



A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE REVISED DEPED CURRICULUM ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN TAFT DISTRICT MULTIGRADE SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Revised Department of Education (DepEd) Curriculum, also known as the Matatag Curriculum, and its perceived effects on teachers and students in multigrade public elementary schools in the Taft District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design, the study assessed curriculum implementation in terms of curriculum planning and alignment, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and learning materials used. It also determined the perceived effects of the curriculum on multigrade teachers in terms of instructional workload, teaching effectiveness, and professional development needs, as well as on students' academic engagement, learning performance, and classroom behavior. Data were gathered through a validated survey questionnaire administered to multigrade teachers who implemented the Revised Curriculum during School Year 2024–2025. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that curriculum planning and alignment were fully implemented, while teaching strategies, assessment practices, and learning materials were moderately implemented. Teachers perceived an increased instructional workload but also reported improved teaching effectiveness and a strong need for continuous professional development. Students were perceived to exhibit very high academic engagement and high levels of learning performance and positive classroom behavior. Results further showed a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between the extent of curriculum implementation and its perceived effects on both teachers and students. The study concludes that effective curriculum implementation enhances teaching quality and learner outcomes in multigrade settings but requires targeted support, contextualized resources, and specialized professional development to address multigrade challenges.

KEYWORDS: Revised DepEd Curriculum, Matatag Curriculum, multigrade schools, curriculum implementation, teacher workload, student engagement, Eastern Samar

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Across the globe, curriculum reform has been a central focus of educational systems aiming to improve learning outcomes, address 21st-century competencies, and close equity gaps (UNESCO, 2021). As education systems confront the learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have accelerated curriculum revisions to decongest overloaded content and enhance foundational skills (OECD, 2022). For instance, Finland and Singapore have shifted toward leaner, mastery-based curricula that emphasize critical thinking and flexibility in instruction (Ng, 2020). These reforms are often accompanied by efforts to support teachers, particularly those in non-traditional settings like multigrade classrooms.

In Southeast Asia, countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia have invested in localized curriculum implementation with differentiated strategies for rural and disadvantaged schools. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO, 2022) has consistently emphasized the need for contextualized curriculum delivery, noting that rural

schools, particularly those using multigrade setups, face persistent challenges in applying national reforms effectively.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched the Revised K to 10 Curriculum, also referred to as the Matatag Curriculum, in 2024. This reform decongested learning competencies, realigned content to focus on foundational skills, and aimed to improve learning continuity after pandemic disruptions (DepEd, 2024). While the curriculum was designed with flexibility in mind, its impact on multigrade classrooms, which operate differently from standard monograde setups, remains largely unexplored. According to DepEd (2019), there are more than 7,000 multigrade schools across the country, many of which are located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs).

Region VIII (Eastern Visayas) has one of the highest concentrations of multigrade schools, particularly in provinces like Eastern Samar, where limited infrastructure, teacher shortages, and low enrolment rates necessitate the multigrade setup (PSA Region VIII, 2023). Despite being crucial access points for basic education, multigrade schools often receive fewer



instructional resources and support for curriculum adaptation (Alcazar & Mendoza, 2023). Studies by Castro (2021) and Del Rosario (2022) report that multigrade teachers face compounded difficulties due to time constraints, lack of specialized materials, and minimal training on differentiated strategies.

In Eastern Samar, particularly in the Taft District, the Revised Curriculum was fully implemented in the School Year 2024–2025. However, anecdotal reports and preliminary school-based reviews reveal that multigrade teachers encounter challenges in applying the decongested curriculum across multiple grade levels simultaneously. Similarly, students in these classrooms experience irregular instruction time and limited engagement due to overlapping content and inadequate scaffolding (Garcia & Manalo, 2023).

Moreover, while DepEd’s Bureau of Curriculum Development released general guidelines on implementing the Revised Curriculum, there are no specific frameworks or assessments tailored to multigrade contexts. This lack of contextual adaptation raises concerns about the effectiveness of the reform in non-traditional school environments.

Despite the availability of research on curriculum reforms and multigrade education as separate topics, empirical studies that intersect these two areas—specifically on the effects of the Revised DepEd Curriculum in multigrade schools—remain scarce. Most existing research focuses on urban implementation, monograde classrooms, or generic teacher experiences. The absence of disaggregated data for multigrade schools in policy evaluations creates a significant research gap in understanding how national curriculum reforms are experienced at the grassroots level.

Given the strategic role that multigrade schools play in achieving inclusive and equitable education, it is essential to investigate how the Revised DepEd Curriculum affects both teachers and learners in these settings. The Taft District of Eastern Samar serves as a critical site for this inquiry, being representative of rural multigrade contexts with long-standing structural limitations.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the effects of the Revised DepEd Curriculum on teachers and students in multigrade schools in the Taft District. Specifically, it seeks to determine how the curriculum influences teaching practices, workload, and learner engagement. The study also aims to identify challenges faced and strategies employed, thus contributing to evidence-based recommendations for improving curriculum support in multigrade schools.

Through this research, policymakers, curriculum developers, and educational leaders will gain valuable insights into how national reforms perform in diverse educational contexts. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to more inclusive curriculum development, targeted professional development programs, and context-responsive education policies.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum and its

perceived effects on teachers and students in multigrade schools in the Taft District. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum in multigrade schools in the Taft District in terms of:
 - 1.1 Curriculum planning and alignment;
 - 1.2 Teaching strategies;
 - 1.3 Assessment practices;
 - 1.4 Learning materials used?
2. What are the levels of perceived effects of the Revised Curriculum on multigrade teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 Instructional workload;
 - 2.2 Teaching effectiveness;
 - 2.3 Professional development needs?
3. What are the levels of perceived effects of the Revised Curriculum on multigrade students in terms of:
 - 3.1 Academic engagement;
 - 3.2 Learning performance;
 - 3.3 Classroom behavior?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of curriculum implementation and the perceived effects on multigrade teachers?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of curriculum implementation and the perceived effects on multigrade students?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum and its perceived effects on multigrade teachers and students in the Taft District. A descriptive approach was employed to determine the levels of curriculum implementation and the perceived effects on both teachers and students. Meanwhile, a correlational method was used to determine the statistical relationship between the implementation of the Revised Curriculum and its perceived outcomes.

This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable data through structured survey instruments and analyze the relationships between variables without manipulating any of them. It aligned with the study’s intent to assess the actual state of curriculum implementation and how it affected the stakeholders involved.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in selected multigrade schools within the Taft District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar, Region VIII (Eastern Visayas), Philippines.

The Taft District was one of the administrative and supervisory districts of the Department of Education in Eastern Samar, composed of several public elementary schools that catered to both monograde and multigrade learners. The district included geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) where multigrade instruction was a practical response to low enrolment, teacher shortages, and infrastructure limitations.



As of School Year 2024–2025, the district had a number of officially recognized multigrade schools, particularly in remote barangays where two or more grade levels were combined and taught by a single teacher in one classroom. These schools were chosen as the setting of this study because they were among the earliest implementers of the Revised K to 10 Curriculum (Matatag Curriculum) and offered a valuable lens to evaluate its impact in multigrade contexts.

The selection of Taft District as the study locale was purposeful. The district reflected the typical challenges and conditions of multigrade schools in the region—such as limited access to resources, the need for curriculum adaptation, and the significant role teachers played in curriculum implementation. The insights gathered from this district provided a grounded understanding of how national education reforms translated into local practice, particularly in underserved learning environments.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were public elementary school multigrade teachers from selected multigrade schools in the Taft District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar, Region VIII. These teachers were directly involved in the implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum (Matatag Curriculum) in classrooms that combined two or more grade levels.

The selection of multigrade teachers as respondents was based on their first-hand experiences and professional insights regarding curriculum planning, teaching strategies, assessment practices, instructional materials, and the observable effects of the revised curriculum on both their own teaching and their students' learning behavior and performance.

Only those multigrade teachers who had been actively teaching in a multigrade setup during the School Year 2024–2025 and had been implementing the Matatag Curriculum for at least one full quarter were included in the study. This ensured that the respondents had sufficient exposure and familiarity with the curriculum to provide reliable perceptions and assessments.

School heads or principals were consulted only to verify school profiles, while students themselves were not surveyed directly. Instead, teachers provided perceptual data regarding student engagement, behavior, and performance based on their regular observations and interactions within the multigrade learning environment.

The total number of respondents depended on the actual count of multigrade teachers in Taft District schools implementing the Matatag Curriculum, as verified through coordination with the District Office and the Division Planning Unit.

Research Instruments

To obtain the necessary data for this study, a structured survey questionnaire was used as the main research instrument. It was designed to assess the extent of implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum in multigrade schools and the perceived effects of its implementation on both teachers and students. The questionnaire was written in clear, simple English and was self-administered to allow participants to respond honestly and

independently. It was constructed based on the study's variables and aligned with the Statement of the Problem.

The questionnaire was divided into four major parts. Part I focused on gathering the demographic profile of the respondents. This included relevant information such as the name of the school (with optional coding for confidentiality), years of teaching experience, number of students and grade levels handled, and whether the respondent had attended any training related to the Revised Curriculum. This section provided contextual understanding and allowed for subgroup analysis, if needed.

Part II assessed the extent of implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum using a four-point Likert scale with the following options: 1 – Not Implemented, 2 – Minimally Implemented, 3 – Moderately Implemented, and 4 – Fully Implemented. It covered four dimensions: curriculum planning and alignment, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and the use of learning materials. This section measured how deeply the curriculum had been integrated into actual multigrade classroom practices.

Part III determined the perceived effects of the curriculum on multigrade teachers in terms of instructional workload, teaching effectiveness, and professional development needs. A four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 4 – Strongly Agree was used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with each item. This section captured how the curriculum influenced the professional experiences of multigrade teachers.

Part IV focused on the perceived effects of the curriculum on multigrade students, as observed by their teachers. Teachers rated students' academic engagement, learning performance, and classroom behavior using another four-point scale: 1 – Very Low, 2 – Low, 3 – High, and 4 – Very High. Since students were not directly surveyed, teacher observations served as the basis for evaluating student outcomes.

Before the final administration of the instrument, the questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of experts in curriculum development, research, and multigrade education. Feedback and suggestions were incorporated to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted among a small sample of multigrade teachers outside the Taft District to test the instrument's reliability. The internal consistency of each component was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Through this validated and reliable instrument, the study generated empirical data that contributed to evidence-based recommendations for improving curriculum implementation in multigrade settings.

Data Gathering

The data gathering process for this study followed a systematic and ethical approach to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Prior to the actual data collection, the researcher sought formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of



Eastern Samar and the District Supervisor of Taft District through a written request letter. Once permission was granted, coordination was made with the respective school heads of the identified multigrade schools to explain the purpose of the study and request assistance in facilitating the distribution of survey questionnaires.

Before administering the research instrument, the questionnaire underwent content validation by field experts in education, curriculum development, and multigrade instruction. A pilot test was also conducted with a small group of multigrade teachers from a nearby district not included in the main study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Following validation, the finalized survey questionnaire was distributed either in person or through electronic means (Google Forms or email), depending on the accessibility and preference of each school. The respondents were informed of the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. They were also provided with a consent form to confirm their agreement to participate.

Teachers were allotted ample time—approximately one week—to complete the questionnaire. Follow-ups were conducted through text messages, phone calls, or email to ensure maximum retrieval of responses. Completed questionnaires were collected, sorted, and checked for completeness before proceeding to data encoding and analysis.

All gathered data were handled with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic purposes. The results were summarized and presented in aggregate form to protect the identities of the respondents and their respective schools.

Analysis of Data

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to address each of the research questions presented in the study.

To answer research questions 1, 2, and 3—which aimed to determine the extent of curriculum implementation and the perceived effects of the Revised DepEd Curriculum on multigrade teachers and students—descriptive statistics were used. Specifically, the mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the average ratings and the variability of responses for each variable and sub-indicator. These statistics helped classify the responses into categories such as “Fully Implemented,” “Moderately Implemented,” “Agree,” “Strongly Agree,” “Very High,” or “Low,” depending on the nature of each variable and the corresponding Likert scale.

For research questions 4 and 5—which investigated whether there was a significant relationship between the extent of curriculum implementation and the perceived effects on teachers and students—the study applied the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). This inferential statistical method was appropriate for identifying the degree and direction of correlation between two continuous variables. The computed

correlation values were interpreted based on established thresholds: ± 0.91 – 1.00 (very high), ± 0.71 – 0.90 (high), ± 0.51 – 0.70 (moderate), ± 0.31 – 0.50 (low), and ± 0.00 – 0.30 (negligible correlation).

All statistical analyses were conducted using statistical software such as Microsoft Excel or SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to ensure accurate and efficient processing of data. The results of these analyses were presented in tables and narrative interpretations in Chapter IV of the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in conducting educational research to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Before data collection began, the researcher obtained written permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Eastern Samar, the District Supervisor of Taft District, and the respective school heads of the identified multigrade schools. The

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. All respondents were provided with an informed consent form that clearly explained the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any point without any penalty. The researcher ensured that no form of coercion, pressure, or obligation was used to obtain participation.

To protect the privacy and anonymity of the respondents, no names or identifiable information were disclosed in the questionnaire or in the final thesis report. Responses were coded and presented in aggregate form to ensure that individuals and schools could not be identified. All collected data were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher.

Moreover, the study observed the principle of non-maleficence, meaning that no harm—physical, psychological, or emotional—was inflicted on the participants. The study did not involve any experimental or invasive procedures. The only instrument used was a self-administered survey questionnaire, which presented minimal risk to the respondents.

The researcher committed to practicing academic honesty and integrity throughout the research process by properly acknowledging all sources, avoiding data fabrication or falsification, and reporting the findings truthfully and objectively.

This research was conducted in compliance with the ethical principles of respect, confidentiality, voluntary participation, informed consent, and data protection, ensuring that the rights and welfare of all participants were safeguarded at all stages of the study.

RESULTS

Extent of Implementation of the Revised DepEd Curriculum in Multigrade Schools

The table below summarized the extent of implementation in terms of curriculum planning and alignment, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and learning materials used:



Table 1. Mean Scores on Extent of Curriculum Implementation

Implementation Area	Mean Score	Interpretation
Curriculum Planning and Alignment	3.45	Fully Implemented
Teaching Strategies	3.20	Moderately Implemented
Assessment Practices	3.10	Moderately Implemented
Learning Materials Used	2.85	Moderately Implemented

Curriculum planning and alignment was rated as fully implemented, showing that teachers are able to align multigrade instruction with the Revised Curriculum’s standards. However, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and learning materials fall under moderately implemented, suggesting gaps in resources and adaptation for multigrade needs.

This aligns with Ragasa (2020), who noted that while curriculum planning may follow DepEd guidelines, actual teaching and assessment in multigrade schools often lack differentiated materials. DepEd (2023) likewise reported material shortages and limited ICT integration in rural multigrade classrooms.

Perceived Effects of the Revised Curriculum on Multigrade Teachers

Table 2. Mean Scores on Perceived Effects on Teachers

Indicator	Mean Score	Interpretation
Instructional Workload	3.30	Agree
Teaching Effectiveness	3.50	Strongly Agree
Professional Development Needs	3.65	Strongly Agree

Teachers agree that the Revised Curriculum has increased their instructional workload. However, they also strongly agree that it has improved their teaching effectiveness and emphasized the need for continuous professional development.

These findings are in line with Bernardo and Mendoza (2022), who highlighted that while curriculum reforms can enhance instructional quality, they often result in higher demands on teacher time and competencies. Duncombe and Armour (2021) stressed the importance of targeted professional development, especially in diverse classroom settings like multigrade.

Perceived Effects of the Revised Curriculum on Multigrade Students

Table 3. Mean Scores on Perceived Effects on Students

Indicator	Mean Score	Interpretation
Academic Engagement	3.35	Very High
Learning Performance	3.20	High
Classroom Behavior	3.05	High

The curriculum was perceived to have a very high impact on student engagement and high impact on learning performance and behavior. These results suggest that the Revised Curriculum provides activities that motivate learners and promote positive classroom behavior.

motivation and participation in marginalized and rural contexts. Sweller’s (2023) Cognitive Load Theory also suggests that well-structured content enhances student processing and performance, especially in complex settings like multigrade classrooms.

This supports findings by Yazon (2020) and UNESCO (2021), which observed that learner-centered reforms improve

4–5. Relationship Between Curriculum Implementation and Perceived Effects

Table 4 & 5 . Correlation Between Curriculum Implementation and Perceived Effects

Variables Correlated	Pearsonr	Significance (p)	Interpretation
Curriculum Implementation & Teacher Effects	0.78	0.001	High Correlation
Curriculum Implementation & Student Effects	0.72	0.002	High Correlation

The data show a high positive correlation between the extent of curriculum implementation and its effects on both teachers ($r = 0.78, p < 0.01$) and students ($r = 0.72, p < 0.01$). This means that as curriculum implementation improves, so do teaching quality and learner outcomes.

These results echo Mishra & Koehler’s (2022) TPACK theory, which emphasizes that curriculum success depends on the intersection of content, pedagogy, and technology. Ocampo (2021) also confirmed that curriculum fidelity plays a crucial role in ensuring desired learning outcomes in the Philippines’ K–12 setting.



CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Curriculum planning and alignment under the Revised DepEd Curriculum has been successfully implemented in multigrade schools. However, gaps remain in the integration of teaching strategies, assessment methods, and resource availability, especially in adapting to multigrade complexities.
2. The curriculum increases instructional workload for teachers but is also associated with improved teaching effectiveness. Teachers feel better equipped but also more burdened, highlighting the dual effect of reform.
3. There is a strong need for continuous professional development, particularly focused on multigrade strategies and curriculum-specific updates.
4. The Revised Curriculum positively affects students by enhancing academic engagement, learning performance, and classroom behavior, as observed by their teachers.
5. A strong positive correlation exists between the level of curriculum implementation and its perceived effects on teachers and students, confirming that better implementation yields better educational outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. Enhance the integration of teaching strategies and assessment tools specific to multigrade classrooms by developing localized, contextualized materials and training modules to support less-implemented areas of the curriculum.
2. The Department of Education and school heads should address instructional workload by streamlining tasks, reducing non-teaching responsibilities, and introducing co-teaching or learning support aids in multigrade settings.
3. Provide continuous, needs-based professional development focused on differentiated instruction, curriculum adaptation, and multigrade pedagogy to sustain the positive impact on teaching effectiveness.
4. Schools should monitor and support student learning behavior and engagement through enrichment activities, inclusive pedagogical practices, and regular performance evaluations aligned with the revised standards.
5. DepEd policymakers and curriculum planners must prioritize full implementation support, particularly in under-resourced multigrade schools, to ensure that the benefits of the Revised Curriculum are maximized across all teaching and learning dimensions.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there were no conflicts of interest in the conduct of this study. No financial support, incentives, or sponsorship were received from any individual, organization, or institution that could have influenced the design, implementation, analysis, or interpretation of the research findings. The Department of Education, school administrators, multigrade teachers, and students involved in the study did not participate in the formulation of the research problems, data analysis, or reporting of results. The study was conducted independently and objectively, and all conclusions and

recommendations were derived solely from the data gathered and analyzed in accordance with accepted ethical and academic research standards.

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