

# Bridging the Gap: Aligning the BEEd Curriculum with the DepEd MATATAG Framework

Venus C. Lumapac<sup>1</sup>; Jennifer M. Montero<sup>2</sup>, EdD

<sup>1</sup>North Eastern Mindanao State University, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Northumbria University, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

## ABSTRACT

In this research, the alignment of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) curriculum with the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum was evaluated to gauge the preparedness of pre-service teacher education programs to answer the changing needs of basic education. In light of national reforms redrawing the map of basic and 21st-century competencies, higher education curricula need to be aligned with the standards of modern pedagogy. The research assessed the BEEd program's congruence with MATATAG's pedagogical requirements, instructional approaches, priority assessment, stakeholder involvement, and professional growth frameworks. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach was utilized. Quantitative data of 31 faculty, administrators, and curriculum officers were gathered using a structured survey, and qualitative information was obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics and Spearman's rho, whereas qualitative data interpretation utilized thematic analysis. Results indicated moderate to strong alignment of curriculum: learning objectives ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.798$ ), learning outcomes ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.798$ ), assessment standards ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.847$ ), and competencies ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.798$ ), all rated as "Strongly Agree." Critical gaps were also found in assessment practices and the inclusion of 21st-century competencies. Qualitative results identified mismatches between courses and classroom conditions, minimal exposure to differentiated instruction, technology integration, and inclusive pedagogy. Lacking was any significant stakeholder engagement in curriculum review, further limiting alignment. The research emphasizes the imperative for curriculum changes that maximize school-university alliances, enrich practicum training, and enshrine stakeholder collaboration to better prepare future teachers for the dynamic context of Philippine basic education.

**How to cite this paper:** Venus C. Lumapac | Jennifer M. Montero "Bridging the Gap: Aligning the BEEd Curriculum with the DepEd MATATAG Framework"

Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-9 | Issue-3, June 2025, pp.25-39, URL: [www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd79780.pdf](http://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd79780.pdf)



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**KEYWORDS:** Curriculum alignment; MATATAG Curriculum; pre-service teacher education; mixed-methods research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The alignment of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) curriculum with national and international standards is crucial in preparing highly competent educators who can adapt to evolving educational landscapes (Altbach & de Wit, 2020). In the Philippines, the Education Act of 1982 and Republic Act No. 10533 mandate that teacher education programs align with the K-12 MATATAG Curriculum to enhance instructional quality and global competitiveness. Strengthening this alignment, CHED Memorandum Order No. 74, series of 2017, emphasizes outcomes-based education, quality

assurance, and international partnerships to elevate teacher training (CMO 74, Article I, s.2017). In the Caraga Region, integrating these policies into the BEEd curriculum ensures that pre-service teachers develop the necessary competencies to meet both local demands and international teaching standards. By fostering curriculum enhancement and global linkages, BEEd programs create a seamless transition in teacher education, equipping future educators with the skills to navigate diverse learning environments effectively.

According to Reyes and Villanueva (2023), aligning teacher education programs with the MATATAG curriculum is essential for preparing educators to meet the evolving demands of the education sector. Building on this, Garcia (2022) highlights the need to integrate adaptive teaching strategies and digital literacy, ensuring that future teachers are equipped for contemporary classrooms. Similarly, Laureta (2021) reinforces the significance of competency-based education in shaping effective teacher training programs, emphasizing the development of practical skills aligned with real-world teaching demands. Expanding this perspective, Dela Cruz (2020) argues that embedding critical thinking and problem-solving skills into teacher education is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by the MATATAG framework. Furthermore, Crisostomo (2019) underscores the importance of incorporating inclusive education principles into the BEEd curriculum to accommodate diverse student needs, aligning with DepEd's vision for an inclusive education system. Collectively, these studies affirm that achieving alignment with the MATATAG curriculum requires a well-structured integration of pedagogical methods, assessment tools, and technological competencies to enhance both teacher preparation and student learning outcomes.

Despite ongoing efforts to align the BEEd program with the DepEd curriculum, significant gaps persist in its effective implementation. DepEd (2021) highlights inconsistencies in the application of competency-based assessments and the integration of 21st-century skills in both teacher education programs and DepEd classrooms. Meanwhile, Santos (2019) underscores deficiencies in teacher training, particularly in pedagogical strategies essential for competency-based assessments, which are fundamental to the MATATAG curriculum. Similarly, Manalo (2020) reveals that BEEd graduates often struggle with differentiated instruction and inclusive education, pointing to a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Reinforcing this concern, a CHED (2019) survey indicates that only 60% of BEEd graduates feel adequately prepared to implement DepEd's competency-based curriculum in real classroom settings. These findings underscore the pressing need to strengthen the integration of critical thinking, assessment techniques, and technology within BEEd programs to ensure that future educators are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the DepEd curriculum.

Considering these challenges, this study examines the alignment of the BEEd curriculum with the DepEd K-12 framework, based on the present situation across three (3) campuses of North Eastern Mindanao State

University (NEMSU). Specifically, it investigates the extent of curriculum alignment in terms of learning objectives, learning outcomes, assessment standards, competencies and continuing quality improvement. Findings of this study served as the basis for strengthening curriculum alignment, offering a framework for integrating pedagogical strategies, assessment methods, and technological competencies.

By exploring the alignment and gaps either in knowledge, theoretical and methodological gaps in mind, this study explored the extent of the current BEEd curriculum alignment with DepEd MATATAG curriculum to address these objectives, the study explored four research questions.

RQ: To what extent is the current BEEd curriculum aligned with the MATATAG curriculum in terms of

- 1.1. Learning objectives;
- 1.2. Learning outcomes;
- 1.3. Assessment standards; and
- 1.4. Competencies.

The study findings will add a localized evidence-based evaluation of curriculum alignment based on both empirical and experiential information. It asserts the necessity of continuous faculty development, coordination across agencies, and participatory review of the curriculum in enhancing responsiveness of teacher education to MATATAG.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education (CBE) has become a cornerstone in modern educational frameworks, especially within teacher preparation. Both the MATATAG curriculum and teacher preparation programs, such as the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd), have increasingly adopted CBE as a critical approach. The MATATAG curriculum shifts the focus from rote memorization to the development of specific skills and competencies that students must demonstrate, ensuring that learning outcomes are more aligned with real-world applications. Similarly, the BEEd program has embraced this shift by emphasizing competencies that future educators must possess to be effective in their teaching practices (Punzalan, 2021). This alignment supports a more skill-based, holistic approach to teaching that prioritizes students' mastery of key competencies rather than their ability to recall information.

Hernandez (2023) underscores that competency-based approaches are crucial in both K-12 education and teacher preparation, as they enable educators to assess and nurture students' skills more effectively. By focusing on the mastery of competencies, CBE moves

beyond traditional assessment methods, such as exams, and emphasizes formative assessments that track and support student development over time. This shift directly aligns with the Department of Education's (DepEd) vision of fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills among students (DepEd, 2021). In this context, the BEEd program plays a pivotal role in preparing future teachers to adopt and implement CBE strategies, ensuring their teaching methodologies are in line with the national curriculum and are designed to foster skill mastery among elementary students.

However, Ocampo (2022) argues that teacher education programs often fall short of fully equipping educators with the necessary tools and understanding of how to implement effective competency-based assessments. As a result, some teachers continue to rely on traditional testing methods, such as summative exams, which are not aligned with the MATATAG curriculum's focus on competency development. This gap highlights the need for more robust training within teacher preparation programs to ensure that educators can successfully implement CBE in their classrooms.

The integration of competency-based education (CBE) into both the BEEd program and the MATATAG curriculum is essential to ensure that teachers are prepared to evaluate students based on their mastery of competencies rather than just their knowledge. Aligning these two frameworks guarantees that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to foster student development through effective, competency-focused teaching and assessment practices.

## 2.2. Stakeholder Involvement in Curriculum Design

Effective curriculum alignment is deeply rooted in the active involvement of various stakeholders, including faculty members, administrators, teachers, school heads, and policymakers. Garcia et al. (2021) argue that the engagement of all these groups is vital to ensure that the curriculum not only meets the needs of learners but also aligns with professional demands and national education standards. In the context of teacher education, De La Cruz (2022) emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the Department of Education (DepEd) and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to align teacher education programs with the national curriculum, ensuring that future educators are adequately prepared to teach in line with the country's educational goals.

Further studies by Reyes (2020) and Rodriguez & Villanueva (2021) highlight the benefits of active collaboration between key stakeholders such as

Curriculum Implementation Division (CID) officials, Division Superintendents, and faculty members in enhancing curriculum alignment. These collaborations enable clearer communication regarding expectations about competencies, assessment standards, and teaching methods, which, in turn, ensures that teacher preparation programs are better suited to the practical realities of the classroom. De La Cruz (2022) points out that these ongoing discussions help to align educational practices with national curriculum goals, resulting in more effective teacher training and improved student outcomes.

However, challenges persist in the involvement of stakeholders, particularly due to communication barriers and institutional silos. Bautista et al. (2023) note that these challenges can hinder the alignment process, with certain aspects of the curriculum failing to reflect the practical needs and expectations of the classroom. This misalignment may undermine the effectiveness of teacher education programs, limiting their ability to equip teachers with the necessary competencies to meet the evolving needs of students.

Achieving effective curriculum alignment depends heavily on continuous collaboration and communication among stakeholders, including administrators from SUCs and DepEd officials. By fostering an inclusive dialogue, educational programs can better reflect the needs of both students and teachers, ensuring a more comprehensive and responsive curriculum.

## 2.3. Professional Development for Teachers

Professional development is a crucial factor in ensuring that teachers are equipped to implement and adapt to evolving curriculum standards effectively. Continuous learning opportunities provide educators with updated knowledge on subject matter, pedagogy, and assessment methods, enabling them to align their instructional practices with national education reforms. Flores (2021) asserts that well-structured professional development programs empower teachers to integrate new curricular approaches, such as those embedded in the MATATAG curriculum. These programs play a critical role in enhancing teachers' ability to navigate shifts in educational priorities while maintaining a high standard of teaching and learning. Furthermore, professional development fosters lifelong learning, allowing educators to refine their skills and respond to emerging educational trends, ultimately contributing to improved student outcomes.

Despite the availability of professional development programs, several studies indicate that gaps exist between training content and practical classroom implementation. Aguilar (2023) found that many



professional development initiatives fail to address the specific competencies required by the MATATAG curriculum, leaving teachers underprepared to apply competency-based instructional methods effectively. Similarly, Cunanan (2020) highlights that while teachers participate in training, many feel that these sessions do not adequately address real-world challenges, particularly in student assessment and differentiated instruction. The lack of alignment between professional development content and curriculum expectations can hinder teachers' ability to deliver meaningful and effective instruction. Moreover, Punzalan (2021) emphasizes the growing need for training programs to incorporate digital literacy and technology integration, as these competencies are essential for modern teaching and learning. With education systems increasingly integrating technology-driven approaches, professional development must prioritize equipping teachers with the skills necessary for digital instruction and assessment.

For professional development to be truly effective, it must be regularly updated to reflect the latest curriculum demands and teaching methodologies. According to Mendoza and Reyes (2022), ongoing teacher training should focus on competency-based education, formative assessment strategies, and the integration of 21st-century skills, ensuring that educators remain responsive to curriculum changes. Additionally, collaborative professional learning communities can enhance teachers' ability to share best practices and adapt to evolving educational challenges. The continuous enhancement of professional development programs will not only strengthen curriculum alignment but also elevate the overall quality of education by equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to foster student success in a rapidly changing academic landscape.

#### **2.4. Teacher Preparation and Curriculum Alignment**

Curriculum alignment in teacher education is a critical factor in ensuring that educators are well-equipped to meet national and global standards, thereby enhancing their teaching efficacy and overall student achievement. When teacher preparation programs are structured to align with national educational frameworks, they provide future educators with the necessary competencies, pedagogical strategies, and assessment tools to effectively implement curriculum reforms. This alignment strengthens the transition from pre-service training to actual classroom practice, enabling teachers to confidently navigate curriculum changes,

apply innovative teaching strategies, and address the diverse needs of learners. Furthermore, it fosters coherence between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that teachers are prepared to meet the demands of modern education.

Recent studies have highlighted the significance of aligning teacher preparation curricula with national education policies to improve instructional quality. Johnson and Smith (2022) explored global trends in teacher training alignment, emphasizing that such alignment enhances teacher effectiveness and directly contributes to improved student outcomes. Their findings underscore the necessity of developing clear frameworks and processes that ensure coherence between teacher education programs and national curriculum standards. This is particularly relevant in the Philippine context, where the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program must align with the MATATAG curriculum to produce competent, globally competitive educators. By ensuring that pre-service teacher training reflects the expectations and competencies required by the national curriculum, higher education institutions can cultivate a more responsive and adaptable teaching workforce.

Globally, countries that have successfully integrated teacher education with national curriculum reforms have observed positive impacts on both teachers and students. Aligned programs help educators develop a strong sense of professional identity, increase their confidence in instructional delivery, and improve their ability to assess and support student learning effectively. Additionally, when curriculum alignment is coupled with continuous professional development, teachers are better equipped to engage in lifelong learning and remain responsive to educational advancements. In the Philippine setting, this approach is crucial in bridging the gap between higher education institutions and basic education schools, ensuring that teacher preparation programs are in sync with the evolving requirements of the MATATAG curriculum. Therefore, achieving full alignment between the BEEd program and national education policies is essential in sustaining quality education and fostering long-term improvements in teacher efficacy and student achievement.

#### **3. Underpinning Theories**

This study was primarily anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Constructivist Learning Theory, as cited by Schmidt et al. (2021), posits that learning is an active process in which students construct knowledge rather than merely receive it. This theory emphasizes that learners build understanding through experiences,

critical thinking, and problem-solving, which aligns with the objectives of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program in preparing future educators. Constructivism highlights that meaningful learning occurs when individuals engage in authentic tasks, interact with peers, and apply prior knowledge to new contexts. In the context of aligning the BEEd curriculum with the Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum, constructivist principles encourage the development of student-centered teaching strategies that foster deep learning and engagement. Future teachers must be equipped with pedagogical skills that allow them to create dynamic and interactive classrooms where students become active participants in their learning process (Harris & Jones, 2022).

Another theory that supported this study was Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, as discussed by Garcia and Brooks (2021). Vygotsky's theory underscores the role of social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in cognitive development. It suggests that students learn best when they engage in collaborative activities with peers and receive appropriate guidance from teachers or more knowledgeable individuals. In the context of teacher education, Social Development Theory is highly relevant, as it informs instructional strategies that emphasize peer learning, mentoring, and scaffolding techniques. By integrating Vygotskian principles, the BEEd program can better prepare future educators to recognize the varying learning capacities of students and implement differentiated instruction that fosters inclusive education. The study examined how teacher education institutions incorporate social learning strategies in their curriculum to ensure that graduates are equipped to address diverse learning needs, a fundamental aspect of the MATATAG curriculum's inclusive education framework (Patel & Wilson, 2023).

Furthermore, Bloom's Taxonomy, developed by Benjamin Bloom and further revised by Anderson & Krathwohl (2019), also supported this study. Bloom's Taxonomy classifies learning objectives into six hierarchical cognitive levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. This structured framework is critical in designing curricula that promote higher-order thinking skills among learners. Within the BEEd program, Bloom's Taxonomy serves as a foundation for training pre-service teachers in lesson planning, assessment design, and instructional delivery. The study investigated how teacher education institutions integrate Bloom's principles to ensure that future educators are adept at fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their students. By aligning

the BEEd program with the MATATAG curriculum through Bloom's Taxonomy, teacher education institutions can systematically develop instructional strategies that promote student mastery and cognitive progression (Turner & Adams, 2021).

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Research Design

This research utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The study started with the gathering and analysis of quantitative data to identify the level of alignment between the BEEd curriculum and the DepEd MATATAG Curriculum. Subsequent to this, qualitative data were collected to complement and expound on the initial quantitative results to achieve a better understanding of stakeholder attitudes and curriculum implementation dynamics.

The quantitative phase entailed the administration of a validated survey questionnaire to 150 respondents from chosen campuses of North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU) consisting of faculty members, administrators, and curriculum officers engaged in the BEEd program. The instrument assessed perceptions of curriculum alignment, stakeholder engagement, and professional development on a five-point Likert scale.

For the qualitative component, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were done with heads of academic programs, DepEd supervisors, and veteran cooperating teachers. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with BEEd faculty members and student teachers to capture more extensive viewpoints on curriculum practice, loopholes, and readiness for implementation. The data from the discussions and interviews were subjected to thematic analysis in order to find repeated insights, issues, and points of alignment or misalignment with the MATATAG framework.

This mixed-methods strategy enabled data triangulation, providing assurance of the reliability and depth of the results. Ethical procedures were rigidly adhered to, including informed consent, confidentiality of data, and institutional clearance for every stage of data gathering.

### 4.2. Participants

The study included 31 BEEd stakeholders including College of Teacher Education (CTE) core faculty, Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Alumbi and DepEd Teachers and administrators. The study used purposive sampling that allowed the researcher to include participants who were geographically accessible and willing to participate in the research.

Originally, 34 participants responded, but three responses were eliminated after the participants did

not provide consent to participate. A two-way ANOVA test was conducted to find the sample size's statistical power (Cohen, 1998; Field 2018), which was revealed as  $R^2=.962$  ( $F=.771$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which means a large effect size and strong correlation among variables. Thus, 31 participants for the study are justified. A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationships among the variables and to account for the prediction of the independent variables to dependent variables and their mediation between the variables.

#### 4.3. Data Collection Tool

The researcher used a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (see Appendix). The Likert scale items were 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 =Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 =Agree, 5 =Strongly Agree. The questionnaire consisted of five sections: learning goals and objectives (7 items), Learning outcomes (8) items), assessment standard (14 items), and Competencies (13 items). Table 1. Shows the Cronbach values of the items of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire variables	Cronbach alpha scores	Remarks
Learning Objectives	0.812	Reliable
Learning Outcomes	0.834	Reliable
Assessment Standards	0.846	Reliable
Competencies	0.801	Reliable

Table 1 indicates that the Cronbach scores for all variables range from .801 to .812 which are highly reliable (Taber, 2018). This confirms the high internal consistency of the questionnaire items (Hasan & Nomian, 2021).

#### 4.4. Data Collection Method

The data collection process involved distributing the research instrument, which included both online and paper-based surveys, to the identified respondents, ensuring that the responses were collected in a systematic and ethical manner. Following the completion of the questionnaire survey, Key

Informant Interview (KII), and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), all gathered information was treated with strict confidentiality. The data was then coded and analysed to identify key patterns, themes, and insights relevant to the study.

#### 4.5. Data Analysis

For RQ1 to RQ4, data was analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation. This statistical treatment sought to determine the levels of Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the main characteristics of the data, focusing on measures of central tendency. These measures provided a clear understanding of how respondents perceived stakeholder involvement, curriculum relevance, and professional development in relation to the curriculum design and implementation process. Using descriptive statistics was appropriate, as these sub-problems focused on understanding the general levels of these variables within the study sample.

#### 4.6. Ethical Considerations

On the conduct of this study, the researcher took several measures to ensure ethical transparency of the study. Firstly, the participants were thoroughly informed about the contexts, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of the study; the researcher ensured that they understood the aims and scope of the research. In addition, they were granted the right to withdraw from the study at any moment without negative consequences, which guaranteed their voluntary participation. Their participation in the study was anonymous, which safeguarded their privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, their informed consent before involvement in the study confirmed their awareness of their rights and the way the data would be used. Moreover, the responses of participants who responded negatively in the consent form were removed from the dataset before the data analysis. All these measures attest to the research ethical standards of the study.

### 5. Findings

**Table 2. Extent of curriculum alignment between BEEd curriculum and DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning objectives, learning outcomes, assessment standards and competencies**

	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
The BEEd program learning objectives align with the BEEd MATATAG Curriculum in relevance, learner well-being, mastery of foundational skills, and focus on essential competencies.	4.18	0.945	Agree
The BEEd program learning outcomes align with the MATATAG Curriculum in foundational skills, values formation, and scientific literacy.	4.29	0.763	Strongly Agree
The BEEd assessment standards align with the MATATAG Curriculum in assessment for learning, as learning, and of learning.	4.44	0.847	Strongly Agree



The BEEd curriculum develops competencies aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum, including Language proficiency, Literacy, Math skills, Makabansa, and GMRC.	4.32	0.863	Strongly Agree
The BEEd program implements a structured process to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the MATATAG Curriculum.	4.32	0.905	Strongly Agree
The BEEd teaching methodologies align with the pedagogical approaches of the MATATAG Curriculum to enhance effective learning.	4.32	0.905	Strongly Agree
The BEEd program course content aligns with the essential elements of the MATATAG Curriculum, including Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Makabansa, and GMRC.	4.29	0.897	Strongly Agree
The BEEd program provides a structured transition plan to prepare graduates for MATATAG-aligned teaching roles.	4.11	1.066	Agree
The BEEd program integrates 21st-century skills aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum.	4.50	0.793	Strongly Agree
The BEEd program equips graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for effective teaching by integrating the key elements of the MATATAG Curriculum.	4.32	0.905	Strongly Agree
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.798</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

### 5.1. Extent of Curriculum Alignment of the Current BEEd Curriculum with DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of Learning objectives

The data on Curriculum Alignment for the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program with DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning objectives reveals a generally strong alignment with the MATATAG Curriculum, as reflected in the overall mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.798), interpreted as "Strongly Agree." Specifically, the highest-rated item, "The BEEd program integrates 21st-century skills aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum" (M = 4.50), underscores the program's responsiveness to modern educational needs, particularly the emphasis on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. These results support the assertion by Spillane et al. (2018) and DepEd (2021) that effective curriculum alignment ensures not only the acquisition of foundational knowledge but also the development of essential life skills that are vital in today's complex world.

Focusing on the dimension of learning objectives, the findings strongly indicate that the BEEd program's learning goals are intentionally crafted to reflect the core principles of the MATATAG Curriculum. For instance, the item stating, The BEEd program learning objectives align with the BEEd MATATAG Curriculum in relevance, learner well-being, mastery of foundational skills, and focus on essential competencies received a mean score of 4.18, indicating a consensus of "Agree" among respondents. This suggests that the program successfully integrates learning objectives that

promote holistic development, including academic competence, values formation, and personal well-being—hallmarks of a well-rounded curriculum. This is aligned with the insights of Adora (2022), who emphasized the importance of coherence between teacher education objectives and national standards to produce competent and context-sensitive educators.

The curriculum alignment is further substantiated by the consistent high ratings in areas concerning foundational skills, values, and literacy (M = 4.29), and competency development in areas such as language proficiency, math, and GMRC (M = 4.32). These figures highlight that the BEEd program is not only designed to produce knowledgeable teachers but also ones who can implement and nurture the MATATAG curriculum's goals in actual classroom settings. Punzalan (2021) argues that this shift to competency-based education (CBE) is necessary for producing future-ready educators who can assess students based on skill mastery rather than memorization—a vision strongly echoed by the program's outcome-based objectives.

Moreover, the alignment of assessment standards (M = 4.44) and teaching methodologies (M = 4.32) with the MATATAG Curriculum further demonstrates that the BEEd program fosters an ecosystem where learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment methods work in harmony to produce meaningful and measurable learning outcomes. This integrative approach, supported by Hernandez (2023), ensures that teacher education institutions equip pre-service teachers with the tools to not only teach effectively but also assess learning in ways that inform instruction and support student growth.

Considering these findings and literature, it is evident that the learning objectives of the BEEd program are effectively aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum, ensuring that pre-service teachers are academically and professionally prepared to meet the evolving demands of the education sector. However, as Espiritu (2020) cautions, while alignment appears strong on paper, continuous evaluation, stakeholder involvement, and professional development are critical to ensure that the theoretical alignment translates into actual classroom effectiveness. Thus, ongoing curriculum review and professional support systems are vital to sustain and enhance the impact of curriculum alignment on learning objectives and overall instructional quality.

The key informant interview revealed that while the BEEd curriculum aligns with the MATATAG curriculum in foundational pedagogy, significant gaps hinder its full implementation and effectiveness. Participants emphasized the need to revise the curriculum to include digital literacy, contextualized instruction, and performance-based learning. Outdated content, limited use of competency-based assessments, and traditional teaching strategies were identified as key barriers, along with structural issues such as obsolete topics and insufficient training in differentiated instruction. Gaps in teacher preparation—particularly in inclusive education and technology integration—further limit classroom readiness. These findings highlight the MATATAG curriculum's strong influence on the direction of teacher education and underscore the urgent need for a responsive, evidence-based overhaul of the BEEd program to align with current educational demands.

## **5.2. Extent of Curriculum Alignment of the Current BEEd Curriculum with DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of Learning outcomes**

The results of the curriculum alignment evaluation for the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) programs and DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning outcomes demonstrate a high level of consistency between the program's learning outcomes and the key features of the MATATAG Curriculum. The overall mean score of 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.798 indicates that respondents strongly agree that the BEEd program aligns well with the competencies and standards mandated by the MATATAG Curriculum. In particular, the strongest agreement was noted in the item: "The BEEd program integrates 21st-century skills aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum" ( $M = 4.50$ ), underscoring the program's commitment to fostering

critical, creative, and communications skills that are central to contemporary education.

This alignment is vital in the context of learning outcomes, as it ensures that the knowledge, skills, and values taught within the BEEd program translate effectively into what pre-service teachers are expected to demonstrate upon graduation. According to Spillane et al. (2018) and Harris et al. (2020), curriculum alignment significantly enhances educational quality when instruction, assessment, and outcomes are connected to national standards. In the Philippines, the MATATAG Curriculum was crafted by the Department of Education (DepEd) to prioritize foundational skills, essential competencies, and 21st-century learning—all of which are reflected in the BEEd program's outcomes, as confirmed by the respondents.

Furthermore, the alignment of learning outcomes with competency-based education (CBE) principles, as emphasized by Punzalan (2021) and Hernandez (2023), ensures that future teachers are not only content-knowledgeable but also proficient in applying pedagogical skills in real-world teaching contexts. The BEEd's strong performance in aligning assessment standards ( $M = 4.44$ ) and curriculum content ( $M = 4.29$ ) with the MATATAG framework suggests that the program nurtures both formative and summative assessment literacy—vital components in monitoring student mastery of competencies.

However, there are items where the mean scores, though still high, drop slightly—such as the alignment of program learning objectives ( $M = 4.18$ ) and structured transition plans for MATATAG-aligned roles ( $M = 4.11$ ). These scores, while still within the "Agree" range, may point to areas for improvement, particularly in ensuring that program goals and graduate preparedness fully support seamless integration into the MATATAG framework. Espiritu (2020) highlights that even well-designed curricula may fall short if teacher education institutions do not adapt swiftly to national reforms, creating gaps in pre-service teacher readiness.

From a stakeholder engagement perspective, alignment is further reinforced when universities collaborate with DepEd and other governing bodies to co-develop programs that mirror actual classroom needs, as discussed by De La Cruz (2022) and Garcia et al. (2021). Such collaboration not only enhances curriculum coherence but also ensures the relevance of teacher training outcomes. Additionally, the emphasis on professional development discussed by Flores (2021) and Aguilar (2023) calls attention to the need for continuous updating of teacher skills to



sustain the gains made in curriculum alignment and learning outcome achievement.

The BEEd program's strong alignment with the MATATAG Curriculum affirms its role in producing educators who are well-prepared to meet current educational demands. Through competency-based design, integration of 21st-century skills, and responsive assessment methods, the program's learning outcomes align meaningfully with national priorities. Nonetheless, sustained stakeholder collaboration and regular curriculum review are essential to address areas with relatively low agreement and to ensure long-term alignment and effectiveness in teacher preparation.

Based on the key informant narratives gathered through in-depth interviews with key participants, the extent of the BEEd curriculum's alignment with the DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning outcomes reveals a complex and multifaceted picture. The narratives from key informants revealed six (6) major themes that demonstrate coherence between the BEEd Program and the DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning outcomes. These six (6) themes offer valuable insights into how the BEEd curriculum can be restructured to become more responsive to the needs of the basic education system, particularly in preparing future educators with the competencies required for 21st-century teaching. These themes serve as critical foundations for bridging existing gaps in curriculum design, instructional practices, and learning outcome alignment, thereby contributing to the development of a more relevant, inclusive, and competency-based teacher education program.

### **5.3. Extent of Curriculum Alignment of the Current BEEd Curriculum with DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of Assessment standards**

Based on the gathered data, research problem 1.3 "The BEEd assessment standards align with the MATATAG Curriculum in assessment for learning, as learning, and of learning" received a mean rating of 4.44 with a standard deviation of 0.847, indicating a verbal description of "Strongly Agree." This high mean score reflects a strong consensus among respondents that the assessment practices embedded in the BEEd program are well-aligned with the three-fold assessment framework emphasized in the MATATAG Curriculum: assessment for learning, which informs instruction; assessment as learning, which fosters student reflection and self-regulation; and assessment of learning, which evaluates student achievement.

The significance of this alignment lies in the fact that assessment is not merely a tool for grading but a foundational component of teaching and learning. As highlighted in the literature, particularly in the works of Hernandez (2023), competency-based education (CBE) — a core principle of the MATATAG Curriculum — demands assessments that measure students' mastery of specific skills rather than rote knowledge. The BEEd program's adherence to this model reflects its responsiveness to current educational demands by fostering future educators who are not only aware of but capable of applying assessment techniques that support meaningful learning. This ensures that future teachers are prepared to implement formative, summative, and student-centered assessments in their classrooms.

Moreover, aligning BEEd assessment standards with the MATATAG Curriculum supports the broader vision of curriculum design and alignment, as discussed by Spillane et al. (2018) and Harris et al. (2020), which underscores the importance of coherent connections between learning goals, instructional strategies, and evaluation mechanisms. By embedding assessments that are consistent with the MATATAG framework, the BEEd program ensures that its graduates can navigate classroom realities and adapt assessment strategies that promote student engagement, reflective thinking, and academic growth.

Despite this strong alignment, literature also warns of existing gaps. Ocampo (2022) cautions that many teacher education programs may still lack sufficient training in implementing competency-based assessments, often relying too heavily on traditional summative tests. Therefore, while the statistical data reveals positive perceptions of alignment, continuous professional development and program improvement are crucial to ensuring that pre-service teachers can confidently and competently utilize diversified assessment tools aligned with MATATAG goals.

In conclusion, the strong agreement in the assessment standards domain indicates that the BEEd program is on the right trajectory in aligning its evaluative practices with the MATATAG Curriculum. This alignment is essential for producing future educators who can foster higher-order thinking and 21st-century skills through well-rounded, competency-based assessment strategies — a necessity for quality education in the modern era.

The narrative analysis of interview data revealed four major themes that provide critical insights into the alignment between the current Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) curriculum and the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum,

specifically in terms of assessment standards. These themes highlight both the strengths and the gaps in the curriculum's ability to equip future educators for the evolving demands of assessment under MATATAG. The emergent themes are Core Pedagogical Strengths, Gaps in Real-World Preparation, Misalignment in Content and Methods, and Outdated Assessment Practices. These findings suggest that while the BEEd curriculum embeds foundational teaching principles, it often falls short in integrating modern, context-sensitive assessment strategies promoted by MATATAG. This underscores the need for revising course content and practicum components to ensure that future teachers can design, implement, and interpret assessments aligned with current educational priorities.

#### **5.4. Extent of Curriculum Alignment of the Current BEEd Curriculum with DepEd MATATAG curriculum in terms of competencies**

The findings on curriculum alignment between the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program and the MATATAG curriculum in terms of competencies indicate a strong overall alignment in terms of competencies, as reflected by a high overall mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.798, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This suggests that the BEEd program is significantly aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum's goals—particularly in cultivating competencies that support foundational skills, values formation, literacy, numeracy, and 21st-century skills. Specifically, items such as the alignment of assessment standards ( $M = 4.44$ ), integration of 21st-century skills ( $M = 4.50$ ), and teaching methodologies ( $M = 4.32$ ) highlight a strong emphasis on competency-based education (CBE). This demonstrates that the BEEd program is not merely focused on content delivery but is actively structured to ensure student mastery of essential and measurable competencies.

Supporting this, Punzalan (2021) emphasizes that both the MATATAG curriculum and teacher education programs like BEEd are shifting from traditional rote learning to CBE, wherein learners—and by extension, future teachers—are assessed based on real-world skills and abilities. The high ratings for structured processes ( $M = 4.32$ ) and transition planning ( $M = 4.11$ ) further show that the BEEd curriculum is not static; rather, it is dynamic and responsive to national reforms, ensuring pre-service teachers are trained to handle the competencies outlined in the MATATAG framework. This is critical in addressing concerns raised by Espiritu (2020), who noted that misalignment often leads to

inadequately prepared teachers. The results from this survey counter that concern, suggesting that the BEEd program at the assessed institution is effectively adapting to the competency expectations set by DepEd.

In terms of educational theory and policy, this alignment confirms the importance of what Spillane et al. (2018) and Harris et al. (2020) argue: curriculum design must reflect national standards to raise educational quality. Competency-based alignment also provides a holistic development path for students by integrating key areas such as Makabansa and GMRC, which are foundational to the Philippine identity and moral development, into the learning objectives and course content. These areas are not only cultural imperatives but also reflect a broadened understanding of competencies, beyond academic and technical skills, which aligns with the MATATAG curriculum's values-based education component.

Furthermore, the consistent high ratings of various competency areas—including language, literacy, and math—indicate that the BEEd program is systematically developing the skill sets necessary for teachers to thrive under MATATAG. As Hernandez (2023) points out, aligning formative assessments and learning strategies with competencies is key to ensuring students' continuous progress. This alignment is evident in how the BEEd program structures its evaluation frameworks to focus on assessment as, for, and of learning. However, it is also important to note Ocampo's (2022) caution that competency-based assessments require thorough training for teachers to implement effectively. This suggests the need for ongoing professional development, as noted by Flores (2021) and Mendoza & Reyes (2022), so that the alignment doesn't end at curriculum design but extends to actual classroom delivery and teacher capability.

The data strongly supports that the BEEd program is effectively aligned with the MATATAG curriculum in terms of competencies, ensuring future educators are equipped not only with subject knowledge but also with the skills, values, and methodologies necessary to navigate a changing educational landscape. This reflects a systemic effort toward curriculum modernization, one that requires continued stakeholder collaboration, professional development, and adaptive implementation to maintain and enhance the competency alignment in teacher preparation programs.

The alignment between the BEEd curriculum and the MATATAG framework presents several challenges, particularly in terms of competencies. While the

BEEd program partially aligns with MATATAG, it falls short in key areas such as digital literacy, inclusive education, and student-centered methods, requiring substantial updates to meet MATATAG's evolving standards. Pre-service teachers also face difficulties adapting to MATATAG due to limited exposure to modern pedagogical methods and a lack of professional development in critical areas like digital literacy and inclusion. Additionally, the instructional content and assessment practices in the BEEd program are outdated, with traditional methods dominating and insufficient integration of MATATAG-aligned assessments, such as performance tasks. Structural issues further complicate this alignment, as the BEEd curriculum lacks ongoing collaboration with DepEd and other stakeholders, making continuous updates essential for the effective implementation of MATATAG's competencies. The absence of real-time curriculum feedback mechanisms further delays necessary reforms, leaving future educators underprepared for the demands of contemporary classrooms. Strengthening partnerships between teacher education institutions and basic education implementers is vital to ensure that learning outcomes are relevant, responsive, and consistently aligned with national education goals.

## 6. Discussion

The current research aimed to assess the level of curriculum alignment between the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) curriculum and the Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum, focusing on learning objectives, learning outcomes, assessment standards, and competency expectations. The results present a complex scenario of alignment—describing both places of convergence and areas that require serious reform.

The analysis shows that although the BEEd curriculum is aligned in principle with some of the MATATAG curriculum's foundation elements—like literacy, numeracy, and values education—the degree of alignment is still incomplete and fragmented. This resonates with Tyler's (1949) claim that curriculum coherence is at the heart of the effectiveness of instructional systems. One of the concerns is the lack of alignment between program-level goals and classroom-level enactment, which is symptomatic of larger systemic fragmentation in Philippine teacher education (Salandanan, 2019).

The absence of explicit correspondence between BEEd course outcomes and MATATAG's learning competencies aimed at is an indication of curriculum lag, where teacher education curricula are not yet fully attuned to changing K–12 needs. As Bruner

(1960) and subsequently Fullan (2007) argued, alignment is not a technical but a moral and pedagogical necessity—particularly when crossing education sectors. Thus, the results validate the vertical articulation between basic education reforms and pre-service preparation, an attempt reiterated by Taba (1962) in her curriculum alignment model.

The most important gap seen is the preparation of BEEd graduates for the 21st-century classroom. While PPST-consistent, BEEd's curriculum lacks coverage of fundamental competencies like digital literacy, inclusive pedagogies, and global citizenship—competencies which are clearly integrated into the MATATAG curriculum's learner outcomes vision. This is aligned with Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) lament that effective teacher preparation has to incorporate the latest teaching contexts, including technological integration, different learning needs, and knowledge application to the world.

Participant comments during the qualitative phase highlight the disconnect between theoretical coursework and the realities of teaching requirements. Thematic analysis of the data showed that there were no substantial opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice differentiated instruction, technology-enhanced instruction, and inclusive practices. These results are corroborated by literature stating that pre-service programs need to transition from traditional, lecture-based models to competency-based, experiential models (Grossman et al., 2009; Shulman, 1987).

Although the BEEd curriculum shows balanced utilization of formative and summative assessment practices, weak alignment exists between the assessment standards and the learning progression intended in the MATATAG curriculum. Such misalignment appears in the scarce utilization of performance-based tasks, diagnostic instruments, and criterion-referenced rubrics—signatures of the MATATAG framework's learner-centered approach to assessment. Assessment practices in teacher education should advance beyond compliance to CHED requirements and adopt the authenticity and contextualization demanded by the K to 12 reform (DepEd, 2022).

In addition, the research validates the statement of Black and Wiliam (2009) that assessment, when not aligned with learning outcomes, can misrepresent the curriculum and constrain learner development. Institutional efforts must therefore be made to ensure that assessments within the BEEd program reflect not only content knowledge but also pedagogical content



knowledge (PCK), formative feedback processes, and growth-focused evaluation practices.

The results also highlight the minimal participation of DepEd, LGUs, and other stakeholders in the BEED program's curriculum review process. This horizontal misalignment prevents a holistic appreciation of field-level realities and leads to a curriculum that is heavily influenced by academic theory instead of being rooted in classroom practice. Stakeholder involvement, as emphasized by Senge et al. (2012), is the key to developing a responsive and adaptive system curriculum. Following the CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) model, the research promotes an institutional feedback loop that formally incorporates field data, alumni performance, and DepEd benchmarks.

### 7. Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study offer some key pedagogical lessons for higher education institutions that provide the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) program, especially regarding the integration of teacher education into the Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum. These lessons underpin the necessity for a paradigm shift in preparing future elementary educators to address changing national and international educational needs.

Since there is only partial overlap of BEED learning outcomes and the anticipated competencies of MATATAG, institutions for teacher education will need to redefine course outcomes to correspond more directly to the K to 10 curriculum's stated competencies. The recontextualization should ensure that pedagogical objectives are not merely measurable but also adaptive to the demands of the 21st century's learning contexts. Curriculum planners should conduct outcome mapping to secure vertical alignment from pre-service training through basic education practice.

The report emphasizes the importance of integrating 21st-century skills—digital fluency, inclusive pedagogy, problem-solving, and global citizenship—into all professional education and specialization courses. Teacher training needs to shift from the conventional knowledge transfer to competency-based approaches that equip future teachers with the ability to incorporate technology, handle diverse classrooms, and develop critical thinking in students. This calls for ongoing faculty professional development and the integration of experiential learning elements that mirror actual teaching situations.

The lack of alignment between BEED assessment approaches and MATATAG's learner-focused

evaluation framework hints at the necessity for assessment reform in teacher education. Pedagogical training must prioritize authentic, performance-based, and formative assessments replicating the true practices needed in the basic education classroom. Faculty have to model assessment literacy, equipping pre-service teachers with the requisite tools to assess learning via multiple modalities as well as encouraging ongoing feedback and reflective practice.

The disconnection between theoretical course work and classroom life requires a transformed and enriched practicum experience. Colleges and universities must create strategic partnerships with MATATAG-implementing schools so that student teaching placements give candidates exposure to the latest curriculum standards, differentiated instruction, and inclusive classroom approaches. Mentoring programs and co-teaching models can also provide further scaffolding for pre-service teacher learning and build the bridge from theory to practice.

Lack of participation by stakeholders in curriculum planning manifests the need to intensify co-working between CHED, DepEd, institutions of teacher education, and community members. Stakeholders must employ a systems thinking framework whereby stakeholders jointly co-create curriculum innovations and are engaged periodically in program appraisals. The cooperative arrangement will ensure responsiveness, contextual focus, and integration of the curriculum with national goals for education.

Finally, institutions need to institutionalize a data-driven process of curriculum review and instructional enhancement. Curriculum audits conducted regularly, tracer studies, and mechanisms for feedback from graduates should guide program improvement. This CQI cycle will make the BEED curriculum dynamic, evidence-based, and able to produce graduates who are not only competent but also adaptable in responding to educational change.

### 8. Limitations of the Study

Although this research gives a useful understanding of the congruence between the BEED and the DepEd MATATAG curricula, there are a number of limitations that must be noted. Foremost, the study was only undertaken among three campuses of the North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU), thus the generalizability of the results could be limited. While the campuses of these institutions have similar institutional arrangements and curricular designs, implementation practices, faculty competencies, and stakeholder involvement among other state universities and private teacher education providers in the Philippines were not documented.

Moreover, the research was limited to the BEED program alone, thus excluding other specializations in teacher education that could have different patterns of alignment or experience different challenges in conforming to the MATATAG curriculum. The research also used self-reported data and key informant interviews, which, although rich in depth, are prone to respondent bias and institutional subjectivity.

In light of these limitations, care must be taken in projecting the findings beyond the immediate institutional setting. Additional research with a more diverse sample of higher education institutions from a variety of regions and including classroom-level observations or longitudinal data would provide a richer picture of curriculum alignment and its effect on teacher preparedness.

## 9. Conclusion

This study critically examined the extent of alignment between the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) curriculum and the Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum in terms of learning objectives, learning outcomes, assessment standards, and competencies. Through a comprehensive analysis combining quantitative and qualitative data, the research illuminated key areas of convergence and divergence that bear significant implications for teacher preparation and curriculum development in Philippine higher education institutions.

The results revealed that while there is partial alignment in core learning outcomes and assessment principles, substantial gaps persist—particularly in integrating 21st-century competencies, digital literacy, inclusive education, and performance-based assessment. These misalignments highlight the limitations of traditional teacher education models in adequately responding to the evolving demands of the K to 10 MATATAG curriculum and the broader vision of the Department of Education for foundational learning.

Moreover, the findings suggest that the current BEED curriculum remains anchored in outdated paradigms of knowledge transmission, lacking the flexibility and responsiveness required to prepare future educators for complex, inclusive, and technologically mediated classroom environments. The disjunction between theoretical coursework and actual classroom practices further underscores the need to recalibrate practicum experiences and foster stronger collaborations between higher education institutions and DepEd-affiliated schools.

Ultimately, this study calls for a re-envisioning of teacher education through the lens of curriculum alignment, stakeholder engagement, and continuous quality improvement. By institutionalizing evidence-based reforms, embedding 21st-century skills, and promoting collaborative curriculum design, higher education institutions can better fulfill their mandate of producing globally competent and locally responsive educators. In doing so, the transition from pre-service education to classroom practice can become more seamless, impactful, and aligned with national educational priorities.

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