



Teachers' Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) strengthened inclusive education in the Philippines by mandating support for learners with disabilities in mainstream schools. However, a policy–practice gap remains, especially in rural contexts where teachers face limited resources and institutional support. This study examined the classroom management, instructional, and resource-related challenges experienced by elementary teachers in inclusive classrooms in Lanao del Norte.

Materials and Methods: This study used a descriptive-quantitative design involving 60 elementary teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire with high internal consistency reliability (Overall Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means (M), and standard deviations (SD).

Results: Findings showed varied levels of difficulty across challenge areas. Teachers reported low difficulty in instructional tasks ($M = 2.00$), suggesting confidence in adapting teaching strategies. However, they experienced major systemic barriers, particularly the lack of instructional materials ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.25$) and insufficient administrative support ($M = 4.00$). Classroom management was also a significant concern, especially in providing equitable attention to diverse learners ($M = 4.48$).

Conclusion: The study highlights a rural Philippine perspective on inclusive education, showing that systemic constraints are more pressing than pedagogical difficulties. Although teachers demonstrate instructional readiness, the implementation of RA 11650 remains limited by inadequate resources and support. Stronger administrative scaffolding, localized materials, and sustained resource allocation are needed to make inclusive education more effective in rural schools.

Keywords: RA 11650; Teacher Self-efficacy; Scaffolding Inhibitors; Rural Education; Lanao del Norte.

Introduction

Inclusive education is universally acknowledged as a core tenet of egalitarian and rights-based educational systems. It underscores that all students, including individuals with disabilities and varied learning requirements, must have substantial access to quality education in inclusive learning settings (UNESCO, 2020). In the Philippines, this commitment is formally established by Republic Act No. 11650, known as the Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in





Support of Inclusive Education Act, which requires public schools to offer inclusive, accessible, and suitable services for learners with disabilities (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022).

Nonetheless, the execution of inclusive education is inconsistent, especially in rural and resource-limited environments. Despite national policy establishing a legal basis for inclusion, schools frequently face obstacles like inadequate instructional resources, limited administrative backing, insufficient specialist training, and deficient institutional architecture. These problems illustrate the enduring disparity between legislative objectives and actual classroom conditions, a topic often highlighted in global dialogues over the implementation of inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020).

This research is grounded in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, namely the notion of scaffolding, which emphasizes the significance of directed assistance and social interaction in the learning process. In inclusive classrooms, scaffolding is crucial since educators must offer customized support tailored to the unique requirements of each learner. In rural settings, pedagogical scaffolding cannot be effectively implemented in the absence of fundamental institutional support. This study presents the concept of structural scaffolding, which pertains to the teacher's endeavor to address systemic deficiencies prior to the provision of substantial instructional support. When educational institutions are deficient in resources, training, and administrative frameworks, teachers' capacity to execute inclusive policies is hindered, regardless of their professional expertise and dedication.

Lanao del Norte offers a substantial rural framework for analyzing this topic. This province exemplifies the issues encountered by several grassroots educational institutions in the Philippines, characterized by delays in resource allocation and restricted access to expert support. Investigating teachers' experiences in this province is crucial for assessing the practical implementation of Republic Act No. 11650 in rural schools, or whether it remains a legislative obligation that is challenging to convert into effective classroom practice.

This study examines the difficulties faced by elementary educators in executing inclusive education in Lanao del Norte. It specifically analyzes instructional, classroom management, and resource-related obstacles that impede teachers' ability to assist learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This study examines the rural implementation of inclusive education, contributing to the greater discourse on the interplay between policy, teacher self-efficacy, and structural support in establishing inclusive educational practices.

Objectives

This study aimed to examine the instructional, classroom management, and systemic challenges encountered by elementary school teachers in implementing inclusive education in rural public schools in Lanao del Norte, particularly focusing on how resource limitations and institutional support influence teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices effectively.

Literature review

The current literature on inclusive education in the Philippines indicates a complex and frequently disjointed conflict between legislative goals and classroom practices. Despite the considerable expansion of inclusive education policies in recent years, numerous studies suggest that their implementation is hindered by systemic restrictions and instructional obstacles faced by educators. These challenges are more pronounced in rural and underprivileged schools where institutional support systems are inadequate.

A prominent topic identified in the Philippine study is the existence of systemic and institutional obstacles that impede the proper execution of inclusive education. Galutera (2025) highlighted that numerous public schools are deficient in adequate administrative support, collaboration frameworks, and professional development opportunities essential for maintaining inclusive practices. Educators often function in settings where access to specialist staff, educational materials, and coordinated intervention programs is insufficient. Consequently, educators frequently find themselves compelled to autonomously address varied student requirements in the absence of the necessary structural support mandated by inclusive education regulations. This institutional shortcoming generates a disparity





between policy and practice, where inclusion is formally acknowledged in educational mandates but is inconsistently implemented in classroom environments.

Correspondingly, both international and local research have emphasized the pedagogical and psychological challenges faced by educators in inclusive classrooms. Marchan et al. (2025) discovered that educators frequently face challenges concerning differentiated instruction, classroom management, student engagement, and the modification of instructional resources for learners with special educational needs. These issues are exacerbated when educators lack specialized training or experience in inclusive teaching methodologies. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2012) underscored the importance of teacher efficacy in inclusive education, contending that educators' confidence in their teaching capabilities profoundly affects their readiness to adopt inclusive methods. Educators possessing elevated self-efficacy tend to be more adaptive, resilient, and receptive to accommodating varied learners, even in the face of classroom challenges (Hehir et al, 2016)

A notable theoretical and practical paradox remains inadequately examined in the current literature. Although numerous studies indicate that instructors assert confidence in their capacity to teach inclusively, these educators concurrently cite significant deficiencies in instructional materials, institutional support, and classroom resources. This contradiction engenders an instructional paradox: educators exhibit robust professional self-efficacy despite functioning within structurally disadvantaged contexts. Current research has not adequately elucidated why educators maintain instructional confidence despite structural constraints that hinder their ability to provide effective, inclusive education.

This vacuum in the literature is especially significant in rural educational settings where resource scarcity is more acute. In numerous emerging areas, educators are obligated to address institutional shortcomings through improvisation, personal initiative, and professional fortitude. Such settings may foster a type of "survival-based efficacy," in which educators retain confidence not due to sufficient support, but because adapting has become a professional must. Thus, teacher self-efficacy may not consistently indicate ideal teaching conditions; instead, it may signify educators' ability to persevere and operate within structurally limited environments.

This study, grounded in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory and Bandura's self-efficacy concept, advances current scholarship by investigating the interplay between teacher self-belief and environmental constraints in rural inclusive classrooms. This study examines how systemic obstacles, including restricted teaching resources, poor administrative assistance, and insufficient training, serve as "scaffolding inhibitors" that hinder the effective implementation of inclusive pedagogy. This study centers on primary schools in Lanao del Norte, offering a localized rural viewpoint on inclusive education and emphasizing the structural issues that influence teachers' experiences in executing Republic Act No. 11650.

Conceptual Framework

This study is based on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, namely the notions of self-efficacy and result anticipation, to elucidate the intricate challenges instructors face in executing inclusive education in rural schools. The paradigm asserts that instructional efficacy in inclusive classrooms is not entirely contingent upon teachers' professional expertise or their readiness to teach inclusively. Instead, it is influenced by the interplay of internal teacher-related elements and external systemic situations.

The core of the concept is teacher self-efficacy, defined as an educator's conviction in their ability to effectively organize, manage, and execute instructional strategies, especially under difficult classroom circumstances (Bandura, 1997). In inclusive education, educators with elevated self-efficacy typically exhibit greater confidence in course adaptation, managing various learners, altering classroom activities, and addressing individual student needs. Research indicates that educators possessing high self-efficacy exhibit increased tenacity, adaptability, and dedication to inclusive practices, even in the face of instructional challenges (Sharma et al., 2012).

This study contends that self-efficacy alone is inadequate for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Educators may have the requisite knowledge, confidence, and commitment to teach





inclusively, but they may still face considerable obstacles due to systemic constraints. Consequently, the framework presents Resources and Support Challenges as moderating variables that affect the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and instructional success. These issues encompass the absence of teaching resources, poor administrative assistance, insufficient specialist training, excessive class sizes, and restricted time for personalized instruction.

The framework also includes the notion of outcome expectancy, which pertains to a teacher's conviction that the educational environment or institutional structure will furnish the requisite conditions for good teaching outcomes. Teachers may possess high self-efficacy in their personal talents, yet concurrently exhibit poor outcome expectancy if they perceive the school system as deficient in adequate support mechanisms. In rural educational settings, educators frequently encounter this paradox as they are required to adopt inclusive methods despite insufficient resources, infrastructure, or institutional support.

The conflict between elevated self-efficacy and diminished outcome expectancy results in what this study designates as the Instructional Paradox. Educators persist in expressing confidence in their teaching capabilities, even while acknowledging significant structural obstacles that hinder effective execution. In this framework, educators are not inherently incompetent; instead, they are limited by environmental and structural factors that diminish the practical efficacy of their educational endeavors. Moreover, the framework corresponds with Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding by proposing that institutional support serves as a structural scaffold for educators. Similar to students needing assistance to attain educational objectives, educators necessitate organizational, material, and administrative support to effectively execute inclusive education. In the absence of these resources, educators are forced to rely on improvisation, resilience, and personal initiative, potentially heightening professional stress and diminishing long-term sustainability.

This conceptual framework elucidates the implementation of inclusive education as a result of dynamic interactions among teacher beliefs, systemic support structures, and classroom realities. It emphasizes that effective inclusion necessitates not only proficient educators but also adaptive institutional frameworks that may support inclusive practices in rural schools. This study offers a localized understanding of how structural disparities influence the execution of Republic Act No. 11650 by analyzing these interactions within elementary schools in Lanao del Norte.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-survey quantitative research approach to investigate the obstacles faced by elementary school teachers in executing inclusive education in rural public schools. A descriptive quantitative technique was deemed suitable as the study sought to systematically assess and articulate teachers' perspectives, experiences, and challenges regarding inclusive classroom practices without altering any factors. The survey method allowed the researcher to gather standardized data from numerous respondents and quantify patterns related to instructional hurdles, classroom management issues, and resource-related obstacles. The descriptive-survey design is especially appropriate for educational research aimed at assessing the occurrence and severity of various phenomena in natural school settings. This study's design enabled the discovery of persistent implementation challenges related to inclusive education under Republic Act No. 11650, particularly in resource-limited rural schools.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study's respondents were 60 elementary school instructors from designated public schools in Lanao del Norte. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique employed when respondents exhibit particular traits pertinent to the study's objectives. The chosen educators were directly engaged in managing inclusive classrooms or instructing students with varied educational requirements, rendering them suitable sources of information concerning the execution of inclusive education practices. A purposive sample was considered suitable as the study specifically focused on educators with practical expertise in inclusive classroom environments. The study selected





respondents actively engaged in inclusive teaching techniques to ensure that the data collected accurately represented genuine instructional and institutional realities in rural educational settings.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire aimed at evaluating the primary problems faced by educators in executing inclusive education. The measure was developed utilizing current literature on inclusive education, teacher self-efficacy, classroom management, and institutional support systems. The questionnaire encompassed three primary domains: (1) Classroom Management Challenges, (2) Instructional Challenges, and (3) Resources and Support Challenges. The Classroom Management domain analyzed educators' challenges in overseeing various learners, ensuring equal participation, and addressing differing behavioral and educational requirements in inclusive classrooms. The Instructional Challenges domain emphasized lesson planning, adaptation of instructional resources, individualized instruction, and pedagogical practices for students with disabilities. Simultaneously, the Resources and Support domain evaluated concerns about instructional resources, administrative assistance, training opportunities, and time allocation for inclusive education.

Instrument Validation and Reliability

The questionnaire was subjected to expert validation by professionals specializing in inclusive education, educational research, and curriculum development to ensure content validity. Their suggestions were integrated to enhance the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questionnaire items with the study's aims. Following validation, the instrument was pilot-tested with educators not involved in the actual study to assess reliability and internal consistency. The reliability analysis utilizing Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated elevated internal consistency among the instrument's subscales. The Classroom Management domain achieved a reliability rating of $\alpha = 0.84$, the Instructional Challenges area delivered $\alpha = 0.81$, and the Resources and Support domain generated $\alpha = 0.91$. The values show that the questionnaire exhibited good to exceptional reliability, implying that the instrument consistently assessed the desired constructs.

Scale and Data Interpretation

The research employed a 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of agreement and intensity of obstacles encountered by participants. The scale varied from 1 to 5, with verbal interpretations derived from the standardized heuristic guidelines of the Department of Education (DepEd). The scale interpretations were delineated as follows: 4.50–5.00 (Strongly Agree/Very Severe), 3.50–4.49 (Agree/High), 2.50–3.49 (Neutral/Moderate), 1.50–2.49 (Disagree/Low), and 1.00–1.49 (Strongly Disagree/Very Low). The Likert scale allowed the researcher to quantify teachers' impressions and ascertain the proportional severity of challenges faced in implementing inclusive classrooms. Weighted averages and standard deviations were calculated to assess the replies and identify patterns of consensus across the specified domains.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, authorization was obtained from pertinent school authorities and administrators. Participants were apprised of the study's objective, and involvement was entirely voluntary. Throughout the research procedure, ethical considerations like informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the safeguarding of respondents' identities were upheld. Educators were guaranteed that the collected information would be utilized exclusively for scholarly and research objectives.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The gathered data were examined utilizing descriptive statistical methods, such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted averages, and standard deviations. Frequencies and percentages summarized respondents' demographic profiles, while weighted means and standard deviations assessed the intensity and consistency of obstacles encountered throughout the three primary domains. The statistical metrics enabled the researcher to pinpoint the most critical obstacles hindering the implementation of inclusive education in rural primary schools.





Results

The analysis reveals an **Instructional Paradox**. Teachers "Disagree" that planning lessons ($M = 2.00$) is difficult, yet "Strongly Agree" that the lack of materials ($M = 4.93$) is a severe barrier.

Table 1: Prioritized Challenges in Inclusive Education

Domain	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation	Rank
Resource	7. Lack of instructional materials	4.93	0.25	Strongly Agree	1
Management	3. Giving equal attention to all learners	4.48	0.50	Agree	2
Resource	10. Time constraints for attention	4.20	0.40	Agree	3
Support	8. Limited administrative support	4.00	0.22	Agree	4
Support	9. Insufficient specialized training	4.00	0.19	Agree	5
Instruction	5. Adapting teaching materials	2.00	0.15	Disagree	10

The study's findings indicate a significant Instructional Paradox in the execution of inclusive education by elementary teachers in Lanao del Norte. Teachers indicated a minimal difficulty in instructional tasks, such as changing teaching materials ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.15$), although they regarded the absence of instructional materials as the most significant issue ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.25$). This research indicates that teachers may have the confidence and fundamental pedagogical skills to modify classes for various learners; yet, their instructional efficacy is constrained by a lack of sufficient resources.

Table 1 indicates that the most significant difficulty was the deficiency of educational resources, which received a mean score of 4.93, read as Strongly Agree. This signifies that nearly all participants acknowledged the lack of instructional resources as a significant obstacle to the execution of inclusive education. The exceptionally low standard deviation of 0.25 indicates a robust consensus among educators, implying that this issue is not isolated to a few individuals but is prevalent across the surveyed schools.

The second most significant problem was providing equitable attention to all learners ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.50$), evaluated as Agree. This outcome shows that classroom management continues to be a critical issue in inclusive classrooms. Educators are required to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities while also addressing the intellectual, behavioral, and emotional requirements of the remaining class members. In rural classrooms with insufficient teacher aides, specialists, or support people, delivering fair attention becomes progressively challenging.

The time limitations for attending to learners were ranked third, with a mean score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.40. This discovery corroborates the apprehension that inclusive education necessitates more preparation time, personalized assistance, and tailored teaching methodologies. Nevertheless, educators frequently navigate these obligations in conjunction with standard instructional responsibilities, administrative chores, and extensive class sizes. The findings indicate that time constraints serve as a structural impediment that diminishes teachers' ability to offer continuous, tailored assistance.

Limited administrative support and inadequate specialized training both attained mean values of 4.00, interpreted as Agree. The findings suggest that educators regard institutional support as inadequate for the effective execution of inclusive education. Administrative support is crucial for resource provision, training organization, workload adjustment, and the establishment of collaborative school frameworks. Likewise, specialist training is essential to provide educators with effective ways to accommodate varied learning requirements. The findings indicate that inclusive education cannot depend exclusively on teacher dedication; it necessitates robust organizational and professional support mechanisms.





Notably, the adaptation of teaching materials garnered a low mean score of 2.00, indicating disagreement. This indicates that educators do not perceive the process of modifying materials as particularly challenging. Nevertheless, when juxtaposed with the exceedingly high ranking for insufficient instructional resources, the outcome exposes a significant paradox. Educators may possess the willingness and ability to alter educational content; nevertheless, they are hindered by a lack of essential elements required for modification. The issue is not predominantly teacher competence but rather the availability of resources.

The minimal standard deviations across several domains, especially in the resource and instructional categories, reinforce the notion that these issues are uniformly encountered by respondents. The remarkably low standard deviation values, between 0.15 and 0.25, suggest that teachers' replies were closely grouped around the mean. This pattern indicates that the highlighted hurdles are not isolated issues, but rather prevalent systemic factors impacting the implementation of inclusive education in rural areas.

The findings indicate that the primary obstacles to inclusive education in Lanao del Norte are external and institutional, rather than solely instructional. Educators exhibit a certain level of professional preparedness and assurance; yet, their efficacy is constrained by inadequate resources, insufficient support, time limitations, and restricted training opportunities. These findings corroborate the notion of Scaffolding Inhibitors, wherein systemic deficits undermine the support frameworks essential for inclusive pedagogy and learning. Consequently, the execution of inclusive education in rural schools necessitates not just teacher training but also ongoing institutional investment and resource allocation.

Discussion

The study's findings indicate an instructional paradox in the execution of inclusive education. Educators indicated a moderate level of difficulty in adapting educational materials; nonetheless, a lack of enough resources was seen as the primary problem faced in inclusive classrooms. This indicates that educators may have confidence and fundamental teaching skills; yet, the efficacy of inclusive instruction is hindered by insufficient institutional support and poor educational resources. Bandura (1997) posits that self-efficacy affects an individual's conviction in their ability to successfully execute particular tasks. In inclusive education, teacher self-efficacy is seen as crucial as it influences instructional adaptability, classroom management, and collaboration with diverse learners (Sharma et al., 2012).

Prior research has repeatedly demonstrated that educators with heightened self-efficacy are more inclined to adopt inclusive practices (Savolainen et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2012). Nonetheless, good attitudes and confidence alone may not ensure effective implementation in resource-limited situations for educators. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) asserted that educators' perspectives on inclusion are significantly affected by the accessibility of support services, training, and classroom resources. Forlin and Chambers (2011) similarly discovered that while teacher preparation enhances knowledge of inclusive practices, it may concurrently heighten concerns around workload, instructional demands, and classroom reality.

The results also reveal a substantial disparity between policy and reality in inclusive education. Although educational policies promote equitable access and participation for students with disabilities, effective implementation in rural schools is hindered by limited teaching resources, a deficiency of specialized support, and insufficient administrative help. Ainscow (2020) contended that inclusive education necessitates systemic reform and institutional dedication rather than relying exclusively on individual teacher initiative. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) asserted that inclusion necessitates structural reform in educational systems, encompassing suitable support mechanisms, accessibility, and resource distribution.

The insufficient availability of instructional materials highlighted in this study signifies broader structural disparities typically encountered in rural and developing educational settings. De Boer et al. (2011) observed that educators often face challenges in executing inclusion owing to inadequate resources and insufficient professional assistance. Lindsay et al. (2014) discovered that educators in



inclusive environments frequently face challenges related to time constraints, inadequate training, and insufficient collaborative support services. These obstacles diminish teachers' capacity to deliver differentiated education effectively.

A potential explanation for the findings is the impact of social desirability bias. Educators may downplay instructional challenges due to professional standards that compel them to exhibit competence, adaptability, and resilience. Thus, educators may convey assurance in modifying lessons while concurrently facing considerable difficulties during real classroom execution. This scenario may induce professional stress, especially when educators comprehend the tenets of inclusive education yet lack the requisite resources for effective implementation.

The results reinforce the significance of institutional scaffolding in inclusive education. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, scaffolding denotes the essential support mechanisms required for effective learning and growth (Vygotsky, 1978). In inclusive education, scaffolding should extend to both students and educators. Educators necessitate ongoing professional development, administrative support, cooperation with experts, and access to instructional materials to maintain effective inclusive practices. Loreman et al. (2013) underscored that teacher preparedness for inclusion is heavily contingent upon training and support structures. Similarly, Yada et al. (2022) discovered that teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion are enhanced when institutional support is present.

The obstacles found in this study may thus be regarded as impediments to scaffolding. These encompass inadequate instructional resources, insufficient specialized training, limited administrative assistance, and time limitations. Such obstacles diminish instructors' ability to effectively execute inclusive education, notwithstanding their willingness and professional dedication. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) observed analogous findings, asserting that inclusive pedagogy necessitates structural support for sustainability in classroom practice.

The study indicates that the primary challenge in implementing inclusive education is not the reluctance or ineptitude of teachers, but rather the disparity between teachers' professional capabilities and the constrained institutional contexts in which they operate. The successful execution of inclusive education in rural schools necessitates governmental mandates, ongoing funding, sufficient teaching resources, administrative dedication, and constant professional development opportunities.

Knowledge Contribution

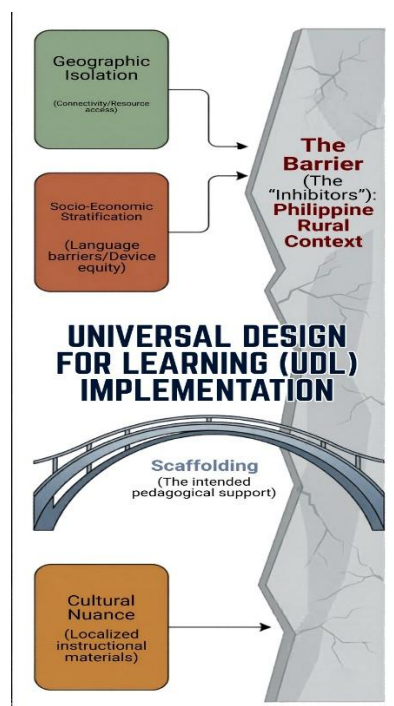


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Scaffolding Inhibitors within the Philippine Rural UDL Framework

The Philippine Rural Lens within the UDL Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the Conceptual Model of Scaffolding Inhibitors within the Philippine Rural UDL Framework, which enhances the concepts of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) by integrating a localized rural perspective. Conventional UDL frameworks typically presume that educational institutions have a requisite baseline of infrastructure, technological accessibility, administrative backing, and instructional materials essential for the efficient implementation of inclusive learning initiatives. This study contends that these assumptions inadequately represent the realities of rural schools in developing nations like the Philippines. The Philippine Rural Lens elucidates how geographic isolation, delayed resource distribution, and institutional disparities influence the practical execution of inclusive education in resource-limited settings. This localized paradigm contends that systemic obstacles in rural schools not only hinder or complicate the execution of inclusive education. Instead, these obstacles aggressively undermine or demolish the instructional scaffolding designed to assist learners with impairments and varied educational requirements. The lack of materials, specialized training, administrative support, and technical infrastructure converts inclusive education from a pedagogical difficulty into a structural problem. Consequently, the research posits that effective inclusion relies on both instructional design and the educational context in which learning takes place.

Challenging the Western-Centric Application of UDL

The Philippine Rural Lens critiques the Western-centric and uniform implementation of UDL frameworks. A significant portion of the current work on inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) derives from educational systems characterized by stable infrastructures, robust institutional support, and extensive access to educational technologies (Ainscow, 2020). Thus, several UDL models implicitly presume that educational institutions can easily offer diverse forms of representation, participation, and expression for students. In numerous rural regions of the Global South, the principal issue lies not only in formulating inclusive teaching but also in guaranteeing the existence of the structural conditions essential for inclusion. Rural schools may have deficiencies in energy, internet access, educational resources, assistive technologies, and qualified staff. Consequently, educators frequently struggle to completely implement UDL concepts, despite their eagerness and professional expertise. This paper contends that inclusive education frameworks should be tailored to local contexts instead of being universally implemented without regard for systematic disparities.

Defining Scaffolding Inhibitors

The study presents the notion of Scaffolding Inhibitors within this framework. In conventional UDL and Vygotskian theory, scaffolding denotes the provisional instructional assistance offered to learners to facilitate their attainment of elevated levels of comprehension and autonomy (Vygotsky, 1978). This study posits that specific structural factors hinder the successful functioning of scaffolding in rural inclusive classrooms.

The initial category of scaffolding inhibitors is Structural Friction. Structural friction denotes systemic problems that diminish the efficacy of inclusive pedagogical approaches. Examples encompass sporadic electricity, poor classroom facilities, absence of indigenous-language learning materials, limited internet connectivity, and shortages of assistive technology. These obstacles hinder educators from executing differentiated instruction and restrict students' access to educational support services. Even when educators have the requisite pedagogical understanding, systemic obstacles diminish their capacity to implement instructional plans effectively in the classroom.

The subsequent category is the Multiplier Effect. This notion elucidates how rurality exacerbates traditional learning obstacles, converting moderate educational challenges into severe exclusionary circumstances. A learner's "need for representation" under UDL may transform into a "complete lack of access" if the school fails to supply visual aids, adaptive technologies, or contextually relevant instructional materials. In this context, rural conditions exacerbate the effects of existing disparities by intertwining poverty, geographic isolation, and institutional underdevelopment. Consequently, students with impairments encounter exacerbated disadvantages relative to those in more urbanized educational environments.



Theoretical Significance

The identification of scaffolding inhibitors conceptually enhances the debate on inclusive education by redirecting focus from Instructional Design to what this study designates as Structural Pedagogy. Conventional discourse on inclusive education frequently emphasizes pedagogical approaches, classroom techniques, and curriculum modifications. Although these factors are significant, the study's findings indicate that pedagogical innovation alone cannot guarantee inclusion if the educational framework is inadequate or underfunded.

This study posits that structural pedagogy highlights the environment as a determinant of the practical constraints of inclusive instruction. Infrastructure, funding, administrative procedures, and resource allocation emerge as essential prerequisites rather than ancillary factors. This viewpoint enhances the comprehension of UDL by acknowledging that successful inclusion necessitates both educational proficiency and infrastructural preparedness.

Moreover, the concept has pragmatic consequences for policymakers and educational leaders in developing countries. It posits that investments in infrastructure, localized instructional resources, rural educator training, and institutional support structures must be regarded as fundamental elements of inclusive education policy. Unless these institutional hurdles are confronted, inclusive education may persist as a theoretical commitment rather than a tangible educational reality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several interventions are recommended to address the identified *Scaffolding Inhibitors* in rural inclusive classrooms.

First, the Department of Education (DepEd) should strengthen the localization and indigenization of instructional materials. Since the lack of instructional resources emerged as the most severe challenge ($M = 4.93$), schools should conduct workshops focused on developing low-cost, localized, and culturally responsive teaching materials using available indigenous and community-based resources. This may help teachers reduce dependence on delayed centralized resource distribution.

Second, stronger administrative and professional support systems should be established for inclusive educators. Given the reported limitations in administrative support and specialized training ($M = 4.00$), school heads and district supervisors should adopt collaborative supervision approaches that provide mentoring, classroom assistance, and targeted professional development programs specifically designed for inclusive education settings.

Third, schools should implement Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and provide protected collaborative time for teachers handling inclusive classrooms. Considering the challenges related to giving equal attention to learners ($M = 4.48$) and time constraints ($M = 4.20$), reducing excessive clerical workloads and encouraging peer collaboration may help teachers share instructional strategies, improve classroom management, and design more time-efficient inclusive practices.

Overall, inclusive education in rural schools requires not only teacher commitment but also sustained institutional support, adequate resources, and responsive educational policies to ensure the effective implementation of Republic Act No. 11650.

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