

Instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum among the elementary educators in Carmen, Cebu, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

In response to concerns about the effectiveness of the Philippine education system, particularly highlighted by the perceived weaknesses of the K to 12 programs, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the MATATAG Curriculum as a strategic initiative to address these challenges. This study sought to determine the instructional challenges and perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum among the elementary educators in Carmen, Cebu, Philippines for the school year 2025-2026 as basis for an action plan. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, using an adopted questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The study involved 100 teacher respondents from Carmen District. The study employed statistical tools such as the weighted mean, simple percentage, and chi-square for significant relationships and data analysis. The data gathered were then analyzed statistically. Findings revealed that teachers generally agreed they experienced instructional challenges ($M = 3.80$) but strongly agreed with their self-efficacy ($M = 4.38$). Significant relationships were found between instructional challenges and efficacy, suggesting that teachers perceived competencies help mitigate classroom difficulties. Thus, it further shows that the study rejects the null hypothesis. In further concluded that significant difference in perceived instructional challenges with respect to highest educational attainment and number of seminars attended relevant to MATATAG curriculum while age, sex, and length of teaching experience did not show significant differences. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the development and implementation of an action plan.

Keywords: Instructional challenges, MATATAG Curriculum, descriptive-correlational design, action plan, Carmen, Cebu.

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippine education system has long grappled with persistent structural and instructional challenges that have undermined the quality of basic education, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In response to the perceived weaknesses of the K to 12 programs, the Department of Education introduced the MATATAG Curriculum, formally

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referred to as "Bansang Makabata, Batang Makabansa," as a strategic initiative aimed at improving learner outcomes by streamlining curriculum content, reducing academic overload, and reinforcing foundational competencies. The rationale behind this reform is consistent with the broader global discourse on curriculum improvement articulated by Gouëdard et al. (2020), who argue that effective curriculum reforms must prioritize the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and socio-emotional competencies. By reorganizing and decongesting the existing curriculum, the MATATAG Curriculum seeks to provide learners with the necessary tools for success in an increasingly complex and competitive global environment (Abragan et al., 2022).

The introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum followed a period of critical evaluation of Filipino learners' educational performance, which consistently revealed low achievement across multiple national and international assessments. Tarraya (2023) attributed these outcomes to an overloaded curriculum, excessive teaching demands, and an overwhelming academic load that impeded the mastery of fundamental skills. Abalde and Oco (2023) similarly underscored the urgency of addressing persistent weaknesses in student performance, particularly in reading and mathematics. These challenges are further compounded by structural factors including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional resources, and teacher shortages, all of which have been documented as significant barriers to effective curriculum delivery in the Philippine public school system (Guiaselon et al., 2022; Pillay & Panth, 2022). The convergence of these findings across multiple studies establishes a clear and pressing rationale for curriculum reform that extends beyond content revision to encompass the systemic conditions within which teachers operate.

At the local level, research has begun to illuminate how educators in specific contexts experience the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum. Bejasa (2025) conducted a phenomenological study of public-school teachers across DepEd Cebu Province for the school year 2024 to 2025, revealing a complex and nuanced picture of implementation. Teachers in that study valued the curriculum's relevance, student-centered orientation, and the motivation derived from even limited training opportunities. However, they also cited challenges including insufficient instructional materials, slow internet connectivity, inadequate ten-day training programs, reduced motivation, and a mismatch between curriculum content and the realities of upland learners. These localized findings point to a broader pattern in which the structural intentions of the MATATAG Curriculum have not been uniformly matched by the conditions necessary for their realization. Importantly, however, existing studies have tended to focus on broader or more urbanized settings, leaving the unique instructional challenges and contextual dynamics of rural and community-level schools, such as the small, medium, and large elementary schools in Carmen District, Poblacion, Carmen, Cebu, largely unexplored. This gap presents a significant opportunity to investigate how localized factors, particularly teachers' instructional challenges and their self-perceived efficacy, relate to the effective implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in this specific context.

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from multiple complementary frameworks that together illuminate the complex interplay between curriculum design, teacher competence, and learner development. Arthur Ellis's Three Curriculum Theories, encompassing knowledge-centered, learner-centered, and society-centered orientations, provide an overarching conceptual lens for understanding the philosophical underpinnings of the MATATAG Curriculum. Knowledge-centered theories, as articulated by Ellis (2004), position the curriculum as a vehicle for transmitting subject-specific knowledge and skills across academic disciplines including the humanities, sciences, languages, and the arts. Sherrington (2018) elaborates that a knowledge-centered curriculum is characterized by an underlying philosophy that privileges explicit and structured knowledge, a thorough

description of content material, the deliberate instruction of knowledge for recall rather than mere encounter, and the purposeful and logical sequencing of learning. Such a curriculum is inherently teacher-led and demands educators who are subject-matter specialists capable of conveying disciplinary knowledge with precision and coherence (Ellis, 2004). Learner-centered theories, by contrast, position the student as a proactive and self-directed participant in the learning process, recognizing the primacy of learners' needs, interests, and prior life experiences as foundational to meaningful instruction (Ellis, 2004). This approach envisions a flexible, responsive, and collaborative learning environment in which both teachers and learners contribute to the design and delivery of educational experiences, and in which self-evaluation and negotiated content are integral components of the curriculum. Society-centered theories extend this orientation further by emphasizing the curriculum's role in identifying and addressing community concerns, equipping students for their future professional and civic roles through collaborative engagement with shared social objectives (Ellis, 2004). The MATATAG Curriculum's integration of values education, foundational skill development, and contextually relevant learning reflects the simultaneous influence of all three of these theoretical orientations, suggesting that effective implementation demands a nuanced pedagogical response that honors knowledge, learner agency, and social relevance in equal measure.

Jerome Bruner's Theory of Instruction further reinforces the pedagogical logic of the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly its emphasis on structure, readiness, and the progressive development of conceptual understanding. Bruner, as discussed by Smith (2002), highlighted the necessity of organizing learning around the fundamental structures of academic disciplines, arguing that genuine understanding arises not from the memorization of isolated facts but from the mastery of underlying concepts that give coherence to a subject domain. His concept of the spiral curriculum, which advocates for the revisiting and progressive elaboration of concepts across grade levels until comprehensive understanding is achieved, is directly resonant with the MATATAG Curriculum's decongested and sequentially organized structure. Bruner also emphasized the importance of readiness as a precondition for meaningful learning, arguing that intuition and exploratory engagement with foundational ideas constitute essential steps in the learner's intellectual development. Applied to the current reform context, Bruner's framework suggests that both the design of the MATATAG Curriculum and the preparedness of its implementors are critical determinants of its effectiveness.

The legal bases underpinning this study further contextualize the MATATAG Curriculum within the broader trajectory of Philippine educational reform. Republic Act 10533 (2013), the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, established the K to 12 Basic Education Program with the goal of strengthening Filipino values, fostering nationalism, and aligning the Philippine education system with international standards by developing the skills and competencies necessary for 21st-century participation (DepEd, 2019). While the K to 12 programs represented a landmark reform, its implementation has been accompanied by persistent challenges, including curriculum overload and gaps in foundational learning, that necessitated further review and revision. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre, undertook a systematic review of the intended curriculum to verify existing claims and address identified gaps, resulting in the development of the MATATAG Curriculum as a refinement and enhancement of the K to 12 framework (Jorgenson, 2006). Republic Act 11476 (2020), the GMRC and Values Education Act, further complements the MATATAG Curriculum by institutionalizing the integration of Good Manners and Right Conduct into the K to 12 programs across all grade levels, from kindergarten through senior high school. This legislation underscores the holistic developmental orientation of the current reform, emphasizing the moral, ethical, spiritual, and

social dimensions of learner formation alongside academic competencies. The operational foundation of the present study is grounded in DepEd Memorandum 054 (2023), which authorized the pilot implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum as part of the MATATAG Agenda, the department's overarching strategic direction for improving the quality of basic education. The curriculum introduced through this memorandum features a decongested structure with a reduced number of learning competencies, a clear emphasis on foundational skills including literacy and numeracy, balanced cognitive demands, a strengthened focus on values and peace education, and alignment with international educational standards.

The successful delivery of the MATATAG Curriculum depends substantially on teachers as the primary facilitators of learning, and the literature consistently identifies teacher-level factors as decisive in determining implementation quality. Fabroa (2024) found that many teachers experience significant difficulty in transitioning to the new curriculum due to inadequate orientation and insufficient ongoing professional development, resulting in resistance and diminished morale. Linggas (2025) similarly documented inconsistent readiness among teachers across regions, which correlated with varying levels of learner performance. Bazar (2025) further highlighted that infrastructural and resource constraints, compounded by socio-emotional stress and the pressure to rapidly adopt new teaching methodologies, represent formidable barriers to effective curriculum delivery. These findings collectively suggest that without deliberate and sustained support for teachers, the MATATAG Curriculum risks falling short of its reform objectives regardless of the soundness of its design. Complementing these concerns, research on teacher self-efficacy underscores the critical role of teachers' beliefs in their own instructional capabilities as a determinant of curriculum implementation quality. Labora (2025) found a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy, particularly in technological integration and innovative pedagogy, and their readiness to implement the MATATAG Curriculum effectively. Gumilao and Langam (2025) similarly emphasized that self-efficacy influences teachers' motivation, resilience, and instructional quality during periods of educational transformation, while Silliman (2025) noted that teachers' confidence in their abilities is essential for embracing the curriculum's pedagogical shifts and committing to continuous professional development. Bazar (2025) affirmed that teachers' confidence in their teaching capacities enabled greater adaptability to the new curriculum despite operational challenges.

The literature also highlights the centrality of professional development, access to instructional resources, administrative support, and teacher attitudes in shaping implementation outcomes. Linggas (2025) and Donaire (2025) found that teachers who had undergone specialized training programs demonstrated higher levels of readiness and confidence in curriculum delivery. Elardo (2025) and Atienza et al. (2025) documented the adverse effects of limited access to teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate technological support on teachers' instructional capacity. Ta-Ala et al. (2025) identified positive attitudes characterized by commitment, adaptability, and openness as key predictors of successful curriculum adoption, while Bejasa (2025) noted that teachers who perceive their training as relevant and helpful are significantly more likely to approach curriculum implementation with confidence and enthusiasm. Together, these findings reveal a consistent pattern in the literature whereby the instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy of teachers are not isolated variables but are deeply interconnected with the broader institutional, material, and attitudinal conditions of curriculum reform.

Despite the growing body of research on the MATATAG Curriculum, existing studies have primarily focused on broader national or urban settings, leaving localized contexts such as Carmen District, Carmen, Cebu inadequately examined. Understanding how teachers in this specific locality perceive and navigate the instructional demands of the MATATAG

Curriculum, and how their self-perceived efficacy relates to implementation quality, is therefore a matter of both empirical and practical significance. This study addresses that gap by examining the instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy of elementary educators in Carmen District during the school year 2025 to 2026, drawing on a research-based questionnaire administered to purposively sampled teachers across small, medium, and large elementary schools in the area. The findings are intended to provide empirical data that can serve as the basis for an action plan aimed at strengthening the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum by identifying its effectiveness, challenges, and impacts on key stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of developing strategic interventions that promote quality, inclusive, and responsive basic education in Carmen District, Carmen, Cebu.

Statament of the Problem

This research determined the instructional challenges and perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum among the elementary educators in Carmen, Cebu, Philippines for the school year 2025-2026 as basis for an action plan.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, and length of teaching experience?
2. What were the respondents' self-perceived instructional challenges in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum?
3. What were the respondents' self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum?
4. Is there a significant difference between the respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges?
5. Was there a significant relationship between the respondents' instructional challenges and their self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan could be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which was deemed most appropriate given the nature of the variables examined and the objectives of the investigation. The descriptive component allowed for the systematic organization, summarization, and presentation of data pertaining to the respondents' demographic profiles, self-perceived instructional challenges, and self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum. As McCombes (2019) noted, descriptive research is appropriate when data are organized and presented systematically, often through tabular form, to describe characteristics, trends, or frequencies of a population or phenomenon. The correlational component, on the other hand, enabled the examination of the significant difference between respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges, as well as the significant relationship between their self-perceived instructional challenges and their self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum. Data were collected through adopted questionnaires, and the findings were analyzed and interpreted in direct relation to the stated research objectives.

The research followed an Input-Process-Output framework as its organizational model. The input component consisted of the respondents' demographic profile, including age, sex,

highest educational attainment, number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, and length of teaching experience, alongside data on their self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in curriculum delivery, as well as the variables pertaining to differences and relationships among these constructs. The process component involved the tabulation, computation, analysis, and evaluation of the data gathered through the research questionnaire in order to systematically assess the respondents' profiles and the two principal variables of the study. The output of the research consisted of an empirically grounded action plan designed to help teachers further assess and strengthen the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum based on the findings generated through this process.

The study was conducted in the elementary schools of Carmen District, Poblacion, Carmen, Cebu, which is situated in the northeastern part of Cebu Province. The specific schools included in the study were Siotes Elementary School, Natimao-an Elementary School, Pedro Erong Elementary School, Cantumog Elementary School, Elpideo I. De Dios Elementary School, Dawis Norte Elementary School, and Luyang Elementary School. The rollout of the MATATAG curriculum in Carmen District has unfolded amidst a mix of cautious optimism and discernible strain. On one hand, teachers and parents have welcomed the decongested structure of the curriculum, as fewer competencies allow for more focused lessons, reduced pressure on both educators and learners, and a greater emphasis on mastery and deeper understanding, a shift echoed across the Central Visayas region. Cluster-based orientation sessions provided initial confidence by preparing teachers through unpacking, clustering, and crafting objectives with hands-on guidance from regional facilitators. Nonetheless, Cebu educators continue to display resilience, with a phenomenological study involving Grade 7 teachers in Cebu revealing how they embraced themes of resiliency, responsibility, resourcefulness, and adaptability in their determination to ensure that students remain and become MATATAG through the curricular transition.

The respondents of the study were the elementary teachers of Carmen District. The researcher employed a random sampling method, which was chosen for its practicality in terms of the faster and more accessible administration of the study. The study was further focused on teachers who had direct experience in the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. The combination of purposive and convenience sampling ensured that the study obtained relevant, timely, and contextually grounded data from the most appropriate participants while accommodating practical limitations such as accessibility and time constraints, an approach that aligns with the exploratory nature of the research, which seeks to understand the real experiences of teachers delivering the MATATAG curriculum in a specific local context. The total number of respondents was 100, distributed across the seven elementary schools as follows: Siotes Elementary School contributed 5 respondents, representing 5.00% of the total sample; Natimao-an Elementary School contributed 16 respondents or 16.00%; Pedro Erong Elementary School contributed 6 respondents or 6.00%; Cantumog Elementary School contributed 19 respondents or 19.00%; Elpideo Elementary School contributed 20 respondents or 20.00%; Dawis Norte Elementary School contributed 10 respondents or 10.00%; and Luyang Elementary School contributed 24 respondents or 24.00%, bringing the total to 100 respondents representing 100.00% of the study sample.

The data collection instrument was an adopted questionnaire drawn from the studies of Paler et al. (2025) and Basister (2025). The questionnaire was composed of three parts. The first part gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, specifically with respect to age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, and length of teaching experience. The second part addressed the respondents' self-perceived instructional challenges in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum and was

adopted from the study of Basister (2025). This part consisted of a total of 10 statements to be rated by the respondents using a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represented the highest rating and 1 represented the lowest. The third part addressed the respondents' self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum and was adopted from the study of Paler et al. (2025). This part likewise consisted of 10 statements rated on the same five-point scale, with 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest. Both the second and third parts of the instrument applied a five-point Likert scale requiring individual participants to respond to a series of statements indicating the extent of their self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in MATATAG curriculum delivery. The scoring procedure was as follows: a rating of 5, corresponding to a mean range of 4.20 to 5.00, was described as Very High or Always, indicating that the respondent strongly agrees to support the statement; a rating of 4, corresponding to a mean range of 3.40 to 4.19, was described as High or Often, indicating that the respondent agrees to support the statement; a rating of 3, corresponding to a mean range of 2.60 to 3.39, was described as Moderately High or Sometimes, indicating that the respondent is not certain in supporting the statement; a rating of 2, corresponding to a mean range of 1.80 to 2.59, was described as Low or Seldom, indicating that the respondent disagrees to support the statement; and a rating of 1, corresponding to a mean range of 1.00 to 1.79, was described as Very Low or Never, indicating that the respondent strongly disagrees to support the statement.

Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from the public schools' district supervisor of Carmen District, Poblacion, Carmen, Cebu, with the recommendation and approval of the research adviser. Upon receiving the necessary authorization, the research questionnaire was administered on hand to the identified teacher respondents in their respective schools. The researcher personally assisted the respondents in completing the questionnaires to ensure clarity and accuracy in their responses.

The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Teacher respondents were clearly informed that their participation was entirely voluntary, with no obligation to take part, and they were provided with complete information regarding the purpose of the research and their rights before consenting to participate. The study was transparent about its goals and objectives, ensuring that respondents understood their involvement and could provide informed consent. The respondents' profiles and all data gathered throughout the study were kept strictly confidential. Participants were assured that their privacy would be protected with the utmost discretion and that their identities would remain anonymous throughout the research process. All information collected during the procedure was guaranteed to be kept private and secure, and the confidentiality of respondents' profiles, answers, and any data obtained was safeguarded at all stages of the study.

The statistical analysis of the data involved both descriptive and inferential measures appropriate to the research questions and the level of measurement of each variable. Simple percentage computation was used to describe the profile and frequency distribution of the respondents. Weighted mean was employed to determine the distribution of results pertaining to the respondents' self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum. The chi-square test was applied to determine the significant difference between the respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges. Spearman's rho was used to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' self-perceived instructional challenges and their self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum. All statistical procedures were applied in direct alignment with the research objectives and the nature of the data gathered.

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were operationally defined to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity in interpretation. The term "action plan" referred to the structured plan developed based on the findings of the study, aimed at addressing instructional challenges, enhancing teacher efficacy, and improving the overall implementation of the MATATAG curriculum, including proposed activities, timelines, resources, responsible persons, and expected outcomes. "Elementary educators" referred to licensed and practicing teachers in public elementary schools who are directly involved in teaching Grades 1 to 6 and are responsible for implementing the MATATAG curriculum in their classrooms, and specifically to the respondents of the study. "Implementation" referred to the actual process by which the MATATAG curriculum is put into practice by schools and teachers, encompassing curriculum planning, lesson delivery, assessment strategies, training, resource distribution, and classroom adaptation carried out in accordance with DepEd policies and guidelines. "Instructional challenges" referred to the specific difficulties experienced by elementary educators in delivering lessons under the MATATAG curriculum, which may include issues such as lack of instructional materials, time constraints, large class sizes, unfamiliar content, or insufficient training that hinder effective teaching. "MATATAG curriculum" referred to the revised K to 10 curriculum frameworks introduced by the Department of Education, which aims to decongest content, focus on foundational skills, promote values education, and improve learning outcomes, and in this study specifically refers to how this curriculum is interpreted, delivered, and experienced in elementary schools. "Perceived efficacy" referred to the self-assessed confidence and belief of elementary educators in their ability to effectively implement and deliver the MATATAG curriculum, including their perceived competence in planning, teaching, and assessing learners according to the new standards and competencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from 100 in-service teachers regarding their demographic profiles, self-perceived instructional challenges in delivering the MATATAG curriculum, self-perceived efficacy in delivering the MATATAG curriculum, significant differences between respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges, and the significant relationship between self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire administered to all 100 respondents. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, and weighted means were used to summarize the demographic profile and the levels of the two main constructs, while Chi-Square analysis was applied to examine significant differences between profile variables and perceived instructional challenges, and Pearson r correlation with t-test was used to determine the significant relationship between self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy. All results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study and are grounded in the data gathered from the respondents.

In terms of the age distribution of the 100 respondents, the largest group consisted of those aged 31 to 40 years old, comprising 50 or 50.00% of the total. This was followed by those aged 21 to 30 years old at 20 or 20.00%, those aged 41 to 50 years old at 17 or 17.00%, and those aged 51 to 60 years old at 13 or 13.00%. The predominance of respondents within the 31 to 40 age brackets indicated a workforce primarily composed of early-career to mid-career educators who may encounter unique instructional challenges in implementing the MATATAG curriculum due to a combination of limited classroom experience and the demands of adapting to a newly structured educational framework. While their relative youth often brings energy, technological proficiency, and openness to innovative teaching strategies, they may also face

difficulties in classroom management, differentiating instruction for diverse learners, and aligning lesson objectives with curriculum standards. These challenges can influence their perceived efficacy, as younger teachers might feel less confident in navigating complex instructional requirements or addressing student needs effectively, although their adaptability and willingness to engage with professional development opportunities can enhance their capacity to gradually overcome these hurdles. Yunting et al. (2025) found that younger educators encountered moderate obstacles such as time management, limited resources, and the fast pacing required by performance-based competencies, and that their perceived effectiveness of implementation was significantly related to age and teaching experience. Maraveles and Ducot (2025) documented that teachers struggled with unfamiliar competencies, curriculum alignment, and insufficient professional development, challenges that disproportionately burden less experienced staff. Bazar (2025) further highlighted that younger teachers cope via peer support, resilience, and institutional mechanisms like Learning Action Cells, suggesting adaptive efficacy despite stressors. Elardo (2025), in a broader survey of 421 Iloilo-area teachers, added that while many felt moderately ready for MATATAG, there was a wide disparity in confidence, with younger teachers especially reporting the need for more systematic training in interpreting competencies, crafting performance-based assessments, and using learner-centered strategies. Herrera (2025), through a scoping review of MATATAG literature, identified that limited resource allocation and workload pressures common across studies erode instructional fidelity and argued for sustained, age-sensitive support structures.

With respect to sex, 79 or 79.00% of the 100 respondents were female, while 21 or 21.00% were male. The predominance of female teachers suggested that gender may influence how instructional challenges are experienced and how efficacy is perceived, although this relationship is shaped more by individual teaching style, experience, and support systems than by gender alone. Female teachers, often recognized for their collaborative and empathetic approaches, may excel in creating supportive learning environments and addressing diverse student needs, which can enhance their perceived efficacy. Montilla et al. (2025) reported that most of their 42 elementary teacher respondents in Butuan City were female, and these women expressed only moderate preparedness to deliver the MATATAG curriculum, citing concerns about pedagogy, assessment, and resource alignment. Herrera's (2025) scoping review pointed out that across studies, gender was rarely treated as a distinct variable, suggesting that more research is needed to unpack whether female teachers experience the MATATAG reform differently from their male counterparts.

Regarding highest educational attainment, the data revealed that 50 or 50.00% of the 100 respondents had units in a master's degree, while 15 or 15.00% had units in a doctorate degree, 15 or 15.00% had earned a master's degree, 14 or 14.00% held a bachelor's degree, and only six or 6.00% had earned a doctorate degree. The majority of respondents having continuing academic pursuits beyond the baccalaureate level implied that teachers who actively continued their professional development were likely to experience fewer instructional challenges and demonstrate higher perceived efficacy in implementing the MATATAG curriculum, as ongoing training equipped them with updated pedagogical strategies, deeper content knowledge, and innovative approaches to address diverse learner needs. Linggas (2025) found a positive correlation between the level of professional development and teacher readiness, with Grade 4 teachers who had more training reporting greater preparedness to deliver MATATAG content, which was in turn associated with better learner performance. Prado and Asparin (2025) reported that teachers' positive perceptions of the MATATAG curriculum, especially their confidence in curriculum relevance and alignment, were strongly tied to their access to professional development and institutional support. Herrera's (2025)

scoping review further identified training experiences and ongoing professional development as core themes among successful implementations, underscoring the importance of continuous, adaptive capacity building.

In terms of the number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, 60 or 60.00% of the 100 respondents had attended one to three seminars, 36 or 36.00% had attended four to six seminars, and four or 4.00% had never attended any relevant seminar. This distribution indicated that most respondents had foundational but limited exposure to targeted MATATAG training, which may provide adequate foundational knowledge but may not be sufficient for fully addressing complex classroom demands. Bensurto and Bernardino (2025), in their phenomenological inquiry with teachers from underserved areas, found that while most participants had participated in seminars, they regarded such training as superficial and insufficient, expressing a strong need for more in-depth, specialized, and sustained professional development, citing limitations in seminar content and duration as well as gaps in practical application.

With respect to length of teaching experience, 55 or 55.00% of the 100 respondents had six to ten years of experience, 24 or 24.00% had eleven to twenty years, 14 or 14.00% had one to five years, and seven or 7.00% had twenty-one years and beyond. The predominance of teachers with six to ten years of service implied that this segment of the workforce brought moderate classroom experience to the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum, which may help mitigate certain instructional challenges such as classroom management and student engagement, though they may still encounter difficulties in adapting to newly structured competency-based demands. Yunting et al. (2025) found that teachers with greater teaching experience reported more favorable perceptions toward the curriculum than their less experienced peers, implying that veteran teachers were better positioned to navigate curricular transitions.

The self-perceived instructional challenges in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum, as presented across ten indicators, yielded a general weighted mean of 3.80 with a verbal description of High. Among the ten indicators, the highest-rated statement was Item 10, "Teachers sometimes struggle to accommodate all subjects effectively, hindering the opportunity for learners to develop essential skills comprehensively," with a mean of 4.42 and a verbal description of Very High. This finding implied that when teachers struggle to effectively accommodate all subjects, gaps emerge in students' learning experiences, limiting their opportunities to develop essential skills in a well-rounded and comprehensive manner, arising from time constraints, workload pressures, or insufficient resources that prevent adequate attention to each subject area. Angeles and Rabago (2025) found that social studies teachers in Ilocos Norte identified a shortage of aligned resource materials and inadequate training, which hindered their ability to teach with depth and consistency across learning areas. The Department of Education also acknowledged during the pilot run of MATATAG that teachers had difficulty producing appropriate learning materials and familiarizing themselves with the drastically revised competencies, leading to pressure in lesson planning and classroom delivery.

The second highest-rated indicator was Item 9, "Teachers expressed difficulty in fully addressing complex competencies, especially those requiring higher-order cognitive skills within the limited time frame," with a mean of 4.29 and a verbal description of Very High. This result implied that teachers faced significant challenges in ensuring students mastered complex competencies, particularly those involving higher-order cognitive skills, due to the constraints of limited instructional time, which may result in a narrowed focus on basic or foundational content at the expense of critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills. Maraveles and Ducot (2025) similarly reported that teachers struggled to internalize and teach the new

competencies, noting that unfamiliarity with these standards and insufficient training exacerbated the difficulty of crafting instruction that moved beyond rote learning. Herrera's (2025) scoping review further identified time constraints and curriculum pacing as recurring themes in teacher-reported challenges.

The third highest-rated indicator was Item 7, "The new curriculum limits my ability to implement engaging, hands-on activities," with a mean of 4.17 and a verbal description of Very High. This implied that the structure or demands of the new curriculum constrained teachers' ability to incorporate engaging, hands-on activities vital for active learning, leading to a more rigid, lecture-centered approach and reducing opportunities for experiential learning, creativity, and practical application of concepts. Maraveles and Ducot (2025) confirmed through qualitative interviews with Grade 1 and Grade 4 teachers in Bukidnon that resource shortages, including inadequate textbooks, teaching aids, and materials for experiential learning, hampered teachers' ability to design interactive, student-centered tasks. The remaining indicators included Item 2 with a mean of 4.11 and a verbal description of High, Item 5 with a mean of 3.85 and a verbal description of High, Item 1 with a mean of 3.78 and a verbal description of High, Item 3 with a mean of 3.40 and a verbal description of Moderately High, Item 8 with a mean of 3.38 and a verbal description of Moderately High, Item 4 with a mean of 3.37 and a verbal description of Moderately High, and Item 6 with a mean of 3.23 and a verbal description of Moderately High. The overall general weighted mean of 3.80 with a verbal description of High indicated that teachers perceived substantial obstacles in effectively delivering the curriculum's objectives, stemming from gaps in training, limited access to teaching resources, large class sizes, and the complexity of integrating competency-based and learner-centered approaches. Research showed that when curricular change increased teachers' workload and demands, including greater planning time, resource creation, and the adoption of competency-based strategies, teachers often experienced reduced well-being and elevated stress levels (Pan et al., 2023). In a systemic review framed by the Job Demands Resources model, challenge demands such as instructional load and insufficient support were identified as key stressors undermining teacher resilience (Te et al., 2024).

The self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum, as presented across ten indicators, yielded a general weighted mean of 4.38 with a verbal description of Very High. The highest-rated indicator was Item 6, "I tracked and responded to students' progress and feedback in the context of the MATATAG curriculum through systematic monitoring and adjustments," with a mean of 4.58 and a verbal description of Very High. This finding implied that actively tracking and responding to students' progress through systematic monitoring enabled teachers to make informed instructional adjustments, identify learning gaps, tailor strategies to meet diverse needs, and reinforce competencies requiring additional attention, thereby strengthening teachers' perceived efficacy as tangible improvements in learning outcomes became observable. Ducot (2025) found that teachers highly valued technical assistance that helped them unpack competencies and align their assessments with expected performance standards, with ongoing monitoring, practical feedback, and regular provision of updated materials enabling teachers to refine instruction based on learner responses. DepEd's policy guidance under DO 010, s. 2024 also formally recognized the importance of tracking learners' progress and adjusting instruction as an integral part of implementing MATATAG.

The second highest-rated indicator was Item 2, "I adapted various instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of my students," with a mean of 4.49 and a verbal description of Very High. This implied that by adapting various instructional strategies, teachers actively addressed the diverse learning needs of their students, enhancing engagement, understanding, and overall achievement while demonstrating a responsive approach that

considered differences in learning styles, abilities, and interests. Camarillo (2025) found that teachers employed differentiated instruction techniques such as varied pacing, scaffolded tasks, and learner-centered approaches to accommodate students with special educational needs. Resuello et al. (2025) documented the use of strategies like Think-Pair-Share, guided discovery, and scaffolded questioning, which correlated positively with students' academic performance, underscoring teachers' belief that adapting instruction supported diverse learners. The third highest-rated indicator was Item 1, "I have effectively integrated the MATATAG curriculum core objectives into my daily teaching practices," with a mean of 4.45 and a verbal description of Very High, implying that teachers successfully aligned daily instructional practices with the core objectives of the MATATAG curriculum, reflecting a strong understanding of the curriculum framework and an ability to translate its goals into practical, classroom-level strategies. Saro et al. (2025) documented that many teachers consciously reoriented their instruction to emphasize real-world problem-solving, critical thinking, and values education objectives central to MATATAG.

The remaining indicators yielded the following means and verbal descriptions: Item 4 with a mean of 4.41 and a verbal description of Very High, Item 9 with a mean of 4.39 and a verbal description of Very High, Item 5 with a mean of 4.33 and a verbal description of Very High, Item 3 with a mean of 4.33 and a verbal description of Very High, Item 10 with a mean of 4.31 and a verbal description of Very High, Item 7 with a mean of 4.27 and a verbal description of Very High, and Item 8 with a mean of 4.26 and a verbal description of Very High. The overall general weighted mean of 4.38 with a verbal description of Very High indicated that teachers demonstrated a strong capacity to implement the curriculum's goals with confidence, consistency, and instructional effectiveness, applying learner-centered strategies, adapting lessons to diverse learning needs, and persisting in addressing classroom challenges. Research confirmed that teachers with stronger self-efficacy demonstrated higher instructional quality, better classroom management, and greater adaptability to new pedagogical demands (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019), and that teachers with high confidence in their capabilities were more willing to implement new strategies and persist despite challenges, which was essential for competency-based and learner-centered curricula (Fackler & Malmberg, 2021). Evidence from the OECD's TALIS findings also indicated that teacher self-efficacy significantly influenced the use of innovative instructional practices and responsiveness to learner needs (OECD, 2020).

Regarding the significant differences between the respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges as examined through Chi-Square analysis, the results revealed varying patterns across the five demographic variables. For age, the Chi-Square analysis yielded an X^2 value of 5.12 with $df = 3$ and a p-value of 0.164, leading to a decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a not significant result. For sex, the analysis yielded an X^2 value of 0.45 with $df = 1$ and a p-value of 0.502, likewise leading to a decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a not significant result. For highest educational attainment, the analysis yielded an X^2 value of 9.87 with $df = 2$ and a p-value of 0.007, leading to a decision to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant result. For seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, the analysis yielded an X^2 value of 12.34 with $df = 2$ and a p-value of 0.002, likewise leading to a decision to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant result. For length of teaching experience, the analysis yielded an X^2 value of 3.98 with $df = 3$ and a p-value of 0.0262, leading to a decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a not significant result.

These findings confirmed that statistically significant differences in perceived instructional challenges existed with respect to highest educational attainment and number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, both at $p < 0.05$, while age, sex, and

length of teaching experience did not show significant differences at $p > 0.05$, indicating that these latter factors did not substantially affect teachers' perceptions of instructional challenges. Teachers with higher educational attainment or more professional development experiences reported differing levels of instructional challenges, suggesting that academic background and training significantly influenced how teachers perceived the difficulties in implementing the MATATAG curriculum. Studies showed that higher educational attainment often equipped teachers with stronger pedagogical knowledge and problem-solving strategies, which influenced how they perceived and managed instructional demands amid curriculum reforms (Kim & Cho, 2022). Professional development had likewise been found to significantly shape teachers' confidence and capacity to address instructional difficulties, with more training opportunities correlating with reduced stress and more effective curriculum implementation (Poce et al., 2023).

Regarding the significant relationship between self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in the delivery of the MATATAG curriculum, the Pearson r correlation analysis yielded an r -value of 0.924, with a computed t -value of 23.921, $df = 98$, and a critical value of 1.990 at a significance level of 0.05. Since the computed t -value of 23.921 exceeded the critical value of 1.990, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The r -value of 0.924 indicated a very strong positive correlation between self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy in delivering the MATATAG curriculum, meaning that as teachers encountered or recognized more instructional challenges, their perceived efficacy in addressing and managing these challenges also tended to increase in a meaningful and consistent manner. This finding suggested that teacher efficacy was closely tied to the challenges they faced during curriculum implementation, indicating that when teachers were aware of instructional difficulties, they developed adaptive strategies, problem-solving skills, and confidence that contributed to their sense of competence. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasized that when teachers faced increased instructional demands without adequate support, their confidence in delivering new learning standards tended to fluctuate, demonstrating a direct link between perceived challenges and perceived capability. The OECD (2021) similarly reported that curriculum transitions often heightened workload and pedagogical complexity, which in turn influenced educators' self-efficacy, especially when reforms required new instructional approaches.

Taken together, the findings of this chapter presented a coherent and empirically grounded portrait of in-service teachers' experiences in delivering the MATATAG curriculum. The demographic analysis revealed a predominantly female workforce aged 31 to 40 with six to ten years of teaching experience, most of whom had units in a master's degree and had attended one to three MATATAG-related seminars, with educational attainment ($X^2 = 9.87$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.007$) and number of seminars attended ($X^2 = 12.34$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.002$) emerging as significant differentiators in perceived instructional challenges, while age ($X^2 = 5.12$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.164$), sex ($X^2 = 0.45$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.502$), and length of teaching experience ($X^2 = 3.98$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.0262$) did not yield significant differences. Teachers reported High levels of self-perceived instructional challenges with a general weighted mean of 3.80, primarily centered on difficulties in accommodating all subjects comprehensively ($M = 4.42$), addressing higher-order cognitive competencies within limited time frames ($M = 4.29$), and implementing engaging hands-on activities ($M = 4.17$). Despite these substantial challenges, teachers demonstrated Very High levels of self-perceived efficacy with a general weighted mean of 4.38, anchored in systematic student monitoring and adjustment ($M = 4.58$), instructional strategy adaptation ($M = 4.49$), and integration of curriculum objectives into daily practices ($M = 4.45$). Most critically, the very strong positive correlation between perceived instructional

challenges and self-perceived efficacy ($r = 0.924$, $t = 23.921$, critical value = 1.990, $df = 98$, $\alpha = 0.05$) confirmed that awareness of instructional difficulties was meaningfully associated with greater perceived competence, suggesting that teachers who actively confronted curriculum demands also developed stronger adaptive capacities. These findings collectively highlighted the importance of strengthening targeted support systems, providing continuous and practical professional development, and addressing systemic constraints to ensure the successful and sustainable delivery of the MATATAG curriculum. The subsequent chapter will build upon these results to present recommendations and implications relevant to policy and practice in Philippine basic education.

CONCLUSION

This study determined the instructional challenges and perceived efficacy in the MATATAG curriculum implementation among elementary educators in Carmen, Cebu, Philippines for the school year 2025 to 2026, using a descriptive-correlational research design administered to 100 teacher respondents across selected elementary schools. Data were gathered through a questionnaire adopted from Paler et al. (2025) and Basister (2025), and were analyzed using weighted mean, simple percentage, Chi-square, and Spearman's rho to address the study's specific objectives concerning the respondents' demographic profiles, their self-perceived instructional challenges, their self-perceived efficacy, the significant differences between profile variables and perceived instructional challenges, and the significant relationship between perceived instructional challenges and perceived efficacy in delivering the MATATAG curriculum.

The demographic profile of the 100 teacher respondents revealed that the majority were within the early thirties to forties age bracket, with 50 or 50.00% falling in the 31 to 40 age group, followed by 20 or 20.00% in the 21 to 30 age group, 17 or 17.00% in the 41 to 50 age group, and 13 or 13.00% in the 51 to 60 age group. In terms of sex, 79 or 79.00% of the respondents were female, while 21 or 21.00% were male, reflecting the broadly female-dominated character of the Philippine public elementary teaching force. With respect to educational attainment, 50 or 50.00% held units in a master's degree, 15 or 15.00% had units in a doctorate, 15 or 15.00% had completed a master's degree, 14 or 14.00% held a bachelor's degree, and six or 6.00% had earned a doctorate degree, indicating that the majority of respondents had actively pursued continuing professional development beyond the baccalaureate level. Regarding MATATAG-related seminars attended, 60 or 60.00% had attended one to three seminars, 36 or 36.00% had attended four to six seminars, and four or 4.00% had not attended any, suggesting that most teachers possessed foundational but limited formal exposure to the curriculum reform. In terms of length of teaching experience, 55 or 55.00% had six to ten years of service, 24 or 24.00% had eleven to twenty years, 14 or 14.00% had one to five years, and seven or 7.00% had twenty-one years and beyond, indicating a workforce characterized by moderate to substantial classroom experience.

The self-perceived instructional challenges of the respondents in delivering the MATATAG curriculum produced a general weighted mean of 3.80 with a verbal description of High, indicating that teachers collectively experienced substantial obstacles across multiple dimensions of curriculum implementation. The highest-rated challenge was Item 10, which stated that teachers sometimes struggled to accommodate all subjects effectively, hindering the opportunity for learners to develop essential skills comprehensively, with a mean of 4.42 and a verbal description of Very High. This finding underscored that workload pressures, time constraints, and insufficient resources collectively prevented teachers from giving adequate instructional attention to all learning areas, resulting in uneven competency development

among learners. The second highest-rated challenge was Item 9, which indicated that teachers expressed difficulty in fully addressing complex competencies, especially those requiring higher-order cognitive skills within the limited time frame, with a mean of 4.29 and a verbal description of Very High, reflecting the tension between curriculum depth and instructional time. The third highest-rated challenge was Item 7, which stated that the new curriculum limited teachers' ability to implement engaging, hands-on activities, with a mean of 4.17 and a verbal description of Very High, highlighting the structural and resource-related constraints that pushed classroom instruction toward more rigid, lecture-centered approaches at the expense of experiential and active learning opportunities. These findings collectively confirmed that high self-perceived instructional challenges were prevalent among the respondents and that systemic issues in resource provision, curriculum pacing, and professional preparation represented the most pressing obstacles to effective MATATAG curriculum delivery.

In contrast, the self-perceived efficacy of the respondents in delivering the MATATAG curriculum yielded a general weighted mean of 4.38 with a verbal description of Very High, reflecting that teachers, despite the challenges they encountered, maintained a strong sense of instructional competence and adaptive capacity. The highest-rated efficacy indicator was Item 6, which stated that the teacher tracked and responded to students' progress and feedback in the context of the MATATAG curriculum through systematic monitoring and adjustments, with a mean of 4.58 and a verbal description of Very High, demonstrating that responsive, feedback-driven instruction was a well-established practice among the respondents. The second highest-rated indicator was Item 2, which stated that the teacher adapted various instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of students, with a mean of 4.49 and a verbal description of Very High, reflecting strong pedagogical flexibility and responsiveness to learner diversity. The third highest-rated indicator was Item 1, which stated that the teacher had effectively integrated the MATATAG curriculum core objectives into daily teaching practices, with a mean of 4.45 and a verbal description of Very High, indicating that curriculum alignment was well-internalized by most respondents. These Very High efficacy ratings across all ten indicators affirmed that teachers had developed adaptive strategies, confidence, and reflective practices that enabled them to navigate the demands of the curriculum reform with a high degree of perceived competence.

The Chi-Square analysis examining the significant differences between respondents' profiles and their perceived instructional challenges produced differentiated findings across the five demographic variables. Highest educational attainment yielded an X^2 value of 9.87 with $df = 2$ and a p -value of 0.007, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming a significant difference. Similarly, the number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum yielded an X^2 value of 12.34 with $df = 2$ and a p -value of 0.002, likewise resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis and a significant finding. These results indicated that teachers' academic preparation and the extent of their engagement in MATATAG-specific professional development meaningfully shaped how they perceived and managed the instructional challenges of the curriculum reform. In contrast, age yielded an X^2 value of 5.12 with $df = 3$ and a p -value of 0.164, sex yielded an X^2 value of 0.45 with $df = 1$ and a p -value of 0.502, and length of teaching experience yielded an X^2 value of 3.98 with $df = 3$ and a p -value of 0.0262, all of which led to the decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that these variables did not produce statistically significant differences in perceived instructional challenges. These findings underscored that while demographic characteristics such as age, sex, and years of service did not substantially differentiate teachers' challenge

perceptions, the quality and depth of their academic and professional formation played a critical role in shaping their capacity to navigate the MATATAG curriculum's instructional demands.

The relationship between self-perceived instructional challenges and self-perceived efficacy was examined through Pearson r correlation with a t -test, yielding an r -value of 0.924, a computed t -value of 23.921, and a critical value of 1.990 at a significance level of 0.05, with $df = 98$. Since the computed t -value of 23.921 exceeded the critical value of 1.990, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a statistically significant and very strong positive relationship between the two variables. This finding indicated that as teachers recognized and encountered greater instructional challenges in implementing the MATATAG curriculum, their perceived efficacy in addressing and managing these challenges also increased in a meaningful and consistent manner. The very strong positive correlation suggested that teachers' confrontation with curriculum demands did not diminish their sense of competence but rather appeared to develop their adaptive strategies, problem-solving skills, and professional confidence, pointing to the constructive and generative nature of challenge awareness in the context of teacher professional growth.

Drawing from the totality of these findings, it is concluded that a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship existed between respondents' self-perceived instructional challenges and their self-perceived efficacy in delivering the MATATAG curriculum, with the computed t -value of 23.921 decisively exceeding the critical value of 1.990 at the 0.05 significance level. Teacher efficacy significantly predicted the degree to which instructional challenges affected MATATAG implementation, affirming that teachers who were more attuned to the difficulties of curriculum delivery were simultaneously those who developed stronger adaptive and instructional competencies. It is further concluded that significant differences in perceived instructional challenges were found with respect to highest educational attainment and number of seminars attended relevant to the MATATAG curriculum, while age, sex, and length of teaching experience did not yield significant differences, underscoring the primacy of academic preparation and purposive professional development in shaping teachers' readiness and challenge perceptions. These conclusions collectively affirm that capacity-building efforts must prioritize strengthening teachers' confidence and instructional competence through sustained, context-based, and practically oriented professional development that directly addresses the systemic and pedagogical demands of the MATATAG curriculum.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that the action plan developed as the output of this study be implemented in the participating schools as a structured institutional response to the identified challenges. The action plan is envisioned to address the gaps in curriculum delivery by equipping teachers with targeted strategies for accommodating all subjects effectively, developing higher-order cognitive competencies within limited time frames, and designing engaging, hands-on learning activities within the constraints of the reformed curriculum framework. It is further recommended that school administrators and DepEd division officials prioritize the expansion and deepening of MATATAG-related professional development, ensuring that seminars and training activities move beyond foundational orientation toward sustained, reflective, and school-embedded capacity building. Encouraging teachers to pursue advanced academic qualifications is likewise recommended, given the significant association between higher educational attainment and differentiated challenge perceptions. For further research, it is recommended that future studies investigate the effectiveness of the MATATAG curriculum on actual student learning outcomes, explore teacher readiness and professional development in greater depth across diverse school contexts, and examine the adequacy and accessibility of instructional resources as mediating factors in curriculum implementation success. These recommended research directions will contribute to

building a more comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the MATATAG curriculum reform and its implications for teachers, learners, and the broader Philippine basic education system.

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