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LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN MANAGING LEARNERS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS: A QUALITATIVE MULTIPLE-CASE PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education in the Philippines depends on parents and teachers, yet localized qualitative evidence on how both groups experience and make sense of managing learners with additional needs remains limited. This study explored the lived experiences of parents and teachers in managing learners with additional needs in selected public schools in the Schools Division Offices (SDOs) of Bataan and San Fernando City, the meanings they attached to these experiences, and the essence of those experiences. A qualitative multiple-case design with a phenomenological orientation was used. Two contextual cases, parents (home) and teachers (school), were examined through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with seven parents and seven teachers selected through criterion-based purposive sampling. Data were analyzed with Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis, first within each case and then across cases. Six themes described the parent case: daily caregiving requires constant adjustment; a child's progress brings joy and fulfillment; love and acceptance give meaning to parenting; parenting is a process of learning and personal growth; resilience is sustained through love, patience, and hope; and every child deserves acceptance, opportunity, and support for independence. Seven themes described the teacher case, covering continuous adjustment amid behavioral and instructional demands, meaning drawn from learner progress, patience and compassion, individualized and holistic support, professional transformation, sustained fulfillment and hope, and shared responsibility and social acceptance. Parents and teachers hold different responsibilities but share a commitment to learner development, acceptance, and independence. The convergent findings informed the TULAY Framework (Trust and Acceptance, Understanding Individual Needs, Learning and Capacity Building, Alliance and Shared Responsibility, Yielding Growth and Independence) and an accompanying training program, which require further validation.

Keywords: *lived experiences; parents and teachers; learners with additional needs; inclusive education; multiple case study; thematic analysis; TULAY Framework*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and a means of personal, social, and economic development. Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2025), and the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) has promoted inclusive education as a strategy for increasing the participation of children with differing abilities and needs (DepEd, 2017). Inclusion is reinforced nationally by Republic Act No. 11650, the Inclusive Education Act (2022), and by the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 (NEDA, 2023). Even so, learner identification, teacher preparation, specialized services, and support systems continue to constrain implementation (EDCOM 2, 2025).

In this study, learners with additional needs are learners who require additional academic, developmental, behavioral, social, emotional, physical, or educational support to participate meaningfully and progress in school. Their needs may include learning difficulties, developmental delays, autism spectrum disorder, attention-related difficulties, physical impairments, and behavioral concerns. Supporting them requires coordinated effort among parents, teachers, schools, and other stakeholders (UNESCO, 2025; UNICEF, 2022).

Parents and teachers play complementary roles. Parents provide care, guidance, emotional support, and learning assistance at home, while teachers respond to individual differences in the classroom. Both groups, however, report limited resources and specialized services, training gaps, financial demands, workload, and uncertainty about appropriate interventions (DepEd, 2017; UNESCO, 2021; UNICEF, 2022). The existing literature documents parental stress and coping (Cheng & Lai, 2023; Dijkstra-de Neijs et al., 2024), the process of parental acceptance (Sarmiento et al., 2024; Castro et al., 2024), and teachers' challenges and fulfillment in inclusive classrooms (Fajardo et al., 2025; Varela, 2026). Few studies, however, examine parents and teachers together within Philippine school contexts or ask how their experiences and the meanings they attach to them converge across home and school.

The study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which treats home and school as interconnected environments, and is supported by Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, which explains how beliefs about one's capability shape responses to challenge, together with Family Systems and Social Support perspectives. Phenomenology was appropriate because it focuses on how individuals experience a phenomenon firsthand and the meanings they attach to it (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The study therefore sought to explore and describe the lived experiences of parents and teachers in managing learners with additional needs in selected public schools in the SDOs of Bataan and San Fernando City. Specifically, it asked: (1) How do parents and teachers describe their lived experiences in managing learners with additional needs? (2) What meanings do they attribute to these experiences? (3) What is the essence of the experiences they share? (4) How can the findings guide the development of a framework, the TULAY Framework, to support learners with additional needs at home and in school?

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METHODS

Research design

A qualitative multiple-case design with a phenomenological orientation was used to explore how parents and teachers experience the management of learners with additional needs. A multiple-case design suits a phenomenon examined across clearly defined cases and the settings in which it occurs (Creswell & Poth, 2024). Two contextual cases were defined by role and setting rather than by individual participant: the parent case (experiences, responsibilities, and support practices in the home and family setting) and the teacher case (the same in the classroom and school setting). Data were analyzed within each case before a cross-case analysis identified similarities, differences, and complementary perspectives.

Participants and setting

Fourteen participants took part: seven parents and seven teachers with direct, relevant experience in managing or supporting learners with additional needs in selected public schools under the SDOs of Bataan and San Fernando City. Criterion-based purposive sampling was used. Parents had direct experience of managing or supporting a child with additional needs; teachers had taught, managed, or supported such learners; and all participants were willing and able to describe their experiences and gave voluntary informed consent. The sample aimed at depth and richness of information rather than statistical representation, and adequacy was judged by the richness, relevance, and completeness of the interview data and the recurrence of meaningful patterns.

Research instrument

A researcher-developed, semi-structured interview guide served as the primary instrument. It contained open-ended main questions with follow-up probes aligned with the research questions and covered lived experiences, meanings attached to them, significant situations, complexities encountered in home and school contexts, and the overall essence of the experience. Questions were written in clear, non-leading language; parent questions were framed around the home and family, teacher questions around the classroom and school, and shared areas of inquiry allowed comparison across cases. The interview closed with an open question inviting any additional experiences. The guide was submitted for expert review of relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the research questions.

Data collection and translation

Interviews were conducted individually and, with consent, audio-recorded; detailed notes were taken when participants declined recording. Some participants responded in Filipino or a mix of Filipino and English. Responses were translated into English for analysis and presentation; the translations were reviewed to retain the intended meaning, and original-language transcripts were preserved for verification.

Data analysis

Interview data were transcribed and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) generating initial themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. Analysis proceeded in two stages. In the within-case stage, parent and teacher data were coded and themed separately to preserve context. In the cross-case stage, the resulting patterns were compared to identify convergence, divergence, and complementarity. Movement back and forth between phases was allowed, and themes were checked against coded extracts and the full dataset. Themes were grounded in participants' accounts rather than imposed in advance, and the TULAY Framework was developed from the convergent themes. Quotations are identified by participant codes (e.g., P3 = parent 3; T4 = teacher 4).

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Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness followed four criteria (Ahmed, 2024). Credibility was supported by in-depth interviewing with probing, repeated engagement with transcripts, participant triangulation across parents and teachers, and the use of direct quotations. Transferability was supported by detailed description of settings, participants, and contexts. Dependability was supported by an audit trail covering participant selection, guide development, data gathering, transcription, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Confirmability was supported by reflexivity, documentation of methodological decisions, and bracketing of the researchers' assumptions.

Ethical considerations

Participants received an informed consent form describing the purpose, procedures, expected duration, risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, data management, and their rights. Participation was voluntary, and participants could skip questions, pause, or withdraw at any time without penalty. Participant codes protected identities, recordings were made only with explicit consent, and data were stored securely with password protection and restricted access, in line with university policy and data privacy requirements. Any conflicts of interest were disclosed.

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RESULTS

Analysis produced six themes for the parent case and seven for the teacher case. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the themes and subthemes; the sections below illustrate each theme with participant narratives.

Table 1. Themes and subthemes: parent case (home context)

Theme	Subthemes
Daily caregiving is challenging and requires constant adjustment	Constant supervision for the learner's safety; communicating with a learner with delayed speech; emotional strain in managing behavior; managing behavior during moments of frustration
Witnessing the child's progress brings joy and fulfillment	Fulfillment in developmental progress; pride in growing independence; recognizing small developmental milestones; celebrating new skills and future potential
Love and acceptance give meaning to parenting	Learning to accept the child's condition; drawing strength from love and faith; embracing the child through unconditional love; accepting circumstances through faith
Parenting becomes a process of learning and personal growth	Learning and growing through caregiving; developing greater patience and understanding; adjusting responses with patience and calmness; becoming more confident and responsive
Resilience is sustained through love, patience, and hope	Sustaining commitment through love; practicing patience through continuing challenges; drawing hope from the learner's progress; maintaining resilience through faith and acceptance
Every child deserves acceptance, opportunity, and support for independence	Recognizing the child's worth and potential; providing opportunities for learning and participation; supporting functional and self-help skills; promoting independence and dignity

Table 2. Themes and subthemes: teacher case (school context)

Theme	Subthemes
Teaching learners with additional needs involves challenges and continuous adjustment	Managing unpredictable behavior and ensuring classroom safety; managing tantrums and classroom disruptions; responding to diverse needs through additional effort; finding fulfillment despite demands
Learner progress makes the challenges of teaching meaningful	Joy in everyday achievements; witnessing gradual growth toward independence; fulfillment through small behavioral gains; lasting impact of teacher–learner relationships
Inclusive teaching develops patience, compassion, and understanding	Importance of compassion and attentiveness; developing patience through teaching experiences; understanding learners' individual ways of communicating

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Teaching requires individualized approaches and holistic support	Recognizing the uniqueness of every learner; adapting expectations and approaches to learner needs; upholding every learner's right to quality education
Inclusive teaching transforms teachers through patience, reflection, and continuous learning	Developing patience through challenging experiences; becoming more flexible and understanding; finding purpose through learner improvement
Learner progress sustains teachers' fulfillment and hope	Fulfillment in small achievements; reward through growing independence; hope for learners' full participation in society
Meaningful inclusion requires shared responsibility and social acceptance	Recognizing strengths beyond disabilities; promoting acceptance and equal treatment; building partnerships for broader inclusive opportunities

Parent case: experiences in the home context

Theme P1. Daily caregiving is challenging and requires constant adjustment

Parents described caregiving as continuous vigilance. Keeping children safe, finding ways to communicate with them, and managing behavior that was hard to interpret or control demanded constant adjustment. Supervision was most demanding in public places:

"When he/she was young, it was difficult because you couldn't take your eyes off him/her. Whenever you were in a public place, he/she would really run off." (P1-S1-KP2)

Delayed speech made communication a daily difficulty, as one parent noticed when comparing her child with a neighbor's:

"I would hear my neighbor's child talking a lot, while my child was not speaking. Even saying 'Mama' and 'Papa' was difficult for him/her." (P2-S1-KP1)

Repeated behaviors produced emotional strain, although parents continued to provide care, and frustration over unmet communication sometimes escalated into aggressive actions:

"It's difficult, ma'am, but it really needs to be done. There are times when you get frustrated because you've already told him/her many times, yet there are still moments when he/she doesn't do it." (P3-S1-KP10)

"He/she would easily get frustrated when others did not immediately understand what he/she was trying to say. When he/she became upset, he/she would bang things and throw objects around the house, and then suddenly start crying." (P7-S3-KP8)

Taken together, these accounts show caregiving as emotional work: parents managed their own frustration while interpreting the feelings behind the child's behavior.

Theme P2. Witnessing the child's progress brings joy and fulfillment

Alongside the strain, parents found joy in progress, including very small gains. Fulfillment came from seeing a difference in the child and from recognizing abilities rather than only limitations:

"It is fulfilling as a parent because, even though my child has special needs, there are things that he/she can already do that I believe will be a great help in his/her life." (P3-S1-KP14)

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Growing independence was a particular source of pride after years of close accompaniment:

"Since [she] was a child until now that she is in Grade 11, I have always accompanied and supported her… But now, she is doing very well because there are things that she can already do on her own, and that makes me proud." (P4-S2-KP11)

Progress did not have to be dramatic to be meaningful:

"Progress does not always come in big or dramatic ways. Sometimes, progress comes in a single word, a new gesture, a calmer response, or a small accomplishment that we once wondered whether he would ever achieve." (P5-S1-KP23)

Theme P3. Love and acceptance give meaning to parenting

Acceptance emerged as a gradual process that redirected parents from facing the situation toward acting on it:

"Although I accepted him for who he was, I told myself, 'It has already happened. We just must do whatever we can.'" (P2-S5-KP2)

Love and faith were sources of strength, and parents emphasized valuing the child as a whole person rather than defining the child by a condition:

"Being a parent is difficult. But from that experience, I learned that love should prevail—love, trust in God, and love for my child." (P4-S2-KP5)

"I learned to love my child regardless of his condition." (P6-S2-KP2)

Theme P4. Parenting becomes a process of learning and personal growth

Parents described themselves as learners. Caregiving taught them to observe their children, to modify responses that did not work, and to grow in patience and confidence:

"In a way, my child also taught me. I had to learn because I needed to. So, all my focus was on my child and on what he/she needed." (P1-S2-KP10)

"I realized that I needed to understand and be more patient with him/her. My child taught me to be more patient, not only with him/her but also with the children at school who may be experiencing similar difficulties…" (P3-S2-KP7)

Theme P5. Resilience is sustained through love, patience, and hope

Parents sustained their commitment through love, patience, faith, and hope drawn from their children's progress:

"Prayer is what I always carry with me for my child. I want her to experience a normal life." (P3-S3-KP9)

"Despite everything we are going through, I am still thankful to the Lord… Yes, it is difficult, but I always tell myself that I can get through it for my child." (P4-S5-KP3)

"My love for [my daughter] is what keeps me going. I bring her to and from school and wait for her before we go home. It is difficult, yes, but as a parent, I do my best to endure and carry on for her." (P7-S2-KP4)

Theme P6. Every child deserves acceptance, opportunity, and support for independence

Parents looked beyond the present to dignity, participation, and independence. They wanted their children recognized for their potential, given opportunities to learn, and equipped with functional skills for a future without them:

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"Every child has abilities and potential. With the right love, acceptance, and support, they can grow, develop, and succeed." (P6-S5-KP5)

"They always ask us, 'What will happen to them when we are no longer around?' I tell them that this is exactly why we help them learn skills and other things, so that when we are no longer here, they will be able to manage and take care of themselves." (P4-S3-KP9)

Inclusion, for one parent, meant belonging rather than presence:

"True inclusion means more than simply allowing our children to be present in public spaces. It means recognizing their right to participate, understanding that they may behave differently, and responding with patience rather than judgment." (P5-S5-KP16)

Experiences of bullying heightened the wish for peer understanding (P7-S3-KP7).

Teacher case: experiences in the school context

Theme T1. Teaching learners with additional needs involves challenges and continuous adjustment

Teachers described unpredictable behavior, tantrums, classroom disruptions, and diverse needs that required extra effort and constant adjustment:

"I have experienced situations where I had to chase a child outside the classroom. There were also times when the child would become disruptive in class when his or her wishes were not followed. The most difficult part was dealing with their tantrums. Although I was able to manage them, it was really exhausting as a teacher." (T2-S1-KP5–KP7)

"As a teacher, it is not that easy. These children have exceptional needs, so you need to exert extra effort and be patient." (T4-S1-KP1–KP4)

Fatigue and fulfillment coexisted: "It is tiring yet fulfilling" (T4-S1-KP3–KP6).

Theme T2. Learner progress makes the challenges of teaching meaningful

Small achievements and gradual growth in skills, behavior, and independence gave teachers a sense of reward, and enduring relationships reinforced their commitment:

"It is both a happy and tiring experience. It is rewarding because whenever they achieve something, even something as simple as tying their shoelaces, we already consider it a significant achievement." (T3-S1-KP2)

"They only stayed with me for three years, but even until now, they still come back to me and say, 'Ma'am, we learned so much from you…'" (T6-S1-KP7)

Theme T3. Inclusive teaching develops patience, compassion, and understanding

Teachers saw compassion and attentiveness as essential and described patience as something the work itself had built, along with an understanding of how learners communicate:

"I think that experience as a teacher was also a way for me to become stronger as a teacher and to develop more patience." (T1-S2-KP2)

"You really need to understand their way of communicating because sometimes, they can be difficult to understand." (T6-S2-KP9)

Theme T4. Teaching requires individualized approaches and holistic support

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Teachers recognized each learner's uniqueness, adapted expectations and approaches accordingly, and framed individualized support as a matter of rights:

"I have learned that every learner with special needs has unique abilities, needs, and ways of learning." (T3-S2-KP2–KP3)

"One of the things I realized from that experience is that everyone, including learners with additional needs, has the right to quality education. That is why inclusive education is really necessary." (T6-S2-KP3–KP5)

Theme T5. Inclusive teaching transforms teachers through patience, reflection, and continuous learning

The work changed teachers professionally and personally:

"It really taught me to have more patience. Before, whenever I became angry, I would lose my patience and scold the children. But now that I am handling children with special needs I have learned to become more patient." (T1-S5-KP1–KP3)

"I have learned to become more patient, understanding, flexible, and creative in my approach." (T3-S5-KP1–KP2)

Theme T6. Learner progress sustains teachers' fulfillment and hope

Teachers appreciated even the smallest gains and drew hope from learners' growing independence:

"The progress of learners is not always immediate, so I have learned to appreciate even their smallest achievements." (T3-S5-KP3–KP5)

"Seeing a child improve behaviorally, academically, and emotionally makes all the effort worthwhile. When a learner becomes more independent and is able to manage tasks because of the training and guidance provided, it brings a great sense of accomplishment." (T4-S5-KP1–KP9)

"I hope that someday we can have a community where persons with additional needs can live freely, participate in society, and be accepted without judgment." (T7-S5-KP2–KP3)

Theme T7. Meaningful inclusion requires shared responsibility and social acceptance

Teachers insisted that inclusion goes beyond placement in a mainstream classroom. It means recognizing strengths, treating learners equally, and sharing responsibility among families, schools, professionals, and the community:

"Our students should not be judged simply because they are SNED learners. Being a SNED learner does not mean that they are incapable of doing certain things. We have to recognize that they are also capable of doing many things and that they have their own strengths." (T5-S5-KP5–KP7)

"We hope that we can become more open and accepting toward children with disabilities, and that we can love learners with additional needs just as we love the learners in our regular classes." (T6-S5-KP5–KP8)

"[The DSWD] should also communicate and coordinate with SPED programs to identify appropriate programs that can create broader opportunities for persons or learners with additional needs." (T7-S5-KP7–KP11)

Cross-case analysis and the TULAY Framework

The cross-case comparison showed that parents and teachers occupy different roles but converge on five areas, which formed the basis of the TULAY Framework (Table 3).

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Table 3. Cross-case convergence and the TULAY Framework

TULAY component	Convergent evidence (parent and teacher themes)	Focus
T – Trust and Acceptance	Parents: love and acceptance give meaning (P3, P6). Teachers: compassion, equal treatment, social acceptance (T3, T7).	Valuing learners for their abilities, dignity, and potential
U – Understanding Individual Needs	Parents: reading speech, behavior, and triggers (P1). Teachers: learner uniqueness, individualized approaches (T3, T4).	Recognizing differences in ability, behavior, communication, and learning
L – Learning and Capacity Building	Parents: parenting as learning (P4). Teachers: transformation through reflection and continuous learning (T5).	Strengthening knowledge, skills, patience, resilience, and confidence
A – Alliance and Shared Responsibility	Parents: wish for peer and community understanding (P6). Teachers: partnerships among families, schools, professionals, and community (T7).	Cooperation among parents, teachers, specialists, agencies, and community
Y – Yielding Growth and Independence	Parents: progress, pride, and independence (P2, P6). Teachers: progress, sustaining fulfillment and hope (T2, T6).	Opportunities for skills, participation, and independence

On this basis, a five-module TULAY Training Program (two days, ten contact hours, about two hours per module) was proposed, with one module per framework component and a session output for each, such as a personal commitment statement, a learner profile, a strategy plan, a home–school collaboration plan, and a learner growth and independence action plan.

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DISCUSSION

This study explored how parents and teachers experience, and make meaning of, managing learners with additional needs. The two cases differed in setting and responsibility but converged on a common story: demanding, emotionally taxing daily work that is sustained by learner progress, acceptance, patience, and a hope for independence.

Demands and adjustment across home and school

Parents' accounts of constant supervision, delayed speech, and emotionally taxing behavior management are consistent with research linking children's behavioral and communication difficulties to parental stress (Asghar et al., 2023; Cheng & Lai, 2023; Dijkstra-de Neijs et al., 2024; Janah & Yunitasari, 2024) and with safety concerns that make active family supervision necessary (Modula & Sumbane, 2022; Robinson & Graham, 2019). The description of frustration-driven outbursts parallels caregiver accounts of meltdowns in a Philippine setting, where patience, calm communication, and emotional understanding were central (Gevero & San Jose, 2026). Teachers' experiences of chasing a child out of class, managing tantrums, and exerting extra effort mirror studies of inclusion "in the heat of the moment" and of teachers' emotional and behavioral challenges (Øen et al., 2023; Esperanza et al., 2025).

Through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) lens, these demands arise in the microsystems of home and classroom but are shaped by the broader environment. Participants' efforts to adjust, rather than to correct behavior alone, suggest that managing learners with additional needs is relational and responsive work, not only a technical one.

Progress, meaning, and self-efficacy

Both groups located meaning in small gains. Parents' pride in growing independence and teachers' reward in tying shoelaces or sitting through five minutes of work echo, showing that parents redefine success in terms of the child's own qualities (Malka & Rahat-Drihem, 2026), that independence develops progressively with support (Tumbali & Oracion, 2026), and that positive teacher–learner relationships sustain teachers' commitment (Berchiatti et al., 2024; Varela, 2026). Seen through Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, observed progress functions as mastery evidence: it affirms that effort works and thereby sustains persistence despite fatigue.

Acceptance, faith, and personal and professional growth

Parents' accounts of acceptance as a gradual process that turns from facing reality to acting match the staged acceptance process described for Filipino parents (Sarmiento et al., 2024) and the role of unconditional love and acceptance in Philippine parents of children with autism (Castro et al., 2024; Zabala & Doromal, 2025). Faith as a source of resilience is consistent with studies of religious and spiritual coping among parents of children with disabilities (Moskito et al., 2025; Pely, 2025; Rodrigues et al., 2024). Parents and teachers alike reported becoming more patient, flexible, and confident, supporting the view that caregiving and inclusive teaching are also learning experiences (Fajardo et al., 2025; Pely, 2025; Catoto & Mantawil, 2023).

Inclusion as shared responsibility

Both groups defined inclusion as belonging and participation rather than physical placement, in line with calls to move beyond inclusion toward belonging (Long & Guo, 2023) and with evidence that attitudes toward inclusion are shaped by perceived preparedness (Lindner et al., 2023). Teachers' and parents' appeals for community understanding, protection from bullying, and coordination with social services show that the experiences described here cannot be resolved by individual commitment alone, consistent with national findings on gaps in teacher preparation and support systems (EDCOM 2, 2025). This is the logic of the TULAY Framework: Trust and Acceptance, Understanding Individual Needs, Learning and Capacity Building, Alliance and Shared Responsibility, and Yielding Growth and Independence.

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Implications and recommendations

For schools and families, the findings support (a) individualized support developed jointly with parents, with realistic goals across academic, behavioral, communication, functional, and self-help skills; (b) continuing, practical teacher development in differentiated instruction, behavior support, communication strategies, and classroom safety; and (c) school-based mechanisms for parent–teacher collaboration, referral, access to assistive resources, and clear procedures for behavioral, emotional, and safety concerns. For policymakers, they point to teacher preparation, resource allocation, specialist support, and family assistance in implementing the Inclusive Education Act. For guidance counselors and SPED personnel, they suggest integrated consultation, counseling, and referral services for learners, parents, and teachers. Across settings, support should promote learner dignity, participation, and functional independence.

Limitations and directions for future research

The findings reflect fourteen participants from selected public schools in two school divisions and should be read within these boundaries; transferability rests on the contextual detail provided. The study did not include learners, school heads, guidance counselors, therapists, or other specialists, did not compare experiences by type or level of need, and did not assess intervention effectiveness or learner outcomes. Interviews were partly conducted in Filipino and translated, which may affect nuance despite verification. The TULAY Framework and Training Program are conceptual outputs derived from the data and have not been tested. Future studies may validate and pilot them, examine perspectives of learners and school leaders, compare by type of need, and use mixed methods to assess their effect on collaboration, teacher preparedness, and learner independence.

Conclusion

Parents and teachers who manage learners with additional needs experience continuous adjustment, emotional and practical demands, and the limits of individual effort, yet they find meaning in small gains, acceptance, patience, and the hope that learners will participate and live independently. Their experiences show that sustainable inclusion requires trust and acceptance, understanding of each learner, capacity building for adults, shared responsibility among home, school, and community, and opportunities for learners' growth and independence. These insights are embodied in the TULAY Framework, which merits further validation in other settings.

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