



MATATAG AGENDA: ANALYZING SCHOOL HEADS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES IN LAMBAYONG DISTRICT I

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ABSTRACT

This aimed to investigate the perspectives of school heads and teachers on the MATATAG agenda in District I of Lambayong, Division of Sultan Kudarat. The researcher used qualitative research designed specifically phenomenology nature of study, and purposively sampling technique was employed in the selection of school heads and teacher as participants. The data gathered was analyzed using thematic analysis to describe the information gathered and answer the problems of the study. The result revealed that school heads perceived that the Curriculum must align with the latest industry needs, and the programs, and activities projects in the school should aligned to the different objectives of every agenda. The curriculum centers on the pupils' holistic development, and makes the stakeholders aware of the MATATAG agenda. In terms of the teachers' perspectives on the agenda is that, the implementer always consider the learners' needs, and the teachers must solve first the problem of the reading abilities of the pupils. Also, teachers were always updated and prepared for ensuring that every learner had the access to quality education. Finally concluded that school heads and teachers facing tensions such as confusion, frustration, and powerlessness considering that head and teacher had crucial role in the implementation of agenda. Further, concluded that agenda prioritized teachers' training and development because of the critical role in curriculum reform to eradicate poor literacy and numeracy issues of the learners and quality of education.

Keywords: *School Heads, Teachers, MATATAG Perspectives, Lambayong*

INTRODUCTION

MATATAG Agenda aims to resolve basic education challenges, namely MA- Make the curriculum relevant to produce job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; TA- Take steps to accelerate delivery of basic education facilities and services; TA- Take good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusiveness learning, and positive learning environment and G- Give support to teachers to teach better (DepEd, 2023). In the 2023 General Appropriations Act, the education sector received the highest budget (Republic of the Philippines, 2023). However, these national budget allocations for basic education are not enough to cover all the requirements for achieving our MATATAG Agenda (DepEd, 2023).

According to Grauwe (2022), IIEP-UNESCO stated that the Education 2030 Agenda, which reflects the seven objectives, not only defines a global agenda; it also offers guidance to countries and challenges them. This agenda has a multitude of implications for the planning and management of the education sector. Education 2030 is ambitious. So was the Exploratory Factor Analysis framework. It can be argued that the major progress made at the global level and in several countries demonstrates the potential value of ambition (IIEP-UNESCO, 2022). Further, such ambition may help to bring people together, to mobilize resources, and to create enthusiasm. But there are still many countries in South Asia that are at risk of not achieving even the EFA goals by 2030 (Grauwe, 2022). It is essential therefore that the agenda is accompanied by an analysis of key lessons learned by countries that have made progress (UNESCO, 2022).

The overarching agenda highlights the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education, emphasizes the need for universal secondary education, and underscores the significance of strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training to develop essential skills (IIEP-UNESCO, 2022). While there is a well-supported emphasis on teachers, the rationale behind prioritizing investments in facilities and scholarships is less apparent, as these are not the primary factors contributing to the success of education systems (UNESCO, 2022).

The K-12 program is a part of international educational standards. The implementation of the K-12 Curriculum is still a challenge of basic education in the Philippines as the teaching forces in senior high school, professional growth of the teachers, school facilities, and classrooms are integral parts of the major problems in the Philippine Education Department (DepEd, 2023). At this time, MATATAG Agenda has become the concern of school heads, and teachers because they are the direct persons involved in this agenda (DepEd, 2023). DepEd- Sultan Kudarat Division covers a large number of districts along remote areas that are facing problems such as a lack of facilities, school buildings, and teachers to capacitate personnel in the field of teaching and sustain the needs of our 21st-century learners (DepEd-Sultan Kudarat Division, 2023). Some schools are striving to meet the standard requirement in education so that quality of education may also be achieved (DepEd-Sultan Kudarat Division, 2023). DepEd-Sultan Kudarat Division. (2023). Challenges in Basic Education in Remote Areas. Department of Education, Sultan Kudarat Division. This is why the researcher assessed and evaluated

the status of education in the District of Lambayong I, and its readiness to face challenges to solve it, then finally initiate intervention to meet the targets of the MATATAG Agenda in the Division of Sultan Kudarat.

Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the MATATAG Agenda: Analyzing school heads' and teachers' perspective in District I of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat Division.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perspective of school heads on MATATAG Agenda?
2. What is the perspective of teachers on MATATAG Agenda?
3. How do school heads' and teachers' ready and prepared on this MATATAG Agenda?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the behaviors and perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the MATATAG Agenda. Qualitative methods were chosen for their ability to provide rich, descriptive insights into participants' lived experiences. Among the various qualitative methods, the phenomenological research design was selected, as it is particularly effective in social and behavioral sciences when the goal is to understand complex phenomena such as perceptions and thoughts.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of school heads and teachers from District I of Lambayong. Criteria have been established to select individuals who have significant experiences within their roles and who are likely to provide insightful feedback on the MATATAG Agenda.

Sampling Technique

In this research, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who possess specific attributes that align with the study's objectives. Aiming for a sample size of 5 to 10 participants enables the study to remain focused while ensuring a comprehensive collection of data. The smaller sample size fosters an intimate exploration of the school heads' and teachers' perspectives and experiences with the MATATAG Agenda, providing richness and depth to the resulting analysis.

Data Gathering Instrument

The collection and analysis of data on participants' perspectives were facilitated through a self-made structured survey carefully constructed and developed for this study. The survey was designed to elicit rich, detailed information about the participants' views on the MATATAG Agenda.

Additionally, the survey was validated using the validation tool provided by East-West Mindanao College Inc. This validation process ensured that the survey effectively measured the intended constructs and met the necessary standards for reliability and validity.

Upon approval by the evaluation panels and validation through the East-West Mindanao College Inc. validation tool, the researcher was authorized to administer the developed survey. Before data collection, ethical clearance was sought from the East-West Research Ethics Committee (EREC) to ensure that the research adhered to ethical standards, including participant consent, confidentiality, and protection of participant rights.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the process of data collection, the researcher sought permission with notification from her research adviser, the Graduate School Dean, and the Schools Division Superintendent of Sultan Kudarat Division. After obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher meticulously coordinated with the school principal to schedule in-depth interviews with the participants at convenient times, ensuring minimal disruption to their regular academic activities. The researcher took great care to build rapport with the participants, explaining the purpose and significance of the study to encourage open and honest communication.

During the interviews, the researcher used audio recordings to capture the participants' responses accurately, ensuring that every detail was documented for subsequent analysis. The use of audio recordings allowed the researcher to focus on the conversation and engage more fully with the participants, fostering a more natural and comprehensive dialogue. These recordings were later transcribed verbatim to maintain the integrity of the participants' responses. The transcriptions were then reviewed and cross-checked for accuracy, ensuring that the data reflected the true sentiments and insights shared by the participants. This careful and systematic approach to data collection ensured the reliability and validity of the research findings.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative data collected from the participants, comprising interviews and focus group transcripts. This method allowed for the identification of recurring patterns of meaning within the dataset, enabling a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives on the MATATAG Agenda.

Following data collection, the transcripts were systematically reviewed to identify common themes and patterns emerging from the participants' responses which patterned after the study of Ngag (2023). Through an iterative process of coding and categorization, key themes were identified, reflecting the participants' perceptions, concerns, and insights regarding the agenda.

The analysis was guided by Flick's (2014) framework for thematic analysis, which provided a structured approach to organizing and interpreting the data. Themes were identified based on their frequency, relevance, and significance to the research objectives, ensuring that the analysis captured the essence of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Scope and Limitations

This study focused on the new and updated agenda of the VP of the Philippines Sarah Z. Duterte, the DepEd MATATAG Agenda specifically on the perspectives of school heads and teachers in the implementation of agenda. The researcher was not evaluated the implementation because the program is still on the process of implementation. However, the focused was on the individual perspectives of school heads' and teachers' on this agenda despite of unresolved problem in education in the country.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

MATATAG Agenda aims to resolve basic education challenges, namely MA- Make the curriculum relevant to produce job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; TA-Take steps to accelerate delivery of basic education facilities and services; TA-Take good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusiveness learning, and positive learning environment and G- Give support to teachers to teach better. This study employed a qualitative-phenomenological research design to explore the perspectives of the school heads and teachers in Lambayong I.

The following were the findings of the study:

Firstly, there's a clear emphasis on aligning the curriculum with industry needs to enhance skill application. School heads in Lambayong District I stress the importance of updating the curriculum to ensure it meets contemporary industry demands, thus facilitating the practical application of skills acquired by learners.

Secondly, school heads underscore the significance of commitment and dedication to improving the educational system. They advocate for the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum to provide learners with the flexibility and adaptability needed

for the evolving job market, demonstrating a commitment to educational excellence and continuous improvement.

Lastly, there's a recognition of the crucial role of teacher preparation for successful curriculum implementation. School heads prioritize ensuring teachers are adequately prepared for the implementation of the MATATAG Agenda, including providing instructional materials and organizing training sessions to align with the demands of the new curriculum.

According to Cobo (2013), there is a growing demand for educational systems to adapt to the changing requirements of the labor market, ensuring that learners are equipped with relevant and up-to-date skills. This alignment is crucial for preparing students to meet contemporary industry demands, thus facilitating their transition from education to employment.

As to the perspectives of teachers on the MATATAG Agenda, several major findings emerge:

1. Teachers perceive the MATATAG Agenda as emphasizing holistic student development, focusing not only on academic achievement but also on essential life skills and values.

2. Teachers recognize the transformative nature of the curriculum, which prioritizes the holistic development of learners. Additionally, teachers observe that the MATATAG curriculum encourages student-centered learning approaches, promoting greater student engagement and ownership of learning processes.

3. Teachers appreciate the curriculum's focus on active student involvement and empowerment. Furthermore, teachers value the emphasis of the MATATAG Agenda on providing diverse learning opportunities tailored to meet individual student needs and interests. They recognize the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of all learners.

A study by Smith (2021) supports the findings regarding the perspectives of teachers on the MATATAG Agenda. Smith's research emphasizes the importance of holistic student development in educational curricula. It highlights how teachers value curriculums that not only focus on academic achievement but also incorporate essential life skills and values, which align with the core principles of the MATATAG Agenda. The study further underscores the transformative potential of such curriculums, noting that student-centered learning approaches can significantly enhance student engagement and ownership of the learning process. Moreover, Smith's findings indicate that teachers appreciate curriculums that provide diverse learning opportunities, tailored to meet the individual needs and interests of students, thereby fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

On the preparations of school heads and teachers for the implementation of the MATATAG Agenda, the following were observed:

1. There's collaborative preparation for curriculum alignment, with school heads and teachers actively engaged in planning sessions to ensure alignment between teaching practices and the objectives of the MATATAG Agenda.

2. There's a focus on professional development for MATATAG Agenda implementation, with teachers participating in workshops and training sessions to enhance their pedagogical skills and familiarity with the new curriculum framework. Additionally, teachers are diligently working to develop and adapt instructional materials tailored to the requirements of the MATATAG curriculum, demonstrating a commitment to providing relevant and effective teaching resources.

3. School heads and teachers are fostering strong partnerships with parents and the local community to garner support and engagement in implementing the MATATAG Agenda, recognizing the importance of collaborative efforts in promoting educational excellence and ensuring the success of curriculum implementation.

One supporting study that aligns with these observations is from Fullan (2007), who emphasizes the importance of collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) in educational reform. Fullan argues that successful implementation of new curricula and educational reforms depends significantly on the active involvement and collaboration of school leaders and teachers. The study highlights the need for continuous professional development and community involvement to ensure effective curriculum alignment and improved teaching practices.

Fullan (2007) supports the observed preparations of school heads and teachers for the implementation of the MATATAG Agenda, emphasizing collaborative planning sessions for curriculum alignment, professional development workshops, and strong community partnerships as critical factors for successful educational reform.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded the following:

1. The perspectives of school heads in Lambayong District I underscore the importance of aligning the curriculum with industry needs, emphasizing commitment to improving the educational system, and prioritizing teacher preparation for successful curriculum implementation.

2. The teachers in Lambayong District I view the MATATAG Agenda as transformative, prioritizing holistic student development by integrating essential life skills with academic achievement. They commend its promotion of student-centered learning, enhancing engagement and ownership of learning. Additionally, they value its emphasis on diversity and inclusivity, tailored to meet individual student needs. Lastly, teachers recognize the need for ongoing professional development to effectively implement the

agenda, ensuring adaptation to evolving educational trends and seamless curriculum integration.

3. Lambayong District I school heads and teachers are actively preparing for MATATAG Agenda implementation in the K to 10 Curriculum. They engage in collaborative planning, attend professional development workshops, and develop tailored instructional materials. Additionally, they align teaching practices with agenda objectives and foster partnerships to promote educational excellence.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study based on the findings:

1. DepEd may provide continued training and professional development opportunities for both school heads and teachers to enhance their readiness and effectiveness in implementing the MATATAG Agenda.
 2. Teachers and school heads may also initiate collaboration among stakeholders to ensure alignment with MATATAG objectives and holistic development of students.
 3. The school may continuously monitor and evaluate curriculum implementation to address emerging challenges and ensure its effectiveness.
 4. Future researchers may conduct further investigation to understand further the readiness and perceptions of teachers about the MATATAG Agenda.
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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the study to ensure the protection and respect of all participants involved. Initially, participants were fully informed about the nature and objectives of the research, and their voluntary participation was emphasized. They were provided with comprehensive details about the study's purpose, their role as participants, and the specific ways in which their responses would be utilized. This information was communicated clearly and thoroughly to guarantee that participants had a complete understanding of the research before consenting.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant, with assurances that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. It was made explicit that all collected data would be used solely for academic purposes, and measures were put in place to ensure that the data would not be used against the participants or the organization in any manner.

This approach ensured transparency and respected the autonomy of the participants. By upholding these ethical standards, the study maintained the integrity and trustworthiness of the research process, fostering an environment of trust and respect between the researcher and the participants.

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