



Exploring the Initial Implementation of the Revised K–12 Curriculum: Challenges of Public Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study examined the initial implementation of the Revised K–12 Curriculum and illuminated how public high school teachers in the Philippines are grappling with its early roll-out. Respondents in the quantitative part of the research included 30 teachers (to whom a validated survey was administered) and purposively selected participants were involved to provide qualitative data using semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was undertaken using univariate and thematic analysis. The findings indicated that teachers experienced a moderate level of ease and difficulty in instructional practice, availability of materials and resources, and alignment with professional standards; an evidence for all three were justified to be "neutral" sticking transitional uncertainty not an ease. Despite constraints in resources and inadequate training, teachers were found to make use of adaptable approaches through their cooperation with one another and the creative utilization of study materials. Thematic analysis highlighted the significance of Availability and Adequacy of Learning Materials and Adaptive and Collaborative Pedagogy in adhering to curriculum requirements. The research concludes that teachers are resilient in the face of empty promises but need immediate institutional support, extending to: training; materials development and policy clarity if curriculum implementation is to work.

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, Instructional Resources, Teacher Training, Philippines, Revised K–12 Curriculum

1. Introduction

The Philippines adopted the K to 12 Curriculum to raise its basic education to match global standards (Republic of the Philippines, 2013) ^[36]. Some research indicates that the reform has improved learners' readiness for higher education or employment. (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017) ^[10]. Most studies overlook the daily struggles of teachers implementing the curriculum, especially now that policymakers have revised it into the MATATAG version (Dematea *et al.*, 2025) ^[13]. While many have discussed the policy itself, few have explored how it plays out inside the classroom. The study focuses on the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers and the hurdles they face through a combination of surveys and interviews. In 2013, the government implemented Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act, which expanded the country's basic education to include kindergarten and two additional years in high school (Republic of the Philippines, 2013) ^[36]. It aimed to prepare students to be globally competitive. Officials have also recently adopted the MATATAG curriculum in order to streamline content and to discourage learning overload (Department of Education, 2025). But teachers continue to grapple with many challenges – overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials and resources, unclear teaching guidelines, tight timelines – that render it nearly impossible to follow the curriculum as planned. In the international literature, factors leading to successful reforms have been examined. In Finland and Singapore, for example, research has found that well-supported teachers, access to sufficient learning resources, and ongoing professional learning serve as variables that mitigate change to the new curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Fullan 2007). These countries employ a staged, derivative model of reform in which teachers' voices are woven through the implementation process.

They continue to invest in teacher capacity development, which the literature connects to better classroom implementation of the reformed curriculum. Results indicate that with adequate resources and training, teachers can find curricular change more effective and less stressful to implement. Research within the Philippines has largely addressed administrative compliance and student achievements, but little attention to how teachers navigate through curriculum changes. The literature tends to concentrate teachers' lives as one-of-a-kind and unique group of people, without considering how things such as the location in which they teach, the type of subject area/their content-specific experience or years teaching impact their adversity. Moreover, not many research inquiries into the practical implications of the MATATAG curriculum framework exist, particularly in low-resourced schools. What is missing isn't simply an understanding of what the issues are, but how they differ from context to context and among instructional tasks. "Without that specificity, we cannot design evidence-based focused support mechanisms for those people on the ground who are trying to implement the curriculum. This article aims to fill this void by analyzing the challenges and problems that teachers face when teaching with the new K–12 curriculum. This approach contributes an intricate tale of curriculum implementation and comes forward with data that is both quantitative and personal narrative. It attempts not only to list what those challenges are but also how teachers respond to them—improvisation, collaboration, self-directed learning—out of the belief that if others knew what professional expertise means then maybe everyone would appreciate how hard teaching actually is. It is also the purpose of this study to explore differences in experience by grade level taught, years in the profession, subject area taught, and school location. Our aim is the provide guidance for future policy and curriculum change,

based on real experiences of those who are most directly affected.

2. Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

In gathering data, the current study adopted the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord; 1987) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to reveal a wider scope of perspectives toward the obstacles encountered by teachers in public secondary schools in relation to the implementation of Enhanced K–12 Curriculum. These will provide direction to the inquiry by connecting curriculum implementation to teacher experiences, coping strategies and situational factors.

Concerns-Based Adoption Model

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), designed by Hall and Hord (1987), focuses on the ways that people take in and react after a change. In this research, it will be employed to ascertain concern and use levels of teachers as they implement the (terrain) Enhanced K-12 Curriculum. CBAM will assist in determining what support the teachers require and how their concerns change as they adjust to curricular reform.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's model helps us to understand how various environmental systems impact upon what it is like for a person. This study elucidates how teacher challenges to enacting the curriculum are influenced at different levels, including in their classroom (microsystem), via school or community support (mesosystem and exosystem) and across national education policy (macrosystem). This is helpful to researchers who can then see how the challenges vary depending upon the job grade (level taught), years of experience in teaching, subject matter and location.

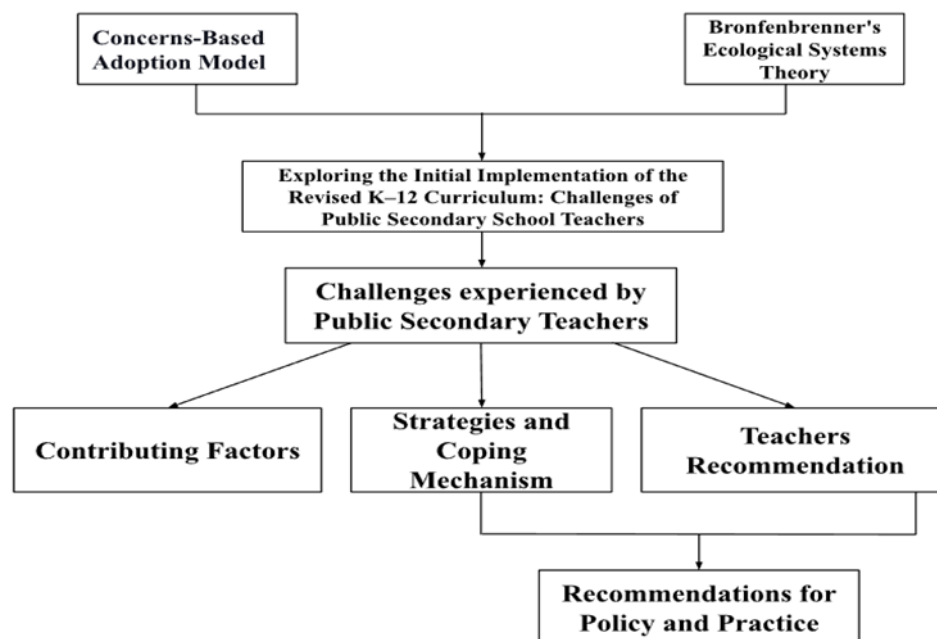


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Theoretical-Conceptual Background of the Study

The diagram additionally demonstrates how teachers' work context influences the challenges they encounter when implementing the curriculum. The analysis focuses on

challenges faced by public high schoolteachers controlling for a range of context variables including age, grade level taught, teaching years, subject field and location. The

research also describes the sources of these difficulties, coping strategies, ways to overcome them and draws conclusions from teachers' suggestions. Crucially, final policy and practice recommendations will take into account teachers' lived experience and recognition of the realities they navigate in their classrooms. But, the elements are also designed to improve how curricula will be taught in public secondary schools. The use of these theories allow this study to contribute some understanding of the problems teachers face, and attempt to come to an understanding of why teachers experience such issues, how they manage them and how teacher education can be enhanced. Understanding these frameworks may place the experiences of teachers in delivering Revised K-12 Curriculum which could guide policy makers and school heads have a clearer direction on how they can support this process better.

3. Statement of the Problem

The primary goal of this study is to explore and comprehend the challenges or problems encountered by public secondary schools in operationalizing the Revised MATATAG K-12 Curriculum through teachers' experiences. It also aims to gather their feedback on how the action can be improved to benefit teaching and learning. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. Sex
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - 1.2. Highest Educational Attainment
 - a. Bachelor's degree
 - b. Master's ongoing
 - b. Master's graduate
 - c. Doctorate graduate
 - 1.3 Years of teaching experience
 - a. 1-5 years
 - b. 6-9 years
 - c. 10 years and above
 - 1.4. Subject area
 - a. Mathematics
 - b. English
 - c. Filipino
 - d. Science
 - e. Others
 - 1.5. School location
 - a. Urban
 - b. Rural
2. What factors contribute to these challenges?
3. What strategies do teachers use to cope with or overcome these challenges?
4. What suggestions can be given based on the research?

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study will follow a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, with the quantitative phase preceding the qualitative phase to build on and further explore/hone quantitative results. Quantitative preliminary data will describe the context in which public school teachers work. Subsequent qualitative interviews will enhance our understanding of the barriers, facilitators and influences associated with these experiences.

4.2. Sampling Design, Research Respondents & Environments

This research will use purposive sampling (criterion sampling) method to recruit the participants according to specific criteria that required for achieving the aims of study. The population of the study is 30 public secondary school teachers using the revised MATATAG K-12 Curriculum. They will be recruited in terms of their grade level taught, subject specialization, teaching experience and participation in curriculum implementation, to reflect diversity in the various teaching environments. Answering the structured survey questionnaire, which is developed for this purpose, teachers (teaching at least one EG) will fully answer the provided questioner to understand the level and type of encountered challenges they experience during implementing curriculum. They will then participate in an indepth, semi-structured interview process aimed at providing more nuanced description of their experiences, context and suggestions for curriculum modification. This method results in a coherence in data acquisition and allows this study to be able to assess the broad quantitative phase and qualitative phase from the same subjects. To explore how the geographical location affects teachers' experiences, two settings will be covered in this study: rural and urban. Selected in an urban setting is one of the identified schools in Cebu City. Conversely, an integrated school located in a rural mountainous barangay is chosen. In the two aforementioned settings, our study will offer a relevant comparison of how school teachers' challenges are differentially shaped by local contexts. Data will be collected both online and in person, that is participants will have an opportunity to respond to the surveys or interviews from their homes or where they feel comfortable and thus save cost and reduce any potential inconvenience during data collection.

4.3. Research Instrument

In this study, two instruments will be used. A validated survey questionnaire will be used first during the quantitative phase for data on the difficulties, support level, coping mechanisms of teachers as well as suggestions to improve the curriculum implementation. It will utilize Likert-scale questions that were developed to target the studies' problems. Second, additional control will be maintained in the qualitative phase by employing a semi-structured interview which is designed to guide but not constrain a full exploration of challenges that public-school teachers experience within a range of contexts. Both instruments will be pilot tested and experts to checked to ensure that they are valid and reliable.

4.4. Data Gathering Procedure

Quantitative Phase The researchers will seek ethical approval and official approval from advisees before embarking the data collection in this study. Once approved, the researchers will send a link to the online survey questionnaire for targeted public secondary school teachers that contains consent form and sections about demographic profiles and respondent experiences. Once the online survey questionnaire is posted, participants will be given a specified time to complete the survey. The Google Forms will be closed once the number of participants needed has been reached. All survey participants will be recognized for their invaluable contribution to the research. **Qualitative Phase** Following the survey, a sub-sample of these will be asked to take part in

follow-up semi-structured interviews. They will be conducting these interviews either in person or with online tools like Google Meet and Zoom. Interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' permission and then transcribed for analysis. During the interviews, investigators will ask a set of keys focusing questions intended to elicit discussion from participants regarding their experiences with implementation. The interviews will last 30–40 minutes each and the respondents will be remunerated when interviews are completed.

4.5. Data Analysis

Analysis of survey responses will be presented in descriptive statistics: means, percentage and standard deviation to describe the constraints and challenges faced by public secondary teachers regarding teaching FSL, indications and procedures in dealing with possible contributions, strategy, cognitive coping strategies as well as recommendations on better implementation of the curriculum. After which, the verbatims from the interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis with a particular focus on Braun and Clarke framework. Critical themes appearing on the data will be highlighted in coding with regard to challenges, facilitators, strategies, coping mechanisms and recommended changes towards successful implementation of the curriculum as well as meaning that adds up to quantitative findings.

Quantitative Results and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the teachers in the Secondary high school

Description	Specific	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	28	90.3%
	Male	3	9.7%
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor	9	29%
	Masters Ongoing	13	41.9%
	Masters Completed	7	22.6%
	Doctorate	2	6.5%
Years of Teaching Experience	1-5 years	4	12.9%
	6-9 years	7	22.6%
	10+ years	20	64.5%
Subject Area	English	10	32.26%
	All Subjects (including multi-subject teachers)	8	25.81%
	Filipino	3	9.68%
	Mathematics	2	6.45%
	Araling Panlipunan	2	6.45%
	Practical Research	2	6.45%
	ESP	2	6.45%
	Research and MAPEH	1	3.23%
	TLE	1	3.23%
	Asian History, Economics, Contemporary Issues	1	3.23%
	Gen Ed	1	3.23%
School Location	Urban	15	48.4%
	Rural	16	51.6%

Table 1 shows that 90.3% of students were female while male students accounted for 9.7%. It also suggests that most of the teachers were being trained for their Master (41.9% mentioned it), 29% at a bachelor's level, most than 22.6% with a concluded MA and 6.5 with a DrPH/PhD. The findings also show that, in terms of years of teaching experience, the majority (64.5%) had more than 10 years of experience on the job, which reflects an experienced teaching pool and next were 22.6% between 6-9 years' experience and 12.9% with less than five years' account for fewer early-career teachers. Furthermore, for the subject area, findings

4.6. Ethical Considerations

Procedures and interpretations will be conducted fairly in order to maintain the research integrity. It is a respondent-based survey, and voluntary participation will be obtained from all respondents. All responses are kept in confidence and anonymity will be maintained. Participants will be informed of their right to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. Data will be securely saved and only be used for research. To express our appreciation for their time and input, survey completers will receive a letter of acknowledgment, although interviewees will be offered nominal beyond-monetary incentives consistent with the perspectives that we stand to gain new insights (from this group) on the difficulties faced by public secondary school teachers and potentially cited in future research.

5. Results and Discussions

Results and discussion Based on the findings drawing from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, this section presents the results of the study. Tables and statistical results are used to present quantitative data, thematic presentations are used for qualitative data. Both results are addressed regarding research objectives and literature.

revealed that most of the teachers taught English (32.26%) followed by Multiple/All Subjects with 25.81%. This reveals that many teachers work across multiple areas of learning, which could be widespread in smaller or composite schools. Less respondents specialized in Filipino (9.68%), Mathematics (6.45), Araling Panlipunan(9.68), Practical Research(16) and ESP(Is thought on Guillermo/testing/complete texts/macagga,Coronal 2005) (3).These were significant subject areas offered at the secondary levels. Meanwhile, some respondents (3.23% each) were handling MAPEH, TLE, or specialized subjects

(as in the case of Asian History that is not only limited to Accra). These results suggest that whereas today, as in the past, English dominates areas of specialization among teachers, they tend to have very broad subject area affiliations. This diversity supports curricula aimed at

specialized and generalist (at secondary) teaching responsibilities. Regarding the school location, teachers' distribution was almost balanced: 51.6% in rural and 48.4% urban schools.

Table 2: Instructional and Curriculum Design Challenges

Challenges	Mean	SD	Description
1. The new curriculum's learning competencies are challenging to cover given limited teaching resources and exemplars.	3.52	0.851	Agree
2. I find it hard to complete all the required lessons within the given time.	2.84	1.068	Neutral
3. The curriculum content does not always align with the actual needs of my learners.	2.77	1.055	Neutral
4. The number of topics included in the curriculum is more than what can realistically be managed.	3.45	1.060	Agree
5. Meeting curriculum expectations while addressing students' ability levels is difficult for me.	3.32	0.979	Neutral
6. I feel uncertain because the curriculum is only partially implemented in Grades 7-8	2.74	1.064	Neutral
Average	3.11	0.714	Neutral

Findings indicate that teachers experience teaching and curriculum designing challenges neutrally (Mean = 3.11, SD = 0.714). This implies that there are perceptions of problems with skills coverage and alignment between content and targeted learners, but these ineffective practices can be considered to be reasonable for most educators. This indicates that teachers are still adjusting to the changes in curriculum. For some factors, such as number of topics (mean = 3.45) and lack of teaching time (mean = 3.52), difficulties are felt, while for others, such as alignment to curricula (mean = 2.77) or partial implementation uncertainty (mean = 2.74) remain neutral indicating a certain balance between manageable and demanding aspects of instruction. This claim is supported by Orale and Uy (2022) who posit that Filipino

teachers see the curriculum reforms are reasonably manageable but restricted with low on time in most schools or access to instructional resources. Equally, Panti (2021), observes that teachers have difficulties pacing instruction and achieving competency targets particularly when taking into account of the heterogeneous nature of learners. Shavneet Kaur et al (2017) also argued that teachers are struggling to manage heavy and diverse task. Additionally, Bautista *et al.* (2019) identify insufficient preparation and lack of examples as factors that can increase teacher uncertainty, especially with early or partial implementation of new curricula. Teachers need on-going training, including model materials and manageable workloads to assist them in making the curriculum changes needed for this reform.

Table 3: Resource & Training Challenges

Classroom and Learner Factors	Mean	SD	Description
7. I rely mainly on exemplars or online resources because official textbooks/materials are not yet available	3.68	1.107	Agree
8. The revised curriculum was introduced without sufficient training or orientation for teachers like me.	2.81	1.195	Neutral
9. Limited access to digital tools and technology hinders my teaching.	2.77	1.309	Neutral
10. Instructional materials available to me are incomplete or not yet fully developed.	2.65	1.170	Neutral
11. Professional development opportunities related to the curriculum are lacking.	2.87	0.0957	Neutral
12. I find that the absence of finalized textbooks makes lesson preparation difficult.	3.32	1.077	Neutral
13. I feel unprepared because seminars and trainings for higher grade levels (Grades 9–12) are still pending.	2.52	1.235	Neutral
Average	2.94	0.853	Neutral

The findings revealed that for the issue of resources and training challenges, teachers had an average score that was slightly above the neutral stance on that issue (mean = 2.94, SD = 0.853), suggesting moderate concern about how instructional materials would be made available for them to use as enhancements to traditional print materials, how digital tools would support their teaching practices and access by students, and if they were sufficiently prepared via professional development or other means. The greatest mean (M = 3.68) found in teachers' convenience of exemplars or online resources that exist because official textbooks are unavailable indicates that many educators use other materials to plan for their teaching. On the other end of the continuum,

teachers' perception of unpreparedness for higher grade-level pending trainings had one of the lowest means (M = 2.52), suggesting diversity in respondents' readiness and coping to deal with such perturbation. That means educators acknowledge the limitations of materials and preparation, but are flexible in working within these constraints. Neutral ratings for the majority of items –for example, inadequate training (M = 2.81), incomplete course materials (M = 2.65), lack of professional development opportunities (M = 2.87)– indicate teachers' mixed perceptions regarding both constraints and existing support networks in schools surrounding these issues. The findings affirm the study of David and Dizon (2019) ^[12] which supplements that Filipino

teachers experience moderate to extreme difficulty in responding to curriculum reforms due to inadequate preparation and resources. Similarly, Frianeza *et al.* (2024)^[18] revealed that teachers typically rely on resources available online and collegial work when official instructional materials are limited. Ancho and Bongco (2019) also observed that teacher workload and lack of institutional support limit the successful delivery of curriculum as well as professional development. In line with Prudente *et al.* (2024)

^[35], job-embedded professional development is essential for providing teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to address curricular requirements. These findings indicate that support systems for teachers —such as delivering learning materials in a timely manner, technology accessibility, and continued training—need to be bolstered by the Department of Education and school administrators to facilitate successful implementation of the curriculum with confidence.

Table 4: Classroom and Learner Factors

Classroom and Learner Factors	Mean	SD	Description
1.The large size of my classes makes teaching more difficult.	3.13	1.176	Neutral
2.The diversity of students' learning needs is hard to manage.	3.03	0.875	Neutral
3.Many students show low motivation and engagement in classroom activities.	3.13	0.922	Neutral
4.Disruptive student behaviors often interfere with lessons.	3.35	0.798	Neutral
5.It is difficult to give individualized attention to learners because of the class situation.	3.10	0.790	Neutral
Average	3.15	0.771	Neutral

The results showed that teachers tend to be neutral in terms of classroom- and learner-related conditions (overall mean score 3.15, SD.771). All five items further belong to the location of neutrality, indicating neither particularly good nor particularly bad agreement or disagreement regarding phenomena described in these items. It indicates that teachers perceive classroom and learner-related factors are moderately affecting their teaching performance. They acknowledge issues such as large class sizes, learning diversity, low motivation, disruptive behaviors, and limited individualized attention, but not to a severe extent. This implies that these challenges exist in their teaching environments, though teachers may have found ways to cope or adapt. The neutral findings align with previous research, which emphasizes that classroom and learner factors moderately influence teaching and learning outcomes. According to Konstantinidis *et al.*

(2024)^[26], classroom climate and course design significantly affect student well-being, but their influence varies across contexts. Likewise, Kassab, Rathan, and Taylor (2024)^[24] explained that while educational environments are affecting engagement and performance, their effects are often mediated by institutional and personal factors. Ye (2024)^[43] also noted that positive classroom conditions can enhance student engagement, though the overall impact tends to be moderate rather than strong. These studies support the results and suggest that teachers experience a balanced level of difficulty in managing classroom and learner factors. These findings imply that school administrators and teachers should strengthen classroom management practices, provide support for differentiated instruction, and implement agreement strategies to improve learning environments and shift teachers' perceptions from neutral to positive.

Table 5: Systemic Challenges

Systemic Challenges	Mean	SD	Description
19. I find that the assessment requirements and performance standards of the revised K–12 curriculum are difficult to meet.	2.97	0.795	Neutral
20. Unclear or evolving guidelines for MATATAG curriculum create challenges for implementation.	3.10	0.870	Neutral
21. I do not receive support from school administrators in applying the curriculum.	2.10	0.978	Disagree
22. School policies are sometimes unclear or inconsistent, which hinders teaching.	2.42	1.205	Disagree
23. I find that the revised curriculum is not fully aligned with the realities and conditions of classroom teaching.	2.97	1.080	Neutral
Average	2.71	0.762	Neutral

The findings revealed that teachers had neutral perceptions (overall mean = 2.71, SD = 0.762) regarding systemic challenges in implementing the Revised K–12 Curriculum. This suggests that teachers experience moderate difficulty with institutional factors, such as unclear guidelines, insufficient administrative support, and inconsistent school policies. The highest mean was recorded in the item on unclear or evolving guidelines for the MATATAG Curriculum (M = 3.10, SD = 0.870), followed by difficulties in meeting assessment requirements and performance standards (M = 2.97, SD = 0.795). Meanwhile, teachers disagreed with statements indicating a lack of administrative support (M = 2.10, SD = 0.978) and unclear or inconsistent school policies (M = 2.42, SD = 1.205), showing that while some systemic barriers exist, others are less pronounced in

their schools. Aligned to this, Casimiro, Atrido and Calahat (2023) documented that teachers face substantial difficulties in integrating the K–12 Curriculum because of the ever-changing policies, unclear curriculum direction, and a low level of administrative or institutional support. In their study, teachers were also found to be faced with the lack of congruence in assessment practices and performance standards when comparing them against existing classroom realities, a parallel which can be drawn to the neutral view in this present study. These results suggest that greater policy clarity, communication and support should be given by educational leaders and policymakers to facilitate the smoother and more coherent institutionalisation of the MATATAG Curriculum in public secondary schools.

Table 6: Coping Strategies

Coping Strategies	Mean	SD	Description
1. I make use of locally available or improvised resources whenever standard materials are lacking.	4.16	0.68	Agree
2. I work together or co-plan with my colleagues to address curriculum challenges.	4.00	0.93	Agree
3. I participate in school-initiated trainings, webinars, or workshops to improve teaching.	4.26	0.68	Strongly Agree
4. I adjust or modify my lesson plans to better fit classroom realities.	4.32	0.60	Strongly Agree
5. I seek support or advice from school administrators when facing difficulties.	3.94	0.77	Agree
6. I use technology (e.g., online resources, apps) to support instruction.	4.35	0.91	Strongly Agree
7. I join professional learning communities or teacher groups to share strategies and solutions.	3.87	0.76	Agree
8. I practice time management or prioritization strategies to cope with heavy workload.	4.29	0.59	Strongly Agree
9. I reflect on my teaching practices and make adjustments when needed.	4.45	0.51	Strongly Agree
10. I practice self-care or wellness routines to help manage stress from teaching.	4.32	0.79	Strongly Agree
Average	4.32	0.79	Strongly Agree

Teachers strongly agreed (overall mean = 4.20, SD = 0.512) under items (6–10) to the coping strategies which indicates that teachers regularly use different adaptive and reflective practices in handling challenges while adopting the MATATAG Curriculum. Only in reflecting on teaching practices were means higher ($M = 4.45$) than those noted for self-care ($M = 4.32$) or time management strategies ($M = 4.29$), suggesting that teachers, as a whole, perceive themselves to have high levels of self-awareness and resiliency and adaptability. These findings are in line with Day and Gu (2014) ^[11], who argue that being reflective and of possessing personal resilience typifies teachers who remain effective in changing times. Similarly, Collie, Shapka, and Perry (2012) ^[7] indicated that teachers having engaged in professional collaboration and self-regulation perceived the highest levels of job satisfaction and emotional well-being. "However, Kyriacou (2011) ^[28] also warned that personal coping strategies would only be effective for not burning out if you have the appropriate institutional support. These results suggest that although there is evidence of teacher resilience and resourcefulness, it will be important for school leaders to continue to support teachers by maintaining institutional support, such as professional development opportunities, wellness initiatives, and collaborative networks of support designed to promote these positive adaptive responses as well as increase teacher well-being.

Theme 1: Insufficient Resources

'Insufficient resources' means limited or incomplete teaching and learning supports—for example, textbooks, equipment, technological devices or teaching space—which are required to deliver the new curriculum. Teachers simply do not have the appropriate resources (often including funding) to be productive under the K–12 Revised curriculum. This might involve missing or outdated modules, an absence of library books, inadequate internet or, computer access and insufficient classroom supplies. In Philippine schools, most conspicuously in low-resource areas, the context is that of a lack of "teaching materials" and facilities.

"We still use old modules from last year – the new books promised by DepEd never arrived." – R3 (rural)

"Even in my city school we have only one computer for many classes, and our internet is too slow for online lessons." – U2 (urban)

"There's no lab equipment or science kits for the new curriculum's activities, so we just improvise with whatever we have." – R5 (rural)

Lack of resources makes it difficult to implement the new

curriculum, particularly for teachers in urban and rural settings. More often than not, they have to generate or alter resources because of outdated textbooks, no access to digital devices and inadequate classroom infrastructure. The needs are worse in the countryside: Not only do rural schools lack internet access, but they don't even have textbooks or, in some cases, furniture; urban schools are better off equipped but still face problems like slow internet and not enough digital devices. These are in the rear of previous research on Philippine educational reform. For example, Mendoza & Abad (2022) ^[34] found that many of the teachers faced "not enough training and support," due in part to lack of resources. Meanwhile, Baldera (2025) ^[2] discusses the Philippines context as one which is "resource-limited" and explains that teachers are left with "inadequate teaching materials" to use. According to international reports, the new curriculums also regularly fail for more basic reasons: a lack of classrooms, laboratories, textbooks and internet. In our data especially rural teachers (but urban too – if to a lesser extent) complain about no resources at all, and although the more immediate "supplies" are better in urban schools, they're still insufficient and out of date. This follows on work by Garcia and Santos (2023) ^[21] which found that urban teachers were universally more positive, with rural teachers' frustration seen as resulting from unequal resources. The result is an enormous disparity in the achievements of pupils in well resourced schools in urban centres against poorly and ill-resourced rural schools. Addressing these gaps requires a rapid and fair dispersal of funds, with textbooks and learning kits and technology front and center. Infact, support programs that could help to alleviate teachers burden^[1]ought to be provided Practical –ready-to-go- lesson plans, mobile device kits, and long-term investment in the schools infrastructure. Such actions will help make sure teachers are able to enforce the new curriculum appropriately and hence, lead to fairer quality of education overall.

Theme 2: Technological and Time-related Constraints

The restraints of technology and time often hinder the digitization of teaching tools, or exploiting the scarce contact hours (Smadi & Raman, 2020) ^[37]. These difficulties are well reflected in teacher interviews where all teachers said it was a challenge for them to teach and promote learning with such behaviour.

"Aside from the lack of materials and too much paperwork, my biggest challenge is technology. Back then, ICT use wasn't very common, so I struggled to catch up with online platforms and digital requirements." - U2
"Time is not enough" - R1

“Time management has been a major challenge. There are many tasks, such as lesson preparation, checking outputs, and ensuring documentation compliance. Another challenge is the lack of up-to-date materials that align with the curriculum. Using technology can also be difficult at times, especially when internet connections or devices are limited.” - R4

“One big challenge is the limited time to finish all the lessons. Another is adjusting to my pupils' different learning levels.” - R5

Tech and time challenges among rural and urban teachers. A majority of them struggle to access technology because they do not have the internet and even if they do, it is sporadic. There's also limited time in which to finish their lessons. Haleem *et al.* (2022) ^[22] also observed that teachers are given little training in the use of digital and some of them are “digital novices”. Another study by Leek *et al.* (2024) ^[30] teachers report feeling time-pressured as they are trying to cover need-to-teach while meeting curricular requirements, thus emphasizing the perennial tug of paradox between instruction time and non-instructional responsibilities. These responses suggest that teachers are struggling with technology adoption, and time constraints see the innovation not implemented effectively. This suggests a need for technological training in the case of teachers, making digital resources more available in the classroom, and perhaps reduction of administrative tasks to allow teachers to focus on teaching and student learning.

Theme 3: Availability and Adequacy of Learning Materials

Availability and Adequacy of Learning Materials pertains to the availability, adequacy, and quality of teaching/learning materials utilized by the teachers in implementing the Revised K–12 Curriculum. It speaks to the degree of how instruction delivery and learner engagement as well as teacher labour are shaped in school by absence or presence of text books, examples and teaching aids themselves.

“If I don't have textbooks, I make use of stories, pictures, or even objects inside the classroom.”

“Most of the time, I make my own materials. I tweak them depending on what my pupils actually need.”

“It adds more work for me, but it makes the lessons more fun for them. When they're interested, they learn faster.”

“When there are no books available, I rely on self-made materials and whatever resources I can find.”

“It's a bit of a struggle to search online since I'm not used to it, but I'm slowly learning.”

“It's tiring because it takes double the effort, especially when technology is involved. But despite the difficulty, I can see that students learn better when the materials are suited to their learning needs.”

“The most difficult for me are topics that require technological support, such as digital activities or online research.”

“I use exemplars and other materials.”

“The exemplars provided are helpful; we base our teaching on the exemplars provided.”

“Teacher's manuals and student textbooks—yes, when no copies of activity sheets were available.”

Teachers face both open and control in learning materials. The shortage of reference books and prepared resources

forces them to produce themselves, which makes some more work but also encourages dynamic resourcefulness. Although both examples and guides provide support, lack of access to them and need for adaptation reflect the uneven suitability of instructional materials in both urban cities and rural areas. The evidence supports that inadequate access to suitable materials for learning is still an endemic problem in curriculum execution. Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2020) ^[9] note that successful teaching is reliant on what resources are available to teachers and whether those resources meet curricular standards. Likewise, DepEd (2023) ^[15] notes that the support gaps still exist in resources even with the distribution of exemplars under the MATATAG Curriculum. However, the teachers' commissioning of development and adaptations supports Schluman's (1987) ^[38] idea of pedagogical content knowledge to demonstrate that expertise in teaching is beyond set materials. The teachers' narratives reveal a clash between the curriculum and practical circumstances. While RK–12 Curriculum wishes to have teaching contextualized and meaningful, the lack of instructional materials and its unequal distribution hinders smooth flow of lesson delivery. Teachers' improvisation fills the gaps, but this increases workload and reliance on personal initiative. This case illustrates an enduring disconnect between national curriculum aims and the capacity to effectively use them in the classroom. To improve the implementation of curriculum, the education sector needs to guarantee that rural schools have fair and equal access to adequate, context-specific materials. Institutional reinforcement via localized resource generation, ICT integration and continued teacher training may alleviate individual burden and ensure that quality learning in a predictable manner occurs across settings.

Theme 4: Gaps in Professional Development and Training

Gaps in professional development and training refer to the insufficient, irregular or delayed conduct of capacity-building programs that were scheduled for teachers in the course of the roll-out of MATATAG Curriculum. Such gaps are barriers to teachers acquiring and receiving support for the most current pedagogical practices, confidence in delivering a curriculum effectively.

“The revised curriculum was introduced without sufficient training or orientation for teachers like me.” – U5

“I feel unprepared because seminars and trainings for higher grade levels (Grades 9-12) are still pending.” – R3 “Professional development opportunities related to the curriculum are lacking.” – U9

“We only had one training, and it did not fully explain the new learning competencies.” – R6

“There's a lack of follow-up training after the orientation, so we just learn through trial and error.” – U2

Teachers from both urban and rural settings mentioned that they had experienced a lack of subject-specific professional learning opportunities available. According to urban teachers, the training was exclusively taught in general curriculum guidelines and rural teachers were unable to attend training because of distance, scheduling conflicts, or limited access to the internet. These results are consistent with previous studies which point out that Filipino teachers

experience marked deficits in professional development. Chin *et al.* (2022) ^[8] found that teacher PD in the Philippines is often fragmented and not continuous. Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner (2017) ^[10] emphasized that meaningful PD should be continuous, content-focused, and collaborative. Prudente *et al.* (2024) ^[35] who further ascertained that one-shot seminars have very limited effects on teachers' learning to the practice in the classroom. Comments from respondents are indicative that a considerable number of teachers move into aspects of curriculum implementation not having been prepared sufficiently for their role. Training activities consisted of brief introductions or webinars, with little attention to subject-specific needs. Limited levels of connectivity and travel for rural teachers also limited access to PD. In the absence of ongoing mentoring and resource-sharing mechanisms, these teachers must rely on self-study or peer support. Unequal access to PD results in uneven delivery of curricular programs across schools. The Department of Education and school leaders must institutionalize a district-wide professional-development model but also can offer regular follow-up, peer coaching and by-local workshops that can be provided on-line or on-site. Prioritize making consistent and fair training available so it can bridge teacher competency gaps and enhance curriculum implementation.

Theme 5: Adaptive and Collaborative Pedagogy

Adaptive and Collaborative Pedagogy: How teachers' adaptive teaching and collaborative practices contribute to student outcomes. It demonstrates how teachers display flexibility, teamwork and ingenuity in meeting classroom challenges." This theme emphasizes what teachers do—such as differentiate instruction, scaffold learning, and tap peer support to reach every student in ways that help them succeed (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017; Tomlinson, 2014) ^[10, 40].

"When there are no textbooks, I rely on my own notes, online references, and sometimes make my own activities." - R5

"I follow lesson exemplars but combine them with my own activities." - R2

"I give varied activities depending on students' abilities and provide extra guidance for those who struggle." - R5

"I use simple things as learning aids—when I had no counters for Math, we used bottle caps." - U1

"Peer teaching helps weak learners." - R1

"Collaboration works best—we share lesson plans through a shared Google Drive to make preparation faster." - U4

Both the urban and rural educators showed resilience and a spirit of cooperation, but their means were different than what would be possible in their separate teaching settings. Adaptable urban educators provided differentiated instruction and utilized technology to enhance collaboration. They adapted their plans to fit what students were asking for and harnessed digital tools, like shared Google Drives, to co-plan lessons more easily. Such practices illustrate a dynamic of what Kusumarti, Sariyatun, and Rejekiningsih (2024) ^[27] called the collaborative skills that emerged in communication and teamwork. Similarly, Jopia (2025) ^[23] and Dulfer, Saito, & McKernan (2025) ^[17] affirmed that differentiated instruction improves learning achievements when integrated with active collaboration as well as shared planning. The

experiences of urban teachers are indicative of a technology-enhanced cooperative teaching model to facilitate efficiency and inclusivity in classrooms. On the other hand, rural teachers showed themselves to be resourceful and interdependent as strategies for survival in a climate of scarcity. Instead, they made their own handouts, created improvised teaching tools and engaged in peer or team teaching to ensure that all students had entry points into learning. Strategies are consistent with those found by Gamboa (2023) ^[20]. Though they have little access to high-tech tools, rural teachers' creativity and collaboration reveal the essence of adaptive pedagogy—teaching that changes in response to the problems they face. To sum up, urban teachers depend more on prefabricated differentiation and digital teamwork. While the rural teachers count on their initiatives, scarcity of resources and cooperative learning to ensure effective instruction. Both, however, show that flexibility and cooperation are necessary to provide inclusive and quality education. Encouraging professional collaboration, using digital resources or localized teamwork is essential in building resilient, creative-minded teachers able to connect with all students (Basister *et al.*, 2025; Gamboa, 2023) ^[3, 20].

Theme 6: Motivational Dynamics in the Classroom

According to Dörnyei *et al.* (2015) ^[16], the motivational dynamics of motivation or how motivation is exerted in classroom by learner and environment interactions constantly emerges and changes.

"Students' responses to the curriculum will depend on their individual strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles." - U5 *"I collaborate with my fellow teachers, use improvised materials, and adjust my lessons to make them simpler and more manageable for students"* - U4

"Napansin kong mas nagiging masigla ang ilan kapag may gawaing praktikal at kaugnay sa buhay nila... Mas pinipili kong magbigay ng gawain ayon sa kakayahan ng bata... at inuulit ang mahihirap na bahagi para masundan ng lahat."—"I've noticed that some children become more motivated when they have practical activities that are relevant to their lives... I prefer to give activities based on the child's ability...and repeat the difficult parts so that everyone can follow along." - R4

Teachers from both urban and rural areas are aware of students' diverse learning needs, addressing them by collaborating with peers, adapting technology to make lessons more interactive and relevant while engaging in ability-based teaching. This finding is consistent with Tomlinson (2014) ^[40] who believed that catering for diversified learning needs through differentiated and contextually embedded instruction maintain students' interest and supports different learning styles in the classroom setting. This suggests that teachers' efforts to adapt lessons based on learners' abilities and contexts mirror the principles of differentiated instruction. When contrasted to the one-size-fits-all, compromise and counterproductive programming that characterizes much education in both urban and rural contexts, the creative problem-solving of teachers working to tailor activities and materials to their students' needs highlights how attending to learner diversity can be motivating and productive. Additionally, this underscores the necessity of ongoing teacher professional

development around differentiated and inclusive pedagogy such that teachers are supported to develop responsive lessons for all types of learners in different school environments.

Theme 7: Inadequate Support Systems

Lack of support systems is insufficient administrative, material and institutional assistance to teachers that hinders the delivery of effective teaching and learning especially when there is a change or an introduction of a new curriculum.

“Bondpapers and ink are provided for printing activity sheets and lesson exemplars; Admin has been supportive of teachers’ needs; Classrooms are conducive to learning; Provide learners with reference materials like textbooks.” – R3

“Our administrators are supportive within their means. They encourage and try to assist with school needs, but the limited budget and bureaucratic processes sometimes prevent them from giving full support.” - U4

“Since our school is in a remote area, access to resources is limited”. -R2

“Nandiyan naman ang suporta, pero limitado rin sila. Minsan nakakatulong sila sa pagbibigay ng papel, supplies, at iba pang pangangailangan, pero may mga pagkakataon ding kulang ang kanilang maibigay. ... Dahil nasa malayong lugar ang paaralan, limitado ang access sa mga resources at minsan nahihirapan din ang mga estudyante sa pagkamit ng materyales.” – ““The support is there, but it is limited. Sometimes they help by providing paper, supplies, and other necessities, but there are also times when they are not enough. ... Because the school is located in a remote area, access to resources is limited and sometimes students have difficulty obtaining materials.” – R4

Both rural and urban teachers experience varying levels of administrative and material support. While some teachers acknowledge school-level attempts to respond to instructional needs, others emphasize the persistent shortages of supplies, books and training—especially in schools that are geographically isolated and have few resources. Philippine studies reveal several barriers such as inadequate training, resource-limited and lack of support from administrative especially in rural settings (Orleans, 2020; Santos & Navarro, 2021). International studies support these findings. Grissom *et al.* (2015) observed that strong administrative support could highly contribute to fostering higher teacher satisfaction and retention. Similarly, Leithwood *et al.* (2004) emphasises the importance of leadership and simplified administrative systems that free teachers from unnecessary additional workload and allow direct dedication to teaching goals. Clarissa *et al.* (2019) and Granthorn (2020) similarly highlight that insufficient support and heavy workloads contribute significantly to teacher stress in the Philippines. This reveals the need for efficient school administration and fair distribution of support to urban and rural schools. It highlights the importance of prioritising teachers' needs to meet curriculum demands and reduce workloads.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that although teachers have been resilient, creative and adaptive in implementing the

Revised K-12 Curriculum, they continue to face persistent, systemic and instructional challenges which compromise quality delivery of the curriculum. The null findings in several dimensions may indicate that teachers are working under stress, preserving performance with inadequate materials, low training and vague guidelines of implementation. Teachers' capacity to improvise with self-made or borrowed instructional resources not only demonstrates their commitment towards providing quality education, but it also clearly highlights the inadequacy of institutional support required for full curriculum realization. Furthermore, the recurring issues of a scarcity of resources, lack of administrative support and the requirement for additional training clearly suggest structural deficits that need immediate attention in education. In short, while the curriculum is gradually taking root in classroom practice, its success currently relies heavily on teacher resilience rather than systemic readiness. In the absence of immediate intervention and ongoing support across systems, teachers' burnout, uneven implementation and increased disparities amid schools between urban and rural contexts—may persist. The data therefore, highlights the need for immediate action that has to be accommodated and supported in order to reach the curriculum's goals.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen resource allocation and accessibility. The Department of Education and the school divisions must ensure that instructional resources, materials, models, samples, etc., are made available in a timely manner and equitably. Budgets have to be provided for the school so that teachers do not rely on doing their own.
2. Enhance teacher training and professional development. Provide comprehensive hands-on training which is holistic in nature to meet the curriculum's competencies with regards to practical classroom application of ICT skills, differentiated instruction, and resource utilization.
3. Intensify administrative and policy support. Clarity and consistent communication about curriculum policies and implementation instructions will help minimize confusion and variation among teachers.
4. Prioritize teacher welfare and workload management. Systems for institutional support should be in place to ensure the well-being of teachers and prevent burn-out while experiencing increased work-load due to lack of resources and curriculum changes.
5. Address urban–rural implementation disparities. Provide targeted assistance to rural and under-resourced schools, enabling them to have the same opportunities and resources for delivering the curriculum regardless of location.
6. Future research. Future studies may adopt a four-point Likert scale to prevent the neutral bias, and obtain more serious information about teachers' attitudes and perceptions. More qualitative investigation work might also be done to listen into teachers' stories about moving.

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