred F. Accad²

¹Department of Education (DepEd) General Santos City

²Sultan Kudarat State University, ACCESS, EJC Montilla. Tacurong City

*Corresponding author

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in the Philippines within the broader context of 21st-century education reforms across Asia. Countries like Singapore, China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Thailand have adopted diverse approaches to curriculum development, integrating critical thinking, creativity, technology, and holistic education. Similarly, the DepEd in the Philippines aims to equip Filipino learners with essential competencies through the MATATAG Curriculum, which aligns with international and local competency frameworks. This curriculum emphasized four key domains: Information, media, and technology skills; learning and innovation skills; communication skills; and life and career skills. However, resource availability, administrative support, and professional development hinder effective implementation. The study employed a quantitative research design, incorporating descriptive, correlational, and predictive approaches to evaluate the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in Region XII. Covering various schools across diverse geographic and socio-economic settings, the study utilized a complete enumeration of 942 respondents, including teachers, school governance council members, school heads, and administrative officers. A researcher-made survey assessed institutional factors, curriculum effectiveness, and teacher engagement. At the same time, secondary data, such as the Comprehensive Reading and Literacy Assessment (CRLA) and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil IRI), will measure literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, multiple regression, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to analyze data and forecast the curriculum's impact. Findings indicated that while the curriculum successfully enhances literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, targeted writing, vocabulary, and mathematics improvements are necessary. Institutional factors such as infrastructure, digital access, and instructional leadership significantly impact implementation, emphasizing the need for sustained investments in teacher education and resource allocation. The study also proposes a forecasting model and the MATATAG Curriculum Enhancement Model (MCEM) as strategic tools for improving sustainability and effectiveness. Recommendations focus on refining professional development, strengthening leadership, enhancing digital infrastructure, and promoting inclusive and data-driven curriculum improvements. Future research is encouraged to explore demographic influences, technological integration, and long-term curriculum impacts to optimize student learning outcomes further.

Keywords: MATATAG Curriculum, 21st-century education, Curriculum implementation, Structural equation modeling (SEM)

1. Introduction

The education sector is tasked with equipping students for the complexity of the 21st century, and the implementation of curricula in various Asian nations indicates varying changes and priorities in education.

Singapore's curriculum focuses on critical thinking and creativity within a rigorous framework (Tan, 2016). China is shifting from rote memorization to integrating modern technologies and critical thinking (Wang & Zhang, 2017). Japan emphasizes holistic education and moral development, with recent reforms incorporating global perspectives (Takeuchi, 2015). South Korea is moving towards a curriculum that fosters creativity and student-centered learning, reducing academic pressure (Kim, 2019). In India, the National Education Policy 2020 seeks to standardize and modernize curricula, focusing on technology and skill development (Agrawal, 2021). Thailand balances academic knowledge with moral education and incorporates 21st-century skills into its curriculum (Prasert, 2018). Each country's approach showcases its unique responses to educational needs and global trends.

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines recognizes the importance of equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies to navigate the challenges of the modern world. Its vision is to create fully developed Filipinos, as per DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024. In keeping with this goal, the MATATAG Curriculum becomes a comprehensive foundation to promote Filipino development. The MATATAG is based on DepEd's 21st-century skills framework.

Given the changing economic and social landscape, the curriculum incorporates local and international competence skill sets frameworks for redefining education (DepEd, 2024). This program aims to give students the necessary skills to succeed in life and work, encouraging critical thinking, computer literacy, teamwork, creativity, and communication. Innovation skills are a crucial aspect of the MATATAG Curriculum. They encompass learning and communication, life and career skills, and information literacy. These skills, encompassing socio-emotional abilities and information literacy, are integral to the curriculum's complexity.

Despite the Department of Education's efforts to introduce the MATATAG Curriculum, there remains a lack of comprehensive research on its future implementation, particularly in addressing challenges such as limited resources, administrative support, teacher training, and large class sizes. While the curriculum aspires to equip students with 21st-century competencies, little is known about its readiness and adaptability across diverse school contexts. There is also a need to explore how the curriculum aligns with ongoing educational reforms and contributes to holistic student development. This gap highlights the importance of examining the MATATAG Curriculum's foundational elements and implementation strategies to ensure its success and sustainability in the evolving educational landscape.

2. Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design, incorporating predictive and correlational methods to analyze relationships among variables and forecast outcomes based on historical data. Conducted in Region XII (SOCCSKSARGEN), the research covered five pilot schools and twenty-one implementing schools across eight Schools Division Offices, representing a range of geographic, socio-economic, and cultural contexts that influence curriculum implementation.

3. Respondents of the Study

The study's respondents are 942, which include teachers, school heads, School Governing Council (SGC) officers, Administrative Officers (AO), and Administrative Assistants (ADAS) from the eight divisions in Region 12, all involved in implementing various educational programs based on DepEd Order No. 10 series of 2024. These respondents were identified through complete enumeration.

4. Data Gathering Instruments

A researcher-made survey was used to gather respondents' demographic profiles and assess institutional factors affecting the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, such as resource availability, administrative support, professional development, and class size. It also evaluated curriculum effectiveness based on literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, teacher satisfaction, and engagement, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Low) to 4 (Very High).

5. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured formal approval from DepEd Regional and Division Offices and obtained informed consent from all participants, ensuring ethical compliance and confidentiality. Surveys were then distributed, collected, and systematically organized for analysis. Throughout the process, strict ethical standards were maintained to ensure data accuracy, participant anonymity, and integrity of the findings.

6. Statistical Tool

The study employed frequency and percentage for respondent profiles and used mean and standard deviation to assess school factors and curriculum effectiveness, interpreted through a four-point scale. Inferential statistics, including t-tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM), were used to examine relationships, impacts, and predict future curriculum sustainability. Secondary data from CRLA, Phil IRI, and Learners' Quarterly Assessments supported the evaluation of literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills.

7. Results and Discussion

The following results were gathered from a survey conducted among the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile Summary of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Profile		
Age	f	%
31-37 years old	209	22.19%
Sex		
Female	601	63.80%
Category		
Teachers	709	75.27%
Years of Experience		
1 to 10 years	303	32.17%
Educational Background		
College	415	44.06%
School Location		
Rural	512	54.35%
MATATAG Training Attended		
Division	291	30.89%

Table 1 shows the summary of the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. As shown, a majority of the respondents (22.19%) are aged between 31 to 37 years, reflecting a balanced mix of early to mid-career

professionals who likely bring a wealth of experience to their roles. The study also shows a notable gender disparity, with 63.80% of respondents being female, which is consistent with the higher representation of women in the teaching profession, particularly in primary and secondary education. Teachers dominate the sample, comprising 75.27% of respondents, underscoring the central role that educators play in the study. Regarding years of experience, a significant proportion (32.17%) have between 1 to 10 years of teaching experience, indicating a mix of newer educators who may be more open to adopting innovative educational practices. In terms of educational qualifications, 44.06% of respondents hold a college degree, with the majority coming from rural schools (54.35%), and a large number (30.89%) attended Division-level training for the MATATAG curriculum.

The findings of the study align with existing literature on the demographics of teachers in the Philippines and globally. Dahl (2019) highlights the gender imbalance in education, where women make up the majority of the teaching workforce, particularly in primary and secondary education, supporting the predominance of female teachers in this study. The educational qualifications of the respondents are consistent with the observations of Jimenez (2021), who points out that teachers in the Philippines are increasingly obtaining higher qualifications to meet evolving curriculum demands. This is a promising sign of professional growth and commitment to better educational outcomes. Moreover, the significant representation of teachers with 1 to 10 years of experience echoes Schaefer (2020) finding that many younger teachers are entering the workforce with fresh pedagogical insights, which are crucial for implementing new curricula like MATATAG.

However, the study also highlights potential gaps in access to professional development, as most respondents attended Division-level training (30.89%). Merriam and Tisdell (2020) suggest that limited access to higher-level training opportunities, particularly in rural areas, could impede the successful implementation of educational reforms. This is corroborated by Sobrato (2022), who emphasizes that teachers in rural schools often face greater challenges in accessing professional development, which may impact their ability to fully engage with initiatives like MATATAG. Additionally, UNESCO (2020) indicates that rural schools often struggle with fewer resources, which can affect the quality and effectiveness of both teaching and curriculum implementation. Therefore, while the socio-demographic data reflect a highly educated and committed teaching workforce, it also points to disparities in access to training that may hinder the overall success of the MATATAG curriculum.

Table 2: Level of School Factors in MATATAG Curriculum Implementation

Level of School Factors in MATATAG Curriculum Implementation			
Indicators	Weighted Mean	STD	Verbal Description
Availability of Resources	3.09	0.295	High
Administrative Support	3.28	0.294	Very High
Professional Development	3.31	0.286	Very High
Class Size	3.32	0.273	Very High
Overall Mean	3.25	0.108	Very High

The data from Table 2 indicates that the level of school factors in the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum is generally very high, with professional development, administrative support, and class size each receiving mean scores between 3.28 and 3.32, all of which fall under the "Very High" category. These results

suggest that the schools involved in the study have strong systems in place for supporting curriculum implementation, including substantial resources for teacher development and robust administrative backing. Notably, the availability of resources scored slightly lower (3.09) but still remained in the "High" category, pointing to a somewhat less than optimal but still significant availability of teaching tools and infrastructure. The overall mean of 3.25 also indicates a positive environment for the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum, with strong support systems in place.

Recent literature supports these findings, with Tan and Garcia (2021) noting that administrative support and professional development are critical for the success of curriculum reforms. Their study highlights that teachers' professional growth, and the backing of school leadership play a central role in the smooth implementation of new curricula. Similarly, Mendoza and Ramos (2023) found that schools with robust professional development programs, including regular training and workshops, had higher success rates in curriculum implementation. They also point to the importance of class size, as smaller classes allow for more individualized attention and greater teacher effectiveness.

However, the slightly lower rating for resource availability is consistent with the research by Javier and Villanueva (2022), who found that while administrative support and professional development were generally strong, resource allocation in some schools, especially those in rural areas, still posed challenges. Their study underscores the need for equitable resource distribution to ensure that all schools, regardless of location, can fully support the curriculum. The findings of this study, therefore, align with Lee and Co (2024), who argue that while professional development and administrative support are crucial, a sustainable investment in resources is also necessary to fully realize the potential of new educational initiatives like MATATAG.

Table 3: Effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum Implementation

Effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum Implementation			
Indicators	Weighted Mean	STD	Verbal Description
Literacy Skills	3.27	0.298	Very High
Numeracy Skills	3.26	0.336	Very High
Critical-Thinking Skills	3.29	0.356	Very High
Teacher's Satisfaction	3.31	0.364	Very High
Teacher's Engagement with the Curriculum	3.30	0.342	Very High
Overall Mean	3.29	0.021	Very High

Table 3 shows the perceived effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum Implementation based on various indicators. The overall mean score of 3.29 with a low standard deviation of 0.021 indicates a "Very High" level of effectiveness. Among the specific indicators, Teacher's Satisfaction scored the highest mean (3.31), followed closely by Teacher's Engagement with the Curriculum (3.30) and Critical-Thinking Skills (3.29). These findings suggest that the MATATAG curriculum is not only fostering student competencies in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking but also enhancing teacher satisfaction and engagement, two important dimensions of successful curriculum implementation.

These results align with Guillermo and Santos (2022), who found that curriculum reforms emphasizing learner-centered approaches and clear pedagogical frameworks significantly increase teacher engagement and satisfaction. The improvement in critical-thinking skills also supports the findings of Ramos et al. (2021), who emphasized the effectiveness of structured yet flexible curricula in promoting higher-order thinking among students. Similarly, Salvador and Cruz (2020) argued that meaningful professional engagement with

new curricula boosts not only instructional quality but also educator morale.

On the other hand, Torres and Villanueva (2019) noted that while curriculum reforms tend to receive favorable initial feedback, long-term sustainability and effectiveness often depend on continued resource support, feedback mechanisms, and contextual adaptation, especially in under-resourced schools. This suggests that despite high initial effectiveness ratings, challenges may still emerge over time, particularly in areas with limited access to professional development and teaching materials.

Table 4: Results of One-Way ANOVA on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum When Respondents are Grouped According to Their Socio-Demographic Characteristics

VARIABLE	MATATAG Curriculum			
	F-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
Profile				
Age	1.468	0.226	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Sex	1.096	0.329	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Category	0.546	0.324	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Teacher’s years of experience	0.642	0.944	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Teacher’s educational background	1.668	0.018	Significant	Reject Ho
School location	0.853	0.356	Not Significant	Accept Ho
MATATAG training attended	0.734	0.335	Not Significant	Accept Ho

The ANOVA results indicate that teachers’ age, sex, years of experience, school location, and MATATAG training do not significantly affect their perception of curriculum implementation, suggesting a consistent delivery across diverse school and teacher profiles. However, a significant difference was found in relation to educational background ($p = 0.018$), highlighting that teachers with higher academic qualifications are more effective in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum.

This finding is supported by Goe et al. (2019) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who found that educators with advanced degrees exhibit stronger instructional capacities and adaptability to curricular reforms. In contrast, Harris and Sass (2021) and Egalite et al. (2021) reported minimal impact of other demographic factors, such as age, sex, and location, on curriculum implementation, similar to the current study’s findings. Rodríguez and Dávila (2023) also confirm that curriculum consistency is generally maintained regardless of school setting or teacher background, except for educational attainment.

The result emphasizes the importance of professional development and further studies to enhance teacher qualifications, which can ultimately improve curriculum implementation and student learning outcomes.

Table 5: Relationship Between the Institutional Factors in Curriculum Implementation

VARIABLE	Institutional factors			
	r-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
MATATAG Curriculum				
Literacy skills	.583	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
Numeracy skills	.604	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
Critical skills	.562	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
Teacher’s satisfaction;	.606	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
Teacher’s engagement with the curriculum	.527	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
Overall	.694	.000	Significant	Reject Ho

Correlation analysis shows a strong and significant positive relationship between institutional factors and various components of the MATATAG Curriculum implementation—literacy ($r = 0.583$), numeracy ($r = 0.604$), critical thinking ($r = 0.562$), teacher satisfaction ($r = 0.606$), and engagement ($r = 0.527$), all significant at the 0.01 level. The overall correlation ($r = 0.694$) suggests that institutional support significantly enhances curriculum implementation.

These results highlight the importance of resource availability, administrative backing, and aligned professional development in supporting curriculum goals. Studies by Coles et al. (2023) and Fasinro et al. (2024) support this, noting that strategic investments in materials, technology, and teacher training lead to more effective instructional practices and curriculum success. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity should be a policy priority to ensure sustained improvements in teaching and learning.

Proposed Enhancement Model

The MATATAG Curriculum Enhancement Model (MCEM) is a strategic framework aimed at strengthening the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in Philippine basic education. Rooted in DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024, MCEM addresses critical gaps in instructional delivery, curriculum standards, leadership and supervision, and teacher capacity. It emphasizes inclusive, evidence-based, and sustainable practices to improve educational outcomes through innovative teaching methods, stronger leadership, and professional development. The model integrates robust monitoring and evaluation, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure relevance, equity, and accountability in curriculum implementation. Ultimately, MCEM fosters 21st-century competencies—critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration—preparing learners for global competitiveness and lifelong learning.

To support MCEM's objectives, the Training-Based Capacity Development Framework (TBCDF) was developed to enhance teacher readiness and professional growth. TBCDF offers multi-level, differentiated, and accessible training programs, from school-based to national levels. It promotes inclusive participation through blended learning formats, competency-aligned modules, leadership development, and peer mentorship via Learning Action Cells (LACs). With a strong emphasis on monitoring and feedback, the framework ensures data-driven improvements in teacher effectiveness and curriculum delivery. The implementation of TBCDF is expected to increase curriculum fidelity, boost teacher performance, reinforce leadership, and institutionalize sustainable educational reforms across the country.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that the majority of respondents were experienced and well-educated female teachers aged 24–51, primarily from rural areas, with most having attended Division-level MATATAG training. School-related factors—such as resource availability, administrative support, professional development, and manageable class sizes—were rated from “High” to “Very High,” indicating strong institutional backing. The MATATAG Curriculum itself was rated “Very High” in promoting literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, teacher satisfaction, and engagement, showcasing its effectiveness in enhancing both learning outcomes and teaching practices.

Additionally, the findings revealed no significant differences in curriculum implementation based on demographic factors such as age, sex, teaching experience, location, or training attended, except for educational background, which significantly influenced implementation success. A strong positive correlation was observed between institutional factors and curriculum outcomes, confirming that better institutional support leads to more effective curriculum delivery. Furthermore, the proposed MATATAG Curriculum model demonstrated a good to acceptable fit, reinforcing the vital role of institutional factors in the successful execution of the curriculum.

With the findings at hand, the following are recommended:

1. Tailor professional development to meet the needs of different age groups and promote more involvement of school heads and non-teaching staff in curriculum decisions.
2. Improve digital infrastructure, facilities, and financial support, strengthening leadership and teacher assistance to boost MATATAG curriculum delivery.
3. Focus interventions on innovative learning approaches such as personalized, problem-based, and game-based learning.
4. Support teachers' continuous learning through professional development and address resource and class size issues to create better learning environments.
5. Invest more in resources, leadership, and training to strengthen curriculum effectiveness and student achievement, using strategic, evidence-based improvements.
6. Keep refining the MATATAG Curriculum model through regular evaluations to stay responsive to changing educational needs.
7. Strengthen the MATATAG Curriculum Enhancement Model by encouraging ongoing collaboration and integrating the best global practices.
8. Future studies should look into how teacher profiles, digital skills, and school support systems shape the long-term success of the MATATAG Curriculum.

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