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Research Article

Supervisory Strategies to Overcome Teacher Resistance to the MATATAG Curriculum in Zone 1, DepEd Zambales

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ABSTRACT

Grounded on curriculum change theories anchored with the unfreezing, change, and refreezing as necessary stages in managing educational transitions and the important roles of individual beliefs, systemic support, and supervisory strategies in implementing curriculum reforms, this quantitative-descriptive study investigated the resistance encountered by teachers and the supervisory strategies employed by school heads during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum by assessing the extent of teacher resistance in various dimensions, evaluate the supervisory strategies used by school heads, and analyze the effectiveness of these strategies from the perspectives of teachers. This research utilized a validated survey questionnaire to gather data from 150 teachers and 62 school heads in selected public elementary schools whom majority of teacher-respondents were female early adults, serving for 6–10 years, held the rank of Teacher I, most were handling Grade I learners and had earned master's units. On the other hand, most school heads were middle adults, serving as Head Teacher III with EdD units and supervising 6–10 teachers. Findings revealed that in terms of resistance, both groups agreed that teachers encountered challenges related to readiness, structural and cultural constraints, learning resources, and perceptions of the curriculum. Notably, school heads perceived these challenges more intensely, particularly in the areas of support, training, and resources. Significant differences in resistance were observed based on academic rank, highest educational attainment, age, and sex. Monitoring and assessment emerged as the most effective supervisory strategy, followed by professional development, emotional support, and collaborative communication. These strategies were affirmed by teacher-respondents as vital in mitigating resistance and facilitating smoother curriculum transitions. Furthermore, there was a very high positive correlation between supervisory strategies and the effectiveness of MATATAG Curriculum implementation, underscoring the importance of leadership

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practices in educational reforms. The findings also informed the creation of an intervention plan aimed at reinforcing teacher support, strengthening leadership capacity, and improving training responsiveness. In conclusion, while the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum encountered moderate resistance, this was mitigated by proactive and supportive leadership. The effectiveness of school heads' supervisory strategies particularly those emphasizing collaboration, feedback, and capacity-building, highlighted their pivotal role in change management. The study recommends the Department of Education may implement career-stage-aligned training programs and mentorship pathways for both teachers and school heads to sustain momentum and drive positive change in future curriculum reforms.

Keywords: *Supervisory strategies, Teacher resistance, MATATAG Curriculum, Curriculum implementation, Department of Education (DepEd), Zone 1, Zambales*

Background

Resistance to curriculum change has long posed challenges to educational systems worldwide. International research indicates that this resistance often arises from a combination of teacher concerns (Lomba-Portela et al., 2022) and systemic limitations (Pak et al., 2020).

In the Asian context, resistance to curriculum reforms have frequently intersected with cultural and systemic issues. For instance, Popova et al. (2021) found that in many developing countries, teachers resisted reforms due to limited access to professional development, misalignments with cultural expectations, and insufficient teaching resources.

In the Philippines, resistance to curriculum reforms has been a recurring issue, particularly during the rollout of the K-12 Program. More recently, the MATATAG Curriculum, introduced in 2023 to address learning gaps and strengthen foundational skills, has also faced resistance. Kilag et.al (2024) concluded that the MATATAG curriculum roll out was marked by inadequate training, limited access to instructional materials, and insufficient professional development.

Saro et al. (2024) supported these findings, reporting that the teachers who participated in their study regarding the pilot testing of MATATAG implementation identified lack of training opportunities as key barriers. This condition rendered many teachers unprepared for new

teaching strategies. Resistance to change makes it difficult for some teachers to shift from familiar methods. The participants in the study also highlighted limited resources in teaching materials and technology as part of the challenge.

In DepEd Zambales specifically in the districts of Santa Cruz, Candelaria, and Masinloc, these national challenges also emerged. Teachers in these areas raised concerns about readiness, cultural dissonance, and doubts about the curriculum's relevance.

In response to these challenges, this study explored the supervisory strategies employed by school heads in Zone 1, DepEd Zambales, to address teacher resistance to the MATATAG Curriculum during the School Year 2024-2025. It identified common forms of resistance, such as issues with readiness, structural challenges, cultural misalignment, and curriculum perceptions. Additionally, it examined the effectiveness of strategies like coaching, mentoring, professional development, and constructive feedback in reducing resistance and promoting professional growth, morale, and job satisfaction among teachers.

Methods

In this study, the researcher will utilize a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the relationship between supervisory strategies by school heads and teacher re-

sistance to implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in Zone 1, DepEd Zambales. The descriptive component will help to provide a detailed understanding of the current practices in place, while the correlational component will explore how these supervisory strategies impact the levels of teacher resistance. According to Akinlua (2019), the descriptive-correlational design is suitable for studies that aim at describing the characteristics of a phenomenon while trying out some relationships between variables under study. This study will also investigate how these supervisory strategies in-

fluence teacher resistance in all its manifestations, including teachers' opinions about how the supervisory strategies impact curriculum implementation.

The respondents of the research will be the Elementary School Principals, Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 4 Teachers of Zone 1, DepEd Division of Zambales.

The respondents will include a total population of two hundred twelve (212) (School Heads, 62; and Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 4 Teachers, 150). Table 1 below shows the distribution of the participants.

Table 1. Distribution of the School Head and Teacher – Respondents from Elementary Schools of Zone 1, Division of Zambales

District	School Heads	%	K, G1, & G4 Teachers	%
1. Santa Cruz	28	45.161	50	33.33
2. Candelaria	16	25.806	50	33.33
3. Masinloc	18	29.032	50	33.33
Total	62	100.00	150	100.00

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing results of the study, the researcher concluded that:

Majority of the teacher-respondents are female, early adults, with adequate years of teaching experience, Teacher I, assigned to teach Grade I learners, who are Master's degree unit earners, and attended Subject-specific and Grade level training. While, majority of the school head-respondents are female, middle adults, who rendered adequate years of exposure in their role as school heads, Head Teacher III, EdD unit earners, supervising 6-10 teachers, with enough years of exposure in curriculum reforms.

Teachers strongly perceived monitoring and assessment strategies, particularly regular classroom observations and feedback, as the most effective supervisory approach in supporting their transition to the MATATAG Curriculum.

Professional development programs were perceived as effective but require improve-

ments in frequency, relevance, and responsiveness to better address the evolving needs of teachers during curriculum implementation.

Collaborative communication, emotional support, and motivational strategies provided by school heads significantly contribute to reducing teacher resistance and fostering a positive attitude toward curriculum change.

There was a significant difference in the teacher's resistance during the implementation of MATATAG curriculum in terms of teacher's readiness when they are grouped according to academic rank/position; significant in terms of structural constraints when grouped according to academic rank/position and highest educational attainment; significant in terms of perceptions of the curriculum when grouped according to age; and significant in terms of support from school administration when grouped according to sex; while no significant difference in terms of cultural constraints, learning resources, and professional development and training when grouped according to sex, age,

number of years in teaching, academic rank/position, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, and MATATAG curriculum trainings attended.

There was very high positive correlation between the supervisory strategies and effectiveness in the MATATAG curriculum implementation as perceived by teachers.

The proposed intervention plan ensures that teachers receive the necessary support, training, and resources to effectively implement the MATATAG curriculum.

Recommendations

In view of the conclusion of the study, the following are recommended.

The Department of Education may implement a targeted professional development program that aligns with the career progression of both teachers and school heads. Given the high number of early adult teachers and middle adult school heads, customized leadership training and mentorship programs should be developed to prepare teachers for administrative roles and enhance school heads' leadership capabilities in implementing curriculum reforms.

School heads and instructional leaders may sustain and strengthen regular classroom observations, coupled with timely, constructive feedback. This will ensure continued instructional alignment and help reduce teacher uncertainty during the MATATAG Curriculum transition.

To address teachers' resistance due to cultural constraints, school heads could initiate cultural sensitivity training and collaborative dialogues to help teachers understand and appreciate the significance of the MATATAG curriculum. Involvement of community stakeholders and parents should also be encouraged to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate smoother curriculum adaptation.

The Division Training Coordinators and program implementors may conduct professional development activities frequently and designed a consultation scheme for teacher's feedback mechanism to ensure their relevance, responsiveness, and effectiveness in addressing specific implementation challenges of the MATATAG Curriculum.

School administrators may institutionalize open communication channels, recognize teacher efforts, and continuously provide motivational support to create a psychologically safe environment that fosters resilience and positive engagement with curriculum changes.

Strengthening school-based mentoring programs is essential to further support teachers in adapting to the MATATAG curriculum. Implementing structured mentoring sessions with clear objectives and measurable outcomes can enhance the effectiveness of school heads' coaching and mentoring strategies, ensuring teachers receive continuous guidance and support.

Since teachers strongly agree on the effectiveness of professional development programs, the Department of Education should institutionalize more frequent and diverse training opportunities, including hands-on workshops, online learning platforms, and certification programs. Training should also focus on addressing real classroom challenges related to the MATATAG curriculum.

Since resistance varies based on academic rank, age, sex, and educational attainment, a differentiated support approach could be adopted. For instance, junior teachers should receive targeted readiness programs, while those with higher academic qualifications should be involved in curriculum enhancement discussions. School heads should also ensure equal administrative support for all teachers, regardless of their demographic background.

Given the strong positive correlation, school heads should continuously refine their supervisory strategies by integrating data-driven decision-making. Feedback mechanisms such as teacher surveys, peer evaluations, and classroom observations should be utilized to assess the impact of supervisory practices and make necessary adjustments to maximize curriculum effectiveness.

The proposed intervention plan may be reviewed and critiqued for future implementation. To ensure the success of the intervention plan, a dedicated task force should be established to monitor its implementation, assess progress, and address emerging challenges. Regular evaluations and updates should be conducted to refine the strategies based on feedback from

teachers and school administrators, ensuring continuous improvement in MATATAG curriculum execution.

Further studies in examining the supervisory strategies that employed by school heads to overcome teacher's resistance to the MATATAG Curriculum may be conducted involving a wider scope of sample and research locale.

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