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## MOUNTAIN SCHOOL TEACHERS' K TO 12 CURRICULUM PROGRAM EXPERIENCES AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS ON MATATAG CURRICULUM FOR AN ENHANCED GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTATION

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### ABSTRACT

This descriptive-qualitative study aimed to determine the experiences of mountain school teachers on K to 12 curriculum program and their expectations on MATATAG Curriculum for an enhanced guidelines implementation. It was found out that the experiences of teachers on K to 12 curriculum were congested competencies, limited learning resources materials, delayed delivery of learning materials, lot of paper work to do, and lack of adequate training. Their coping strategies were maximizing time for preparation, producing localized materials, prioritizing the most essential competencies, seeking administrative support, and continuing professional development. Based on the result its study revealed that mountain school teachers expected to have more responsive and realistic curriculum, enough suitable materials, flexible administration support and more trainings and seminars provided in the MATATAG curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Mountain School Teachers, K to 12 Curriculum Program, Experiences, Expectation, MATATAG Curriculum, Enhanced Guidelines Implementation*

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## INTRODUCTION

The K to 12 curricula started last 2012 is a comprehensive reform for basic education. This educational reform in the Philippines is catching up with global standards in education system. The improvement of educational system includes undergoing reform in structure, curricula, and philosophy of the education system. The curriculum aims to provide comprehensive education that prepares students for higher education, employment, and entrepreneurship leading them to become holistically developed and productive citizen of the country. This policy appears admirable and timely, but it faces some pedagogical and socioeconomic problems (Okabe, 2013).

The MATATAG Curriculum known as “Bansang Makabata, Bansang Makabansa,” was introduced to focus on addressing educational challenges and problems that teachers and learners experience. This curriculum will aim on prioritizing the mastery of literacy and numeracy skills among Filipino learners.

Teachers have various expectations on the MATATAG curriculum which will be implemented for school year 2024-2025. They reflect on the essentiality and feasibility of choosing learning competencies, the need for good quality, flexibility, sustainability, and safety in choosing learning modalities, and the importance of aligning, distributing, and ensuring sufficiency of learning materials. Teachers also emphasize the devotion, adaptability, and helpfulness of teachers, the need for reaching out to students and individualizing tasks, and the leadership and involvement required for success in education. The new curriculum is seen as adaptive and flexible to the changing educational landscape brought by the COVID-19

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pandemic. Additionally, teachers play a vital role in implementing curriculum policies, facing tensions such as confusion, frustration, and powerlessness, but also appreciation, flexibility, and importance in making sense of and operationalizing the curriculum.

The researcher conducted the study to identify issues about education in implementing overloaded curriculum, excessive teaching demands within constrained timeframes, and an overloaded academic load such as the competencies that need to be mastered by teachers and learners which hindered the mastery of fundamental skills like reading and simple mathematics problem.

Curriculum implementation is a challenge among all teachers especially in terms of how it should be implemented at the classroom level. Given the paradigm shift in Philippine basic education classrooms brought about by the K to 12 Education Program, there is a need to describe and understand the experiences of teachers specifically the mountain school teachers.

A lot of questions on mind of the teachers on the ground regarding K to 12 curricula and the MATATAG Curriculum, since some of the resources were already provided even though its already late but the thing is there are resources. Here comes the new curriculum that we are going to implement but we feel we are not ready especially that our training was not enough. That is why the researcher studied the experiences of mountain school teachers in K to 12 curricula to help improve the implementation of MATATAG curriculum specifically the late issuance and provision of learning materials. And lastly, the researcher also wanted to

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gathered the expectations of teachers on MATATAG curriculum which served as bases for an enhanced guideline's implementation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the experiences of mountain school teachers on K to 12 curriculum program and their expectations on MATATAG Curriculum for an enhanced guidelines implementation.

### Research Method

The research method utilized in this study was qualitative research using in-depth interview.

Descriptive method according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2007), used to describe a given situation as fully and carefully as possible.

The interviewer with the interviewee during the interview was allowed to sit together in a distance and to think about the series of questions about a certain issue. The aim was to get the main or the necessary views of the participants in a certain issue in a social context through the responses of the participants to the questions.

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## Research Design

The study used phenomenological research design. Phenomenology was considered a philosophical approach to undertaking qualitative research. The goal of phenomenology was to understand how others view the world, and how this view may vary from commonly held views by focusing on a person's subjective interpretations of what she experiences. Phenomenology was done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions, and is frequently used in such fields as psychology, sociology, and social work.

According to Smith (2013), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

## Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were 15 selected teachers with 3 years and above teaching experience in K to 12 curriculum and implemented the MATATAG curriculum in mountain schools in the District of Leon II, Schools Division of Iloilo. Out of 15 selected participants of the study, 5 of them are teachers handling kindergarten, 5 handling grade I, and 5 handling grade IV.

## Sampling Design

Purposive sampling design was used in the study. Purposive sampling according to Nikolopoulou (2023) refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units

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are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research and mixed methods research. It is particularly useful if you need to find information-rich cases or make the most out of limited resources but is at high risk for research biases like observer bias.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule.

The interview schedule had four questions focusing on the purpose of the study.

Voice and video recorder were used for data gathering and documentation, depending upon the permission of the participants.

### **Validity of the Research Instrument**

Prior to the determination of the validity of the interview schedule made by the researcher, the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School then a panel of jurors who were considered for their expertise in the field of research, testing and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of inferences that a researcher makes. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and

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format must be consistent with the definition of variables and sample of subject to be measured and is also helpful in validating the items in the questionnaire (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007).

Comments, corrections, and suggestions of the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were considered using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (Appendix A).

### Data Gathering Procedures

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, School Heads, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

The researcher conducted an interview to the participants but prior to this, the researcher encouraged first the participants to sign a waiver or permission relative to the conduct of the study.

Using in-depth interview, voice and video recorders were also provided to completely capture the interviewee's words. The researcher consolidated all collected data after series of interviews.

### Data Analyses

The information gathered was analyzed using thematic approach.

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Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), the aim of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is summarizing, analyzing and interpreting the data gathered and making sense of it.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to determine mountain school teachers' experiences and expectations regarding the K to 12 curriculum and MATATAG Curriculum in the Schools District of Leon II, Schools Division of Iloilo for 2024-2025. The research used a phenomenological approach and involved 10 teachers with 3 years or more experience in K to 12 curriculum. The study utilized in-depth interviews. The data were gathered through face-to-face interviews, and analyzed using thematic approach. The study was validated by a panel of experts and the Dean of the Graduate School.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the results on the in-depth interview with the participants, it was found out that the experiences of mountain school teachers on K to 12 curriculum were congested competencies limited, learning resource materials , delayed deliveries of learning materials, lots of paper work to do, and lack of adequate training.

It was also found out that the challenges encountered by mountain school teachers using K to 12 curriculum were disruption of classes, lack of learning materials, delayed delivery

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of learning materials, lot of competencies to teach, lack of technology, and lack of training and seminars.

The mountain school teachers coping strategies on the challenges encountered using the K to 12 curriculum were maximizing time for preparation, producing localized materials, prioritizing the most essential competencies, seeking administrative support, and continuing professional development.

It was found out based on the responses of the participants during the in-depth interview that the expectations of mountain school teachers in MATATAG curriculum were to have more responsive and realistic curriculum, enough suitable learning materials, provision of administrative support, and more trainings and seminars.

The enhanced guidelines implementation focused on the unpacking of competencies, reproduction of instructional and learning materials, institutionalization of tracking and follow-up system, strict compliance of the removal of administrative functions of teachers, training and re-training system, and provision of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Teachers have wide scope of subjects and high cognitive demands, particularly during the formative years of kindergarten and first grade.

Teachers are unable to adequately teach the curriculum and address the necessary abilities because of time restrictions and lack of resources.

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The commitment of teachers to develop essential skills in learners, combined with a supportive and collaborative educational environment, is fundamental to fostering effective learning experiences.

By focusing on competency-based education and leveraging technology, educators can better prepare learners for future challenges.

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a forward-thinking approach to education that prioritizes essential skills and competencies while ensuring that teachers have the necessary tools and support to succeed.

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

Pedagogical practices and in-depth material comprehension should be given priority in teacher professional development to solve these problems. By providing teachers with the required tools, they can improve student learning and make sure the objectives of the curriculum are fulfilled. In the end, a more targeted approach to resource allocation and training could revolutionize K–12 curriculum implementation, increasing its effectiveness and responsiveness to the requirements of educators and learners alike.

The community, lawmakers, and education should work together in a cooperative manner. By improving technological accessibility, streamlining administrative processes, and emphasizing infrastructural upgrades, officials can create a more adaptable learning

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environment that better meets the needs of teachers and students. Ultimately, by fostering a supportive atmosphere, educators can deliver a K–12 curriculum that is more successful and ensures that every child could succeed.

The schools must organize different committees to handle programs for (1) unpacking of competencies, (2) reproduction of instructional and learning materials, (3) institutionalization of tracking and follow-up system, (4) strict compliance of the removal of administrative functions of teachers, (5) training and re-training system, and (6) provision of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

A copy of a proposed enhanced guidelines implementation must be shared with the Schools Division Office and provided to the District office, and to the office of the school heads for their information and guidance, and if necessary be implemented in their respective schools.

A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future, consider other variables not used nor mentioned in the study, and if possible, a quantitative research to determine the level of implementation and acceptance of the curricula.

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