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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Teacher Effectiveness and Well-Being Under the Matatag Curriculum For Grade 7

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| ABSTRACT
This study assessed teacher effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG. The research employed a descriptive-correlational design through using an adapted survey questionnaire which collected data from 20 teacher-respondents. Findings showed that despite some challenges, teachers expressed positive attitudes toward the MATATAG Curriculum and career contentment was found to be moderate; teachers felt purposeful in their roles but sought more recognition and opportunities for advancement. Teaching effectiveness was effective but 80% reported additional responsibilities beyond teaching, leading to burnout. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between teacher attitudes and career contentment ($\rho = 0.880$), as well as moderate to strong correlations with curriculum effectiveness ($\rho = 0.575$ and $\rho = 0.630$, respectively). The study concludes that improving teacher well-being and support systems is crucial for effective curriculum implementation. Key challenges identified included curriculum alignment, confidence in implementation, and student engagement. It recommends reducing non-teaching tasks, enhancing professional growth, and adopting active learning strategies.

| KEYWORDS

MATATAG Curriculum, Teacher Effectiveness, Curriculum Implementation, Philippine Education Reform

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

Curriculum reforms worldwide aim to improve student learning outcomes, yet educators consistently face challenges adapting to these changes. Studies indicate that curriculum implementation is often hindered by inadequate professional development, limited instructional resources, and the diverse needs of learners (OECD, 2023). Successful transitions in countries implementing large-scale education reforms, such as Finland and Singapore, depend on sustained teacher training and strong institutional support (Tan, 2023). However, developing nations struggle with similar reforms due to resource disparities and resistance to change (UNESCO, 2023). The MATATAG Curriculum aligns with global trends in competency-based education, but its success depends on effective teacher facilitation, which this study aims to examine.

Despite significant efforts by education policymakers, curriculum reforms worldwide frequently encounter systemic challenges, including insufficient teacher preparation, resistance to pedagogical innovation, and the complexity of meeting diverse student needs. Research consistently underscores that the success of curriculum reform hinges on teacher readiness and professional support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). In many cases, especially in developing nations, reforms are introduced without the necessary investment in sustained teacher training or institutional capacity-building (UNESCO, 2023). Moreover, educators often experience uncertainty when required to adopt student-centered or competency-based approaches without clear guidance or adequate resources (Lombardi et al., 2022). This disconnect between policy and practice contributes to implementation fatigue, where teachers struggle to integrate reforms into daily instruction effectively (Nguyen & Hallinger, 2023). Yet, there remains a

notable research gap in understanding how educators in resource-constrained contexts pragmatically adapt their teaching strategies in response to systemic limitations and reform mandates.

In the Philippines, previous curriculum reforms, such as the K to 12 programs, encountered setbacks due to a lack of instructional materials, inconsistent teacher training, and limited assessment tools to track student progress (DepEd, 2024). The MATATAG Curriculum seeks to address these issues, but early reports suggest that many teachers are still struggling with its implementation due to similar resource limitations and time constraints (Saro, 2024). There is a lack of empirical studies on how teachers navigate these difficulties while ensuring quality instruction, which this research aims to address. At the regional level, science high schools in Cebu and nearby provinces face unique challenges due to the curriculum's emphasis on high academic standards. Teachers are expected to balance rigorous subject content with innovative teaching methodologies despite resource limitations. At the local level, anecdotal reports from Minglanilla Science High School suggest that teachers struggle with implementing student-centered approaches while ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all learners. This gap necessitates an in-depth analysis of the actual experiences of Grade 7 teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum effectively.

The MATATAG Curriculum aims to enhance foundational learning in the Philippines by fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Globally, it aligns with student-centered educational frameworks, but its success depends on teacher readiness. This study contributes to the global discourse by highlighting a developing country's challenges. The curriculum addresses learning gaps and resource limitations nationally, yet many educators struggle with implementation. This study identifies practical solutions to enhance teacher support. In science high schools like Minglanilla Science High School, teachers must balance high academic standards with accessibility. Given these contextual challenges and opportunities, this study aims to explore the experiences of Grade 7 teachers in Minglanilla Science High School as they implement the MATATAG Curriculum. Focusing on science high school settings, the research seeks to generate grounded insights into the practical realities of curriculum implementation. The findings will inform both local and national education stakeholders, offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance teacher readiness, curriculum alignment, and systemic support mechanisms essential for the MATATAG Curriculum's long-term success.

Literature Review

Curriculum reform remains a top priority across education systems worldwide, yet its success relies heavily on teacher preparedness, systemic capacity, and policy coherence. Recent research indicates that effective reform is grounded in continuous teacher professional development, targeted instructional support, and contextual adaptation (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). For instance, high-performing systems such as Estonia and Canada have demonstrated that sustained investment in teacher learning directly correlates with improved curriculum delivery and student performance (Hoven & Mitchell, 2022). However, in many developing contexts, reforms are introduced without adequate groundwork, leading to implementation challenges due to a lack of localized training resources and overloaded curricula (Oketch & Rolleston, 2021).

The introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum in the Philippines, which aligns with global movements toward competency-based education, illustrates these tensions. It requires teachers to shift not only their instructional strategies but also their pedagogical beliefs. Studies have shown that such transitions are difficult to achieve without bottom-up engagement and practical classroom tools (Yoon et al., 2023). Teachers, especially in public science high schools, are expected to uphold academic rigor while integrating inclusive, learner-centered approaches. This dual responsibility can strain instructional capacity when infrastructure, time, and curriculum alignment are insufficient. As highlighted by de Guzman and Ramos (2024), gaps in teacher support, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas, contribute to uneven reform uptake. To address this, there is a need for research that examines how teachers locally interpret, adapt, and implement reforms like MATATAG, taking into account their unique institutional and cultural contexts.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive correlational research design to examine the effectiveness of Grade 7 teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum at Minglanilla Science High School. The descriptive component focused on assessing levels of teacher effectiveness across domains such as curriculum delivery, classroom management, learner engagement, and assessment strategies. Meanwhile, the correlational component aimed to determine relationships between teacher effectiveness and selected variables including professional development, teaching experience, and access to instructional resources. Respondents included all Grade 7 teachers from Minglanilla Science High School, selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants were directly involved in MATATAG Curriculum implementation. The main data collection tool was a survey questionnaire adapted from the validated instrument developed by Magalong and Torreon (2021), originally designed to assess teacher workload and time management. This instrument was modified to reflect indicators aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the specific demands of the MATATAG Curriculum. The questionnaire was divided into three sections and utilized a 5-point Likert scale, covering aspects such as lesson preparation, class scheduling, teaching hours, and

instructional strategies. The instrument underwent expert validation by professionals in education and curriculum studies. Ethical procedures were followed, including securing permission from the school head and obtaining informed consent from all participants. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to assess teacher effectiveness and Pearson's r to evaluate correlations between teacher effectiveness and influencing factors.

Results

Table 1 presents the teachers' perspectives on the MATATAG Curriculum, revealing an overall positive attitude with a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.426. Teachers generally agree that the curriculum is beneficial to students' holistic development (M = 4.00) and fosters creativity and innovation in teaching practices (M = 4.05). Respondents also believe the curriculum aligns with their teaching philosophies and provides clear instructional guidelines (M = 3.95). Confidence in implementing the curriculum (M = 3.85) and perceptions of manageable workload (M = 3.95) suggest general acceptance of the reform. Importantly, teachers agree that adequate training and support are provided (M = 4.00), and that the curriculum is responsive to students' diverse needs (M = 3.95), indicating strong alignment between teacher readiness and curricular goals.

Table 1. Teachers' Perspective of the MATATAG Curriculum

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Attitude Towards MATATAG Curriculum	3.95	0.426	Positive
Teachers view the MATATAG Curriculum as beneficial to student's holistic development.	4.00	0.562	Agree
The MATATAG Curriculum aligns with teachers' teaching philosophies and approaches in their classrooms.	3.85	0.489	Agree
The MATATAG Curriculum provides clear guidelines for effective teaching.	3.95	0.510	Agree
The workload associated with the MATATAG Curriculum is manageable for teachers.	3.95	0.510	Agree
Teachers feel adequately prepared to implement the MATATAG Curriculum.	3.85	0.813	Agree
The MATATAG Curriculum fosters creativity and innovation in teaching practices.	4.05	0.510	Agree
Teachers receive adequate support and resources for implementing the MATATAG Curriculum.	4.00	0.562	Agree
The MATATAG Curriculum is responsive to the diverse needs of students.	3.95	0.510	Agree

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Career Contentment	3.79	0.675	Contented
Teachers feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their profession.	3.90	0.553	Agree
The teaching environment promotes teachers' emotional well-being and job satisfaction.	3.80	0.768	Agree
Teachers feel adequately recognized for their contributions to student development.	3.70	0.865	Agree
Opportunities for career growth and development are accessible and encouraging for teachers.	3.80	1.005	Agree
Teachers are satisfied with their current teaching workload and responsibilities.	3.85	0.813	Agree
The level of collaboration and support among colleagues enhances teachers' job satisfaction.	3.85	0.933	Agree
Teachers feel that their work-life balance is appropriately maintained.	3.75	0.786	Agree
Teachers are optimistic about their long-term career prospects in the education sector.	3.70	0.865	Agree

Table 2. Teachers' Perspective of the Career Contentment

Table 2 presents data on teachers' career contentment, showing an overall mean of 3.79 with a standard deviation of 0.675, indicating a general sense of contentment among respondents. Teachers reported a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment in their profession (M = 3.90) and satisfaction with their current workload (M = 3.85). The collaborative environment among colleagues and available opportunities for growth (M = 3.85 and M = 3.80, respectively) contribute positively to job satisfaction. Emotional well-being and work-life balance were also rated favorably (M = 3.80 and M = 3.75). However, slightly lower scores were observed in perceptions of recognition (M = 3.70) and optimism about long-term prospects (M = 3.70), suggesting areas where institutional support may be strengthened.

Table 3. Lesson Planning and Preparation

Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
Effectiveness in Lesson Planning and Preparation	4.11	0.516	Effective
Teachers prepare lesson plans aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum standards.	4.10	0.641	Effective
Lesson plans effectively integrate diverse learning materials and resources	4.21	0.616	Highly Effective
Lesson objectives are clearly defined and achievable within the allocated time.	4.10	0.641	Effective
Activities in the lesson plans cater to students' varied learning needs and styles.	4.05	0.510	Effective

Table 3 highlights teachers' effectiveness in lesson planning and preparation, with an overall mean score of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.516, indicating a generally high level of competence. Teachers consistently prepare lesson plans aligned with MATATAG Curriculum standards (M = 4.10), with a particular strength in integrating diverse learning materials and resources (M = 4.21), which was rated as highly effective. Additionally, lesson objectives are reported to be clearly defined and achievable within the given time (M = 4.10). Activities are also designed to accommodate varied learning needs and styles (M = 4.05), demonstrating thoughtful instructional design. These results reflect strong alignment between planning practices and the goals of the curriculum reform, supporting effective classroom implementation.

Table 4. Classroom Management

Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*
Effectiveness in Classroom Management	4.05	0.426	Effective
Teachers maintain a disciplined and conducive learning environment.	4.21	0.616	Highly Effective
Strategies are in place to address classroom disruptions effectively.	3.95	0.510	Effective
Classroom routines promote smooth transitions between activities.	4.10	0.447	Effective
Student engagement is consistently high during lessons.	3.95	0.605	Effective

Table 4 presents data on teachers' classroom management effectiveness, with an overall mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.426, indicating a high level of effectiveness. Teachers are particularly strong in maintaining a disciplined and conducive learning environment (M = 4.21), rated as highly effective. Classroom routines that support smooth transitions between activities (M = 4.10) and strategies to address disruptions (M = 3.95) are also effectively implemented. Additionally, consistent student engagement during lessons (M = 3.95) reflects the teachers' ability to foster active participation. These findings suggest that effective classroom management is a key strength among the respondents, contributing to the successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Table 5. Teachers' Effectiveness in Class Scheduling

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Effectiveness in Class Scheduling	3.85	0.662	Effective
The current class schedule supports optimal student learning outcomes.	3.85	0.813	Effective
Lesson sequences allow sufficient time for knowledge retention and skill development.	3.90	0.553	Effective
The schedule effectively minimizes student and teacher fatigue.	3.80	0.834	Effective

Table 5 presents the teachers' effectiveness in class scheduling, with an overall mean of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 0.662, indicating general effectiveness. Teachers agree that the current class schedule supports optimal student learning outcomes (M = 3.85) and provides adequate time for knowledge retention and skill development (M = 3.90). Additionally, the scheduling system is seen as effective in reducing fatigue for both students and teachers (M = 3.80). These results suggest that the structure and pacing of the class schedules are well-aligned with instructional needs, contributing positively to both teaching effectiveness and learner engagement under the MATATAG Curriculum.

Table 6. Teachers' Effectiveness in Teaching Hours

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Effectiveness of Teaching Hours	3.63	0.691	Effective
Teachers have sufficient time to cover the required MATATAG Curriculum content.	3.65	0.587	Effective
Allocated teaching hours provide opportunities for differentiated instruction.	3.70	0.865	Effective
The teaching hours allow for meaningful assessment and feedback.	3.75	0.851	Effective
Non-teaching duties (e.g., administrative tasks) do not interfere significantly with teaching hours.	3.40	0.883	Effective

Table 6 shows the effectiveness of teaching hours as perceived by teachers, with an overall mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 0.691, indicating a generally effective experience. Teachers agreed that they have sufficient time to cover the MATATAG Curriculum content (M = 3.65) and that the hours allow for differentiated instruction (M = 3.70). The time allotted also supports meaningful assessment and feedback (M = 3.75). However, the lowest mean was seen in the area of non-teaching duties (M = 3.40), suggesting that administrative tasks may sometimes interfere with instructional time. While teaching hours are mostly effective, addressing the burden of non-instructional responsibilities could further enhance teaching quality.

Table 7. Correlation Between Effectiveness in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum and Teacher's Attitude Towards the Curriculum and Their Career Contentment.

	Variables	Statistics	Attitude	Contentment	Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Attitude	Correlation Coefficient		.880**	.575**
		P-value)		.000	.008
	Contentment	Correlation Coefficient	.880**		.630**
		P-value)	.000		.003
	Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.575**	.630**	
		P-value)	.008	.003	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 7, the results indicate statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitude, career contentment, and effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum: The Spearman's rho correlation shows a strong positive relationship between attitude and career contentment (r = 0.880, p = 0.000), suggesting that teachers who have a more favorable attitude toward the curriculum are also more content in their careers. Likewise, there is a moderate positive correlation between attitude and effectiveness (r = 0.575, p = 0.008), indicating that positive attitudes may enhance implementation effectiveness. Additionally, a strong positive correlation is found between contentment and effectiveness (r = 0.630, p = 0.003), highlighting that teachers who are more content with their careers tend to be more effective in delivering the curriculum. All correlations are significant at the

0.01 level, confirming that both psychological and professional factors significantly influence how effectively the MATATAG Curriculum is implemented in the classroom.

Discussion

Based on the findings presented across the tables, it is evident that teachers at Minglanilla Science High School exhibit high levels of effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly in key instructional areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and scheduling. The consistently high mean scores across domains reflect strong professional competence and adaptability among teachers, despite systemic challenges such as non-teaching duties and time constraints. The data further highlight that teachers perceive the curriculum as aligned with their pedagogical beliefs and as fostering student-centered instruction. This alignment appears to positively influence both their instructional quality and engagement in curriculum delivery. Moreover, the correlation analysis in Table 7 underscores the important role of psychological and attitudinal factors in curriculum implementation. A strong positive relationship between teachers' attitude toward the MATATAG Curriculum and their career contentment indicates that personal and professional satisfaction are interlinked. More importantly, both attitude and contentment significantly correlate with effectiveness, suggesting that emotionally and professionally fulfilled teachers are more likely to implement the curriculum successfully. These findings support the view that educational reforms, to be effective, must be accompanied not only by training and resources but also by attention to teacher morale and well-being. Promoting a supportive and responsive work environment may thus enhance both teacher retention and instructional quality during curriculum transitions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers at Minglanilla Science High School demonstrate a high level of effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly in areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional scheduling. The positive perceptions of the curriculum, paired with their career contentment, significantly influence their teaching performance. Quantitative data revealed strong and moderate correlations among attitude, career contentment, and curriculum implementation effectiveness, emphasizing that successful education reform relies not only on pedagogical competence but also on teachers' emotional and professional fulfillment. The findings highlight that fostering positive teacher attitudes and ensuring career satisfaction are crucial to sustaining quality curriculum implementation. While the MATATAG Curriculum is generally well-received, addressing workload concerns and non-teaching responsibilities may further enhance its success. Thus, to strengthen reform outcomes, education stakeholders should invest in continuous professional development, well-structured support systems, and policies that uphold teacher well-being alongside academic excellence.

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