

**Teachers' beliefs on curriculum change in relation to instructional competence:
Bases for action plan**

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ABSTRACT

Reforming education systems has put a strong focus on how important teachers are in ensuring that a curriculum is implemented effectively. The current study sought to look at the relationship between teachers' beliefs about how curriculum changes, and their competence in teaching in accordance with the new curriculum. The study set out to identify teacher profiles, evaluate the extent of their beliefs, assess teachers' levels of competence in instruction, analyze their beliefs and competence across profiles and identify the nature of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teachers' instructional competence. This research design consisted of descriptive-correlational methodology. A total number of 163 public school teachers participated in the study. A structured questionnaire for data collection related to teacher beliefs regarding the new curriculum and ratings from the Classroom Observation Tool (COT) utilized to measure teacher effectiveness in the delivery of instruction based upon the new curriculum. Statistical analysis techniques included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA (analysis of variance), and Pearson r correlation coefficients were employed to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that a large majority of teachers had positive attitudes about changes to their curriculum ($M = 3.01$) and had excellent instructional capabilities (96.93%, $M=4.9$). Teachers exhibited significant variations in their beliefs based on the number of years they have been a teacher; however, there were several significant differences in regard to teachers' instructional capabilities concerning their ages, length of teaching experience, positions held, and how many professional development experiences they have attended. Additionally, teachers' beliefs had no statistically significant relationship with their instructional capabilities. The conclusion of this research study is that there is no relationship between teachers' beliefs and their level of instructional competence. Recommendations include increasing the availability of ongoing professional development opportunities, mentoring programs, and quality instructional resource materials to maximize successful implementation of new curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum Change Beliefs, Instructional Competence, Curriculum Implementation, Professional Development, Public School Teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education's curriculum changes from K-12 curriculum to Revised K-12 Curriculum. However, teachers often struggle to adapt to these new standards and expectations. These rapid changes can make it difficult for them to plan lessons, support their students, and provide fair grades. Successful curricula change only happens when teachers fully understand the new system and feel prepared to use it. Without enough support, quick transitions can lead to confusion and a loss of confidence. This can ultimately lower teacher morale, reduce the quality of teaching, and decrease student progress.

On the other hand, while curriculum change and its overall effects on education have been the subject of several studies, the majority have concentrated on student outcomes, curriculum content, or policy implementation rather than teachers' attitudes and views. Few studies have looked at how teachers perceive and react to the difficulties posed by curricular modifications, and how these attitudes impact their ability to teach, especially when it comes to lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment procedures.

Moreover, existing research often overlooks the contextual factors unique to specific educational settings, like local school districts or resource-limited areas, such as schools in the Districts of Sagbayan, Clarin, Inabanga and San Isidro where teachers may face different levels of support. Additionally, based on the preliminary survey conducted to the Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 5 teachers of Sagbayan, who initially took part of the Revised K-12 implementation, it is evident that they have struggled with teaching approaches and assessment methods which may have reduced their instructional competence. They attribute this to the difficulties brought by curriculum change. These conditions make Sagbayan a good place to study how changes to the curriculum affect teachers' instructional competence.

Statement of the problem

The aim of the research is to find out if these teachers who are supportive and positive regarding curriculum change have a higher level of instructional competence. Additionally, the study will also look at the relationship between resistance, uncertainty and not accepting the change to the curriculum with how well the instructor or teacher performs their job.

Moreover, the research wants to provide evidence that teachers' beliefs are instrumental in the successful implementation of curriculum change, as these beliefs affect the way teachers interpret, accept and implement new educational policies within their instructional practices.

Finally, this research is intended to give insight to educational leaders about the importance of creating positive beliefs, attitudes and level of readiness within teachers related to curriculum change, which could ultimately lead to increased levels of instructional competence, improved teacher/student learning processes and ultimately help to improve the overall quality and equity of education for students in the Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a descriptive–quantitative correlational research design to examine teachers' beliefs on curriculum change and their relationship to instructional competence. This design was deemed appropriate because the primary objective of the study

was to describe existing conditions and determine the degree of relationship between naturally occurring variables without manipulating them.

A descriptive approach was used to systematically document teachers' demographic profiles, their level of beliefs regarding curriculum change, and their level of instructional competence. Descriptive research is particularly appropriate in educational contexts where the intent is to provide an accurate representation of current conditions as they exist in the field (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were utilized to summarize and interpret respondents' characteristics and perception levels.

The correlational aspect of the design was intended to find out if there is a significant relationship between teachers' belief in changing the curriculum and their ability to teach effectively. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2023), correlational research is appropriate if the variables cannot be manipulated for ethical or practical reasons, and if the researcher wishes to understand the nature of the relationships between the variables rather than determining the cause of them.

Environment

The study was carried out within the selected public elementary schools in the districts of Sagbayan, Clarin, Inabanga and San Isidro which are located in Bohol Province. These four municipalities have the same Schools Division, and therefore have similar administrative policies with respect to delivering and implementing the Revised K-12 and MATATAG Curricula.

Respondents

The respondents were teachers who were directly involved in the first phase of the implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum, making them the most suitable respondents for the study. As primary implementers of the revised curriculum, these teachers were in a strong position to provide information essential to achieving the objectives of the study.

The respondents of this study were selected through stratified sampling using Slovin's formula to determine an appropriate and representative sample size from the total population. The population was 163 consisted of Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 5 public elementary teachers from Sagbayan, Clarin, San Isidro, and Inabanga Districts during the School Year 2025–2026.

Instrument

The data for this study were gathered using a structured research instrument composed of three parts.

The first part was about the demographic profile of the teachers. Specifically, it includes variables such as age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and relevant trainings attended. These variables are essential in describing the characteristics of the respondents and serve as a basis for grouping them in the analysis.

The second part was a survey questionnaire that was adapted from Mehmeti, F., Reshani, A., & Tezci, E. (2024) in "Development of scale to measure teachers' curriculum assessment". The questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of more than .70 in each dimension which made it a great tool to use in this study. It is deemed appropriate for this study

as it directly measures teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward curriculum change, which is one of the primary variables under investigation.

To determine teacher instructional ability from the year 2025 to 2026, the Department of Education (DepEd) employs an official COT or Classroom Observation Tool that has been endorsed by DepEd Memorandum No. 89. The COT provides an evaluation of a teacher's performance against observable standards or through observable teaching behaviors.

Procedure

The research was performed in a well-defined and ethical manner. The data collection process required permissions from Deeds and Schools Division of Bohol as well as from the administrators of participating schools before collection began.

The respondents, consisting of selected Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 5 teachers involved in the implementation of the Revised K–12 Curriculum, were identified using Slovin's formula. A validated survey questionnaire was then prepared and administered to gather data on teachers' profiles and beliefs on curriculum change, while instructional competence was obtained through teachers' most recent Classroom Observation Tool (COT) ratings. The survey questionnaires were attached with an Informed Consent, Researcher's Pledge of Data Privacy, and Respondent's Authorization. These documents informed respondents of the purpose of the study, ensured voluntary participation, and guaranteed confidentiality. Respondents' authorization allowed the researcher to collect and use the data strictly for academic purposes in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173).

The questionnaires were distributed and retrieved personally by the researcher, after which responses were checked, organized, and coded. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools to address the research questions. Based on the results, an action plan was formulated to enhance instructional competence and support teachers in curriculum implementation.

Statistical treatment

This study used several statistical methods to analyze the data collected. Descriptive statistics, specifically simple percentages, was used to characterize the profile of the teachers. The weighted mean and standard deviation were calculated to determine the average level of teachers' beliefs on curriculum change. Additionally, for the level of teachers' instructional competence, COT rating was transmuted to the PMES 5 Point scale using the prescribed rating transmutation. The researcher calculated the percentage, weighted mean and standard deviation of the transmuted rating.

For the investigation of the significant differences between the teacher profiles and the level of teachers' beliefs on problems faced due to curriculum change and the level of teacher's instructional competence, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and T-Test for Independent Samples was conducted.

Lastly, to determine the relationship between teachers' beliefs on problems of curriculum change and instructional competence, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was computed. The result of these calculations was the basis for the action plan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data to examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs on curriculum change and their instructional competence.

Profile of Teachers

Based on the demographic profile, most respondents are likely early to mid-career educators (31–35 years old). The highest percentage of age group is 30-34 years old (Vergara, 2025). The majority of teachers are women; this supports the finding and trend of over the past several decades of teachers being mainly female (Vergara, 2025; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2024) as a result of the continued feminization of the field of education, both nationally and internationally. Additionally, respondents' level of education suggests that many have some units or credits toward a master's degree and therefore many teachers seek additional degrees through progressive levels of study in order to become better professionals. The reason so many do not finish their degree at the advanced post-graduate level is due to competing responsibilities and work (Mkhai, 2023).

The results indicate that more than half of all respondents have taught for at least 10 years, which suggests that the majority are experienced teachers who have been involved in numerous implementations of curriculums. This finding is consistent with findings from Zalun (2023) that note that a large number of public-school teachers in the Philippines have many years' experience. In addition, most respondents are classified as Teacher III which indicates the advancement of their careers by way of experience, qualifications, and professional growth. This finding is also consistent with Gazan and Labitad's study (2025) who found that Teacher III represented the highest percentage of teaching ranks amongst respondents.

With regards to professional development that is related to curriculum, the majority of teachers have only attended one professional development activity regarding the changes to the curriculum; therefore, it would seem that engagement in professional development activities may still be limited and driven by compliance. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2025), the teacher trainings that are available are typically very short in duration, sporadic, or episodic and do not provide ample opportunity for continued professional involvement. Overall, the sample consisted primarily of mid-career female teachers who have experience in teaching, are currently in graduate school, and are suffering from limited experience with ongoing professional training in the area of curriculum change.

Level of Teachers' Beliefs on Curriculum Change

The data suggest that teachers have positive perceptions of curriculum change based on a mean of 3.01 ($SD = 0.62$) which demonstrates some level of support, openness, and acknowledgement of curriculum reform as a way to improve the overall quality of education provided to students. Even though teachers generally believe that they have received appropriate training and support to effectively implement changes, moderate variability within the data makes it evident that there are differences between teachers with their confidence, readiness, and experience levels when implementing the curriculum change. Such variances are likely explained by factors such as resources available for curriculum implementation, opportunities for continued professional development, total workload and amount of administrative support received from administrators at their respective schools. These findings were also referenced by Loza (2024), who found that teachers were open to and ready for curriculum reform even though the implementation process was challenging, as well as Chen (2023), who found that teachers' beliefs and practices varied among themselves based upon their professional experience and type of institutional support received from administrator at their school.

Among the domains analyzed, the Curriculum Philosophy Domain had an overall average (mean) score of 3.29 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.50, making it the highest rated domain, and therefore indicating that teachers have a solid understanding and support for both the goals and principles as well as the direction of Curriculum Reform. The low standard deviation also suggests that all teachers had positive ratings for their understanding of the philosophical basis of Curriculum Reform. Teachers recognize the benefits to students and fully support the student-centered direction of the revised curriculum. The study by Ho and Dimmock (2023), supports this finding by indicating that over time, teachers developed a greater understanding of and support for the philosophical purpose of the Curriculum Reform, especially regarding the importance of a student-centered approach to education.

The Resources/Instrument Domain scored the lowest, with an average of 2.62 and SD of 0.63, indicating that although teachers support changes to the curriculum, they are not confident in their ability to obtain the instructional materials, assessment instruments, and other materials needed to implement the revised curriculum successfully. The moderate variation in the number of teachers responding positively indicates that many will be unable to access such resources. This study's results aligned with the results obtained by Malinao and Miano (2025), who found that teachers faced barriers to adequate resources, training, and infrastructure when implementing the Curriculum Reforms.

Level of Instructional Competence

Research shows that teachers demonstrate a high overall level of instructional competence, indicated by a grand mean score of 4.90. This shows that teachers consistently demonstrated very high competency in most areas of instruction, including, but not limited to, lesson planning, delivering instruction, classroom management, assessing learning, and implementing effective instructional strategies. The mean score of 4.90 is very close to the maximum possible score of 5.00, indicating that teachers performed at the highest level of competence while completing their instructional responsibilities for the 2025-2026 school year.

The standard deviation of 0.20 indicates that there was very little variability in the ratings that teachers received for their instructional abilities, or in other words, there was a high degree of agreement among the raters. In fact, most of the teachers received very similar ratings for their Classroom Observation Tool (COT) ratings. The frequency distribution of the ratings also supports the conclusion that the majority of the teachers received high evaluations: 158 of the 163 teachers (96.93%) were rated as Outstanding and only 5 teachers (3.07%) were rated as Very Satisfactory. No teachers received a rating lower than Satisfactory, Fair or Poor, meaning that all of the responding teachers had very high instructional abilities.

These findings are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Sajonia and Gabion (2025), which found very high levels of teachers' instructional abilities and classroom management skills. Additionally, support from the Sajonia and Gabion (2025) study identifies instructional competence as being a major contributor to effective classroom management and the development of a productive learning environment.

Difference in the Level of Teachers' Belief on Curriculum Change and Instructional Competence when Grouped According to their Profile

The research findings show that of the variables tested, only teaching experience displayed a statistically significant difference between teachers' beliefs on curriculum change ($F = 3.10, p = 0.004$), indicating a difference of perception and belief amongst teachers with differing years of teaching experience. Based on this variable there may be a difference in perception and attitude of teachers towards curriculum reform based on their years of teaching

experience. There may be a reason for this in that teachers with longer teaching histories have had exposure to various curricular reforms so that they possess different perceptions of, and attitudes towards, curriculum change based upon historical context. The historical experience of each individual teacher may provide them with greater willingness to adapt (or a greater degree of caution) to innovations in curriculum change than other teachers may possess. This supports the Mustofa et al. (2023) study highlighting that teachers' beliefs about curriculum change are more influenced by their professional experiences than demographic characteristics.

While the data shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between age, highest educational attainment, teaching position, number of trainings attended and gender ($p > .05$) and teachers' beliefs about curriculum change, these variables appear to be unimportant predictors of how teachers view curriculum reform. However, instructional competence was influenced by age, years of teaching experience, teaching position and amount of training received, which suggests that instructional competence is positively correlated with profit margin as teachers become more mature professionally, have more experience as teachers, receive better promotion opportunities and/or have participated in more professional development. The results of this research align with the findings of both Escote and Evangelio (2024) and Escanda (2025), which indicated that instructional competence varies significantly by demographic / professional factors, such as years of teaching experience and amount of training received.

In addition, findings indicate that while there was not a statistically significant difference between respondent's level of education or credentials and their level of instructional competence ($p=0.130$), in the future it would be helpful if other independent variables with respect to teaching competence, such as teaching experience and professional development, will be included in research to further explore how they affect teaching competency. In addition to the above results, researchers who classified respondents according to sex did not find any differences in respondent's beliefs on curriculum change or instructional competence; therefore, it can be concluded that male and female teachers have equal belief systems and equal levels of teaching competence related to beliefs about institutional change. The findings discussed in this study align with the research of Cipriano (2024) regarding the benefits of continuing education for developing teachers' instructional capacity as well as those in the research conducted by Asis et al. (2023), which concluded that a teacher's instructional competence is primarily determined by their teaching experience and ongoing professional development, rather than by their education level. Moreover, according to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2025), there are no significant differences in the implementation of curricular reforms according to whether the teacher is male or female, based on the original research survey of respondents.

Relationship between the Level of Teachers' Beliefs on Curriculum Change and Instructional Competence.

The results of this study indicated that teachers' beliefs about curriculum reform and instructional competence had no significant relationship based on a correlation coefficient (-0.02) with a corresponding p -value of .813 (greater than 0.05). The lack of significant correlation results in a lack of influence of teachers' beliefs on instructional competence. The very weak negative correlation does show that teachers are highly capable in terms of instructional competence regardless if they have positive or negative beliefs about curriculum change.

Therefore, the physical components involved with instructional competence (i.e., teaching experience, professional growth and development, training, and real classroom experiences) outweigh the impact of beliefs. Although teachers support the idea of reform in curriculum, there is not an automatic association between support of reform and the application of effective teaching practices. This finding is validated through the Mustofa et al. (2023) research on the relationships defined within this study's findings. The Mustofa et al. (2023) study concluded that successful implementation of a curriculum requires more than just belief; it must consider the professional growth and experience of the teacher(s). The study placed emphasis on how successful training and preparation for instruction provide for improved teacher performance in the implementation of reforms in curriculum.

The results also add to what people know about some of the existing educational theories. For instance, Michael Fullan (2007) indicated that in order to successfully implement an educational change process requires a combination of both positive teacher beliefs and the use of effective instructional strategies. However, based on the results from this research study, it appears that although positive teacher beliefs may be an important factor, they might not be enough by themselves to improve teachers' instructional competencies. Likewise, Lee Shulman (1987) pointed out that teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction is based upon having a high level of pedagogical content knowledge, which is developed from having had adequate training and classroom teaching experiences as opposed to having just a belief system about how to teach. Furthermore, Albert Bandura (1986) has shown through Social Cognitive Theory how an individual's self-efficacy affects the individual's performance as a teacher, yet their competence as a teacher will also depend upon their amount of actual teaching experiences, the types of resources they have available to utilize while teaching, and the amount of ongoing practice they have had while teaching. Ultimately, these findings are indicative of the fact that instructional competencies are a complex concept that has more to do with the quality of an individual's professional preparation and the amount of actual teaching experience they have had, and has little to do with an individual's belief system regarding potential curriculum changes.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs on curriculum change and their instructional competence among public elementary school teachers in the Districts of Sagbayan, Clarin, Inabanga, and San Isidro in Bohol Province. Drawing from the findings presented in the Results and Discussion, several significant conclusions can be drawn that contribute to the broader understanding of curriculum implementation, teacher readiness, and professional competence in the Philippine basic education context.

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that the majority of teachers were female, early to mid-career educators between 31 and 35 years of age, holding the rank of Teacher III, and pursuing graduate studies at various levels of completion. Most had accumulated more than ten years of teaching experience, positioning them as seasoned practitioners who have navigated multiple curriculum transitions throughout their careers. Despite this professional experience, the majority of respondents reported having attended only one professional development activity related to curriculum change, suggesting that engagement in structured and sustained training remains limited and largely compliance-driven rather than reflective of genuine, ongoing professional growth.

With respect to teachers' beliefs on curriculum change, the findings indicate that the respondents generally held positive perceptions toward curriculum reform, as reflected in an overall mean score of 3.01. This level of support suggests a general openness to and acceptance of the Revised K-12 and MATATAG Curricula, with teachers recognizing the potential

benefits of reform for student learning. Among the specific domains assessed, the Curriculum Philosophy Domain received the highest rating, indicating that teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of and alignment with the goals, principles, and student-centered direction of the revised curriculum. In contrast, the Resources and Instruments Domain received the lowest rating, signaling that despite their philosophical agreement with curriculum reform, teachers expressed concern about the adequacy and accessibility of instructional materials, assessment tools, and other resources needed for effective curriculum implementation. This gap between philosophical support and material preparedness reflects a critical tension that educational leaders and policymakers must address to support successful implementation at the classroom level.

Regarding instructional competence, the results demonstrated an exceptionally high level of performance among the respondents, with a grand mean score of 4.90 out of a possible 5.00, and with 96.93 percent of teachers rated as Outstanding based on their Classroom Observation Tool ratings. The low standard deviation of 0.20 further confirms the consistency and uniformity of this high performance across respondents. These findings suggest that, regardless of their beliefs about curriculum change, teachers in the study area consistently demonstrated effective instructional behaviors across lesson planning, delivery, classroom management, assessment, and the application of instructional strategies.

The analysis of differences in teachers' beliefs and instructional competence across demographic and professional profiles yielded nuanced findings. Teaching experience emerged as the only variable that produced a statistically significant difference in teachers' beliefs on curriculum change, indicating that the length of professional service shapes how teachers perceive and respond to curricular reform. Teachers with longer teaching histories may bring varying degrees of adaptability or skepticism to curriculum change based on accumulated professional experiences. In contrast, variables such as age, gender, highest educational attainment, teaching position, and number of trainings attended did not produce significant differences in beliefs, suggesting that curriculum change perceptions are more strongly tied to experiential factors than to demographic characteristics. However, instructional competence was found to vary significantly according to age, years of teaching experience, teaching position, and number of professional development activities attended, affirming that competence in instruction is shaped by a composite of professional maturation, career advancement, and deliberate engagement in continuous learning. Gender, on the other hand, did not produce any significant differences in either beliefs or instructional competence, confirming that male and female teachers demonstrate comparable orientations toward curriculum reform and equally high levels of teaching performance.

The central finding of this study is that there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' beliefs on curriculum change and their instructional competence, as indicated by a Pearson r correlation coefficient of -0.02 and a corresponding p -value of .813. This very weak negative correlation confirms that the quality of a teacher's instructional performance is not determined by the nature or strength of their beliefs about curriculum reform. Rather, the findings suggest that instructional competence is primarily shaped by practical professional factors such as teaching experience, formal training, professional development participation, and real classroom practice. These conclusions are further supported by theoretical frameworks including Fullan's (2007) change theory, Shulman's (1987) pedagogical content knowledge framework, and Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, all of which collectively emphasize that belief alone is insufficient to drive instructional improvement without the corresponding support of structured preparation, adequate resources, and sustained professional development.

In light of these conclusions, this study puts forward several recommendations aimed at strengthening both teacher preparedness and curriculum implementation outcomes. Educational leaders and school administrators are encouraged to expand and sustain professional development opportunities that go beyond short-term, compliance-based training and instead provide teachers with meaningful, continuing, and context-responsive learning experiences aligned with the demands of the revised curriculum. Mentoring programs that pair experienced and novice teachers should be institutionalized to facilitate the transfer of professional knowledge and adaptive teaching practices across varying levels of experience. Furthermore, addressing the identified gap in resource accessibility is essential, as teachers' limited confidence in obtaining adequate instructional materials and assessment tools represents a significant barrier to effective curriculum delivery. Providing teachers with quality instructional resource materials that are appropriately aligned with the MATATAG and Revised K-12 Curricula would directly support their ability to translate curricular goals into effective classroom practice. These recommendations collectively form the basis for the action plan developed from this study, which aims to maximize the successful implementation of curriculum reforms through a holistic approach that addresses not only teachers' beliefs and attitudes but also the structural and material conditions that shape their instructional performance.

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