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PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE MATATAG CURRICULUM: QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE ON THE ROLE OF READINESS AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

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2. ABSTRACT

This quantitative study examined the levels of teachers' readiness and pedagogical practices and their predictive influence on teachers' competence in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in the Municipality of Banisilan, Cotabato, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-correlational design, survey data were collected from 311 public elementary and secondary school teachers through complete enumeration. The questionnaire assessed readiness in terms of attitudes, teaching experience, and access to learning resources; pedagogical practices in terms of classroom management, instructional methods, technology integration, and assessment strategies; and competence in terms of self-direction, empathy, and cooperation — all measured on a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), Spearman correlation, and multiple linear regression. Results revealed that teachers demonstrated high levels of readiness (attitudes: M = 4.63; teaching experience: M = 4.55; learning resources: M = 4.56) and highly practiced pedagogical approaches (classroom management: M = 4.71; instructional methods: M = 4.65; technology integration: M = 4.59; assessment strategies: M = 4.65). Competence dimensions were similarly high (self-direction: M = 4.65; empathy: M = 4.73; cooperation: M = 4.70). Correlation analyses confirmed significant positive relationships between readiness, pedagogical practices, and all three competency dimensions. Regression analyses further showed that teaching experience and learning resources

significantly predicted self-direction ($R^2 = 0.499$); attitude and teaching experience predicted empathy ($R^2 = 0.402$); while classroom management, technology integration, and assessment strategies were the strongest predictors of all competence dimensions. These findings affirm that readiness and pedagogical practices are meaningful predictors of teacher competence in MATATAG Curriculum implementation.

3. KEYWORDS: MATATAG Curriculum, Teacher Readiness, Pedagogical Practices, Teacher Competence, Self-Direction, Empathy, Cooperation, Multiple Regression, Curriculum Implementation, Philippines.

4. INTRODUCTION

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant educational reform in the Philippines, emphasizing a streamlined, learner-centered, and holistic approach that integrates academic excellence, character formation, and socio-emotional development. Effective implementation requires teachers who are not only adequately prepared in terms of knowledge and attitude, but also equipped with instructional strategies that respond to the curriculum's competency-based framework. In the Municipality of Banisilan, Cotabato — a predominantly rural district with diverse learner populations — these demands present particularly salient challenges for frontline educators.

Prior studies have examined teacher readiness as a determinant of curriculum adoption (Endot, 2021) and pedagogical practices in relation to instructional quality (Evangelio & Escote, 2024). Others have treated teacher competence as an outcome linked to general curriculum delivery (Herrera et al., 2025; Jumawan & Fabiania, 2025). However, the combined predictive influence of readiness and pedagogical practices on competence within the specific context of the MATATAG Curriculum has not been adequately modeled. This study addresses this gap.

Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), which foregrounds autonomy, competence, and relatedness as motivational foundations for professional behavior, this study posits that teachers who experience self-directedness, empathetic engagement, and cooperative professional practice are better positioned to internalize and implement reform mandates. The study specifically aimed to: (1) determine teachers' levels of readiness, pedagogical practices, and competence; (2) examine the relationships among these variables; and (3) identify the predictors of teacher competence in MATATAG Curriculum implementation.

5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design and Participants

A descriptive-correlational research design was employed. The study population comprised all 311 public elementary and secondary school teachers in the three districts of Banisilan, Cotabato (Central: 105; North: 100; South: 106) who were actively implementing the MATATAG Curriculum during School Year 2025–2026. Complete enumeration was used, ensuring that all eligible teachers were represented and minimizing sampling error.

Research Instrument

A validated survey questionnaire adapted from Mercado (2025) was used. It consisted of three parts measuring: (1) teachers' readiness (attitudes, teaching experience, and learning resources); (2) pedagogical practices (classroom management, instructional methods, technology integration, and assessment strategies); and (3) teacher competence (self-direction, empathy, and cooperation). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree/Least Ready/Least Practiced/Least Competent) to 5 (Strongly Agree/Much Ready/Highly Practiced/Highly Competent). The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing prior to deployment.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to profile each variable. Spearman's rank-order correlation assessed the strength and direction of bivariate relationships among readiness, pedagogical practices, and competency dimensions. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the extent to which readiness and pedagogical practice dimensions individually predicted each competency outcome (self-direction, empathy, cooperation), controlling for all other dimensions in the model. Significance was tested at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Readiness in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum

Table 1 summarizes the mean scores for all readiness dimensions.

Table 1. Summary of Teachers' Readiness Levels by Dimension.

Readiness Dimension	Overall Mean	SD	Interpretation
Attitudes	4.63	—	Much Ready
Teaching Experience	4.55	—	Much Ready
Learning Resources	4.56	—	Much Ready

Across all three readiness dimensions, teachers scored within the Much Ready range (4.21–5.00). Attitude emerged as the highest dimension (M = 4.63), with accepting feedback and improving teaching practice rated highest (M = 4.70) and confidence in implementing new strategies rated lowest (M = 4.56). Teaching experience yielded a mean of 4.55, with knowing that experience has shaped attitudes toward new curricula rated highest (M = 4.60) and classroom differentiation management rated lowest (M = 4.48). Learning resources registered M = 4.56, with utilization of available resources rated highest (M = 4.63) and access to textbooks and digital tools rated lowest (M = 4.40). These findings align with Lanuza et al. (2023), who found that positive attitudes toward curriculum relevance motivate instructional commitment. The slightly lower score in classroom differentiation management resonates with Elardo (2025), who noted that moderate readiness in differentiated instruction remains a persistent gap even among experienced teachers.

Teachers' Pedagogical Practices

Table 2 presents mean scores for pedagogical practice dimensions.

Table 2. Summary of Teachers' Pedagogical Practice Levels by Dimension.

Pedagogical Practice Dimension	Overall Mean	SD	Interpretation
Classroom Management	4.71	—	Highly Practiced
Instructional Methods	4.65	—	Highly Practiced
Technology Integration	4.59	—	Highly Practiced
Assessment Strategies	4.65	—	Highly Practiced

All pedagogical practice dimensions fell within the Highly Practiced range. Classroom management recorded the highest mean (M = 4.71), with rewarding and encouraging student participation rated at M = 5.00 — a ceiling score indicating universal adoption of positive reinforcement. Instructional methods (M = 4.65) and assessment strategies (M = 4.65) were jointly rated second, while technology integration (M = 4.59) was the lowest, though still highly practiced. The strong standing of classroom management aligns with Garcia et al. (2022) and Tabia et al. (2023), who identified structured classroom routines as foundational to learner-centered curriculum delivery. The strong assessment strategy scores corroborate Casilao et al. (2025), who found that varied, feedback-driven assessment practices are essential to competency-based curriculum implementation.

Teachers' Competence in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum

Table 3 summarizes competence dimension scores.

Table 3. Summary of Teachers' Competence Levels by Dimension.

Competence Dimension	Overall Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Direction	4.65	—	Highly Competent
Empathy	4.73	—	Highly Competent
Cooperation	4.70	—	Highly Competent

Teachers scored consistently high across all three competence dimensions. Empathy registered the highest mean (M = 4.73), with encouraging open communication about student feelings rated highest (M = 4.77). Cooperation followed at M = 4.70, with participation in collaborative professional development rated highest (M = 4.76). Self-direction registered M = 4.65, with initiative, goal-setting, resource-seeking, and reflective practice all rated at M = 4.66. These results are consistent with Siloterio and Cajandig (2025) and Lanuza et al. (2023), who found that personal and interpersonal competencies are critical to navigating reform demands.

Correlation Between Readiness and Competence

All readiness dimensions were significantly correlated with all competence dimensions at the 0.01 level (Table 4).

Table 4. Spearman Correlation: Teachers' Readiness and Competence. (** p < 0.01)

Readiness	Self-Direction (r)	Empathy (r)	Cooperation (r)
Attitude	0.563**	0.537**	0.512**
Teaching Experience	0.668**	0.618**	0.542**
Learning Resources	0.649**	0.531**	0.509**

Teaching experience demonstrated the strongest correlations with all three competence dimensions, particularly self-direction (r = 0.668), indicating that accumulated instructional experience fosters independent professional growth most powerfully. Learning resources showed the second strongest correlation with self-direction (r = 0.649), affirming that resource availability provides the informational scaffolding for autonomous practice. These findings are consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who reported that teachers with greater experience and resource access demonstrate higher preparedness across self-directed, empathetic, and collaborative dimensions.

Influence of Readiness on Competence: Regression Results

Multiple regression analyses identified significant predictors of each competence dimension (Table 5).

Table 5. Regression Results: Readiness as Predictors of Teacher Competence (** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05)

Dependent Variable	Significant Predictor(s)	β	p	R^2
Self-Direction	Teaching Experience	0.359	0.000**	0.499
	Learning Resources	0.285	0.000**	
Empathy	Attitude	0.134	0.031*	0.402
	Teaching Experience	0.359	0.000**	
Cooperation	Attitude	0.177	0.009**	0.334
	Teaching Experience	0.240	0.000**	
	Learning Resources	0.139	0.026*	

Teaching experience emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor across all three competence dimensions. The model for self-direction explained 49.9% of variance (R^2 = 0.499), indicating that experience and resources together account for approximately half of teachers' autonomous professional behavior. The empathy model (R^2 = 0.402) was explained by attitude and experience, suggesting that interpersonal responsiveness is shaped more by dispositional and experiential factors than by material resources. The cooperation model (R^2 = 0.334) was the weakest, with all three readiness dimensions contributing, consistent with Vangrieken et al. (2017) and Wijarwadi et al. (2025), who found that cooperation is shaped by a broader configuration of individual, collective, and institutional factors.

Correlation Between Pedagogical Practices and Competence

Table 6. Spearman Correlation: Pedagogical Practices and Competence. (** p < 0.01)

Pedagogical Practice	Self-Direction (r)	Empathy (r)	Cooperation (r)
Classroom Management	0.736**	0.721**	0.637**
Instructional Methods	0.694**	0.646**	0.583**
Technology Integration	0.697**	0.601**	0.618**
Assessment Strategies	0.754**	0.659**	0.669**

Assessment strategies recorded the strongest correlation with self-direction (r = 0.754) and cooperation (r = 0.669), while classroom management showed the strongest association with empathy (r = 0.721). These results suggest that data-driven assessment practices and structured classroom management are particularly powerful catalysts for professional

competency development. Brookhart et al. (2021) similarly found that educators who employ effective assessment procedures demonstrate enhanced competencies across self-direction, empathy, and collaboration.

Influence of Pedagogical Practices on Competence: Regression Results

Table 7. Regression Results: Pedagogical Practices as Predictors of Teacher Competence.

Dependent Variable	Significant Predictors	β	p	R^2
Self-Direction	Classroom Management	0.402	0.000**	0.658
	Technology Integration	0.147	0.008**	
	Assessment Strategies	0.372	0.000**	
Empathy	Classroom Management	0.512	0.000**	0.567
	Assessment Strategies	0.208	0.001**	
Cooperation	Classroom Management	0.323	0.000**	0.509
	Technology Integration	0.165	0.008**	
	Assessment Strategies	0.359	0.000**	

Pedagogical practices explained greater proportions of variance in competence than readiness alone. The self-direction model ($R^2 = 0.658$) was strongest, confirming that classroom management, technology integration, and assessment strategies together are robust predictors of autonomous professional development. The empathy model ($R^2 = 0.567$) and cooperation model ($R^2 = 0.509$) further affirm the centrality of structured classroom management and assessment-informed teaching. Instructional methods alone did not reach significance in any regression model, suggesting that the variety of teaching strategies per se is less determinative of competence than how well teachers manage, assess, and leverage technology in their practice.

7. CONCLUSION

This quantitative study establishes that teachers in Banisilan, Cotabato demonstrate high levels of readiness, pedagogical practice, and competence in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Critically, teaching experience and access to learning resources are the most consistent predictors of self-direction, while attitude and experience drive empathy; all three readiness dimensions predict cooperation. Among pedagogical practices, classroom management and assessment strategies are the strongest and most consistent predictors of all competence dimensions. These findings affirm that teacher competence is not solely dispositional — it is cultivated through the interaction of practical experience, resource availability, and effective classroom practice. The study calls for professional development

initiatives that prioritize mentorship, differentiated instruction, and assessment literacy, with sustained institutional support for equitable resource provision across all schools in the district.

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