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## **Readiness of Public Elementary School Heads and Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum towards a Proposed Management Plan**



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### INTRODUCTION

Curriculum change and development play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape of any country. The evolution of the curriculum has been a subject of continuous deliberation and reform. Curriculum change and development are ongoing processes in education systems worldwide. Various factors, such as societal needs, technological advancements, and pedagogical research, influence the evolution of curricula across different countries. The United States has experienced significant curriculum changes, driven by societal demands and educational research. One notable example is the shift towards competency-based education (CBE). CBE focuses on learners' mastery of specific skills and knowledge rather than mere completion of coursework. This approach aims to ensure that learners acquire the necessary competencies to succeed in the workforce (Basham, 2018). Another prominent change in the U.S. curriculum is the increased emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education to foster innovation and address the growing demand for STEM professionals (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Finland's educational system is often lauded for its exceptional performance in international assessments. The country has undergone significant curriculum development to achieve its educational goals. Finland's curriculum is characterized by a learner-centered approach that emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Sahlberg, 2018). The curriculum places a strong emphasis on holistic development, including arts, physical education, and social skills. Moreover, Finland's curriculum is designed to support equity and inclusivity, ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to succeed (OECD, 2018). Singapore has implemented extensive curriculum reforms to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global landscape. The curriculum is guided by the vision of nurturing learners to be confident and adaptable individuals. The country's curriculum emphasizes the development of 21st-century competencies, including critical and inventive thinking, communication, collaboration, and information skills (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2019).

The curriculum in the Philippines has undergone several revisions over the years to align with the nation's goals and aspirations. Historically, the curriculum emphasized

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international studies, often drawing heavily from Western perspectives and models. This approach aimed to prepare Filipino learners for global challenges and opportunities. However, critics argued that this approach neglected the rich cultural heritage and local context of the Philippines, leading to a lack of appreciation for indigenous knowledge and local issues. One of the primary reasons for the shift toward Curricular change and development is the desire to foster a strong sense of cultural identity among Filipino learners. By incorporating local perspectives, histories, and traditions into the curriculum, learners are encouraged to embrace their heritage and develop a deeper understanding of their own culture. According to Francisco (2018), this emphasis on Curricular change and development helps learners establish a strong sense of self and pride in their cultural roots. By incorporating Curricular change and development into the curriculum, learners develop a better understanding of these issues and are encouraged to find context-specific solutions. As argued by Aquino (2020), an expert in curriculum development, this approach promotes active citizenship and empowers learners to contribute meaningfully to their communities. To enhance learner learning results, the Division of Tarlac City has implemented the MATATAG Curriculum, which is a significant educational reform. Nonetheless, public school heads and teachers' preparedness is a prerequisite for effectively accepting and using this curriculum. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the public-school heads and teachers' preparedness for the MATATAG Curriculum in the Tarlac City Division for several reasons.

To improve the implementation of the curriculum, it is imperative to first assess teacher preparedness. This study can pinpoint any knowledge, ability, or resource shortages that could prevent teachers from delivering the curriculum effectively by looking at their present state of readiness. Afterward, to improve teacher preparedness and MATATAG Curriculum implementation, the results may be used to guide the creation of focused interventions and support systems, such as professional development courses and instructional materials. To support the successful implementation of the curriculum and enhance learner learning outcomes, research on public school heads and teachers' preparedness for the MATATAG Curriculum in the Division of Tarlac City is vital. This project intends to contribute to the effective implementation and long-term sustainability of the MATATAG Curriculum in Tarlac City by evaluating teacher readiness, identifying difficulties, and providing methods to strengthen teacher preparedness and support systems

This study primarily aimed to identify the readiness and challenges of public-school heads and teachers in the Division of Tarlac City to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. This descriptive quantitative research was subject to ninety-eight (98) randomly selected principals, head teachers, and teachers who participated in the study in the Division of Tarlac City for the school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, the researcher aimed to address the following objectives:

1. What is the level of readiness of public-school heads and teachers in the Division of Tarlac City in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of:
  - 1.1. Decongested Curriculum;
  - 1.2. Focus On Foundational Skills;
  - 1.3. Balance Cognitive Demands;
  - 1.4. Clearer Articulation of 21st-Century Skills;
  - 1.5. Reduced Learning Areas;
  - 1.6. Intensified Values Education and Peace Education; and
  - 1.7. On a Par with International Standards?

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2. What are the challenges encountered by the public-school schools heads and teachers as to the following features of the MATATAG curriculum?
3. What management plan can be proposed based on the findings of the study?
4. What are the implications of studying Educational Management?

### **METHODOLOGY**

It is a quantitative investigation. Quantitative research, according to Bryman (2012), focuses on quantifying data collection and analysis. It is based on a deductive approach with a strong emphasis on hypothesis testing. This study uses a quantitative, descriptive methodology. This study primarily aimed to identify the readiness of public-school heads and teachers in the Division of Tarlac City to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. This study utilized descriptive research design. Descriptive research focuses on systematically describing a phenomenon, situation, or population without establishing cause-and-effect relationships. In the context of this study, the descriptive design was appropriate for documenting and analyzing the readiness of public-school heads and the challenges they encountered in implementing the MATATAG curriculum.

To conduct the study, the researcher collected data on two key aspects: the readiness of public-school heads and the challenges they faced during the implementation process. The readiness of school heads was assessed using surveys or questionnaires designed to gather information about their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward the curriculum. The challenges they encountered were identified based on their responses in the readiness assessment, particularly among those who were categorized as being "moderately ready" to "somewhat ready." These findings provided a detailed account of the difficulties experienced during the implementation and offered insights into the relationship between levels of readiness and the challenges faced by public school heads in implementing the MATATAG curriculum.

For the study on the readiness of public-school heads and the challenges they encountered in implementing the MATATAG curriculum in Tarlac City's Division's South A and B Districts, a random sampling technique would be employed. This technique involves selecting participants from the population of public-school heads and teachers in the two districts through a random process, such as using a random number generator or drawing names from a hat. By using random sampling, every public-school head and teacher in the districts has an equal chance of being included in the study, ensuring that the sample of ninety-eight (98) participants is representative of the larger population. This increases the generalizability of the findings and enhances the study's external validity. The questionnaire's mechanics were evaluated by three language specialists, and its content was approved by three educational management specialists. The researcher used premium instruments in strict accordance with professional recommendations. A dry-run test using the same questionnaire and 30 teachers who meet the same requirements as the study participants were also conducted. In the first phase, the researcher sought permission from the proper authorities of the Department of Education Division of Tarlac City to conduct the study on the teachers. Letters of consent were given as an indication of requesting approval from the authorities and respondents. The researcher also conducted a casual interview with the participants.

The questionnaire was then distributed by the researcher. In terms of technology, computer literacy, learning environment, and motivation, the researcher examined and evaluated the data to determine the experiences and challenges that alternative learning system learners have in developing their life and career skills. The researcher suggested a course of action to improve public school heads and teachers' preparedness for the MATATAG

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Curriculum. Lastly, the information to be acquired determined the study's implications for educational management.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

To interpret the data obtained in the level of readiness and challenges of public-school heads and teachers in the Division of Tarlac City to implement the MATATAG Curriculum focusing on key features such as a decongested curriculum, emphasis on foundational skills, balanced cognitive demands, clearer articulation of 21st-century skills, reduced learning areas, intensified values education and peace education, and alignment with international standards. The weighted mean is a calculation that takes into account the different weights that each integer in a data collection has. Each number in the data set is multiplied by a predefined weight when calculating a weighted average before the final computation is done (Ganti, 2021).

### **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The following are the study's key findings:

#### **1. Level of Readiness of Public-School Heads and Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum**

The findings reveal that the overall readiness of public-school heads and teachers in the Division of Tarlac City to implement the MATATAG Curriculum is moderate. Specifically, respondents demonstrated a higher readiness in areas such as Focus on Foundational Skills and Clearer Articulation of 21st-Century Skills. However, in terms of Decongested Curriculum, Reduced Learning Areas, and On a Par with International Standards, the level of readiness was found to be lower, indicating that these areas require more attention and support for effective implementation. The results suggest that while public school heads and teachers are prepared in certain aspects of the curriculum, there are significant gaps that need to be addressed to ensure comprehensive readiness across all features of the MATATAG Curriculum.

#### **2. Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum**

The challenges encountered by public school heads and teachers varied across different features of the MATATAG Curriculum. The study highlights that the most significant challenges were observed in the integration of Intensified Values Education and Peace Education and aligning practices to be On a Par with International Standards. Teachers expressed difficulties in accessing adequate training, balancing academic content with values education, and incorporating global perspectives within local contexts. On the other hand, fewer challenges were reported in areas like Focus on Foundational Skills and Clearer Articulation of 21st-Century Skills, where teachers felt more confident in meeting the curriculum demands. These findings indicate the need for targeted interventions to address specific challenges, especially in terms of professional development, resource allocation, and policy support.

#### **3. The proposed management plan**

Aims to tackle the challenges identified in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, enhancing educational quality and effectiveness in Tarlac City's public schools. It outlines targeted strategies focusing on professional development, resource allocation, curriculum inclusivity, policy alignment, assessment improvements, and community engagement. The table below

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presents the proposed actions, objectives, connections to curriculum features, and expected outcomes, offering a clear roadmap for achieving educational excellence.

#### **4. Implications of the Study to Mathematics Education**

The research on MATATAG Curriculum readiness and challenges has yielded various implications for educational management, particularly about improving the caliber and applicability of instructional techniques in public schools. First, the issues that have been highlighted point to the need for educational leaders to provide priority for teachers' ongoing professional development. These challenges include curriculum alignment with international standards and the effective integration of 21st-century skills. The creation of thorough training programs that give teachers the abilities and information they need to carry out the curriculum should be the main priority of educational management. To improve student results, schools should guarantee that teachers stay abreast of global educational trends and best practices by cultivating a culture of continuous learning.

The study underscores the significance of resource allocation in facilitating the efficacious execution of the MATATAG Curriculum. Managers of education must support and provide funding for initiatives that close known gaps, especially in the areas of technology and training materials. To encourage critical thinking and digital literacy in students, access to digital tools and platforms is crucial. To gain funds and resources that support the integration of cutting-edge teaching techniques and the use of technology in classrooms, educational management should cooperate with governmental agencies and stakeholders. This strategy will help students become more ready for a world that is changing quickly while also enhancing the quality of instruction.

Furthermore, the difficulties in integrating cultural competence and global perspectives into the curriculum highlight how important it is for educational management to provide a diverse and inclusive learning environment. School administrators can increase the curriculum's relevance to students' lives and experiences by encouraging cultural sensitivity and awareness. To improve educational experience, this entails forming alliances with neighborhood organizations, involving parents, and making use of available resources. Education administrators should put in place policies and initiatives that promote intercultural communication and community service to provide a comprehensive learning environment that equips students for success in a globalized society.

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