

MATATAG Curriculum Implementation: The Realities and Challenges of Grade 7 TLE Teachers

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Abstract. This study examined the challenges encountered by Grade 7 Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teachers in implementing the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) component of the MATATAG Curriculum in Lanao del Norte, Philippines. The MATATAG Curriculum, launched by the Department of Education (DepEd), aims to strengthen foundational learning, digital literacy, and 21st-century competencies through a decongested, mastery-based, and technology-integrated framework. Despite its potential to enhance educational outcomes, teachers face various obstacles that affect its effective implementation. Utilizing a mixed-method, descriptive research design, the study surveyed 58 Grade 7 ICT teachers using structured questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS, while qualitative responses provided contextual insights. Findings revealed that teachers generally possess moderate to high proficiency in technological, pedagogical, and content domains, as reflected in overall mean ratings of 3.67 for technological challenges, 3.76 for pedagogical challenges, and 3.66 for content knowledge challenges. However, teachers continue to face substantial barriers, including limited access to digital devices and stable internet connectivity, inadequate HyFlex-oriented training, and difficulties in balancing online and in-person instruction. Although teachers display competence in using learning management systems and designing contextualized lessons, they express less confidence in teaching emerging ICT topics such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and robotics. The study concludes that while teachers demonstrate adaptability and dedication in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, systemic issues—such as resource inadequacy, lack of continuous professional development, and insufficient institutional support—hinder full implementation. To ensure the curriculum's long-term success, a comprehensive approach is required, emphasizing investment in teacher training, digital infrastructure, and administrative support. Strengthening these areas will better align curriculum intentions with classroom realities, thereby advancing the goal of delivering future-ready, quality education to Filipino learners.

Keywords: MATATAG Curriculum; Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), teacher challenges, curriculum implementation.

1. Introduction

Education establishes the essential groundwork for societal progress by equipping individuals with the necessary skills, values, and knowledge to foster both personal and professional growth. Fostering accountable individuals is crucial for advancing the nation in the years to come. Despite these challenges, the education system in the Philippines has faced challenges such as curriculum congestion, learning gaps, and a decline in student performance (David et al., 2023). The identified issues necessitate a thorough reform to improve the quality of learning and student outcomes.

In response, the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the MATATAG Curriculum, a restructured basic education framework designed to strengthen foundational learning and promote mastery-based instruction (DepEd, 2023). For international audiences, the MATATAG Curriculum can be understood as a national reform initiative aligned with global education priorities that emphasize foundational literacy and numeracy, digital competence, learner-centered pedagogy, and teacher support. Rather than expanding content coverage, the curriculum reduces congestion to allow deeper learning, critical thinking, creativity, and inquiry-based instruction—principles consistent with international standards promoted by organizations such as UNESCO and OECD (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2019).

The educational framework of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) is represented by the acronym MATATAG, which denotes: Make the curriculum relevant, Allow students to master foundational skills, Take steps to accelerate digital transformation in education, Administer reforms in the education system, Take good care of learners, Advance support for teachers, and Give resources to schools, as stated by the Department of Education (2023). The curriculum aims to equip students with fundamental skills for lifelong learning by addressing learning impairments and enhancing foundational knowledge. The MATATAG Curriculum is executed in phases to guarantee a smooth transition and efficient adaptation at all grade levels. The implementation schedule is as follows: Grades 1, 4, and 7, as well as Kindergarten, will be taught in the 2024–2025 academic year. In the 2025–2026 academic year, students in grades 2, 5, and 8 will be taught. In the 2026–2027 academic year, students in grades 3, 6, and 9 will be taught. Instruction for grade 10 will commence in the 2027–2028 school year. This tiered rollout facilitates continuous curriculum review and enhancement to address potential concerns throughout each phase (DepEd, 2024). The Department of Education's primary objective is to enhance student learning outcomes and adequately equip them for future academic and professional pursuits by ensuring the effective integration of curriculum revisions through this tiered approach.

A key area of emphasis within the MATATAG Curriculum is Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE), particularly Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The revised TLE curriculum diverges from the earlier Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) framework, which was developed as a response to pandemic-related disruptions (DepEd, 2020). Unlike the MELCs-based curriculum, the MATATAG TLE Curriculum represents a long-term reform that prioritizes mastery-based learning, enhanced ICT integration, and alignment with industry standards (DepEd, 2023). Features such as the “One Skill per Component” approach, sector-based exploration, and integration of the STEM framework aim to equip learners with practical, transferable skills necessary for higher education, employment, and lifelong learning.

In parallel with curriculum reform, Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex) learning has emerged as a complementary pedagogical approach that supports the goals of the MATATAG Curriculum. HyFlex learning allows students to engage through face-to-face, synchronous online, or asynchronous online modalities, thereby increasing accessibility and learner autonomy (Beatty, 2019). Anchored in constructivist and contextual learning theories,

HyFlex promotes active knowledge construction, flexibility, and meaningful engagement, particularly in ICT-focused instruction (Zhu & Atompag, 2023; Hadjipieris, 2024).

Despite its intended benefits, the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum has posed significant challenges for teachers, especially in ICT-related TLE subjects. Previous studies have identified constraints such as limited instructional resources, insufficient professional development, inadequate technological infrastructure, and varying levels of teacher readiness to adopt new pedagogical approaches (Garcia & Santos, 2022; Fabroa, 2024). These challenges can hinder the effective delivery of curriculum and negatively impact student learning outcomes. While the Department of Education has introduced training programs and institutional support mechanisms to facilitate implementation (DepEd, 2023; Rivera, 2021; Mendoza, 2020), disparities persist across regions and school contexts.

Notably, empirical research examining the challenges faced by Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in Lanao del Norte, Philippines, remains limited. Addressing this research gap is critical for strengthening ICT education and improving curriculum implementation at both local and national levels. Evidence-based insights can inform policy decisions, enhance teacher professional development, and support international discussions on curriculum reform and the integration of technology in education.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Specifically, the study focuses on three key areas: the integration of technology in ICT instruction, the pedagogical practices employed by teachers, and the teachers' content knowledge and understanding of the Grade 7 ICT curriculum. Guided by these objectives, the study seeks to answer two central research questions. First, what challenges do Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers encounter in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum with respect to technology integration, pedagogy, and content knowledge? Second, how do these challenges influence the effective delivery of ICT instruction and the attainment of intended learning outcomes? By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy, improve teacher support mechanisms, and contribute to international discussions on curriculum reform and technology-enhanced education.

2. Literature Review

The effective implementation of a curriculum relies heavily on the readiness of educators, the availability of resources, and the adaptability of teaching approaches. Recent investigations reveal that inadequate technological resources, insufficient teacher training, and institutional constraints persist as significant obstacles. Santos et al. (2024) emphasize that internal variables, such as a lack of confidence and motivation, along with external factors like inadequate institutional support, impede the advancement of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) among educators. A recent study by Mendoza and Rivera (2024) highlights that successful professional development programs should focus on both knowledge acquisition and self-efficacy, thereby improving teachers' capacity to incorporate technology into their teaching methods.

The education system in the Philippines has experienced several reforms, such as the K-12 and MATATAG Curricula; however, challenges continue to exist. Research conducted by Reyes and Fernandez (2024) indicates that insufficient teacher preparation, obsolete instructional materials, and substandard facilities persist as barriers to effective curriculum implementation. To deal with these problems, it is important to have full support from institutions, put money into professional development, and increase the number of resources available to improve the teaching of TLE courses in the MATATAG Curriculum.

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is crucial for the effective incorporation of technology into educational courses. As Herrera (2025) pointed out, the results show how important TPACK is for teachers' ability to use technology in their classrooms, especially in TLE topics where digital tools help students improve their technical abilities. Differences in technological skills among educators present considerable obstacles, underscoring the necessity for targeted professional development initiatives.

The Constructivist Theory, highlighting the importance of student-centered learning, is integral to the MATATAG Curriculum. Bautista and Ramos (2024) indicate that educators who utilize constructivist principles through the integration of real-world applications and collaborative projects observe enhanced student engagement and understanding. The primary objective of professional development initiatives should be to provide educators with the necessary technological and pedagogical strategies to improve the efficacy of learning.

When teachers use ICT tools in TLE lessons, there are both good and bad things that might happen. Herrera (2025) found that many teachers have trouble using digital resources well since they don't have enough access to technology or training. Insufficient support may hinder educators' ability to integrate e-learning platforms, virtual simulations, and digital assessments into their pedagogical practices. The present digital competency gap prevents students from getting the most out of ICT-based learning, especially in technical-vocational areas where technology is very important for learning new skills.

The HyFlex learning model has emerged as a novel approach to address the intricacies of curriculum implementation in TVET. HyFlex models have been shown to have the potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes by incorporating a diverse array of learning modalities, such as in-person and online formats (Bonganciso, 2024). Successful implementation of HyFlex learning necessitates a significant commitment to enhancing digital infrastructure and providing continuous training for educators to maximize the effective utilization of technology.

The incorporation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the TLE MATATAG Curriculum is regarded as crucial for equipping students for the future workforce. The curriculum's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those that prioritize quality education and innovation in infrastructure and industry, ensures that students acquire the necessary skills to meet the needs of both local and global markets. Villaver et al. (2024) stress that adding sustainability and green technology to TLE education can make students more competitive on a global scale and encourage them to keep learning.

In conclusion, to effectively execute a curriculum in the Philippines, a comprehensive strategy is needed that includes teacher training, support from institutions, the use of technology, and meeting the needs of the job market. By dealing with these problems, teachers can better help students learn the skills and information they need to do well in a world that is always changing and focused on technology.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive research design with both quantitative and qualitative components conducted simultaneously. This examines the realities and challenges that teachers encounter in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. For the qualitative study, respondents were given an open-ended question, allowing them to express their experiences. While quantitative, it employs a five-point Likert scale to measure the level of challenges experienced by respondents in implementing the MATATAG curriculum. The survey was performed via Google Forms and distributed to 58 Grade 7 ICT teachers, ensuring participation from each district. The study primarily involved teachers, omitting students and other stakeholders. This method allows for a thorough understanding of the

subject with minimal risk to participants, as it involves voluntary participation and the collection of non-sensitive information.

Data collection began with formal permission from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of Lanao del Norte, Department of Education (DepEd), facilitated through the Education Program Supervisor (EPS) in TLE. Upon approval, additional request letters were disseminated to district supervisors via school principals. The survey was then distributed to 58 Grade 7 ICT teachers through Google Forms, ensuring representation from each district within the division. The study focused exclusively on teachers, excluding students and other stakeholders, to capture information directly relevant to curriculum implementation. Participation was voluntary, and the survey involved non-sensitive information, minimizing potential risks to respondents.

The structured questionnaire was carefully designed to align with the study's objectives. Quantitative items employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, to assess respondents' agreement with statements such as: "I am proficient in using learning management systems (LMS) for ICT lessons (e.g., Google Classroom, Moodle, MS Teams)" and "I can design lesson plans that cater to both in-person and online students simultaneously." Qualitative items allowed participants to describe the challenges they faced in lesson planning, technology integration, and classroom management. The explicit alignment of each item with research objectives ensured clarity, relevance, and transparency in the data collection process.

To establish reliability, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small sample of ICT teachers outside the study population. Internal consistency for the Likert-scale items was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high reliability. Content validity was ensured through expert review by ICT education specialists, confirming that each item accurately measured the intended construct of challenges in curriculum implementation.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who were qualified and directly involved in curriculum delivery. Inclusion criteria required that respondents (1) had attended training on the implementation of the Grade 7 MATATAG Curriculum and (2) were actively teaching ICT lessons in Grade 7. This approach ensured that the data reflected the experiences of educators with relevant expertise, enhancing the study's focus and rigor.

Data were systematically compiled, encoded, and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative responses were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, including computation of means and standard deviations, to identify general trends and levels of agreement among respondents. Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to extract meaningful insights into teachers' experiences and challenges. By integrating both types of data, the study provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, offering insights that could inform policy, improve teaching practices, and optimize resource allocation within the division.

4. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to examine the challenges encountered by Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and open-ended responses. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), and multiple linear regression was employed to identify factors influencing the challenges. Qualitative responses were coded thematically to provide contextual insights. Findings are organized according to the study's research objectives, with quantitative and qualitative data presented together for each objective.

OBJECTIVE 1: Identify the key challenges faced by teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Technological.

Table 1. Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Technological Challenges

Statements	Mean	±SD	Description
1. I am proficient in using learning management systems (LMS) for ICT lessons (e.g., Google Classroom, Moodle, MS Teams).	3.75	±0.60	Agree
2. I can effectively conduct synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) ICT lessons.	3.72	±0.66	Agree
3. I am skilled in using video conferencing tools (Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams) for HyFlex teaching.	3.78	±0.65	Agree
4. I can troubleshoot technical problems (e.g., audio/video issues, connectivity problems) during HyFlex classes.	3.48	±0.75	Agree
5. I effectively integrate digital tools and software for ICT instruction (e.g., coding platforms, simulation tools, multimedia).	3.59	±0.65	Agree
6. I am comfortable using interactive technologies (e.g., digital whiteboards, augmented reality, virtual labs) in ICT lessons.	3.62	±0.81	Agree
7. I am confident in implementing data privacy and cybersecurity measures in online ICT teaching.	3.72	±0.69	Agree
Total	3.67	±0.52	Agree

Legend: Strongly Disagrees-1.00-1.79; Disagree-1.80-2.59; Neutral-2.60-3.39; Agree-3.40-4.19; Strongly Agree-4.20-5.00

Table 1 presents the technological challenges experienced by Grade 7 TLE–ICT teachers. The overall mean score of 3.67 (SD = 0.52) indicates that respondents generally agreed with the statements, suggesting a moderate to high level of technological competence alongside persistent challenges.

Teachers reported the highest agreement on proficiency in video conferencing platforms for ICT instruction (M = 3.78, SD = 0.65) and using learning management systems (M = 3.75, SD = 0.60). Competence in conducting synchronous and asynchronous lessons also received favorable ratings, indicating baseline digital readiness for HyFlex teaching.

Despite these competencies, qualitative responses revealed recurring technological constraints. Teachers consistently cited unreliable internet connectivity, limited access to digital devices, and insufficient technical support as major barriers. Several respondents emphasized that managing simultaneous online and face-to-face instruction significantly increased preparation time and workload. Difficulties in monitoring learner engagement and ensuring equitable assessment across modalities were also frequently reported.

Overall, the findings suggest that while teachers possess foundational technological skills, structural and infrastructural limitations persist as a significant challenge to the effective implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in HyFlex environments.

OBJECTIVE 2: Identify the key challenges faced by teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Pedagogical.

Table 2. Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Pedagogical Challenges

Statements	Mean	±SD	Description
1. I can design lesson plans that cater to both in-person and online students simultaneously.	3.90	±0.61	Agree
2. I am proficient in applying constructivist teaching strategies in HyFlex ICT lessons (e.g., problem-solving, collaboration, inquiry-based learning).	3.59	±0.75	Agree
3. I can effectively engage students in interactive learning activities regardless of their participation mode (face-to-face, online synchronous, online asynchronous).	3.76	±0.62	Agree
4. I can assess student learning through both digital and traditional assessment methods.	3.83	±0.75	Agree
5. I can manage classroom dynamics between online and in-person learners effectively.	3.72	±0.69	Agree
6. I provide personalized learning support for students struggling with ICT lessons in a HyFlex environment.	3.69	±0.75	Agree
7. I incorporate contextualized examples and real-world applications in ICT lessons to enhance student understanding.	3.86	±0.73	Agree
Total	3.76	±0.57	Agree

Legend: Strongly Disagree-1.00-1.79; Disagree-1.80-2.59; Neutral-2.60-3.39; Agree-3.40-4.19; Strongly Agree-4.20-5.00

The results indicate that educators predominantly concurred with the questions concerning Pedagogical Challenges, evidenced by an overall mean of 3.76 (SD = 0.57). This implies that although teachers are confident in using pedagogical strategies within the MATATAG Curriculum, they continue to face notable difficulties in effectively delivering ICT lessons in HyFlex (Hybrid-Flexible) settings.

The highest-rated item was the ability to design lesson plans for both in-person and online learners (M = 3.90, SD = 0.61). Teachers also reported strong agreement in incorporating contextualized examples and real-world applications into ICT lessons (M = 3.86, SD = 0.73).

However, qualitative findings highlighted implementation difficulties despite perceived pedagogical readiness. Teachers reported challenges in sustaining student engagement across modalities and balancing instructional attention between online and face-to-face learners. Assessment emerged as a particular concern; although teachers agreed they could use both digital and traditional assessment methods (M = 3.83, SD = 0.75), many expressed uncertainty regarding fairness and consistency in evaluating students across different learning modes.

The lowest mean score was observed for the application of constructivist teaching strategies in HyFlex settings (M = 3.59, SD = 0.75), indicating relative difficulty in implementing inquiry-based and problem-solving approaches within dual-modality classrooms.

OBJECTIVE 3: Identify the key challenges faced by teachers in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Content Knowledge

Table 3. Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in terms of Content Knowledge Challenges

Statements	Mean	±SD	Description
1. I am knowledgeable in teaching core ICT concepts (e.g., coding, networking, software applications).	3.67	±0.68	Agree
2. I can effectively teach emerging ICT trends (e.g., artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain).	3.64	±0.71	Agree
3. I am skilled in guiding students through hands-on ICT projects in both physical and online settings.	3.69	±0.68	Agree
4. I can adapt ICT content to different levels of student proficiency in a HyFlex environment.	3.66	±0.73	Agree
5. I integrate multimedia resources and interactive tools to enhance ICT content delivery.	3.66	±0.68	Agree
Total	3.66	±0.58	Agree

Legend: Strongly Disagree-1.00-1.79; Disagree-1.80-2.59; Neutral-2.60-3.39; Agree-3.40-4.19; Strongly Agree-4.20-5.00

Table 3 presents the findings related to challenges in content knowledge. The overall mean score of 3.66 (SD = 0.58) suggests that teachers generally perceive themselves as competent in ICT content delivery, though challenges remain in specific areas.

Teachers reported the highest confidence in guiding students through hands-on ICT projects in both physical and online settings (M = 3.69, SD = 0.68) and in teaching core ICT concepts such as coding and software applications (M = 3.67, SD = 0.68). These results indicate a strong grasp of content mastery in foundational ICT domains.

In contrast, teaching emerging ICT topics—including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and blockchain—received lower ratings (M = 3.64, SD = 0.71). Qualitative responses reinforced this finding, with teachers expressing the need for additional training and instructional resources related to advanced ICT fields.

Adapting ICT content to varying student proficiency levels in HyFlex environments (M = 3.66, SD = 0.73) also posed challenges. Teachers noted that content differentiation in hybrid settings requires extensive preparation and is heavily constrained by limited access to devices, internet connectivity, and updated software tools.

Across all domains, the results demonstrate that Grade 7 TLE-ICT teachers exhibit moderate to high levels of competence in technology use, pedagogy, and ICT content knowledge. However, the effectiveness of MATATAG Curriculum implementation is constrained by systemic challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to digital resources, and insufficient HyFlex-specific training. These challenges persist despite teachers' willingness and capacity to adapt instructional practices in hybrid learning contexts.

5. Conclusion

The researcher concludes by suggesting that there are multi-faceted, complex difficulties that Grade 7 TLE teachers encounter in teaching the MATATAG Curriculum, which have been influenced in part by their individual and institutional circumstances. The competencies of teachers with respect to technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge overlap with systemic barriers (e.g., inadequate resources, inadequate training, and poor support).

This blend creates a disconnect between school expectations and the classroom environment. However, teachers have shown resilience and adaptability by making the

lessons contextual, creatively deploying digital platforms, and balancing the demands of HyFlex in its delivery. But these initiatives alone can only do so much unless there are wider structural changes. Even our teachers themselves know that the kind of meaningful implementation is not only in their own work, but that in this respect it is also in their work in the form of new resources, fair training, and dependable institutional support.

Therefore, this study finds that in order to ensure the realization of the vision of the MATATAG Curriculum is successful, it is essential to take a comprehensive approach. Reforms cannot stop with building capacity individually for teachers; they must attend to systemic and contextual issues within education itself. By investing in teacher development, building up infrastructure, and support of leadership, the curriculum has more potential to move closer to fulfilling its promise to provide education for Filipinos that is relevant, interesting new future future-ready.

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