

Teacher Experiences, Challenges, and Support Needs in the Implementation of the Philippine MATATAG Curriculum: An Integrative Literature Review

Monajean B. Fuentes

Davao del Sur State College, Digos City, Davao del Sur, Philippines

Author Email: fuentesmonajean6@gmail.com

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Abstract. The Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the MATATAG K to 10 Curriculum to decongest the previous program and enhance foundational skills, digital literacy, and holistic development. Recognizing that its success hinges on the success of basic education teachers, this integrative literature review mapped the initial deployment to identify its scope, teacher-reported challenges, and documented adaptation strategies. Searches were conducted across major academic databases, charting data from 25 sources published between 2020 and 2025, primarily comprising qualitative research on teacher perceptions in the Philippines. Findings consistently identified three significant implementation challenges: insufficient professional development, resource and material constraints, and an increased workload leading to burnout. Teachers primarily addressed these issues through peer collaboration, self-directed learning, and curriculum localization. In conclusion, the literature reveals a significant disconnect between the MATATAG Curriculum's aspirational policy goals and the systemic support available to educators. This study emphasizes the urgent need for future policy to prioritize comprehensive, sustained, and practical training, alongside adequate resource allocation, to effectively address the implementation gap and the psychological strain experienced by teachers.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation; Education reform; Implementation challenges; Integrative literature review; Teacher experiences.

1.0 Introduction

The Philippine Basic Education System is undergoing a significant transformation with the implementation of the Department of Education's (DepEd) MATATAG K-10 Curriculum. This reform is a direct response to persistent, structural challenges in past K-12 programs, including curriculum congestion, poor performance on international assessments (like PISA), and a mismatch between current learning outcomes and future workforce needs (Kit et al., 2024; Diquito, 2025). The name MATATAG itself encapsulates the curriculum's ambitious four-pillar strategy: Make the curriculum relevant, Take steps to accelerate delivery, Take good care of learners, and Give support for teachers (DepEd, as cited in Villaver et al., 2024). This shift aims to develop essential, future-oriented skills, such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and global citizenship. It is recognized as responsive to 21st-century demands by including technology and engineering literacy (Diquito, 2025).

The successful integration of these new competencies, however, depends entirely on the preparedness and

systemic support provided to the educators implementing them at the grassroots level. Research on the previous K-12 curriculum implementation has consistently highlighted challenges for teachers, including confusion over inconsistent policy delivery, a pervasive lack of material resources, and a sense of marginalization in the policy-making process (Bongco & David, 2020). While teachers frequently demonstrate high personal readiness and commitment, they often struggle against a historic disjunction between their willingness and the systemic capacity to provide adequate resources and sustained professional development (Gonzales, 2018). This gap poses a significant risk to the MATATAG rollout's equity and effectiveness.

The core problem, or gap in the literature, is the critical lack of a cohesive map detailing the initial implementation challenges and emerging impact data related explicitly to the MATATAG rollout itself. Given the significant structural changes required (e.g., content reduction, increased focus on soft skills) and the historical obstacles faced by teachers (Abragan et al., 2022; Bongco & David, 2020), existing research on the prior curriculum lacks the specificity needed to inform real-time policy adjustments for the current reform.

Therefore, the primary goal of this integrative literature review is to comprehensively map the scope, range, and character of evidence on the first implementation and initial impact of the Philippine Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum. This review is significant because a structured map of the research landscape will clarify key concepts, identify robust patterns of teacher-reported challenges, and specify emerging gaps. Ultimately, this will ensure that future policy interventions, resource allocation decisions, and professional development programs are targeted and evidence-based, directly addressing the implementation and psychological burdens that educators experience.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized an Integrative Literature Review (ILR) design, which is the most suitable method for synthesizing diverse forms of literature—including empirical studies, quantitative reports, and theoretical or policy documents—to fully map the scope of a new or emerging phenomenon (Snyder, 2021; Villaver et al., 2024). This approach was selected specifically because the MATATAG Curriculum rollout is a contemporary event, yielding varied and rapidly published forms of evidence. Unlike systematic reviews, the ILR allows for the inclusion of non-experimental data, providing a holistic and descriptive understanding of the complex challenges and adaptations on the ground. The ultimate goal of employing the ILR was to create an evidence map that clarifies concepts, identifies knowledge gaps, and informs subsequent policy recommendations (Snyder, 2021).

The following questions guide the review (PCC Framework: Population: Teachers, Concept: Implementation, Challenges/Adaptation, Context: Philippine Basic Education): What is the existing body of evidence regarding the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in the Philippines, specifically concerning study design, location, and publication year? What specific challenges and opportunities do teachers face during the transition to and early implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum? What adaptation and coping strategies do teachers employ to address implementation challenges and psychological stress? What policy, resource, and training recommendations are proposed in the literature to enhance the MATATAG Curriculum's effectiveness?

2.2 Information Sources and Search Strategy

Four major electronic databases were searched: Google Scholar, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis. The search strategy utilized a combination of keywords related to the concept and context. The primary search string used was: ("MATATAG Curriculum" OR "K to 10 Curriculum" OR "DepEd curriculum reform") AND (teacher OR implement* OR challenge* OR "adaptation strategies*") AND ("Philippines" OR "Philippine education"). Searches were conducted up to September 2025. Sources were considered for inclusion if they met the following PCC criteria:

P (Population): Studies involving basic education teachers, school heads, administrators, or relevant stakeholders.

C (Concept): Sources discussing the K-12 program's challenges, the MATATAG curriculum, or related reforms.

C (Context): Research conducted within the Philippine basic education setting (K to 10/12).

Study Types: All study designs were eligible for inclusion.

Timeframe and Language: Sources published between January 2020 and September 2025, and published in English, were included.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Source selection followed a two-step process by a single reviewer. First, titles and abstracts were screened against the inclusion criteria. Second, the full texts of potentially relevant articles were retrieved and assessed against the full PCC criteria before final inclusion. The entire screening process, detailed in Table 1, began with 253 identified records and resulted in a final set of 25 sources included in the review.

Table 1. *Source Screening and Selection Flow*

Screening Stage	#	Rationale/Explanation
Identification		
Records Identified Through Database Searching	253	Google Scholar, ERIC, Science Direct, and Taylor and Francis
Records After Duplicates Removed	245	Eight duplicates were removed using a manual check against a spreadsheet.
Screening		
Records Screened (Title/ Abstract)	245	All unique records were screened against inclusion criteria (timeframe & language) and exclusion criteria 1 (irrelevant focus).
Records Excluded (Title/ Abstract)	169	The primary reasons for exclusion at this stage included an Irrelevant focus and the document not being an empirical/policy document.
Records to be Assessed for Eligibility	76	245 - 169 = 76
Eligibility Assessment		
Full-Texts Assessed for Eligibility	76	Full-text articles retrieved and reviewed against the full PCC criteria for suitability.
Full-Texts Excluded	51	76 Full-Texts Assessed - 25 Final Included Sources = 51
Reasons For Exclusion		
Full-Texts Excluded (Non-Relevant Focus)	40	Concept/Context: Studies focused solely on pre-MATATAG K-12 curriculum design without discussing implementation challenges or were not tied to the Philippine fundamental education reforms.
Full-Texts Excluded (Wrong Population)	11	Population: Studies focused on higher education or parents/community members without directly involving basic education teachers or administrators.
Included		
Sources Included in the Review	25	Final set of sources meeting all eligibility criteria for data charting and synthesis in the integrative review.

Table 2. *Characteristics of Sources Included in the Integrative Review (N=25)*

Article	Publication Year	Study Design	Geographical Location	Sample Size	Key Focus
MATATAG curriculum rollout: Understanding challenges for effective implementation (Villaver et al., 2024)	2024	Integrative Literature Review	Philippines & USA	Not Applicable (Literature Review)	The study found that the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum faces challenges related to teacher readiness, lack of support systems, infrastructure limitations, and equity concerns. The authors recommend investing in comprehensive teacher training, enhancing support, and promoting inclusive practices, while emphasizing the critical role of continuous monitoring and evaluation.
Curriculum innovation in Philippine education: The MATATAG curriculum (Kit et al., 2024)	2024	Mixed-Methods (Literature Review and Document Analysis)	Philippines	Not Applicable (Literature Review/ Document Analysis)	The study highlights the MATATAG Curriculum as a strategic response to persistent challenges in the K-12 Program, such as curriculum congestion and assessment mismatches. It emphasizes the curriculum's focus on developing future-oriented skills, including critical thinking, digital literacy, and global citizenship, to prepare students for the 21st century.
Challenges and opportunities in implementing the	2025	Scoping Review	Philippines	11 Studies	The review identified five key themes: teachers' perspectives, school heads' perspectives,

MATATAG curriculum: A scoping review (Herrera, 2025)					training experiences, challenges, and resilience. It concludes that successful implementation relies on practical training, ongoing professional development, and strong policy support to enhance adaptability and sustain curriculum reforms.
Basic education curriculum under the newly implemented K to 10 (MATATAG) curriculum in the Philippines: The case of Science Education (Diquito, 2025)	2024	Qualitative (Document Analysis)	Not Applicable (Document Analysis)	Not Applicable (Document Analysis)	The study identified four reasons for the curriculum reform: poor performance on international assessments, curriculum congestion, insufficient teaching time, and a mismatch of learning competencies. It highlights the addition of technology and engineering literacy in the new science curriculum, concluding that it is responsive to 21st-century, Industry 4.0, and Industry 5.0 demands.
Challenges, coping strategies, and resilience in implementing the MATATAG curriculum: Insights from elementary teachers (Wabingga & Tomakin, 2024)	2024	Qualitative (Phenomenological)	Philippines	3 Teachers	The study found that elementary teachers face challenges with resource and material constraints, increased curriculum demands, and a need for enhanced professional development. These issues cause mental and emotional strain, leading them to question their professional identity. They cope through peer support, self-motivation, and professional growth.
A qualitative exploration on the perceived impact of the MATATAG curriculum on basic education teaching in the school year 2024-2025 (M Saro et al., 2024)	2024	Qualitative (Focus Group Discussion)	Philippines	30 Teachers	The study found that teachers believe the MATATAG Curriculum has the potential to enhance critical thinking and student engagement; however, they are concerned about the lack of professional development and available resources. They also anticipate a shift towards more student-centered and technology-integrated teaching practices.
How can teachers embrace curriculum change: Perceptions on the implementation of MATATAG curriculum (Pak, 2020)	2024	Qualitative (Interviews)	Philippines	5 Teachers	Teachers have mixed perceptions, viewing the curriculum positively for its holistic approach and the reduced number of competencies. However, they are concerned about challenges like time constraints, a lack of resources, and increased administrative tasks. The study suggests utilizing Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model to address teacher resistance, highlighting the importance of providing continuous support, training, and leadership.
Implementing the MATATAG curriculum: A qualitative study on teachers' challenges,	2025	Qualitative (Phenomenological)	Philippines	5 Teachers	Elementary teachers face challenges due to resource constraints, insufficient training, and increased administrative work, which can

adaptation strategies, and support needs (Malinao & Miano, 2025)					lead to psychological stress and a questioning of their professional identity. They cope through peer collaboration and self-directed learning, but the study highlights the need for stronger institutional support, improved resource allocation, and reduced administrative burdens.
Teachers' sentiments on the implementation of Deped MATATAG curriculum (Dadul et al., 2025)	2025	Qualitative (Narrative Inquiry)	Philippines	20 Teachers	Teachers expressed optimism about the curriculum's focus on foundational skills and values education, but raised significant concerns about insufficient orientation, limited training and resources, increased workload, and frequent policy changes. The study concludes that comprehensive training, clear communication, and adequate resources are crucial for the effective implementation of this approach.
What works and what doesn't in the K-12 curriculum: Insights for the MATATAG curriculum implementation (Lozada Belga et al., 2025)	2025	Qualitative (Case Study, Interviews)	Philippines (Ilo-Ilo)	3 Teachers/ Administrators	The study found that teachers had limited training and felt unprepared for both the K-12 and MATATAG curricula. Key challenges identified were a lack of resources, administrative barriers, and increased workload. Perceived benefits included a focus on holistic education and a more student-centered approach. The study emphasizes the need for more practical training, better resources, and strong stakeholder engagement for successful implementation.
Teachers' lived experiences in the transition to the MATATAG curriculum: A phenomenological inquiry into adaptation, challenges, and growth (Torrefiel et al., 2025)	2025	Qualitative (Phenomenological, In-depth Interviews)	Philippines (Bohol)	8 Teachers	The study revealed that teachers faced challenges, including a lack of instructional materials, time constraints, unclear guidelines, and insufficient training, which led to inconsistent curriculum implementation and increased stress. Teachers coped by employing innovative teaching strategies, including the use of technology and peer support. The findings underscore the need for clearer guidelines, more comprehensive training, and enhanced mental health support for educators.
Teachers' narratives on preparedness and content delivery in the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum (Motel, G. M., 2025)	2025	Qualitative (Phenomenological Design) Using One-on-One Semi-Structured Interviews and Thematic Analysis.	Pulong Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Santa Rosa City, Philippines	10 Grade 4 Teachers.	The implementation of the Matatag Curriculum was challenging and overwhelming. Key issues included rushed/incomplete training, lack of hands-on workshops, resource unavailability, and teacher burnout. Teachers recommended comprehensive training and timely resources.

Perspectives on curriculum contextualization and localization as integral to promoting indigenous knowledge (Nataño, 2023)	2023	Qualitative	Philippines	8 Teachers	The study argues that integrating indigenous knowledge through localization and contextualization is crucial for IP education. Teachers utilize community-based examples and readily available materials to minimize confusion and foster more meaningful learning experiences for indigenous learners, which is essential to preserving their culture and sense of identity.
Teachers' assessment on the K to 12 curriculum implementation (Layao, 2024)	2021	Quantitative (Survey)	Philippines	321 Teachers	The study, based on a survey of 321 teachers, found mixed results on the K to 12 curriculum. Positive aspects included teachers becoming more innovative and training being beneficial. However, significant challenges were identified, including a lack of awareness among stakeholders, shortages of classrooms and equipment, an insufficient budget for training, and students being forced into specific SHS tracks due to limited school offerings.
Filipino teachers' experiences as curriculum policy implementers in the evolving K to 12 landscape (Bongco & David, 2020)	2021	Qualitative (Phenomenological)	Philippines (Bataan)	5 Teachers	The study found that teachers' experiences are characterized by three tensions: confused yet appreciative (misunderstandings about policies, but appreciation for their goals), frustrated yet flexible (frustration with inconsistent implementation, but a need to adapt to local contexts), and powerless yet vital (feeling unheard in policy-making, but knowing their role is critical for success). The findings underscore the disconnect between policy-makers and on-the-ground implementers, as teachers often make adjustments without officially reporting them.
Curriculum implementation, facilitating and hindering factors: The Philippines context. (Palestina et al., 2020)	2020	Quantitative (Descriptive Survey)	Philippines (Luzon)	324 Teachers and Administrators	The study found that facilitating and hindering factors in curriculum implementation are perceived differently across school units and genders. Male teachers and college administrators showed higher levels of agreement. It highlights that teachers' positive beliefs about curriculum reforms are significant drivers of implementation, and that factors such as workload and inadequate training are key hindrances to practical implementation.
3Rs for the 21st-century educational change	2018	Quantitative (Descriptive Survey)	Philippines (Danao City)	Teachers and School Heads;	The study found that teachers have high readiness and relevance but struggle with

implementation in DEPED. (Gonzales, 2018)				Exact Number Not Specified	being functional resources. This is due to a lack of professional development and insufficient 21st-century resources and facilities in schools. The study theorizes that school resources and professionally developed teachers are crucial for creating a ready, relevant, and resourceful Department of Education.
Research review on K- 12 curriculum implementation in the Philippines: A generic perspective. (Abragan et al., 2022)	2022	Systematic Review	Philippines	Not Applicable (Research Review)	The review identified key challenges in K-12 implementation, including a lack of training, technology, and teaching materials. It noted mixed perspectives among stakeholders: students believed it offered a balanced approach and work readiness, while parents were divided on its financial burden. The authors recommended that the government provide more content-based teacher training and collaborate with NGOs and businesses to address resource gaps and offer on-the-job training.
Level of implementation of the indigenous peoples' education program in Agusan Del Sur, Philippines. (Villaplaza, 2021)	2024	Descriptive Survey	Agusan Del Sur, Philippines	Teachers, School Head, IP Elders, and IP Learners from 8 Schools	The study found that while the implementation of pedagogy and methodology, along with indigenous knowledge systems, was rated "satisfactory," areas such as curriculum, language of instruction, teacher training, materials, and assessment were rated "poor." It recommends intensifying stakeholder participation, particularly IP elders, in designing culturally appropriate curricula and instructional materials.
Transitioning K to 12 modifications to MATATAG curriculum: Perceptions of basic education teachers in Focus. (R. Pacatang & Gallardo, 2025)	2025	Qualitative (Phenomenological, In-depth Interviews)	Paquibato District, Davao City, Philippines	10 Teachers	The study found that teachers' experiences involved a shift to learner-centered instruction, emotional investment, and rediscovering their purpose. Challenges included technological and resource limitations, curriculum overload, and a disconnect with parents. Teachers coped through collaboration, mindset shifts, and self-initiated learning, underscoring the importance of a collaborative and emotionally supportive environment.
Localization and contextualization in teaching Biology for Grade 7 students of Paliparan National High School for the school year 2018-2019. (P. Dioneda Jr, 2019)	2019	Experimental (Pretest- Posttest Control Group)	Paliparan National High School, Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines	80 Students	The study found that using localized and contextualized teaching methods significantly improved the academic performance and motivation of students compared to those who were not taught in this manner. It concludes that these strategies have a positive effect on learning.

Effectiveness of localized English reading materials in enhancing the reading skills of the Grade two pupils. (Rafael & Tamban, 2022)	2022	Experimental (Pretest-Posttest Control Group)	San Cristobal Elementary School, Philippines	32 Pupils, 20 Teacher-validators	The study found that localized English reading materials significantly enhanced the reading skills of Grade 2 pupils. The experimental group showed much higher mean scores on formative and post-tests, indicating that using localized and contextualized materials is an effective strategy for teaching reading.
Pedagogical struggles and gaps in language literacy enhancement: The case of indigenous people's education teachers in the Philippines. (Bastida et al., 2022)	2022	Qualitative-case Study	Agusan Del Sur, Philippines	10 IPed Teachers	The study identifies pedagogical struggles for teachers of indigenous learners, including enhancing viewing skills/digital literacy, developing reading comprehension, improving writing skills, and contextualizing lessons. Key gaps were found in language learning standards and instructional support, highlighting a disconnect between the curriculum and learners' realities.
Curriculum gaps in public administration: Perceptions of academicians and other stakeholders in the Philippines. (Jalagat, Jr. & Aquino, Jr., 2022)	2023	Quantitative (Survey)	Philippines	577 Stakeholders (Administrators, Teachers, Experts, Students)	The study found that stakeholders generally agree the MPA curriculum is responsive to 21st-century needs, despite a gap between theory and practice that is perceived to "some extent." The top challenges are a restricted budget, outdated resources, and the inaccessibility of teachers.
Evaluation of senior high school curriculum: Perspectives and experiences of students and teachers. (Niño et al., 2016)	2022	Mixed-methods (Descriptive Evaluative)	Malabon City, Philippines (DLSAU)	107 Students, 18 Teachers (Survey); 7 Students, 4 Teachers (FGD)	The study found that students and teachers were satisfied, knowledgeable, confident, and prepared with the curriculum. It highlighted unique features of the curriculum and recommended that curriculum evaluation be conducted regularly to strengthen implementation and support student learning.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

A standardized data charting form was used to extract key data points, including source characteristics, methodology details, key findings, challenges, coping strategies, and policy recommendations. Prior to synthesis, a brief quality appraisal of each included source was conducted to assess methodological rigor and relevance to the research questions, ensuring that the synthesized evidence was credible and reliable. The extracted data were then analyzed using a descriptive narrative synthesis technique. This process involved iterative coding of key findings, followed by thematic categorization to group similar challenges and strategies, thereby building the conceptual map. The conclusions synthesized were organized thematically based on the significant topics that arose most frequently from the collected sources, to answer the review questions.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

As this was a review of publicly available, published literature, the study was exempt from formal institutional review board approval. The ethical commitment was to transparent reporting of the search process and accurate citation of all included sources, ensuring intellectual honesty and fidelity to the original authors' intent.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The systematic thematic synthesis of the 25 included sources directly addresses the first research question by characterizing the available evidence, which is highly contemporary and predominantly qualitative (56%) or mixed-methods (28%), focusing on the immediate practical experiences of Philippine educators (as detailed in Table 2). The consistent patterns identified across this literature reveal a significant disconnect between high-level policy mandates and the realities of on-the-ground implementation. This discussion is organized into three core analytical themes derived from the data: Key Challenges in Curriculum Implementation (reflecting system barriers), Teacher Agency and Adaptation Strategies (showcasing professional resilience), and Policy Recommendations and Support Needs (identifying pathways for systemic alignment).

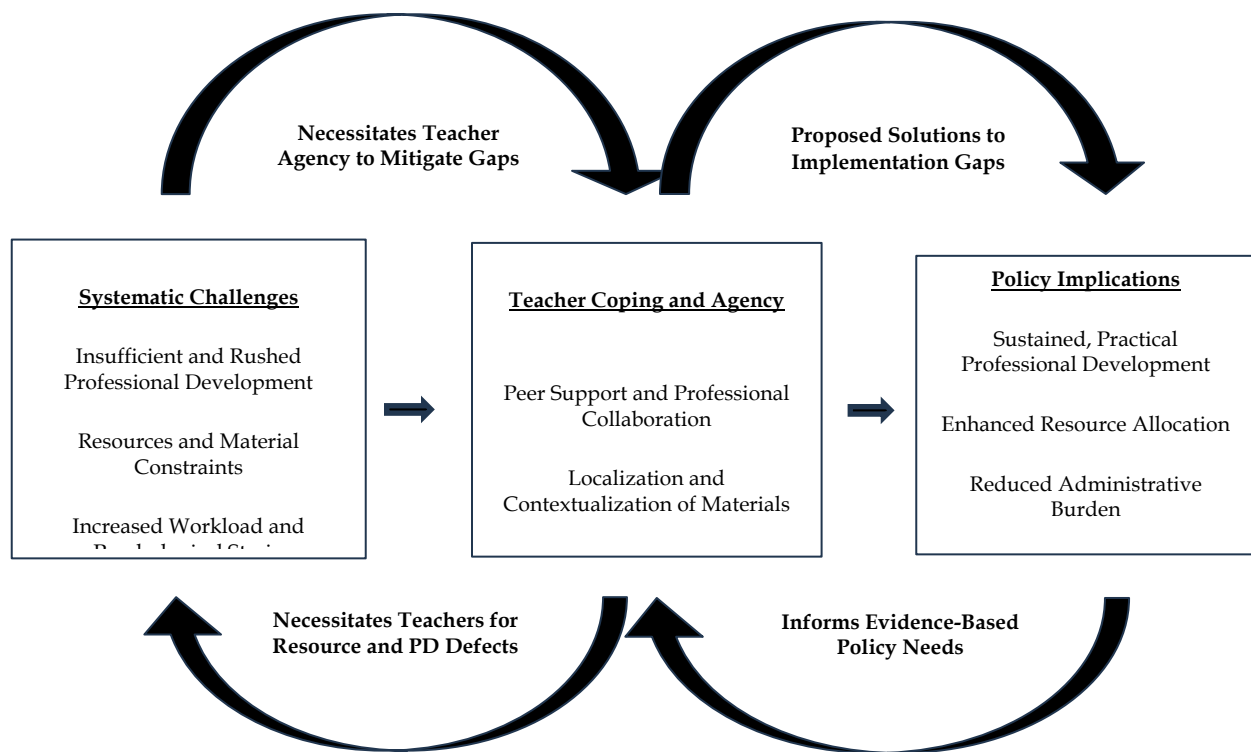


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Unsustainability Cycle in MATATAG Curriculum Implementation

Note. This diagram synthesizes the findings of the integrative review, illustrating the persistent gap between policy and practice. Systemic Challenges (rushed PD, resource gaps) trigger an immediate, short-term reliance on Teacher Agency and Adaptive Strategies to ensure curriculum delivery. Policy Recommendations represent the critical institutional feedback loop required to mitigate systemic failures, break the cycle of individual effort, and move toward sustainable and equitable implementation.

3.1 Key Challenges in Curriculum Implementation

Addressing the second research question, the literature consistently highlights three major systemic obstacles that teachers in the Philippines experience during the transition to and early implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. These challenges represent significant barriers to achieving the curriculum's mandated objectives.

Insufficient and Rushed Professional Development

The most frequently stated challenge is the widespread issue of insufficient, rushed, and incomplete professional development (PD) (Dadul et al., 2025; Lozada Belga et al., 2025; Motel, 2025). Educators report a pervasive sense of unpreparedness, citing limited overall training time, insufficient orientation, and a critical lack of hands-on, practical workshops (Dadul et al., 2025; Motel, 2025). The rushed nature of the training, coupled with the transfer of sometimes imprecise standards, results in varied implementation and uncertainty across schools (Gonzales, 2018; Torrefiel et al., 2025). Analytically, the persistence of this flaw, which mirrors significant barriers seen during the K-12 rollout (Abragan et al., 2022), suggests a fundamental structural failure in curriculum design and rollout planning, where policy deadlines consistently override the pedagogical necessity for sustained, content-based, and practical skill development.

Resource and Material Constraints

The second major challenge is the persistent issue of resource and material restrictions that fundamentally hinder effective curriculum delivery (Layao, 2024; Wabingga & Tomakin, 2024). Teachers repeatedly report a shortage of proper instructional materials, necessary technology access, suitable facilities, and specialized equipment required to meet the curriculum's aspirational goals (Abragan et al., 2022; Layao, 2024). This shortage is especially acute in specialized areas, such as Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education, where culturally relevant materials are severely limited (Villaplaza, 2021). The critical analytical finding here is that this lack of systemic provision effectively devolves resource responsibility to individual teachers, forcing them to develop or acquire materials on their own, which leads directly to budgetary stress and increased workload (Jalagat, Jr. & Aquino; Jr., 2022). This devolution is particularly problematic, given that successful implementation hinges on material quality. Studies confirm that when localization and contextualization are successfully implemented through material development, they significantly enhance student performance (Dioneda Jr., 2019; Rafael & Tamban, 2022).

Increased Workload and Psychological Strain

Finally, the implementation process is directly tied to an increased workload and the resulting psychological strain on educators (Malinao & Miano, 2025; Wabingga & Tomakin, 2024). Teachers note that the convergence of adapting to new curriculum demands, managing extra administrative tasks, and dealing with time constraints severely adds to their overall workload (Pak, 2024). Malinao & Miano (2025) and Wabingga & Tomakin (2024) specifically highlight that this dual convergence of demands and resource limitations has led to high rates of burnout, severe mental and emotional strain, and a stated questioning of professional identity among teachers. The most critical implication of this finding is its effect on curriculum sustainability and teacher retention, as the current implementation model risks compromising the long-term health of the teaching profession in the Philippines.

3.2 Teacher Coping and Adaptation Strategies

In response to the systemic challenges identified above, the literature addressing Research Question 3 highlights a powerful narrative of teacher agency and resilience, illustrating the active adaptive techniques employed to bridge the implementation gap (R. Pacatang & Gallardo, 2025). These proactive, teacher-initiated strategies demonstrate a professional commitment that transcends institutional support failures, primarily clustering into two categories: leveraging informal collaborative networks for knowledge sharing and mastering the skill of curriculum localization and contextualization to make materials relevant and effective in their classrooms.

Peer Support and Self-Directed Learning

A key coping mechanism is a heavy reliance on peer support and professional collaboration (R. Pacatang & Gallardo, 2025; Wabingga & Tomakin, 2024). Educators deliberately construct emotionally supportive cultures, relying on colleagues to share resources, clarify ambiguous guidelines, and collaboratively negotiate policies. Furthermore, teachers demonstrate adaptability through self-directed learning, often utilizing free online resources or technology to address knowledge gaps and find unique ways to impart the new curriculum content (R. Pacatang & Gallardo, 2025; Torrefiel et al., 2025). This peer network functions as an essential, informal professional development system when institutional support is deficient.

Localization and Contextualization

The most effective reported technique is to localize and contextualize learning materials (Nataño, 2023). This adaptation is significant and effective, particularly in Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education, where teachers adjust the curriculum by using community-based examples, language, and cultural references to increase relevance (Nataño, 2023). The literature provides evidence that this approach is not merely a coping mechanism but a demonstrably effective pedagogical strategy. Experimental studies have shown that localized materials can significantly improve student outcomes, including academic performance and reading skills, by making the learning process more meaningful and relatable (Rafael & Tamban, 2022).

3.3 Policy Recommendations and Support Needs

Based on documented problems and observed coping methods, the literature firmly agrees on critical areas where institutional support and policy action are urgently required (Research Question 4). The most prominent recommendation emphasizes the need for ongoing, thorough, and content-based professional development (Dadul et al., 2025; Herrera, 2025). Researchers argue that the current hasty, basic orientations must be replaced

by sustained, practical, and skill-based learning opportunities that provide explicit, hands-on guidance for delivering new knowledge and skills. The second essential issue is resource allocation and increased stakeholder engagement (Abragan et al., 2022; Villaplaza, 2021). To narrow the implementation gap, the government must enhance the availability of updated teaching materials, technology, and specialized equipment. Finally, the examined literature recommends improved communication and a reduction in administrative burden (Lozada Belga et al., 2025; Malinao & Miano, 2025). Reducing the high administrative workload is crucial, not only to mitigate psychological strain and burnout but also to ensure educators have the necessary time to focus on their essential teaching responsibilities (Malinao & Miano, 2025).

4.0 Conclusion

The essential contribution of this integrative literature review is the systematic validation of a profound implementation gap between the aspirational policy goals of the MATATAG Curriculum and the systemic support currently available to teachers. By synthesizing contemporary research (80% from 2024–2025), this review moves beyond anecdotal accounts to confirm three critical, interlinked systemic failures: rushed and insufficient professional development, persistent resource and material scarcity, and an increased administrative burden that is fueling teacher burnout. The observed reliance on informal peer collaboration and self-directed learning highlights a strong commitment to and teacher agency. However, it simultaneously confirms a fundamental failure of institutional systems to provide adequate, sustained support. Ultimately, the successful evolution of this student-centered, competency-based approach is absolutely dependent on the immediate and ongoing prioritization of teacher assistance, which is currently the most fragile component of the reform effort.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings offer a direct and urgent mandate for policy intervention, shifting focus and resources from curriculum design to sustained implementation support. Policymakers must explicitly acknowledge the ongoing discrepancy between the MATATAG policy's aims and the harsh reality encountered by educators on the ground. Firstly, policy must prioritize Sustained Professional Development (PD) that moves beyond basic orientation. The recurring issue of rushed and incomplete training necessitates an investment in ongoing, skill-based PD that includes practical, hands-on workshops and continuous coaching (Dadul et al., 2025; Herrera, 2025). This is a critical investment required for the fidelity of curriculum delivery. Secondly, there is a clear mandate to alleviate resource deficiencies and psychological pressure. This involves boosting the timely delivery of updated instructional materials and technology. Furthermore, institutions must adopt formal mechanisms—such as considerably reducing non-essential administrative tasks or offering accessible well-being services—to directly address burnout and emotional strain (Malinao & Miano, 2025). Finally, given the success demonstrated by teacher-led localization strategies (Nataño, 2023; Rafael & Tamban, 2022), policy must move to formalize and resource contextualization efforts. This ensures that adaptation is a systematic, funded component rather than an additional, uncompensated burden placed on teachers.

Implications for Future Research

Moving forward, the research agenda must strategically shift from the current descriptive mapping of issues (which constituted 84% qualitative/mixed-methods studies in this review) to evaluative and predictive investigation to support evidence-based decision-making. Future research should prioritize Intervention Studies to assess the measurable impact of specific support mechanisms (e.g., structured peer coaching or reduced administrative workload) on implementation quality, teacher well-being, and, crucially, student learning outcomes. Given the recent nature of the literature, Longitudinal Assessments are necessary to track teacher experiences, coping mechanisms, and implementation fidelity over multiple school years. This will help determine the reform's long-term viability and identify which early adaptive strategies endure and become best practices. Finally, studies must move toward Quantitative Impact assessments that go beyond measuring teacher perceptions. Research should analyze the measurable effects of the MATATAG Curriculum on essential metrics, such as academic achievement and the reduction of existing achievement gaps (Abragan et al., 2022).

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author - conceptualization, study design, methodology, data gathering, data analysis, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, and final submission approval

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author certifies that there are no known financial, personal, or academic relationships or conflicts of interest that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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