

MATATAG Curriculum, Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan / Technology and Livelihood Education Master Teachers' Instructional Practices and Pedagogy: A Phenomenological Exploration

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Abstract

This phenomenological study delved into the lived experiences, instructional practices, and pedagogical approaches of Master Teachers in Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP) and Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) as they navigated the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in the Philippine basic education system. While the MATATAG Curriculum was introduced to strengthen foundational and technical-vocational competencies among learners, a gap remained in understanding how it truly shaped the day-to-day teaching practices and professional realities of those tasked with bringing it to life in the classroom, particularly the Master Teachers who serve as mentors, curriculum implementers, and instructional leaders. To capture these realities, the study employed semi-structured interviews with ten EPP/TLE Master Teachers across different divisions. Through thematic analysis, the research uncovered key themes, including the dynamic process of curriculum adaptation, evolving pedagogical methods, recurring instructional challenges, and reflections on meaningful successes. Participants shared how they creatively tailored the MATATAG Curriculum to fit the unique needs and contexts of their learners, balancing curriculum expectations with available resources and localized content. Their narratives revealed a strong sense of commitment, resilience, and ingenuity in sustaining effective teaching practices despite systemic limitations. However, the study also highlighted recurring challenges, such as insufficient instructional materials, limited access to updated tools and equipment, and a pressing need for sustained, targeted professional development. Despite these hurdles, Master Teachers expressed optimism and a deep belief in the transformative potential of the curriculum, provided that necessary support structures are established. This research highlights the crucial role that Master Teachers play in translating educational reforms into effective classroom practice. It recommends further longitudinal studies to assess the broader impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on student learning outcomes and calls for the institutionalization of continuous capacity-building initiatives to empower Master Teachers as key drivers of curriculum innovation and educational excellence.

Keywords: EPP/TLE; MATATAG Curriculum; Phenomenology; Instructional Practices; Pedagogy; Impact; Challenges

1. Introduction

Past curriculum reforms updated and revised educational content, structure, and delivery methods to improve relevance, quality, and effectiveness. The aim was to align educational practices with academic, technological, and societal advancements, better preparing students for future challenges. A structured process, including needs assessments, stakeholder consultations, pilot testing, implementation, and evaluation, typically guides these transformations.

Effective reform required collaboration among educators, policymakers, and community members to ensure contextual relevance and sustainability. Reformers considered diverse cultural backgrounds and local contexts for inclusivity and effectiveness. However, resistance from educators, students, and parents often hindered implementation, stemming from deeply ingrained teaching practices and traditions.

Substantial financial, human, and material resources were needed for implementation. Inadequate funding and resources limited the scope and effectiveness of changes, particularly in low-income settings. Ensuring teachers received adequate training to deliver the new curriculum presented a major challenge; continued professional development was essential for effective adaptation and implementation.

Aligning new curricular content with existing assessment methods proved problematic. Without proper alignment, assessments may not have accurately reflected student learning and progress under the reformed curriculum. Maintaining the long-term sustainability of reforms also posed a significant challenge, requiring ongoing support and adaptation to preserve relevance and effectiveness.

The implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines represented a significant education reform. The addition of two years of senior high school aimed to align the Philippine education system with international standards. However, the transition faced challenges, including insufficient infrastructure, a lack of qualified teachers, and stakeholder resistance. Despite these obstacles, the reform was viewed as a necessary step to improve the quality of education.

Teacher readiness was a critical issue. Many teachers felt unprepared to deliver the new curriculum effectively due to inadequate training and support. Professional development programs were essential to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. Continuous professional development and support mechanisms were crucial in addressing this gap.

The implementation of the K-12 curriculum faced obstacles, including inadequate teacher training, a lack of resources, and insufficient infrastructure. Systemic issues and stakeholder resistance hindered the transition, and the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges. Resource allocation and teacher preparedness were also noted as significant problems. Infrastructure inadequacies and insufficient instructional materials presented key obstacles.

Emphasizing the contextualization and localization of the curriculum to reflect the diverse cultural and social contexts of Filipino students was highlighted. A one-size-fits-all approach proved ineffective. Localized curricula, considering regional languages, traditions, and contexts, enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes. Involving local communities in curriculum development was crucial for success. Traditional assessment methods did not align well with the K to 12 curriculum's emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. More formative and performance-based assessment strategies were needed. Equity and access to quality education remained persistent issues, with disparities between urban and rural areas. The K to 12 reforms aimed to address these inequalities, but challenges such as inadequate funding and

infrastructure hindered progress. Targeted interventions and increased investment in education were necessary.

1.1 Theoretical Lens

Fullan's Theory of Educational Change focuses on the complexity of change processes in education. It highlights the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of change, including the roles of individuals, the organization, and the broader system (Fullan, 2007). Key components of this theory that are relevant to the MATATAG Curriculum include:

Initiation. According to Fullan, initiation in educational change involves recognizing the need for and setting the stage for change. For the MATATAG Curriculum in DepEd CALABARZON, initiation would include identifying the goals and rationale behind introducing this new curriculum. It involves stakeholders understanding the challenges and the potential benefits this change could bring to instructional practices and pedagogy among EPP/TLE master teachers.

Implementation. In Fullan's framework, the actual adoption and enactment of the change. This phase includes translating the goals of the MATATAG Curriculum into actionable steps. EPP/TLE master teachers would need to modify their instructional practices and pedagogical approaches to align with the new curriculum's requirements. This phase also involved providing necessary support, resources, and professional development to ensure successful implementation.

Institutionalization. It is about embedding the change into the culture and practices of the educational system. It required sustaining the changes made by the MATATAG Curriculum over the long term. This phase involved ensuring that the new instructional practices become standard practice among EPP/TLE master teachers and are supported by ongoing policies, resources, and professional development initiatives.

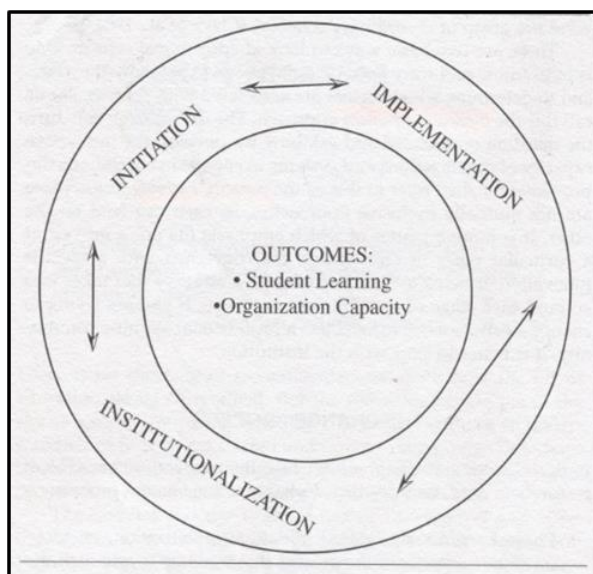


Figure 1: Simplified overview of the Change Process of Fullan's Theory of Educational Change

1.2 Conceptual Framework

This study was designed to explore the challenges and impacts of the MATATAG curriculum on the instructional practices and pedagogy of EPP/TLE Master Teachers in the DepEd CALABARZON region. It sought to understand how these educators responded to the shifts brought by the new curriculum and how it influenced their daily teaching experiences. To support this exploration, the study adopted a framework that integrated key theoretical perspectives and constructs, which served as a structured guide in making sense of the participants' lived experiences and in uncovering the deeper meaning behind the phenomenon being investigated.

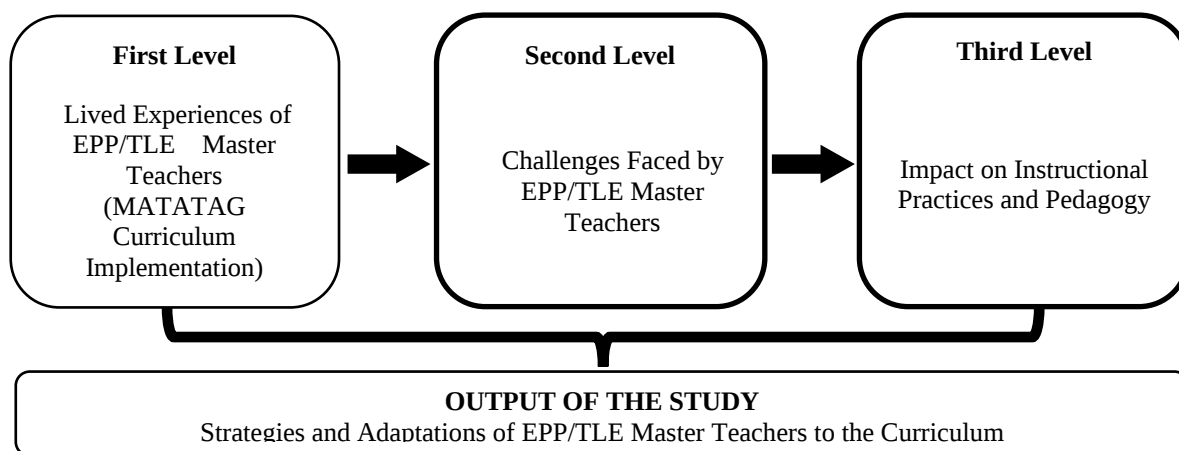


Figure 2: The Research Paradigm

Shows the research paradigm of the study. It follows the three-level thematic reflections.

The first level focused on meticulously examining the lived experiences of the participating teachers. Their narratives, rich with detail and personal perspectives on the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum, formed the foundation for the subsequent analysis. Through a rigorous process of thematic analysis, these individual narratives were reduced to a set of preliminary themes, representing common threads and recurring patterns within the participants' experiences. This reduction process involved identifying key concepts, recurring ideas, and significant events described by the participants, laying the groundwork for a more structured analysis.

The second level focused on identifying commonalities and patterns across participants' experiences. The narratives were revisited to cluster similar experiences and perspectives into broader, more abstract structural themes. This process highlighted recurring challenges and obstacles encountered by the participants during the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. These structural themes represented the collective experiences of the participants, offering a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced. The emergence of these common themes provided a deeper understanding of the shared difficulties and obstacles encountered during the implementation process.

The third level synthesized the findings from the previous two stages to analyze the impact of the MATATAG curriculum on the participants' instructional practices and pedagogy. The structural themes identified in Phase 2 were analyzed to determine their influence on teaching methods, classroom management, and overall pedagogical approaches. This analysis led to the development of the study's conclusions,

recommendations, and final outputs. This phase explicitly linked the challenges and experiences of the teachers to the broader implications for instructional practices and pedagogy, providing actionable insights for curriculum improvement and teacher support.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by the selected EPP/TLE master teachers during the implementation MATATAG curriculum in DepEd CALABARZON, and how it impacts their instructional practices and pedagogy.

Specifically, this study was guided by the following questions:

1. How did the EPP/TLE Master Teachers perceive the MATATAG Curriculum in enhancing instructional practices?
2. What are the challenges faced by the selected EPP/TLE Master Teachers in CALABARZON when in the process of implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?
3. What are the observable impacts of the MATATAG Curriculum on the instructional practices and pedagogy of the selected EPP/TLE Master Teachers in CALABARZON?
4. Based on the results of the study, what strategies and adaptations did EPP/TLE Master Teachers in DepEd CALABARZON implement to overcome the challenges brought by the MATATAG curriculum and improve their instructional practices and pedagogy?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study made use of a qualitative research approach, specifically phenomenology, as it was considered the most appropriate method for uncovering the intricate and deeply personal experiences of educators who had been implementing newly introduced curricula. This approach enabled the researcher to gain a richer, more in-depth understanding of the real-life challenges faced by teachers, as well as the profound effects these changes had on their instructional strategies and pedagogical practices. Drawing on the work of Ravitch and Carl (2021), the study embraced phenomenology's strength in revealing the meaning behind educators' lived experiences, especially during times of significant educational reform.

Phenomenological research was especially crucial in this context, as it allowed the researcher to carefully examine how teachers made sense of, adjusted to, and internalized the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. The method helped surface the subtleties of their day-to-day teaching realities—things that often go unnoticed in more quantitative or surface-level approaches. As emphasized by Almario (2020), phenomenology proved essential in capturing the depth and complexity of instructional transitions, providing authentic insights that reflected not only the technical aspects of teaching but also the emotional and professional journeys of educators navigating curriculum reforms.

2.2. Data Generation

The researcher took great care in transcribing the participants' shared stories, ensuring that each narrative remained true to the voices and experiences of the individuals involved. Open-ended questions served as a flexible guide, allowing the participants to express their thoughts freely and deeply. To further ensure accuracy and authenticity, the researcher followed up with phone calls and virtual meetings. These follow-ups provided an opportunity for the participants to review the transcribed accounts, affirm their experiences, and make clarifications if needed. This step was vital in maintaining the integrity of their lived experiences and ensuring that their voices were genuinely represented.

Once all narratives were confirmed, the researcher began the process of analyzing the data by extracting significant statements and meanings. This process was guided by Taylor's (2023) approach to horizontalization, which involved identifying and coding key phrases, sentences, and quotes that best encapsulated the participants' experiences. Each statement was treated with equal importance during the initial analysis, allowing insights to emerge naturally. As recurring ideas and patterns surfaced, they were thoughtfully grouped into broader themes. The researcher then developed detailed accounts of these themes, offering both textural descriptions that highlighted what the participants experienced and structural descriptions that explained how they experienced the phenomenon in context.

The themes were revisited and refined repeatedly until essential insights began to form. These deeper understandings came from weaving together the textural and structural perspectives, allowing the study to present a holistic view of the collective experience of all participants. From these integrated insights, the researcher identified an eidetic insight, representing the essence of the phenomenon being studied. To uphold the credibility of the research, the final interpretation and thematic findings were returned to the participants for validation, giving them a chance to confirm whether their experiences had been captured accurately and meaningfully.

2.3. Selection of the Co-Participants

The participants in this research were selected master teachers specializing in Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP) and Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) from various schools across the CALABARZON region. These educators were chosen purposefully for their ability to provide valuable insights into the real-life challenges they encountered while implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. A total of ten master teachers were invited to take part in in-depth interviews, where they shared their personal experiences, reflections, and observations related to their instructional practices and adjustments made during the curriculum shift.

Specific criteria guided the selection of co-participants to ensure relevance and depth of information. All participants held the position of EPP/TLE master teacher and had at least one year of experience in that role. This requirement ensured that they had sufficient practical exposure and understanding of the teaching demands in their field. Additionally, participants were based within the CALABARZON region to reflect the regional context of the study, where the MATATAG Curriculum was actively rolled out.

Furthermore, all chosen master teachers had undergone orientation and training related to the MATATAG Curriculum, making them knowledgeable about its core principles, goals, and implementation processes. They also demonstrated a solid understanding of pedagogical theories and practices, enabling them

to critically reflect on the effects of the curriculum changes. Most importantly, each participant expressed a sincere willingness to take part in the research, offering to share their lived experiences openly and honestly. Their commitment played a crucial role in enriching the study with authentic and meaningful perspectives.

2.4. Thematic Reflection

To gather comprehensive and detailed qualitative data, the researcher utilized a carefully prepared interview schedule. Each interview was designed to be flexible, with its length varying depending on the depth of experience shared by each co-participant. In addition to individual interviews, the researcher conducted focus group discussions to delve deeper into the perspectives and collective insights of the participants. These methods enabled the researcher to capture the nuanced views of purposively selected individuals who were encouraged to speak openly and narrate their personal experiences in their own words. Each interview was adapted to reflect the unique background and context of the participant. At the conclusion of every session, the researcher informed participants about the possibility of a follow-up via phone or virtual meetings to validate the themes and insights drawn from the initial conversations.

The researcher determined the point at which data saturation was achieved, ensuring that no new themes were emerging from the interviews. A total of ten participants were purposively selected for this study: two master teachers each from the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon. Prior to the data collection, the researcher sought formal permission from the respective Schools Division Offices across CALABARZON. Once approval was granted, consent letters were also secured from the School Heads of the selected schools in each province. The data collection process began with initial interviews conducted personally by the researcher, allowing for a richer and more contextual discussion with the participants.

Whenever possible, the researcher met the participants face-to-face for more thorough engagement and to build rapport. Before beginning the interviews, participants were asked for permission to record the sessions to ensure accuracy in data collection. In cases where in-person interviews were not feasible, online interviews served as an alternative. After receiving approval for the interview requests, the researcher conducted a series of both individual interviews and focus group discussions across various schools in CALABARZON. The semi-structured interview format offered flexibility, enabling the researcher to explore in depth the lived experiences, instructional challenges, and pedagogical shifts brought about by the MATATAG Curriculum. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions, which provided a structured yet adaptable framework that allowed participants to reflect meaningfully on their experiences as EPP/TLE master teachers in the region.

2.5. Literature Comparison

Many EPP/TLE master teachers had positively received the MATATAG Curriculum, as its design directly responded to the pressing challenges they faced in the classroom. Its practical and forward-thinking approach resonated with teachers, who saw the curriculum as both timely and relevant. This response aligned closely with Fullan's Theory of Educational Change (2007), which stressed the importance of stakeholder buy-in for any reform to succeed. The MATATAG Curriculum stood out because it filled several gaps found in the previous K-12 curriculum. Its emphasis on practical life skills, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship offered real-world value, especially in contrast to the traditional reliance on outdated content and rigid standardized assessments.

Despite the positive reception, the study also uncovered several implementation challenges. Teachers identified issues such as limited resources, resistance to adopting new teaching strategies, and the lack of adequate facilities. These hurdles echoed the stages outlined in Fullan's (2007) framework, particularly the "implementation" and "consolidation" phases, logistical and systemic barriers can dampen initial enthusiasm. For instance, the overlapping of competencies across learning areas and the lack of clarity in the learning objectives created confusion, as reported by DepEd Tambayan (2024). These challenges emphasized the need for clearer curricular alignment and streamlined delivery to ensure effectiveness in real classrooms.

Moreover, the study highlighted how the MATATAG Curriculum encouraged collaboration among educators, learners, and communities. This aspect closely reflected sociocultural theory, which views learning as a shared and interactive process. EPP/TLE master teachers noted that the curriculum's inclusion of project-based learning and group activities fostered both engagement and cooperation. These features effectively addressed one of the major criticisms of the K-12 curriculum—its limited promotion of critical thinking and problem-solving. The flexibility and responsiveness of the master teachers in adapting the new curriculum illustrated Fullan's (2007) concept of teacher leadership. They navigated constraints creatively, integrated innovative approaches, and remained reflective in their practices, showing how empowered teachers could shape the success of reforms through contextual adaptation.

The recurring issue of inadequate resources stood out as a major finding and supported Fullan's argument that genuine educational change must address logistical challenges. Teachers expressed the need for sufficient equipment, facilities, and instructional materials to effectively implement the MATATAG Curriculum. This concern echoed findings from a 2024 ResearchGate study on curriculum implementation, which emphasized that institutional support was vital for sustainability. Unlike the content-heavy and compartmentalized K-12 curriculum, MATATAG promoted integrated learning, which encouraged students to think critically and apply knowledge across different contexts. The curriculum's use of alternative assessment tools, such as portfolios and performance tasks, offered students more meaningful ways to demonstrate learning, thus improving retention and engagement over traditional tests.

Finally, the MATATAG Curriculum's intentional focus on cultural responsiveness and inclusivity stood out, especially with its use of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). This approach addressed the long-standing issues of linguistic diversity and equity that the K-12 curriculum had often overlooked. The study found that professional development was essential to sustaining this cultural shift. In line with Fullan's (2007) advocacy for continuous teacher support, participants emphasized the need for ongoing training and mentoring. The success of the MATATAG Curriculum, they believed, depended not just on its content but also on the capacity of teachers to deliver it effectively and confidently, highlighting the central role of sustained, targeted professional development in any reform initiative.

2.6. Credibility and Dependability

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings, the researcher sought the approval of all co-participants regarding the narratives that had emerged from their interviews. Each of the ten co-participants was invited to review and validate the themes derived from their shared experiences. This process, often referred to as member checking, allowed them to confirm whether the clustered themes truly captured the essence of what they had expressed. A thematic audit was also conducted, during which the co-participants reaffirmed the accuracy and coherence of the themes. In addition, a manual reduction technique was employed to identify commonalities across the narratives, helping establish inter-subjectivity and

ensuring that the themes were not based on isolated experiences but on shared patterns that emerged from their collective stories.

This approach aligned with the principles discussed by Anderson (2023), who emphasized the importance of trustworthiness in phenomenological research. According to Anderson, credibility and dependability are strengthened when participants are given the opportunity to verify how their experiences are interpreted. Member checking, in particular, was considered a key element in preserving authenticity. Furthermore, Anderson highlighted methodological triangulation—drawing on various data sources and analytical strategies—as a crucial method for validating findings. The study also followed Anderson's recommendation to maintain a detailed audit trail, carefully documenting each step of the research process. The study allowed for full transparency and enabled external reviewers to trace how the conclusions were reached. By incorporating these rigorous strategies, the study upheld the integrity of the qualitative research process, ensuring that its findings were both trustworthy and reflective of the participants' lived realities.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, the researcher placed great importance on upholding ethical standards, particularly the facilitation of free and informed consent. This ethical principle was not treated as a mere formality but rather as a foundation for building genuine trust and transparency between the researcher and the participants. Following the ethical guidance outlined by the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2017), as cited in the work of Klykken (2021), the study emphasized the need to respect each individual's autonomy by ensuring that participation was completely voluntary. Every participant was given a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential impact, empowering them to make a fully informed decision about their involvement.

To protect the dignity and privacy of the participants, their identities were kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms were used in place of real names, and any identifying details were removed from all transcripts and written reports. Participants were also reassured that they had the absolute right to withdraw from the study at any point, for any reason, without judgment or penalty. This safeguard provided them with a sense of control over their participation, reinforcing the ethical commitment to respect their rights and well-being throughout the research process.

Moreover, the researcher took all necessary steps to secure proper permissions before data collection began. Letters of consent were obtained not only from the participants themselves but also from school authorities and relevant institutional offices. All data gathered during the study was securely stored and treated with the utmost care, and used solely for academic purposes. No information was shared outside the research context, ensuring that the privacy and trust extended by the participants were honored. These ethical practices underscore the researcher's dedication to conducting responsible and respectful social research that prioritizes the voice, safety, and dignity of all those involved.

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter offered a detailed and thoughtful discussion of the research questions that guided the study. The analysis went beyond simply presenting data; it aimed to draw meaningful connections between

the participants' shared experiences and the body of literature relevant to curriculum reform and pedagogical change. By doing so, the researcher sought to deepen the understanding of how the MATATAG Curriculum was being implemented and experienced by EPP/TLE master teachers across the CALABARZON region.

The core of the discussion focused on the authentic voices of the participants, which were gathered through in-depth, face-to-face, and virtual interviews. These conversations provided a rich tapestry of experiences, shedding light on both the challenges and breakthroughs encountered by the teachers in their respective contexts. Rather than generalizing, the chapter highlighted individual and collective stories that revealed how these educators navigated instructional shifts, curriculum updates, and classroom realities.

Emerging from the interview data were several key themes that captured the essence of the participants' lived realities. These themes were not only explained but also interpreted in light of existing theories and previous studies, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The chapter gave particular attention to how each theme reflected the educators' values, struggles, strategies, and aspirations, bringing the research findings to life in a way that remained grounded in the real-world experiences of those most affected by educational reforms.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Position	Teaching Experience	Division
A	42	Female	Master Teacher I	12 Years	Bacoor City
B	46	Female	Master Teacher I	17 Years	Quezon Province
C	44	Female	Master Teacher I	17 Years	Bacoor City
D	50	Male	Master Teacher I	28 Years	Quezon Province
E	50	Female	Master Teacher I	26 Years	Lipa City
F	38	Male	Master Teacher I	16 Years	Antipolo City
G	48	Female	Master Teacher I	21 Years	Lipa City
H	43	Female	Master Teacher I	14 Years	Laguna Province
I	39	Female	Master Teacher I	22	Laguna Province
J	36	Female	Master Teacher I	17	Antipolo City

The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum has brought about significant shifts in the landscape of Philippine basic education, particularly in the delivery of Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP). To explore the lived experiences, instructional

practices, and pedagogical adaptations of TLE/EPP Master Teachers under this new curriculum, this study engaged ten seasoned educators from various divisions across the CALABARZON region. These participants, all bearing the title of Master Teacher I, bring with them a wealth of experience and deep familiarity with the challenges and innovations required in the evolving educational context. Their insights serve as invaluable narratives that anchor the essence of this phenomenological exploration.

Participant A, a 42-year-old Master Teacher I from Bacoor City, has served for 12 years and represents a vital voice from the urban school context. Her mid-career stage allows for a balance between fresh perspectives and practical experience. Participant A's understanding of curriculum transitions and classroom realities contributes to the discourse on how teachers integrate MATATAG-aligned content with actual instructional delivery. Her voice reflects the experiences of Master Teachers who continue to bridge policy intentions with classroom execution, particularly within highly populated and diverse school environments.

Participants B and D, both hailing from Quezon Province, offer rural perspectives, where resource constraints and logistical challenges often shape pedagogical decisions. Participant B, a 46-year-old with 17 years of experience, and Participant D, a 50-year-old with 28 years in service, present narratives rooted in resilience and adaptation. Their experiences underscore how long-serving Master Teachers perceive the MATATAG curriculum not merely as a policy shift but as a call for transformation in localized instructional strategies. Their roles have involved guiding junior teachers and ensuring the curriculum's integrity despite limited access to updated tools and training. These educators highlight the importance of contextualizing instructional practices based on community needs and student realities.

From Lipa City, Participants E and G bring forward perspectives that reflect both gendered and regional influences on pedagogy. Participant E, a 50-year-old with 26 years of experience, and Participant G, aged 48 with 21 years in the profession, showcase instructional maturity and leadership honed by years of navigating multiple curriculum changes. These Master Teachers are key informants on how the MATATAG curriculum has been integrated into TLE/EPP through contextualized learning resources and community-based projects. Their stories echo the importance of teacher agency, curriculum alignment, and mentoring in sustaining quality education amidst transitions.

Meanwhile, the youngest among the participants, Participant J, aged 36 from Antipolo City, offers a generational lens that highlights dynamism and tech-savviness. Despite being the youngest, her 17 years of teaching signify early career growth and dedication. Alongside Participant F, a 38-year-old male teacher from the same division with 16 years of experience, they reflect the adaptability and forward-thinking attitude of educators who embrace innovative pedagogy and digital tools. Their experiences align with MATATAG's vision of competency-based education, providing practical insight into how TLE can evolve through multimedia integration, project-based learning, and localized innovation.

Lastly, Participants H and I from Laguna Province provide a balance between mid-career insight and extensive service. Participants H, 43 years old with 14 years of experience, and Participant I, 39 years old with 22 years of teaching, articulate how sustained mentorship and continuous professional development influence effective curriculum implementation. Their narratives speak to the importance of reflective practice, collaboration, and the willingness to recalibrate instructional methods to align with MATATAG's goals. Their experiences also highlight the role of Master Teachers in leading pedagogical shifts and supporting fellow educators through capacity-building and modeling best practices.

Collectively, the ten participants of this study embody a rich tapestry of experiences, regional diversity, and pedagogical wisdom. As Master Teachers navigating the MATATAG curriculum's implementation in EPP and TLE, their stories uncover the depth of instructional adaptation, the resilience of educators, and the vital role of mentorship in driving meaningful educational reform. These narratives form the backbone of this phenomenological inquiry, offering authentic insights into how the curriculum lives and evolves within the hands of those who deliver it.

1. How did the EPP/TLE Master Teachers perceive the MATATAG Curriculum in enhancing instructional practices?

The participants' perceptions of the MATATAG curriculum's influence on their instructional practices revealed two overarching themes: "Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction" and "Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process." These themes emerged consistently from the data analysis of interview transcripts, providing a rich understanding of how the curriculum impacted the participants' teaching methodologies and classroom dynamics. The findings suggest a significant shift in pedagogical approaches, reflecting the curriculum's intended impact on enhancing the quality of instruction.

The "Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction" theme highlighted the curriculum's success in providing teachers with updated pedagogical tools and strategies. Participants frequently described feeling more confident and prepared to deliver engaging and effective lessons. They reported increased utilization of innovative teaching methods, such as collaborative learning activities and technology integration, leading to a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. This theme underscored the curriculum's positive impact on teacher efficacy and overall instructional quality.

Specifically, the participants noted improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and student assessment. The structured framework provided by the MATATAG curriculum facilitated more organized and coherent lesson plans, leading to better pacing and a clearer learning trajectory for students. Improved classroom management techniques, derived from the curriculum's training modules, allowed for a more focused and productive learning environment, minimizing disruptions and maximizing student engagement. The curriculum also guided effective assessment strategies, enabling participants to better gauge student understanding and tailor instruction accordingly.

The second overarching theme, "Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process," focused on the curriculum's ability to address existing challenges and shortcomings in the educational system. Participants frequently discussed the curriculum's role in bridging the gap between theory and practice, providing them with practical strategies to overcome common teaching obstacles. This theme highlighted the curriculum's responsiveness to the specific needs and challenges faced by teachers in their daily practice.

Many participants cited the curriculum's emphasis on addressing diverse learning styles and needs as a key factor in its success. The curriculum's training modules provided valuable insights into differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to cater to the unique learning styles and abilities of each student. The impact of the curriculum resulted in a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, where all students had the opportunity to succeed. The integration of these differentiated instructional strategies significantly improved the learning outcomes for students with diverse needs.

The analysis of interview data revealed a strong positive correlation between the MATATAG curriculum and enhanced instructional practices. The two dominant themes, "Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction" and "Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process," provide compelling evidence of the curriculum's effectiveness in improving teacher competence and student learning outcomes. The significant statements extracted from the interview transcripts strongly support these findings, offering valuable insights into the practical impact of the MATATAG curriculum on the teaching and learning process.

Table 2.1 Statements, Meanings, and Themes

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Emergent Themes
- According to Participants E and G, <i>"MATATAG Curriculum can be best implemented if it can seek remediations for the low emerging learners, particularly in reading and numeracy."</i> - Participant H added, <i>"The new curriculum should serve as a tool to reduce the number of non-readers and non-numeracy in the country. We need the best workforce in the future, and so we fervently hope that the MATATAG curriculum will promote functional literacy in schools."</i> - Participant A has shared her point of view saying, <i>"Every time DepEd implements a new curriculum, we are looking forward that this is an avenue to cure the illness in education such as the availability of learning resources and the capability-building initiatives for teachers, so we will be fully equipped with the strategies for this new generation of learners."</i>	- The MATATAG Curriculum is perceived as a way to resolve the issues and concerns on the teaching and learning process. - The new curriculum can be another significant action to respond to the needs of the current context of education.	- Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction - Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process.

Theme One. Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction

The Department of Education, with the Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC), had initiated a comprehensive process to review the existing curriculum. This move aimed to validate long-standing claims about instructional inefficiencies and to address noticeable gaps in how lessons were delivered across various learning areas. The collaborative review process was a response to the evolving demands of 21st-century education, particularly the need to equip learners with relevant skills and knowledge in a rapidly changing world.

As a product of this extensive review, the Shape of the MATATAG Curriculum was developed. This framework served not only to document the rationale and process behind the curriculum review but also to lay out the direction for future curriculum development. More importantly, it provided the foundational structure for crafting and shaping papers specific to each learning area, which helped ensure alignment between policy, instructional design, and classroom delivery.

In exploring how master teachers perceived the MATATAG Curriculum, the research identified a recurring theme: they regarded the new curriculum as a crucial step toward enhancing instructional delivery. Their insights revealed an openness to the changes introduced and a belief in the curriculum's potential to improve the teaching-learning experience.

Participant A stated, *"As an MT, I perceive this curriculum as a valuable framework for enhancing instructional practices by promoting a more streamlined, relevant, and learner-centered approach, which helps improve teaching strategies and student engagement."* This sentiment reflected an appreciation for the curriculum's clarity and coherence, especially in making instruction more attuned to students' needs.

Participant B supported this perspective by saying, *"The MATATAG curriculum is something new to us, but I have observed that it helped us enhance the teaching and learning process."* Their statement acknowledged the initial uncertainty of adapting to a new curriculum but also emphasized the positive outcomes they had already witnessed. These improvements, according to them, were evident in both teaching approaches and learner responsiveness.

Similarly, Participants D, E, and F echoed these positive views. They emphasized that the MATATAG Curriculum was a progressive step toward achieving quality education in the country. According to these three participants, they viewed the new curriculum as another bold venture to explore new teaching strategies and approaches. Teachers' perception signified a collective readiness to embrace innovation in education and move beyond traditional methods.

The relevance of these teacher insights was supported by the study of Saro et al. (2024), which provided empirical backing to the observed benefits of the MATATAG Curriculum. The study revealed that the curriculum had the potential to significantly enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities—two skills deemed essential in today's learning environment. The research highlighted that the curriculum's focus on real-world tasks and interactive learning could foster an environment where students were more analytical, creative, and engaged.

Moreover, Saro et al. found that the MATATAG Curriculum aligned with modern educational trends that promote student-centered learning. Participants in their study anticipated a shift in teaching practices—away from teacher-led instruction and toward methods that empowered learners. They also emphasized the integration of technology and competency-based learning, which are proven strategies for raising academic performance and preparing students for future challenges.

Despite the optimism, participants in both the local study and the one conducted by Saro et al. voiced valid concerns about implementation. They pointed out that successful delivery of the curriculum would require strong institutional support, including comprehensive training programs and resource allocation. The lack of professional development opportunities and teaching materials, along with expected resistance to change, were seen as significant hurdles.

Ultimately, the teachers stressed that while the MATATAG Curriculum showed great promise, its success would hinge on continuous investment in teacher capacity and school infrastructure. They believed that with sustained support from educational leaders and a commitment to equipping schools with the right tools, the vision behind the MATATAG Curriculum could be fully realized. Their experiences underscored the need for a balanced approach—one that values innovation but also recognizes the challenges of educational reform.

Theme Two. Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process

In the process of introducing changes to the basic education curriculum, it has always been essential to consider the current context and educational landscape. Understanding what was happening on the ground allowed the Department of Education to accurately assess both the prevailing challenges and the anticipated shifts in education. This perspective helped them develop strategies that were not only responsive but also adaptive to the rapidly evolving needs of society, resulting in a curriculum such as MATATAG, which aimed to stay relevant and forward-looking.

Participant C pointed out that there had been noticeable gaps in how teaching and learning were being carried out, and the MATATAG Curriculum was seen as an effort to address these shortcomings. According to this participant, the curriculum aimed to respond to long-standing issues such as low literacy and numeracy rates, limited access to quality learning resources, and the struggle among students to master essential competencies. These concerns highlighted the need for a curriculum that would go beyond theory and directly confront the practical realities in Philippine classrooms.

Participants E and G echoed this concern, stressing the importance of addressing the needs of learners who were falling behind. They emphasized, *"MATATAG Curriculum can be best implemented if it can seek remediations for the low emerging learners, particularly in reading and numeracy."* Their statements reflected the hope that the new curriculum would be more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of struggling students, especially in foundational areas like reading and mathematics.

Building on this idea, Participant H expressed a deeper expectation for the curriculum's impact, saying, *"The new curriculum should serve as a tool to reduce the number of non-readers and non-numeracy in the country. We need the best workforce in the future, and so we fervently hope that the MATATAG curriculum will promote functional literacy in schools."* This statement underscored the long-term vision of equipping students not just with academic knowledge but with life-ready skills that would help shape a productive and competitive future workforce.

Meanwhile, Participant A offered a broader perspective on the recurring experience of curriculum reforms within the Department of Education. She shared, *"Every time DepEd implements a new curriculum, we are looking forward that this is an avenue to cure the illness in education, such as the availability of learning resources and the capability-building initiatives for teachers, so we will be fully equipped with the strategies for this new generation of learners."* Her view reflected the anticipation and cautious optimism shared by many educators, who saw each new curriculum as a potential solution to systemic problems, particularly the lack of sufficient teacher training and materials.

Further supporting these insights, the study conducted by Saro (2024) revealed that educators anticipated the MATATAG Curriculum to promote a stronger emphasis on competency-based education (CBE). Teachers believed that this approach would allow students to demonstrate mastery in key skill areas, rather than merely completing academic requirements. This shift aimed to make learning more meaningful and aligned with the demands of modern life and work.

Competency-based education, as supported by research from Kennedy et al. (2020) and Sullivan & Downey (2021), has been recognized for its ability to connect school learning with real-world applications. According to Kennedy et al. (2021), CBE frameworks not only strengthened student learning but also encouraged practical application and skill development, both of which are crucial for future academic and career success. In the Philippine context, Santos and Montalban (2022) also explored how adopting CBE could enhance educational outcomes and bridge the gap between academic instruction and industry expectations.

These studies and teacher testimonials collectively pointed toward a shared aspiration: that the MATATAG Curriculum would serve not just as an academic reform but as a transformative tool to prepare students for lifelong learning, employability, and meaningful participation in society. However, as these findings suggested, the true success of the curriculum would ultimately depend on how well it could be supported, implemented, and sustained across different school contexts.

2. What are the challenges faced by the selected EPP/TLE Master Teachers in CALABARZON when in the process of implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?

The K to 12 Program, while a significant curricular reform initiative, faced considerable challenges in its implementation, as evidenced by stagnant or declining academic performance scores on both national and international standardized assessments (Schleicher, 2020). This lack of improvement highlighted a critical need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment. The static nature of test scores underscored the limitations of the initial K to 12 framework and the necessity for a more dynamic and responsive approach to curriculum development.

Further complicating matters, a growing body of research on learning sciences and pedagogical best practices (Jorgenson, 2022) emphasized the crucial need for basic education institutions to adapt to evolving global trends and the diverse learning needs of students. This research highlighted the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach and emphasized the importance of personalized learning experiences tailored to individual student strengths and weaknesses. The gap between the evolving understanding of effective pedagogy and the existing K to 12 curricula became increasingly apparent.

This disparity between research-based best practices and the actual implementation of the K to 12 programs ultimately led to a re-evaluation and subsequent enhancement efforts. The recognition of these shortcomings prompted a comprehensive review of the curriculum, seeking to identify areas for improvement and to address the persistent challenges hindering the achievement of desired learning outcomes. This process involved a critical examination of existing pedagogical approaches, resource allocation, and teacher training programs.

The subsequent MATATAG curriculum, intended to address the shortcomings of its predecessor, also encountered significant hurdles during its implementation. Analysis of in-depth interviews with participants revealed three dominant themes that consistently emerged: inadequate provision of instructional materials, resistance to change among stakeholders, and insufficient preparedness of facilities and equipment. These recurring concerns highlighted systemic issues that hampered the effective rollout of the new curriculum.

The lack of sufficient instructional materials presented a significant obstacle to effective teaching and learning. Teachers reported difficulties in accessing necessary resources, leading to compromised lesson delivery and a diminished learning experience for students. This shortage of materials exacerbated existing

inequalities, disproportionately affecting students in under-resourced schools and communities. The consistent mention of this issue emphasized the critical need for improved resource allocation and distribution mechanisms.

Resistance to change, another recurring theme, manifested in various forms. This concept included resistance from teachers hesitant to adopt new pedagogical approaches, administrators resistant to implementing changes in school structures, and even parents who were skeptical of the new curriculum's effectiveness. Overcoming this inertia required targeted professional development, effective communication strategies, and a collaborative approach to foster buy-in from all stakeholders. Addressing this resistance was crucial for successful curriculum implementation.

The inadequacy of facilities and equipment further hindered the effective implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. Many schools lacked the necessary technology, learning spaces, and resources to support the new pedagogical approaches. This lack of infrastructure created significant barriers to effective teaching and learning, reinforcing existing inequalities and hindering the achievement of desired learning outcomes.

Table 2.2 Statements, Meanings, and Themes

- Participants B and F as they stated, <i>"We are quite apprehensive about the materials that we need to use in the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. The teachers are hopeful that there are readily available resources that we can use for the delivery of instruction under the new curriculum."</i> - Participants A and C asserted that they are willing to embrace the new curriculum, but they are worried about the learning resources that may be used during the instruction. They have doubts about the sufficiency of materials that they can employ to teach the subjects under the MATATAG Curriculum. - Participants G and H shared the same perspective as they mentioned, <i>"We can easily adjust to the new curriculum if there are support materials that we can utilize during its implementation. I hope that it won't be difficult for us to find the resources for the subjects that we need to teach."</i>	There is a profound need for instructional materials that can assist the teachers in the delivery of instruction.	Provision for Instructional Materials
- Participant A shared, <i>"There are teachers who believe that we can continue with the old curriculum and just enhance our teaching strategies. They seem to be apprehensive to embrace the new one, and that makes it more difficult."</i> - Participants B and E uttered, <i>"We are quite</i>	The teachers have apprehensions about the implementation of the new curriculum.	Resistance to Change

<i>hesitant since we are uncertain of its impact on the learners and on the teachers as well.</i>" Participant, I mentioned, <i>"It is challenging to convince our fellow teachers to embrace this MATATAG curriculum at first. Later, we all learned to accept it since it is already for implementation."</i>		
- Participants A and B have shared the same apprehensions on the preparedness of facilities and equipment, as they said, <i>"We need more computers and TLE equipment for the students. It would be difficult to carry on with the new curriculum if we lack that equipment."</i> - All the rest of the participants have expressed the same sentiment on the lack of functional facilities and equipment for TLE/EPP that affect their delivery of instruction.	The school facilities and equipment are foreseen to be unprepared for the new curriculum.	Preparedness of Facilities and Equipment.

Theme Three. Provision for Instructional Materials

Instructional materials have always played a vital role in making the teaching and learning processes more efficient and comfortable. These materials served as tangible content that helped learners grasp concepts more easily and stay connected with the subject matter. Because of these advantages, many educators made it a point to find systematic ways to cater to learners' differences, recognizing that not all students learned the same way.

Supporting this perspective, Onyedikachi (2022), as cited in the study of Oden, emphasized that teaching without instructional tools made it nearly impossible to reach intended learning goals and competencies. These tools served as bridges that helped students understand lessons more deeply and allowed them to learn not just from the teacher but also from their interactions with the material. Instructional tools made the learning environment more interactive and student-centered, encouraging better engagement and understanding.

With the recent launch of the MATATAG Curriculum, it was inevitable that educators faced new challenges in implementation. One of the most pressing concerns was the availability of appropriate and updated learning materials. Participants B and F openly shared this sentiment, stating, *"We are quite apprehensive about the materials that we need to use in the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. The teachers are hopeful that there are readily available resources that we can use for the delivery of instruction under the new curriculum."* Their words reflected the uncertainty and concern many teachers felt as they prepared to align their teaching with the demands of a new curriculum.

Similarly, Participants A and C expressed readiness to accept and adapt to the MATATAG Curriculum, but also voiced their concerns about the adequacy of instructional materials. They mentioned that while they were open to change, they had doubts about whether the necessary learning tools would be available. Their apprehension was rooted in past experiences where new initiatives were launched without the proper support needed for effective execution.

Participants G and H echoed this concern and added their hopes for a smoother transition. They remarked, *"We can easily adjust to the new curriculum if there are support materials that we can utilize during its implementation. I hope that it won't be difficult for us to find the resources for the subjects that we need to teach."* Their statements illustrated a shared belief that proper resources could make or break the success of any curriculum change. They recognized that their ability to effectively deliver lessons under the MATATAG Curriculum depended heavily on having access to relevant and quality teaching materials.

Across various educational settings, the issue of insufficient learning resources and lack of structural support has consistently been highlighted as a major obstacle in implementing curriculum reforms. Teachers not only needed teaching guides and modules, but also access to technology and institutional backing to effectively apply new methods. Research supported these observations. Guskey (2021) and Hargreaves & Fullan (2022) both pointed out that limited resources often hinder the success of educational reforms. Liao et al. (2022) further found that without proper institutional support, even well-designed curricula failed to achieve their intended outcomes.

Moreover, introducing new instructional approaches under the MATATAG Curriculum was expected to come with its own set of difficulties. These included the need for updated learning materials, sufficient teacher training, and addressing resistance to change among some educators. Fullan (2021) emphasized that these types of challenges were common in any curriculum transition. Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) and Kennedy (2022) stressed the importance of offering continuous professional development programs and structured support systems. They argued that only through sustained investment in teacher capacity could any curriculum reform, such as MATATAG, truly succeed.

In conclusion, while the MATATAG Curriculum brought hope for a more relevant and responsive education system, its implementation required not only the willingness of teachers but also the timely provision of materials and training. Teachers stood ready to adapt, but their success depended on the systems put in place to support them. As echoed by the participants and supported by literature, meaningful curriculum reform could only take root when educators were given the resources they needed to thrive.

Theme Four. Resistance to Change.

As the world continued to evolve, so did educational systems and curricula. Educational reforms were not a new phenomenon; they had been experienced across many countries and often came with varying levels of resistance. It was not surprising that such resistance came from teachers, principals, academic leaders, parents, and other stakeholders who were directly affected by these changes. In many cases, this opposition stemmed from the belief that some reforms were rushed, not thoroughly researched, or implemented without sufficient consultation and preparation (Mutch, 2023).

Resistance to curriculum change was viewed as a significant psychological response from teachers, who were the key implementers of any curriculum reform. This response had the power to influence the success or failure of these initiatives. According to Lomba (2022), resistance could be expressed in many ways through words, subtle gestures, or even passive behaviors. Some resistance remained hidden, only surfacing during crucial or stressful moments. Much of this hesitation was traced to a personal fear of innovation and uncertainty about the changes being introduced.

Within this study, participants shared their honest insights about how the MATATAG Curriculum was received in schools across Region IV-A. Participant A remarked, *"There are teachers who believe that we can continue with the old curriculum and just enhance our teaching strategies. They seem to be apprehensive to embrace the new one, and that makes it more difficult."* This statement reflected how some educators

preferred to stick with familiar routines rather than face the unknown elements of a new curriculum.

Participants B and E echoed similar sentiments. They stated, *"We are quite hesitant since we are uncertain of its impact on the learners and the teachers as well."* Their concern highlighted the underlying fear that the new curriculum might not be beneficial or, worse, might disrupt learning and teaching effectiveness. Their hesitation was rooted in the uncertainty surrounding how the MATATAG Curriculum would influence classroom practices and student outcomes.

Meanwhile, Participant I shared a more nuanced perspective: *"It is challenging to convince our fellow teachers to embrace this MATATAG curriculum at first. Later, we all learned to accept it since it is already for implementation."* This account reflected a journey from reluctance to eventual acceptance, showing how adaptation often took time and effort. Initially, teachers were skeptical, but once the implementation became inevitable, they started to align themselves with the change.

Resistance to curriculum changes and the challenge of adapting to new teaching strategies were not isolated to this context alone. Globally, teachers have often shown reluctance to embrace change due to comfort with their current practices, doubts about the benefits of new systems, and anxiety about unfamiliar methods (Fullan, 2022; Robinson, 2021). These concerns made them hesitant to leave their established routines, especially if the reforms lacked clear direction and support mechanisms.

In the Philippine setting, Ordoñez et al. (2021) identified similar challenges. Teachers frequently expressed concern about whether new curricula would truly benefit students and whether they, as educators, would receive sufficient support in the process. Fullan (2022) emphasized that successful curriculum reforms must directly address this resistance. Curriculum change could be achieved by ensuring that teachers were well-supported, trained, and guided through each stage of the transition.

Finally, the teachers' responses in this study demonstrated a realistic and grounded view of what it meant to navigate change in the educational landscape. While initial resistance was expected and even natural, it was clear that with time, support, and clear communication, educators could gradually adapt to new curricula like MATATAG. Their voices highlighted the importance of acknowledging resistance not as a barrier but as a signal that teachers needed reassurance, professional development, and collaborative involvement in the reform process.

Theme Five. Preparedness of Facilities and Equipment

Participants A and B had openly shared their concerns regarding the readiness of facilities and equipment in their school, particularly in relation to the implementation of the new curriculum. They both stressed the critical need for tools and resources necessary for effective instruction. As they pointed out, *"We need more computers and TLE equipment for the students. It would be difficult to carry on with the new curriculum if we lack that equipment."* Their sentiments reflected a shared anxiety about how the lack of technological and practical tools might hinder the students' hands-on learning experience.

Other participants echoed this concern. They conveyed the same frustration and worry over the scarcity of functional facilities and updated equipment for TLE/EPP, which significantly affected the quality of instruction. The absence of complete tools, machines, and materials often meant that teachers had to improvise or limit their lessons, affecting students' mastery of essential competencies. The collective concern highlighted a gap that needed urgent attention if the MATATAG curriculum was to be successfully implemented.

Just like any educational reform, the K to 12 Program also came with its set of challenges. Despite being in place for several years, national and international assessment outcomes continued to show minimal improvement in the academic performance of Filipino learners (Schleicher, 2021; UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2022). These findings raised concerns among educators, researchers, and policy-makers alike. It became increasingly evident that while the intent of the reform was progressive, its outcomes fell short of expectations.

Furthermore, the growing body of research on how children learn and develop urged basic education institutions to rethink their instructional practices. According to Jorgenson (2022), understanding students' needs, motivations, and cognitive processes was vital to reforming outdated methods. These realizations called for Philippine education to respond proactively to global trends and the evolving learning challenges of today's generation. These processes have eventually spurred the enhancement and re-evaluation of the K to 12 Curriculum to better match both local realities and global demands.

In response, the Department of Education collaborated with the Assessment, Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC) to carefully analyze the existing curriculum. Their goal was to determine whether the intended learning outcomes were still relevant, achievable, and aligned with learners' needs. This situation led to the creation of the Shape of the MATATAG Curriculum, a framework that articulated how the curriculum review was conducted. More importantly, it provided a clear direction for future educational reforms and helped in formulating and shaping papers tailored for each learning area.

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Ubane et al. (2023) at the University of Eastern Philippines shed light on the instructional challenges faced by college students in Home Economics, specifically within the food laboratory context. Using a descriptive-correlational approach, the study involved seventy (70) students taking up Meal Preparation and Selection, three (3) faculty members teaching the subject, and three (3) department heads as respondents. The findings indicated that students lacked access to advanced culinary tools and equipment, which limited their exposure to newer techniques and knowledge.

The same study revealed that financial constraints further limited the functionality of the food laboratory. As a result, while students performed laboratory tasks with dedication, they often encountered difficulties due to equipment shortages and insufficient resources. Still, they demonstrated a "moderate interest," possessed "very good" knowledge, and exhibited "good skill" in their subject area. Faculty members, despite these limitations, were regarded as "most competent," proving that teacher dedication remained a strong factor in student learning despite the infrastructural gaps.

This point mirrored the situation of many basic education teachers implementing the MATATAG curriculum, who showed great commitment in the face of resource limitations. Their professionalism and passion for teaching were never in doubt, but their ability to deliver the new curriculum effectively was, and continues to be, constrained by the availability of functional facilities, materials, and support systems.

3. What are the observable impacts of the MATATAG Curriculum on the instructional practices and pedagogy of the selected EPP/TLE Master Teachers in CALABARZON?

This study explored the observable impacts of the MATATAG curriculum on instructional practices, as reported by participating educators and students. The data collected revealed a rich tapestry of experiences, ultimately coalescing into two significant emergent themes: the fostering of a collaborative spirit among stakeholders and the cultivation of motivated and engaged learners. These themes, deeply intertwined, represent a powerful testament to the curriculum's effectiveness in transforming the learning environment.

The theme of "Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders" emerged prominently from the participants' accounts. Teachers described a marked increase in collaboration with colleagues, sharing best practices and resources to enhance the effectiveness of the MATATAG curriculum. This collaborative approach extended beyond the teaching staff, encompassing parents, administrators, and even community members, creating a supportive ecosystem for learning. The shared responsibility for student success fostered a sense of collective ownership and accountability.

Participants consistently highlighted the increased communication and mutual support among teachers as a key benefit of the MATATAG curriculum. Regular meetings, collaborative lesson planning sessions, and informal peer support networks became integral aspects of the school's culture. This collaborative environment not only improved teaching practices but also fostered a sense of professional camaraderie and mutual respect among educators. The shared challenges and successes strengthened bonds and created a more supportive work environment.

The second emergent theme, "Motivated and Engaged Learners," underscored the positive impact of the MATATAG curriculum on student learning. Participants described a noticeable shift in student attitudes and behaviors, with students demonstrating increased enthusiasm for learning and a greater sense of ownership over their academic progress. This theme heightened engagement manifested in increased participation in class discussions, improved completion of assignments, and a more positive overall learning experience.

The increased student engagement was directly linked to the curriculum's innovative and engaging approach to learning. Participants highlighted the use of interactive activities, hands-on projects, and real-world applications as key factors in motivating students. The curriculum's focus on student-centered learning fostered a sense of autonomy and empowerment, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey. This shift from passive to active learning created a more dynamic and rewarding educational experience.

The participants' shared experiences provided compelling evidence of the MATATAG curriculum's positive influence on both instructional practices and student outcomes. The emergence of the two dominant themes, Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders and Motivated and Engaged Learners, underscores the curriculum's success in creating a supportive and engaging learning environment that fosters both teacher collaboration and student success. The findings suggest that the MATATAG curriculum is a valuable tool for improving the quality of education.

Table 2.3 Statements, Meanings, and Themes

- Participant D stated, <i>"Collaboration among students has improved, fostering a supportive learning environment where they learn from each other's strengths."</i> - Participants A and G shared the same perspectives: <i>"The parents have been more involved in their children's studies. Well, maybe they wanted to assist them since it's a new curriculum."</i> - This notion has been affirmed by Participants B, C, and F as they	The engagement and unity of all the stakeholders can lead to a more productive and supportive school environment.	Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders
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expressed, <i>"Collaboration among teachers, learners, and parents has been so evident, especially during the parent-teacher conferences. Everyone was eager to extend assistance so the learners could cope with the MATATAG curriculum."</i>		
• Participant A uttered, <i>"I have observed that my learners were so active when we switched into the MATATAG curriculum. Maybe they enjoyed the activities that were designed for instruction."</i> • The same point of view has been shared by Participants C, E, and F as they expressed, <i>"It offered something new, so the learners were also thrilled to learn more in this curriculum. They wanted to explore it."</i> • Participant B mentioned, <i>"The students are curious about what the difference is between the old and the new curriculum, so they also participate well, and they wanted to dig deeper to discover more about the MATATAG approach."</i> • Participant H shared, <i>"The learners were determined to unveil what is new about this MATATAG curriculum, so they are interested."</i> • Participants I and J have expressed the same thoughts as they stated, <i>"The teachers and learners are both curious about this new curriculum, so we are all motivated to explore and just have fun while learning."</i>	• The MATATAG curriculum has intensified the motivation and engagement of learners.	• Motivated and Engaged Learners.

Theme Six. Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders

Participant D had observed a significant shift in student behaviour following the introduction of the MATATAG curriculum. They noted that learners had become more collaborative, finding value in working together and learning from each other's strengths. As Participant D stated, *"Collaboration among students has improved, fostering a supportive learning environment where they learn from each other's strengths."* This sense of teamwork among students created a more encouraging atmosphere in the classroom, where peer support played a key role in academic success.

Participants A and G echoed this positive change, but they focused more on the role of the parents. They observed that parents seemed more engaged and active in supporting their children's academic journey, especially because the MATATAG curriculum was something new for everyone. They shared, *"The parents*

have been more involved in their children's studies. Well, maybe they wanted to assist them since it's a new curriculum." This concern that increased parental involvement was seen as a hopeful sign of stronger home-school collaboration.

Their insights were further affirmed by Participants B, C, and F, who noticed an even broader sense of community collaboration surrounding the curriculum shift. They emphasized that the connection among teachers, students, and parents became more evident, particularly during parent-teacher conferences. As they collectively stated, *"Collaboration among teachers, learners, and parents has been so evident, especially during the parent-teacher conferences. Everyone was eager to extend assistance so the learners could cope with the MATATAG curriculum."* This kind of mutual support was seen as a vital element in helping students navigate the new expectations and academic demands.

Supporting these experiences, Strnadová et al. (2022) explored similar patterns in their study, although they did not explicitly outline the main features of effective collaborative engagement. Their findings revealed that open communication and emotional support during times of educational transition had a meaningful impact on students' academic well-being. Teachers in their study admitted, however, that collaboration was not without challenges; "a lack of time and poor communication" were often cited as major barriers between primary and secondary school educators during curriculum changes.

One of the study's most notable insights was the importance of empowering both students and parents during transitional periods. When learners were encouraged to take initiative and parents were actively engaged in the process, students felt more supported and confident. This idea reinforced the idea that a shared effort among all stakeholders—teachers, parents, and students was not just helpful but necessary for a smooth and effective curriculum transition, especially in times of systemic educational reform like the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum.

Theme Seven. Motivated and Engaged Learners

Participant A shared a noticeable change in student behavior upon the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum. They recalled that students became significantly more engaged during class sessions, showing signs of enthusiasm and enjoyment toward the newly introduced activities. As Participant A uttered, *"I have observed that my learners were so active when we switched into the MATATAG curriculum. Maybe they enjoyed the activities that were designed for instruction."* This statement reflected how the structure and content of the new curriculum sparked excitement among learners and made classroom engagement more vibrant.

Participants C, E, and F echoed similar insights. They observed that the novelty of the MATATAG Curriculum played a crucial role in boosting student interest. As they expressed, *"It offered something new, so the learners were also thrilled to learn more in this curriculum. They wanted to explore it."* The idea of encountering unfamiliar topics and innovative tasks stirred the students' motivation to participate more actively in class.

Participant B also pointed out the curiosity that the learners demonstrated during the transition period. The students began to compare the old curriculum with the new one, eager to discover the differences and understand the benefits of the MATATAG approach. As Participant B mentioned, *"The students are curious about what the difference is between the old and the new curriculum, so they also participate well, and they wanted to dig deeper to discover more about the MATATAG approach."* This curiosity, in turn, encouraged deeper engagement and better classroom dynamics.

Meanwhile, Participant H also noticed that students showed a genuine interest in exploring what the new curriculum had to offer. The sense of mystery and excitement surrounding the MATATAG Curriculum fueled their motivation. As Participant H shared, *"The learners were determined to unveil what is new about this MATATAG curriculum, so they are interested."* This sense of determination suggested that the curriculum was successful in sparking a learner-centered and inquiry-driven classroom environment.

Participants I and J provided a broader perspective by pointing out that both teachers and learners felt the same enthusiasm. Their reflections highlighted how the shared curiosity and collaborative exploration between educators and students created a more joyful and inspiring learning environment. They stated, *"The teachers and learners are both curious about this new curriculum, so we are all motivated to explore and just have fun while learning."* Such a shared sense of purpose and engagement helped strengthen the teaching and learning relationship within the classroom.

These observations align with international studies that examined the impact of curriculum reforms in various countries. In Singapore, for instance, students showed heightened engagement and critical thinking skills following reforms that emphasized holistic learning (Tan & Deneen, 2021). The results revealed that well-designed and purposeful curriculum changes could promote stronger learning outcomes. On the other hand, South Africa's experience demonstrated that curriculum changes alone do not guarantee success. Despite efforts to make the system more equitable, barriers such as limited resources and insufficient teacher training hindered the intended outcomes (Tannin et al., 2020).

Similarly, Finland's adoption of a student-centered, interdisciplinary curriculum showed positive results in terms of learner motivation and participation (Niemi, 2021). However, their success was largely attributed to strong teacher support systems and professional development programs. In contrast, the United States showed mixed results from the Common Core implementation, where some states improved in academic performance while others did not, depending on factors such as readiness, training, and localized implementation strategies (Porter et al., 2023). These global findings make it clear that curriculum success is heavily dependent on contextual factors, including support systems and resources.

Locally, the MATATAG Curriculum is beginning to show varied effects across different regions of the Philippines. According to Garcia and Santos (2023), schools in urban areas reported noticeable improvements in student engagement and performance. Meanwhile, schools in rural communities continued to experience challenges due to limited access to teaching materials and facilities. This gap underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions that ensure equal learning opportunities for all.

A study by Luz and Gregorio (2024) further reinforced this view, emphasizing the importance of addressing regional needs and providing sufficient support to both teachers and students. Their findings showed that schools with trained teachers and adequate resources demonstrated stronger student performance under the MATATAG Curriculum. This notion highlights the critical importance of investing in contextualized teacher training and classroom support, especially in underserved areas.

The Philippine education system stands at a turning point with the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. While early signs from both teachers and learners suggest increased engagement and enthusiasm, the overall success of this reform will depend on consistent and comprehensive implementation. Lessons from both global and local contexts reveal that meaningful change comes not only from what is taught but also from how it is supported. Teachers, learners, and even parents must be equipped and empowered to ensure the new curriculum becomes more than just a policy, but a pathway toward holistic and equitable learning for every Filipino student.

4. Based on the results of the study, what strategies and adaptations do EPP/TLE master teachers in DepEd CALABARZON employ to address the challenges posed by the MATATAG curriculum and enhance their instructional practices and pedagogy?

Analysis of significant participant statements revealed two overarching themes characterizing the master teachers' strategies and adaptations: Enhanced Instructional Strategies through Reflective Teaching, and Flexibility and Adaptability to Change. The first theme, Enhanced Instructional Strategies through Reflective Teaching, encompassed a range of practices centered on continuous self-assessment and improvement. Master teachers consistently demonstrated a commitment to critically examining their teaching methods, seeking feedback from students and colleagues, and iteratively refining their approaches based on these insights. This iterative process of reflection and refinement was a cornerstone of their success.

The second major theme, Flexibility and Adaptability to Change, highlighted the master teachers' capacity to navigate unexpected challenges and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Participants frequently described instances where they had to adapt their lesson plans or teaching methods in response to unforeseen circumstances, such as student needs or technological limitations. This adaptability extended beyond immediate classroom challenges; master teachers also demonstrated a willingness to embrace new technologies and pedagogical approaches to enhance student learning. Their capacity to adjust and innovate was crucial in ensuring consistent student engagement and success.

Further examination of the data within the "Enhanced Instructional Strategies through Reflective Teaching" theme revealed several key sub-themes. These included the strategic use of formative assessment to gauge student understanding and adjust instruction in real-time, the implementation of differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learning styles and needs, and the intentional fostering of a collaborative and supportive classroom environment. The master teachers' commitment to these practices underscored their dedication to providing high-quality, individualized instruction.

The "Flexibility and Adaptability to Change" theme also encompassed several important sub-themes. These included the ability to effectively integrate technology into instruction, the capacity to adapt to unexpected disruptions or challenges within the learning environment, and the willingness to embrace new pedagogical approaches and continuously update their teaching practices. The master teachers' proficiency in these areas demonstrated their resilience and commitment to providing a dynamic and enriching learning experience for their students.

Table 2.4 Statements, Meanings, and Themes

- Participants A and C have claimed that they adapted reflective teaching with the commencement of the MATATAG curriculum. They shared, <i>"There are problems in education that we cannot resolve right away. Being creative is important. Reflective teaching can also help us reduce those challenges, for we can be part of the solution."</i> - Participant B mentioned, <i>"There are teachers who keep on complaining, but</i>	The MATATAG curriculum has reinforced innovation and reflectional strategies among teachers.	Innovative and Reflective Instructional Strategies
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<i>the truth is, we also need to reflect on what we have done to help the Department of Education? Innovative spirit is highly recommended.”</i> • Participant I expressed, <i>“First thing to do to resolve the gaps in education is to innovate and be more creative. Let us also reflect. It begins with us. Then help each other to at least lighten the problem. Find ways to improve our teaching strategies and speak up when assistance is needed.”</i> • Another point of view was shared by Participant H, <i>“I remember my professor way back in my college years, he always told us to ponder on the teaching styles that we employ among our learners. With this MATATAG curriculum, I take time to reflect whenever my approach doesn't work with my students.”</i>		
• Participant B shared, <i>“It is challenging for us, teachers, to begin with a new curriculum, but reality check, it needs enhancement or revision to keep it relevant to our learners. We need to embrace it and adapt to it.”</i> • Participant D mentioned, <i>“Some are resistant. They insist that we can stay on the same curriculum. Maybe because they fear the scarcity of materials for this MATATAG curriculum. However, we need to adapt to these changing times. We can be resourceful and let us have a positive outlook so we can adapt to changes in the teaching and learning process.”</i> • Participant I have the same notion on flexibility and adaptability as he uttered, <i>“It would be easier for us to implement the MATATAG curriculum if we first accept it and be open-minded to the changes that it might entail.”</i> • The same perspectives were shared by Participants C, E, and G as they affirmed that teachers need to be flexible to	• The teachers have adjusted themselves to the changes brought by the MATATAG curriculum.	• Flexibility and Adaptability to Change.

change and be adaptable to the changing era of education.		
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Theme Eight. Innovative and Reflective Instructional Strategies

Participants A and C both shared that they had adopted reflective teaching practices with the introduction of the MATATAG curriculum. They remarked, *"There are problems in education that we cannot resolve right away. Being creative is important. Reflective teaching can also help us reduce those challenges, for we can be part of the solution."* Their reflections revealed a growing awareness that while not all educational issues could be resolved immediately, practicing mindfulness in teaching and being adaptive were essential first steps. These participants believed that through conscious reflection, teachers could contribute meaningfully to solving persistent issues in the classroom by adjusting strategies based on observed needs.

Participant B offered a critical yet constructive observation about the attitude of some educators toward systemic challenges. He said, *"There are teachers who keep on complaining, but the truth is, we also need to reflect on what we have done to help the Department of Education? Innovative spirit is highly recommended."* His statement emphasized the importance of self-accountability among teachers. Rather than focusing on what's lacking, he highlighted the need for educators to take the initiative, innovate where possible, and be part of the educational transformation the MATATAG curriculum aimed to bring.

Echoing this mindset, Participant I also underscored the power of reflection and innovation in addressing educational gaps. She explained, *"First thing to do to resolve the gaps in education is to innovate and be more creative. Let us also reflect. It begins with us. Then help each other to at least lighten the problem. Find ways to improve our teaching strategies and speak up when assistance is needed."* Her view showed a deep understanding that solutions begin with the individual teacher's effort to adapt and work collaboratively with colleagues. She believed that reflective practice, coupled with proactive communication, could significantly improve teaching approaches and foster a supportive school environment.

Participant H, meanwhile, shared a more personal and nostalgic reflection. He recalled, *"I remember my professor way back in my college years, he always told us to ponder on the teaching styles that we employ among our learners. With this MATATAG curriculum, I take time to reflect whenever my approach doesn't work with my students."* His statement revealed a long-standing appreciation for thoughtful teaching, which he now actively applied in the context of the curriculum shift. This participant's habit of evaluating instructional effectiveness became even more essential with the evolving educational landscape brought by MATATAG.

These teachers' experiences reflected the broader goals of the MATATAG Curriculum, which was designed to inspire more innovative, reflective, and learner-centered teaching. The curriculum encouraged active learning, inquiry, and project-based instruction strategies that are widely regarded as effective in improving engagement and outcomes (Schweisfurth, 2022). These pedagogical shifts aligned with global education reforms focused on creating dynamic classrooms where students become critical thinkers and problem-solvers (Becker & Park, 2019; Finkelstein et al., 2021).

Moreover, research supported the idea that teachers who engaged in reflective practices were better positioned to implement curriculum reforms effectively. Hattie (2018) and Prince (2020) noted that when educators analyzed their teaching critically and explored new approaches, they fostered deeper student learning. Activities such as collaborative tasks, contextualized problem-solving, and interactive lessons were all part of this innovative framework that the MATATAG Curriculum promoted.

Saro (2024) also observed that the MATATAG Curriculum had the potential to significantly

influence how teachers managed their classrooms and conducted instruction. Though there were anticipated hurdles, such as limited resources and the need for comprehensive training, teachers who embraced reflective practice were more equipped to overcome them. Ultimately, the integration of reflective and innovative teaching strategies served not just to align with curriculum demands but also to uplift the quality of education for learners across various contexts.

Theme Nine. Flexibility and Adaptability to Change.

Participant B reflected on the reality of transitioning to a new curriculum and acknowledged the challenges it brought for teachers. She admitted, *"It is challenging for us, teachers, to begin with a new curriculum, but reality check, it needs enhancement or revision to keep it relevant to our learners. We need to embrace it and adapt to it."* Her insight underscored a mature acceptance of educational change. While recognizing the initial difficulty, she emphasized that embracing and adapting to curriculum reforms was necessary to ensure that instruction remained meaningful and relevant to today's learners.

In a similar vein, Participant D pointed out that not all educators had readily accepted the shift to the MATATAG Curriculum. He shared, *"Some are resistant. They insist that we can stay on the same curriculum. Maybe because they fear the scarcity of materials for this MATATAG curriculum. However, we need to adapt to these changing times. We can be resourceful, and let us have a positive outlook so we can adapt to changes in the teaching and learning process."* Her statement captured both the hesitation of some educators and the need for a mindset shift. She acknowledged fears around a lack of resources but encouraged a positive and proactive approach, emphasizing the importance of being resourceful and open to change in the ever-evolving educational landscape.

Participant I expressed a similar understanding of the value of adaptability and open-mindedness when facing change. He asserted, *"It would be easier for us to implement the MATATAG curriculum if we first accept it and be open-minded to the changes that it might entail."* His perspective emphasized that internal acceptance of change was the first step toward a smoother implementation. By choosing to be open and flexible, teachers could lessen the burden of transition and approach curriculum changes with more confidence and cooperation.

Participants C, E also echoed this emphasis on flexibility and adaptability and G. They collectively affirmed that teachers needed to be receptive to the evolving demands of education. In a rapidly changing academic environment shaped by societal shifts and global influences, their consensus highlighted the need for continuous professional growth. Being adaptable was not merely a preference but a requirement for educators striving to remain relevant and effective in their roles.

The perspectives of these participants reflected broader trends observed in recent studies on curriculum reform in the Philippines. According to Mendoza and Abad (2022), Filipino teachers held mixed views about the new curriculum. While many appreciated its focus on critical thinking and student-centered approaches, others felt burdened by the added responsibilities and limited training support. This duality revealed the complexity of implementing reforms, highlighting that support systems were just as essential as the curriculum content itself.

Teachers reported that the MATATAG Curriculum required them to adopt new strategies and integrate diverse competencies into their lessons, which aligned with global educational trends. However, for educators used to traditional approaches, this was a considerable adjustment. Mendoza and Abad (2022) emphasized the importance of robust professional development to equip teachers with the tools and confidence needed to thrive under the new system.

Comparative studies from other countries revealed similar experiences. In Singapore, for example, teachers also initially struggled with increased demands but eventually adapted, thanks to consistent training and institutional support (Tan & Deneen, 2021). These findings suggest that Filipino teachers, too, could adjust effectively if provided with sustained professional development, peer mentoring, and access to instructional resources.

Moreover, a recent study by Garcia and Santos (2023) revealed a noticeable divide in teacher perceptions between urban and rural schools in the Philippines. Urban teachers generally viewed the curriculum changes more positively due to better access to training and resources. In contrast, rural educators faced more significant hurdles. These findings underscore the urgent need to address equity in resource distribution and professional support to ensure the successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum across diverse school contexts.

3.1. Reflection

After carefully analyzing the participants' meaningful responses and identifying emerging themes from the grouped data, the researcher entered a thoughtful phase of reflection. This period allowed for a deeper engagement with the findings, beyond simply categorizing them. It was during this time that several important insights surfaced, prompting the researcher to rethink some of the theoretical foundations that initially guided the study. The data revealed layers of complexity that were not immediately visible at the outset.

As the researcher moved through the continuous process of analyzing and interpreting the data, a clearer and more refined understanding of the core research questions began to unfold. Each round of analysis brought new perspectives, gradually shaping a more comprehensive view of the study's subject. What once seemed straightforward became more intricate, demanding greater sensitivity and critical thought.

This reflective process involved carefully weighing both the findings that met expectations and those that came as surprises. The researcher revisited the original goals of the study, looking closely at how the themes that emerged either supported or diverged from the anticipated outcomes. This comparison allowed the researcher to see the participants' experiences in a more holistic light, acknowledging the depth, variety, and sometimes unpredictability of their insights.

Through this critical evaluation, the researcher gained a deeper appreciation for the richness of the data. The voices of the participants revealed complex realities that could not be fully understood through surface-level analysis alone. These realizations had a direct impact on how the researcher framed the conclusions and crafted the recommendations that followed, ensuring that they were grounded in the lived experiences of those who participated.

Additionally, the researcher took time to reflect on the study's limitations, recognizing areas where the research could have gone further or where certain constraints affected the scope of the findings. These considerations opened new avenues for future exploration and highlighted the importance of continued inquiry into the topic. This reflection not only strengthened the current study but also laid the groundwork for further research to build upon its findings.

Theme One. Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction

The MATATAG Curriculum has served as a strong foundation for creating more meaningful and transformative learning opportunities for our students. It was designed not just to update lesson content but to

breathe new life into teaching strategies, making learning more engaging, relevant, and aligned with the needs of 21st-century learners. Its introduction marked a clear shift from the traditional, content-heavy approach toward a more learner-centered and contextualized framework. This transition called for a rethinking of deeply ingrained teaching philosophies and practices, which understandably took time and effort to internalize.

The journey toward full implementation was not without its challenges. Teachers, many of whom had spent years mastering conventional methods, were suddenly asked to navigate new teaching approaches, instructional designs, and assessment techniques. Understandably, there was initial resistance and hesitation, especially with the pressure to adapt quickly. It wasn't just about learning new content; it was about transforming mindsets. The shift demanded professional recalibration and a great deal of courage from educators who had to reimagine the way they facilitated learning.

Despite these hurdles, the faculty responded with professionalism and resilience. Through sustained professional development sessions, peer mentoring, and school-based learning action cells (SLACs), teachers gradually developed the confidence and competence needed to embrace the new curriculum. Collaborative efforts became the backbone of this transition. Educators worked together, shared best practices, and supported one another in navigating unfamiliar territory. Over time, what initially felt daunting slowly became manageable and even inspiring, as they witnessed positive shifts in student engagement.

The curriculum's effect on student learning was carefully monitored and thoughtfully evaluated. Regular assessments—both formative and summative—were conducted to track students' academic growth and gauge the success of newly adopted strategies. Feedback mechanisms, including teacher reflections, student observations, and parental input, played a vital role in informing curriculum enhancements. These sources of data provided a clearer picture of what was working, what needed adjusting, and how to move forward with greater confidence.

Importantly, the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum was never seen as a one-time rollout. Instead, it became a dynamic and responsive process. When challenges were identified, such as gaps in content understanding or inconsistencies in classroom delivery, these were addressed through targeted actions. Teachers received more focused training, instructional materials were revised, and technology was integrated more intentionally into lessons. These changes were not made for the sake of change, but as direct responses to feedback and evidence gathered throughout the process.

Ultimately, the shift to the MATATAG Curriculum signaled a forward-thinking investment in the future of education. By choosing to embrace innovation over comfort and growth over routine, the school community moved toward a culture of continuous improvement. Teachers and students alike became more engaged, flexible, and attuned to the demands of a rapidly evolving world. The experience highlighted the importance of ongoing curriculum review and reminded us that education must remain adaptable if it is to truly serve its purpose. Through the lens of this journey, it became clear that meaningful reform is not just about changing content, but about transforming people, educators who are empowered to grow, and learners who are equipped to thrive.

Theme Two. Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process

The Department of Education had taken a bold and sustained step toward educational excellence by launching a long-term vision of developing a globally competitive workforce. This vision was not merely aspirational—deliberate and transformative actions backed it. One of the most significant efforts under this commitment was the development and implementation of a new curriculum. This major undertaking emerged

from a clear realization: long-standing issues in the country's education system had to be addressed if meaningful progress was to be made.

The new curriculum was crafted as a direct response to the growing concern over student underperformance. Educators and policymakers alike saw the need to better prepare learners for the demands of a rapidly changing global environment. In doing so, they sought to equip students not just with academic content but with the practical skills, critical thinking abilities, and adaptability needed in a modern world. This impression meant re-evaluating and updating the existing learning standards, teaching strategies, and assessment tools to create a more relevant and enriching learning experience for all.

Education leaders understood that the root of the problem extended far beyond the curriculum itself. They acknowledged that academic struggles among students were symptoms of deeper, interconnected issues. As a result, they approached the reform process from a broader perspective—one that included enhancing teacher training programs, ensuring proper resource allocation, and improving school infrastructure. This systems-based mindset highlighted a dedication to sustainable, long-term improvement rather than relying on temporary or fragmented fixes.

The development and rollout of the new curriculum were not done in isolation. The Department of Education prioritized collaboration and inclusivity by engaging various stakeholders in the process. Teachers contributed their classroom expertise, school administrators shared operational insights, and parents and students offered their unique perspectives. These dialogues helped shape a curriculum that was not only grounded in sound educational theory but also responsive to the lived experiences of learners. By involving the community, the Department aimed to create a strong sense of shared responsibility and collective ownership over the direction of educational reform.

This comprehensive initiative signified more than just a policy change; it was an investment in the nation's future. By placing students at the center of reform and recognizing the need for ongoing development, the Department of Education showed a clear commitment to raising the quality of education. The process served as a reminder that curriculum reform is not a one-time event, but a continuous cycle that must evolve with society's demands. Its long-term success depends on sustained evaluation, consistent feedback, and the willingness to adapt based on what learners truly need to succeed in a globalized world.

Theme Three. Provision for Instructional Materials

The implementation of the MATATAG curriculum had been significantly hindered by a persistent and deeply rooted lack of adequate resources. This ongoing shortage posed a serious challenge for teachers, who were expected to deliver a revitalized and effective curriculum without the foundational tools and support needed to do so. It became increasingly clear that the success of any curriculum reform, no matter how well-designed, was closely tied to the availability of essential teaching and learning materials. Without these supports in place, the full promise of the MATATAG curriculum remained largely unrealized, limiting its capacity to truly transform student learning outcomes.

In the classrooms, the resource gap created a daily struggle for educators. Teachers were forced to operate in environments where updated textbooks were scarce, instructional materials were outdated or lacking, and access to digital tools was minimal or non-existent. These shortages affected not only how lessons were delivered but also how students engaged with the content. As a result, teachers had to work under immense pressure, often going above and beyond to bridge the gap between the curriculum's demands and the reality of what was available to them.

Despite these difficult circumstances, teachers showed extraordinary determination and creativity. Many took it upon themselves to develop contextualized and improvised learning materials tailored to the unique needs of their students. They reworked lesson plans, created visual aids from scratch, and even used personal funds to acquire basic classroom supplies. These efforts reflected their unwavering commitment to providing quality education and ensuring that no student was left behind, regardless of the limitations imposed by the system.

However, no amount of teacher dedication could fully make up for the lack of systemic support. The time and energy teachers spent creating materials and finding workarounds came at a cost. It reduced the time they could devote to other important responsibilities, such as designing more engaging lessons, conducting in-depth assessments, and offering individualized student support. Over time, this added burden began to wear down teacher morale and well-being, revealing the toll that inadequate resourcing had taken on the very individuals tasked with implementing educational reforms.

The issue of resource scarcity was not new—it had persisted for years despite repeated appeals from the education sector. Teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders had long called for more equitable and sufficient resource allocation, but these calls often went unanswered. This ongoing neglect highlighted a troubling disconnect between the goals of educational reforms and the lived experiences of those working on the front lines. It became increasingly apparent that without proper investment, even the most promising curriculum would struggle to take root.

Ultimately, the MATATAG curriculum's ability to deliver on its intended outcomes was severely limited by the absence of necessary support structures. While the design of the curriculum held promise, its implementation was consistently undermined by the lack of materials, tools, and infrastructure. This failure to address fundamental resource needs prevented the curriculum from fostering the high-quality, learner-centered education it had envisioned.

The situation called for urgent action from educational leaders. While the resilience and resourcefulness of teachers were commendable, these efforts were never meant to replace systemic support. Lasting improvement required more than improvisation—it demanded structural investment. Addressing the long-standing gaps in resource provision was critical not just for the success of the MATATAG curriculum but for ensuring a more equitable and empowering educational experience for both teachers and learners.

The implementation of the MATATAG curriculum had been deeply affected by a chronic and unresolved shortage of educational resources. Teachers rose to the occasion with remarkable grit and creativity, yet their efforts alone could not overcome the challenges caused by insufficient support. This experience underscored the urgent need for educational decision-makers to prioritize resource allocation in future reforms, recognizing that meaningful change cannot occur without investing in the tools and environments that enable teachers to teach and students to learn effectively.

Theme Four. Resistance to Change

Change had always been inevitable, especially in the field of education. The ongoing pursuit to improve the quality of learning required continuous adaptation and evolution, a journey that was often met with obstacles but proved to be ultimately fulfilling. Previous attempts at educational reform may have faced resistance, but they also served as clear reminders of the enduring need for progress. It became increasingly evident that clinging to outdated systems would only hinder the growth and future potential of the country's learners.

The former curriculum, though once suitable for its time, had gradually lost its effectiveness in addressing the complexities of the modern world. As the pace of technological and societal advancement quickened, the disconnect between what was taught in classrooms and what was expected in real-world scenarios became more pronounced. Teaching strategies remained largely traditional, leaving students underprepared for the demands of a globalized workforce. Recognizing this gap sparked the urgency for a comprehensive overhaul, one that required not only strategic planning but also boldness and vision.

Transitioning to a new curriculum was far from smooth. Understandably, many educators who had spent years mastering conventional methods were hesitant to abandon what was familiar. Some schools, particularly those in underserved areas, lacked the resources to fully embrace the changes. Questions arose about whether such reforms could truly work across diverse learning environments. And yet, rather than impeding progress, these challenges encouraged innovation and collaboration. Teachers, school leaders, and policymakers began working together, developing a shared sense of responsibility to make the shift possible.

A key step in this transformation involved empowering educators. Comprehensive teacher training programs were rolled out to equip them with updated skills and pedagogical approaches. These trainings emphasized active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving, moving away from passive instruction and rote memorization. Teachers were encouraged to become facilitators of learning, creating classrooms where students could explore, question, and apply knowledge in meaningful ways. This idea marked a significant shift in teaching culture and classroom dynamics.

Technology also became an essential component of the curriculum reform. Digital tools, online platforms, and interactive resources were introduced to enhance both teaching and learning. However, the challenge extended beyond simply providing devices. Teachers needed proper training to use these tools effectively, and schools required reliable infrastructure to support their integration. This dual focus on access and capacity-building demanded substantial investments—not just financially, but also in time, effort, and coordination.

Monitoring and evaluating the curriculum's success became a continuous priority. A system of regular assessments, feedback collection, and data analysis was put in place to gauge student learning and refine the curriculum accordingly. This process helped ensure that the reforms remained flexible and responsive to shifting societal needs. By actively listening to both students and teachers, education leaders were able to make timely adjustments, keeping the curriculum relevant and effective.

During this period of transition, students' experiences varied widely. Some learners thrived in the new, more dynamic environment, embracing project-based learning and collaborative activities. Others, however, found the changes disorienting or overwhelming, especially those who had grown accustomed to the old system. These variations highlighted the importance of differentiated instruction and targeted support. By recognizing students' individual learning needs and backgrounds, teachers were better able to guide all learners toward success. Student feedback, in particular, became an invaluable resource in shaping ongoing curriculum improvements.

In the end, the shift to a new curriculum marked a major milestone in the Philippines' journey toward educational excellence. It was a step forward that involved more than just updated content; it demanded unity, resilience, and a commitment to long-term growth. Although the process had its share of difficulties, the collaborative spirit among stakeholders, teachers, administrators, parents, and students created a strong foundation for lasting change. The result was an education system that began to feel more responsive, inclusive, and forward-thinking.

The legacy of this reform effort was a more dynamic educational landscape, one better equipped to prepare young Filipinos for the challenges and opportunities of the future. It reminded all involved that meaningful change requires more than policy shifts; it takes courage, cooperation, and a shared belief in the power of education to transform lives.

Theme Five. Preparedness of Facilities and Equipment.

Over the years, persistent challenges have continued to plague the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) programs across many public schools. A major and recurring issue stemmed from the chronic shortage of essential tools and equipment, especially in specialized areas like cookery, bread, and pastry production. This lack of resources consistently hindered the delivery of hands-on, high-quality instruction, preventing students from fully acquiring the practical skills necessary for success in these vocational fields. No matter how strong the curriculum or how dedicated the teachers, the absence of basic equipment undermined the very foundation of skill-based learning.

The scarcity of proper facilities and infrastructure also severely limited the capacity of educators to deliver meaningful instruction. Learning in TLE subjects was supposed to be experiential, yet many schools lacked the environment to support that kind of teaching. In many cases, outdated or broken tools were never replaced, and makeshift solutions became the norm. Effective management of school facilities, which should have included the procurement, upkeep, and upgrading of equipment, had long been insufficient, further widening the gap between what was expected and what was possible in actual classrooms.

The importance of infrastructure extended far beyond physical resources; it influenced the entire learning experience. When schools were well-equipped, even students with average academic abilities were able to thrive through hands-on learning. Functional workstations, updated tools, and access to technology helped level the playing field and gave all students a chance to succeed. In contrast, when infrastructure was lacking, even the most motivated learners struggled to fully engage. The availability of proper facilities has consistently shown its power to transform student performance and enthusiasm in TLE classes.

Teachers, too, felt the positive impact when given access to the right tools and spaces. Well-equipped laboratories and workshops allowed them to design richer, more interactive, and more relevant learning experiences. With modern resources at their fingertips, they could incorporate innovative teaching strategies tailored to their students' diverse needs. Unfortunately, many educators had to teach without these supports. Still, their creativity and resilience were commendable; they adapted by finding alternative methods, often using their own money or improvising with substandard materials. But these workarounds came at a cost.

The added burden on teachers was significant. Many had to invest extra time and effort to create simulations of practical activities that should have been hands-on. This additional workload not only drained their energy but also took time away from planning, assessing, and supporting their students. Over time, it impacted morale and contributed to burnout. The root of this struggle traces back to one core issue: the consistent failure to provide adequate infrastructure and support systems within schools.

Historically, the responsibility for managing facilities and resources fell squarely on the shoulders of the school administration. Beyond merely acquiring equipment, schools were expected to ensure their maintenance, repair, and replacement. However, many institutions struggled to fulfil this responsibility. The lack of funding, poor oversight, and absence of clear systems led to a cycle of underperformance and neglect, one that deeply affected the quality of TLE programs.

The consequences of this neglect went beyond the classroom. Graduates from poorly equipped TLE programs often lacked the real-world skills that employers expected. As a result, many faced difficulties securing employment or establishing small enterprises after graduation. Without proper training and exposure to industry-standard tools, these students were placed at a disadvantage in an already competitive job market. This outcome not only limited their personal growth but also hampered their potential contributions to the national economy.

Addressing these long-standing challenges required a comprehensive and strategic approach. First and foremost, increased investment in TLE programs was necessary. Schools needed funding not just for curriculum development, but specifically for acquiring, maintaining, and upgrading tools, equipment, and infrastructure. Equally important was ensuring the equitable distribution of these resources, so that even schools in remote or low-income areas could provide students with the same opportunities as those in more privileged settings.

Alongside increased funding, effective infrastructure management systems had to be put in place. It was not enough to provide resources; there had to be accountability in how those resources were used. This concept included regular maintenance schedules, efficient procurement processes, and clear policies to prevent misuse or neglect. With better systems, schools could maximize the lifespan and utility of their tools, ensuring consistent support for teaching and learning.

Finally, the professional development of teachers remained critical. Even the best tools were ineffective without teachers who knew how to use them. Ongoing training in emerging technologies, equipment handling, and innovative pedagogy was essential for maintaining instructional quality. Teachers needed not only technical know-how but also confidence in applying these skills in the classroom.

In sum, the historical under-resourcing of TLE programs had a profound and far-reaching impact on students, teachers, schools, and even the broader economy. It created a cycle where limited resources led to compromised instruction, which in turn resulted in poorly prepared graduates. Breaking this cycle required a serious, system-wide commitment to reform—one that prioritized infrastructure, empowered teachers, and ultimately gave every learner the tools they needed to succeed in life and work.

Theme Six. Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders

A strong and sustained partnership with stakeholders has proven to be essential in ensuring the smooth and effective operation of the school. These stakeholders, which included parents, community members, local government units, and other partners, played a significant role in supporting various school initiatives. However, despite good intentions, numerous challenges surfaced that hindered meaningful collaboration. These barriers were deeply embedded in different facets of school life, including rigid institutional procedures, physical limitations within the learning environment, and unequal resource allocation. At times, the inflexibility of school systems made it difficult to accommodate diverse voices, leading to friction in collaborative efforts.

One of the most pressing concerns was the evident limitation in two-way communication. The channels for feedback were often underdeveloped or inconsistent, leaving little room for stakeholders to express concerns, contribute ideas, or feel genuinely involved in school affairs. This gap created a disconnect between the school's plans and the actual needs or insights of its partners. Without structured and open dialogue, it became increasingly difficult to translate stakeholder input into tangible improvements, and collaborative strategies remained underutilized or ineffective.

In response to these challenges, the school administration made deliberate efforts to bridge the communication divide. They recognized the value of listening to stakeholders and took concrete steps to improve the flow of information. Various initiatives were introduced, such as more inclusive parent-teacher conferences, community consultations, and the integration of stakeholder suggestions into classroom practices. Teachers were encouraged to adopt more participatory approaches, allowing students and parents to become more engaged in the educational process. These actions helped create a more welcoming atmosphere for collaboration at the grassroots level.

To support these initiatives, schools also prioritized the development of more responsive systems and protocols. They realized that consistent and clear communication was not just about occasional updates but about building a culture of mutual respect and ongoing interaction. Technology played a pivotal role in this transformation. Tools such as messaging apps, online surveys, and school websites were utilized to facilitate real-time updates and convenient feedback collection. Moreover, regular meetings, town hall forums, and stakeholder assemblies were established to provide platforms for open dialogue and collaborative decision-making.

Through these sustained efforts, the schools began to foster a more inclusive and cooperative environment. Stakeholders gradually became more active and visible in their participation, sensing that their voices were being heard and their contributions valued. While challenges still existed, the collective commitment to improving stakeholder relationships created a more dynamic and supportive school community, one where collaboration was not just encouraged but embedded in the culture of the institution.

Theme Seven. Motivated and Engaged Learners.

The transition from the previous curriculum to the MATATAG curriculum marked a meaningful turning point in how learners engaged with TLE and EPP subjects. As the new curriculum was rolled out, it became clear that students were not just adjusting; they were genuinely intrigued. Teachers observed a noticeable increase in curiosity and enthusiasm among learners. Students eagerly explored the updated learning materials, showing a strong willingness to adapt and embrace the unfamiliar. Rather than hesitating in the face of change, learners demonstrated a proactive attitude, recognizing the shift as an opportunity to grow and challenge themselves in new ways.

What stood out the most was the learners' rekindled excitement for hands-on activities and real-life application of skills. Practical tasks were no longer seen as mere requirements but as avenues for creative exploration. Students became more eager to test what they had learned, apply it in simulated work environments, and even innovate based on their interests. This renewed interest helped redefine the atmosphere of the classroom; it felt more alive, more vibrant, and far more learner-centered than before.

The MATATAG curriculum's broader scope and more progressive design played a crucial role in this transformation. Its emphasis on project-based learning, skill-building, and real-world application opened up diverse opportunities for students to showcase what they could do. Lessons moved beyond theoretical discussions, evolving into active learning experiences where experimentation and critical thinking were highly encouraged. This shift allowed students to work through challenges, think independently, and develop practical problem-solving skills, which in turn boosted their confidence and deepened their understanding.

Another striking improvement was the rise in collaboration and participation among learners. The MATATAG curriculum promoted a learning environment where students were encouraged to engage with one another and contribute their ideas freely. Teachers reported more lively discussions, increased group work, and a spirit of mutual support within the classroom. This interactive setup not only made learning more

enjoyable but also nurtured soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and leadership, essential traits that students would carry with them into higher education and future careers.

The positive changes in classroom dynamics were not experienced by learners alone. Teachers, too, found themselves inspired by the novelty and potential of the new curriculum. There was a shared sense of discovery that strengthened the connection between educators and students. Both parties approached lessons with a spirit of curiosity, which created an uplifting and motivating environment. This collective energy made the learning journey feel more like a shared adventure rather than a routine process.

In the end, the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum produced undeniably positive outcomes, particularly in student engagement and enthusiasm for TLE and EPP subjects. By promoting hands-on, collaborative, and exploratory learning, the curriculum helped create classrooms where learners were actively involved, motivated, and more prepared for real-life challenges. The energy, interest, and commitment observed throughout the transition reflected not only a successful curriculum shift but also a deeper transformation in how learning was experienced and valued.

Theme Eight. Innovative and Reflective Instructional Strategies

This study sought to understand the broader and more complex nature of education, moving away from the limited view that focuses solely on measurable skill acquisition, such as those captured in PISA indicators. Instead, the research emphasized the essential role of cultivating innovation within the school system. It explored how educational practices and institutional structures either nurtured or hindered the growth of innovative thinking and behaviors among both teachers and students. It became clear through the inquiry that fostering innovation required more than standard academic instruction; it demanded an environment where creativity, experimentation, and new ideas were welcomed and valued.

As the research progressed, a critical aspect emerged: the need to define what "innovativeness" truly meant within the educational context. Innovativeness was no longer seen as simply generating new ideas, but rather as a dynamic and ongoing process. This process involved not only creating new concepts but also reshaping existing ones, developing new tools, strategies, and approaches, and applying them in real and meaningful ways. Innovativeness, therefore, required a conscious effort, creative energy, and the courage to take calculated risks, all of which depended heavily on how teachers and students were supported within their learning environment.

Another key area of focus was the concept of "innovative behavior." The study highlighted that such behavior was not spontaneous or incidental. Instead, it was deliberate and goal-oriented. Teachers and students who displayed innovative behavior were actively trying to improve processes, solve problems, and contribute meaningfully to the goals of their schools. This idea included everything from suggesting fresh classroom strategies and championing new instructional ideas to securing resources and putting those ideas into practice. The research showed that this kind of behavior helped move the school forward, not just academically, but culturally and operationally as well.

The role of teachers in supporting and driving innovation was also a central theme. The study found that teaching is not a one-size-fits-all process; it is nuanced and affected by multiple factors, such as a teacher's experience, teaching style, and the specific demands of their learners. Even seasoned educators faced difficulties when adapting to new content or teaching environments. This notion was a reminder that being open to change did not come automatically with experience; it required intentional effort and support.

One of the most important insights from the study was the value of reflective practice among educators. Teachers who continuously assessed their performance, listened to feedback, and embraced change were more likely to implement innovative practices. These reflective teachers were not content with simply repeating what worked in the past; they were eager to improve, experiment, and grow. By integrating new teaching techniques and exploring emerging technologies, they created classrooms that encouraged curiosity and inspired students to think differently.

The research also looked at how teachers' reflective habits influenced student outcomes, especially in terms of innovative thinking. Teachers who fostered open, student-centered classrooms where risk-taking was encouraged saw students become more engaged in creative tasks. These learners were more likely to take the initiative, propose their ideas, and see failure as a step in the learning process. The study revealed a strong link between reflective teaching and students' ability to become innovative thinkers and problem-solvers.

Beyond individual practices, the study examined the broader educational environment, the systems, policies, and institutional culture that either encouraged or discouraged innovation. It explored whether the curriculum allowed room for creativity, whether assessments rewarded original thinking, and whether resources were allocated in ways that supported innovative projects. Importantly, it became evident that institutional culture played a major role in shaping teachers' willingness to innovate. Schools that encouraged experimentation and supported teacher development were far more successful in cultivating innovation at all levels.

In conclusion, this research offered a deep and holistic view of how education and innovation are intertwined. It demonstrated that the future of learning should not rest solely on standard assessments and rigid instruction, but rather on nurturing innovation through reflective teaching and supportive institutional structures. The study reinforced the idea that when teachers reflect and adapt, and when schools embrace change, students are empowered not just to learn, but to create, to innovate, and to lead.

Theme Nine. Flexibility and Adaptability to Change.

Flexibility had emerged as the heart of effective classroom management. Each school day brought its own set of unexpected twists. Some lessons flowed effortlessly according to plan, while others veered off course due to shifting student needs, unforeseen interruptions, or sudden changes in school schedules. In these moments, being able to adapt quickly became essential. Embracing a flexible mindset was not just a professional strategy; it became a way of modeling real-life adaptability for students. Through the teacher's example, learners witnessed how to respond calmly and constructively to challenges, developing their resilience in the process.

Over time, it became evident that rigidity in the classroom often did more harm than good. Trying to control every detail or clinging too tightly to a fixed plan often led to unnecessary stress and frustration. This tension didn't just stay in the classroom; it affected the teacher's morale, their energy levels, and even the quality of their relationships with colleagues. As the pressure built up, it sometimes led to emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction, with some educators feeling the early signs of burnout. This realization highlighted the need to view flexibility not as a luxury, but as a vital practice for sustaining both professional health and passion for teaching.

One powerful way teachers coped with these challenges was by narrowing their focus to what they could control. This process meant honing classroom routines, refining lesson plans, and developing meaningful student engagement techniques, all of which were within their immediate influence. By putting energy into these aspects, teachers regained a sense of control and direction, even when outside factors felt

chaotic. This mindset allowed them to stay grounded and confident, reducing feelings of helplessness. In many ways, this approach helped teachers feel more capable and fulfilled, reinforcing their sense of purpose within the profession.

A guiding philosophy that many teachers leaned on was the wisdom behind Bruce Lee's phrase, "Be like water." This metaphor captured the essence of what it meant to be truly adaptable. Just as water flows around obstacles and conforms to its container, teachers learned to respond fluidly to the ever-changing demands of their classrooms. They discovered that teaching was not about perfect execution, but about responding thoughtfully to the present moment. By embodying this approach, they were not only reducing their stress but also creating a more dynamic and student-responsive learning environment.

Ultimately, it was the flexible teachers, the ones who embraced unpredictability and adjusted with grace, who seemed to thrive the most. Their adaptability allowed them to maintain a calm and positive presence even in the face of disruption. This thought, in turn, uplifted their students and created a supportive space for learning. These educators found greater job satisfaction and emotional well-being, not because the work became easier, but because they changed the way they responded to its demands. The deeper lesson was clear: in the ever-evolving world of education, flexibility was not just helpful, it was essential for longevity, joy, and true impact in teaching.

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Summary

The study uncovered nine significant themes that emerged from the heartfelt and repeated statements of the master teachers who had directly experienced the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. These themes were carefully drawn from their narratives, shared during in-depth interviews, and reflected the real-life challenges, adjustments, and insights they encountered as they navigated this educational reform.

Through their stories, the research captured a broad view of how these master teachers perceived the MATATAG curriculum, the difficulties they faced, the positive outcomes they observed, and the creative ways they adapted to this change. Their reflections painted a nuanced picture of the curriculum's impact on classroom practices, school dynamics, and learner engagement. By organizing their experiences into themes, the study provided a deeper understanding of the MATATAG curriculum's multifaceted effects on the ground.

One of the study's first focal points was how the master teachers perceived the curriculum's influence on their instructional delivery. Two central themes stood out in this area: "Bridge towards Improved Delivery of Instruction" and "Endeavor to Address the Gap in the Teaching and Learning Process." Many teachers shared that the MATATAG curriculum served as a clear and timely guide that helped them improve how they taught. It encouraged them to move away from rote teaching and embrace strategies that promoted more interactive, learner-centered experiences. Several pointed out that the use of differentiated instruction and active learning made their lessons more engaging and understandable for students, helping bridge the gap between content and comprehension.

Meanwhile, the second theme emphasized the curriculum's role in addressing long-standing gaps in the teaching and learning process. Teachers described how the MATATAG framework pushed them to focus more on assessment and feedback, which helped them identify specific learning needs among students. They

also valued the collaborative nature encouraged by the curriculum, which led to more open communication among teachers and learners. This shift toward responsive teaching helped them become more intentional in supporting students who were struggling, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive classroom culture.

However, alongside these positive perceptions were real challenges. Teachers shared their concerns through two distinct but related themes: "Provision for Instructional Materials" and "Resistance to Change and Preparedness of Facilities and Equipment." A common frustration was the limited availability of basic teaching resources such as updated textbooks, hands-on tools, and access to technology. These shortages made it difficult to fully implement many of the curriculum's innovative features, forcing teachers to find workarounds or modify their plans constantly.

In addition to resource constraints, many teachers voiced the struggle with resistance to change, whether from colleagues, school systems, or the physical learning environments themselves. The lack of readiness in facilities and equipment was especially felt in TLE subjects, where practical work was essential. Some classrooms were not equipped for the hands-on activities required, and insufficient training left teachers feeling unprepared for the shift. This resistance and lack of infrastructure slowed the curriculum's rollout and, at times, limited its intended impact.

Despite these obstacles, the curriculum still managed to bring about positive transformations. Teachers observed and highlighted two meaningful outcomes: "Collaborative Spirit among Stakeholders" and "Motivated and Engaged Learners." They noticed a marked increase in collaboration across different groups in the school community, including teachers, school leaders, parents, and even students themselves. This sense of shared responsibility created a more supportive environment where ideas and resources were exchanged more freely. Teachers no longer felt isolated in their efforts; instead, they saw themselves as part of a larger movement toward educational improvement.

More importantly, students began to respond with enthusiasm. Under the theme of "Motivated and Engaged Learners," teachers spoke of how learners were more curious, eager, and participative in class. They credited this transformation to the curriculum's learner-centered strategies, such as project-based activities and real-life applications of skills. Students, once passive recipients of lessons, became active participants in their learning. This shift was not only rewarding for the students but also deeply fulfilling for the teachers.

Lastly, the study revealed the various ways in which the master teachers adapted to ensure the curriculum's success, despite the hurdles. Two more themes came to the forefront here: "Innovative and Reflective Instructional Strategies" and "Flexibility and Adaptability to Change." Teachers described how they modified lesson plans, explored unconventional methods, and reflected regularly on what worked best for their students. Many showed a high level of creativity and critical thinking, which allowed them to align the curriculum to their specific classroom contexts.

Their willingness to embrace change and adjust their methods, despite uncertainty, was central to the MATATAG curriculum's practical implementation. These experiences reinforced the importance of building teachers' capacity through regular professional development and sustained support. The study emphasized that innovation and adaptability were not optional—they were necessary for navigating evolving educational demands.

The study provided a detailed and human-centered exploration of the MATATAG curriculum's implementation from the perspective of master teachers. It showcased the richness of their lived experiences, highlighting how they perceived the curriculum's purpose, the challenges they faced, the positive changes they observed, and the strategies they adopted to move forward. More than just a report on curriculum rollout, the study served as a reminder of the need to invest in teachers through adequate resources, training, and systemic support. By doing so, future reforms can be made more effective, meaningful, and truly transformative for both educators and learners alike.

4.2. Conclusion

This phenomenological exploration of the MATATAG curriculum's impact on Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhasan (EPP)/ Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) master teachers' instructional practices and pedagogy reveals several key findings:

1. The participants strongly viewed the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum as a timely and vital step toward raising the quality of education in the Philippines. For many, it served as a **bridge toward improved delivery of instruction (Theme One)**, particularly in the context of EPP and TLE, where practical application and real-life relevance were often lacking in earlier curricula. They felt that the MATATAG framework directly addressed the pressing need to modernize instructional content and strategies. Teachers observed a noticeable shift in classroom dynamics, where learners became more responsive and participative, clear indicators of the curriculum's potential to positively impact student learning outcomes.
2. While the overall perception remained optimistic, the study surfaced critical challenges that made implementation difficult. Teachers encountered an **evident gap in the teaching and learning process (Theme Two)**, brought about by **limited access to instructional materials (Theme Three)**. Many reported having to improvise due to the lack of essential tools and updated learning resources. **Resistance to adopting new pedagogical approaches (Theme Four)** also emerged, particularly among educators who were accustomed to traditional methods. Additionally, the **unpreparedness of school facilities and equipment (Theme Five)** further complicated the transition. Classrooms were not always equipped to accommodate the hands-on and project-based nature of the MATATAG curriculum, thereby limiting its full implementation. These concerns underscored the need for systemic support to remove barriers and strengthen institutional readiness.
3. Despite these difficulties, one of the most heartening outcomes of the MATATAG implementation was the stronger sense of **collaboration among stakeholders (Theme Six)**. Teachers, school heads, parents, and even community members became more involved in supporting student learning. This cooperative atmosphere created a ripple effect that extended to the learners themselves. **Students became more motivated and engaged (Theme Seven)**, finding renewed excitement in interactive and applied learning tasks. Their participation became more meaningful, and their confidence improved, suggesting that the collaborative nature of the curriculum not only empowered teachers but also helped shape well-rounded, eager learners.
4. Lastly, the role of Master Teachers stood out as a key driver of successful implementation. Their **innovative and reflective instructional strategies (Theme Eight)** allowed them to navigate the unfamiliar territory of the MATATAG curriculum with intention and creativity. They adapted lesson

plans, explored alternative methods, and constantly reflected on what worked best for their students. Their **flexibility and adaptability to change (Theme Nine)** served as a model for others and proved essential in turning the challenges into opportunities for growth. These practices demonstrated the vital importance of sustained professional development to help educators fully utilize the curriculum and sustain momentum.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the study has arrived at the following recommendations:

1. Conduct comprehensive surveys and focus group discussions with learners, teachers, and parents to assess the MATATAG curriculum's effectiveness, identifying areas of strength and weakness. Gather data on learner achievement, teacher satisfaction, and parental perceptions. Develop a detailed implementation plan for the MATATAG curriculum, outlining timelines, responsibilities, and resource allocation. This plan should be regularly reviewed and updated.
2. Allocate sufficient funds not only for learning materials but also for professional development programs specifically designed for the MATATAG curriculum. This idea should include training on pedagogical approaches and assessment strategies. Establish a dedicated support team to assist schools in implementing the MATATAG curriculum, providing technical assistance, and addressing challenges as they arise. This team could offer on-site support and online resources. Develop and disseminate a comprehensive guide for implementing the MATATAG curriculum, including detailed lesson plans, assessment tools, and best practices. This guide should be easily accessible to all schools.
3. Organize regular meetings and workshops to engage teachers in ongoing dialogue about the MATATAG curriculum. These sessions should provide opportunities for feedback, collaboration, and problem-solving. Develop a robust communication strategy to promote the benefits of the MATATAG curriculum to all stakeholders, highlighting its positive impact on learner outcomes. This activity could include presentations, newsletters, and social media campaigns.
4. Establish partnerships with community organizations and local businesses to secure additional resources and support for the MATATAG curriculum. This concept could involve securing funding, volunteers, or access to facilities. Develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the MATATAG curriculum, using both quantitative and qualitative data. Regular progress reports should be shared with stakeholders. Incorporate the principles of the MATATAG curriculum into other school programs and initiatives, ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to education.
5. Conduct further research to investigate the long-term impact of the MATATAG curriculum on learner outcomes and teacher effectiveness. This research should include longitudinal studies to track student progress over time.
6. Regularly review and update the policies and guidelines related to the MATATAG curriculum to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. This notion should involve feedback from all stakeholders.

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