



## Voices of Rural Youth: Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities on School Performance

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of rural learners, particularly the challenges they encounter, the opportunities available to them, and how these shapes their academic journey. Anchored in a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved fifteen (15) Grade 4 to Grade 6 learners from five rural elementary schools. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to capture the meanings learners attach to their experiences in both school and home contexts. Findings revealed that rural learners face multiple and interconnected challenges, including poverty, lack of school materials, long travel distances, poor road conditions, and occasional bullying. These factors significantly affect their attendance, participation, and overall engagement in school. Despite these barriers, learners demonstrated strong resilience, motivation, and perseverance, driven by their aspirations to achieve a better future and support their families. Education was consistently viewed as a pathway toward personal and socio-economic advancement. Moreover, the study found that teacher support, peer collaboration, family encouragement, and community involvement serve as critical enabling factors that sustain learners' engagement and persistence in school. Coping strategies such as persistence, help-seeking behavior, and goal-oriented motivation were commonly employed to overcome difficulties. These findings highlight that rural learners' school performance is shaped by the dynamic interaction of economic, environmental, social, and institutional influences. The study concludes that addressing rural education challenges requires a holistic and context-sensitive approach. It recommends strengthening financial assistance, improving infrastructure, and enhancing school-based support systems to promote equitable and inclusive learning opportunities in rural communities.

**Keywords:** coping strategies, lived experiences rural learners, school performance, student resilience

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a powerful tool for personal growth, social mobility, and national development. It equips learners with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their lives and contribute meaningfully to society. To better understand how various factors influence learners' development, this study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explains that an individual's learning is shaped by interactions within multiple environmental systems, including the home, school, and community. This framework provides a comprehensive lens for examining how rural learners' school performance is influenced by interconnected social, economic, and environmental factors.

Despite the recognized importance of education, access to quality learning opportunities remains unequal. Rural learners, in particular, continue to face significant challenges that affect their academic performance and overall school experience. Globally, studies show that rural students are more likely to experience poverty, limited access to school resources, and geographic isolation, which negatively impact their learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). In developing countries, these challenges are further intensified by inadequate infrastructure, shortage of instructional materials, and limited access to qualified teachers.

In the Philippine context, reports from the Department of Education (DepEd, 2022) highlight persistent disparities between rural and urban schools. Many rural learners encounter long travel distances, poor road conditions, and insufficient learning materials. The COVID-19 pandemic further magnified these inequalities, particularly in terms of access to digital learning tools and internet connectivity, resulting in widened learning gaps in reading and numeracy.

Beyond structural barriers, rural learners also face socio-economic pressures within their households. Many are expected to contribute to family responsibilities such as farming, fishing, or household chores, which reduces their study time. However, despite these constraints, learners often demonstrate resilience, supported by family encouragement, peer relationships, and community involvement.

While existing studies have extensively documented the challenges faced by rural learners and the factors affecting their academic performance, most of these studies rely on quantitative data and focus on general trends or program outcomes. There is a lack of in-depth exploration of how rural learners themselves experience, interpret, and give meaning to these challenges and opportunities in their daily lives. Furthermore, the voices of elementary-level learners in geographically isolated areas remain underrepresented in the literature.

This gap highlights the need for a qualitative approach that captures the lived experiences of rural learners. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this study aims to explore how learners navigate their educational journeys within the contexts of home, school, and community. Specifically, it seeks to understand how they describe their experiences, the meanings they attach to education, the challenges and opportunities they encounter, and the coping strategies they employ to succeed.

Understanding these lived experiences is essential in designing more responsive and inclusive educational programs. The findings of this study may help educators, school leaders, policymakers, and communities develop targeted and context-sensitive interventions that better support rural learners and improve their academic performance.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of rural youth in relation to their school performance. Specifically, it sought to describe how rural learners experience life at home, in school, and in the community as they pursue their education. It also aimed to understand the meanings they attach to their experiences in studying, learning, and achieving success in school. In addition, the study intended to identify the challenges and opportunities that rural learners encounter in their daily schooling experiences. Furthermore, it explored the coping mechanisms and strategies that learners use in dealing with academic and non-academic difficulties. Lastly, the study aimed to gather recommendations from rural learners that may help improve their learning experiences and overall school performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of related literature and studies that provide theoretical and empirical support to the present investigation. It focuses on understanding the challenges and opportunities influencing rural learners' school performance, as well as the factors that shape their educational experiences. Both local and international studies are included to provide a comprehensive perspective on the topic. The review is organized into key themes, including challenges in rural education, family and socio-economic influences, teacher and peer support, environmental and community context, psychosocial factors, and



educational interventions. These themes are closely related to the variables explored in the study and serve as a foundation for analyzing the lived experiences of rural learners.

## ***Challenges in Rural Learners' Educational Experiences***

Recent studies highlight that rural learners continue to face significant barriers that affect their academic performance. According to UNESCO (2020), learners in rural areas experience limited access to educational resources, higher dropout rates, and increased learning poverty. Similarly, studies conducted in the Philippines reveal that rural schools often suffer from inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient instructional materials (DepEd, 2022). Environmental challenges such as long travel distances, poor road conditions, and lack of transportation further hinder school attendance and participation. Research by Javier and Soriano (2022) emphasized that the digital divide remains a major issue, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, where many rural learners lacked access to online learning platforms and internet connectivity. These findings indicate that rural learners' academic difficulties are not only school-based but are deeply rooted in broader socio-economic and environmental conditions.

## ***Family and Socio-Economic Influences on Learning***

Family plays a crucial role in shaping learners' educational experiences. Studies show that socio-economic status significantly influences students' access to resources, study time, and academic engagement (Villanueva & Lim, 2021). In rural settings, learners are often required to contribute to household responsibilities, which may limit their time for studying. Despite these challenges, parental support and encouragement remain strong predictors of academic success. Cabansag (2021) found that emotional and moral support from family members enhances learners' motivation and resilience. This suggests that while poverty poses constraints, family support serves as a protective factor that helps learners persist in their education.

## ***Teacher Support and Teaching Practices***

Teacher-learner relationships are essential in promoting academic success, especially in resource-limited environments. According to recent studies, supportive teachers who provide clear instruction, feedback, and encouragement significantly improve learners' engagement and performance (Creswell & Poth, 2020). Effective teaching practices, such as differentiated instruction and contextualized learning, are particularly important in rural settings where learners have diverse needs and backgrounds. However, challenges such as large class sizes and limited teaching resources may hinder teachers' ability to provide individualized support. These findings highlight the critical role of teachers as facilitators of learning and sources of motivation.

## ***Peer Influence and Collaborative Learning***

Peer relationships also play an important role in shaping learners' academic experiences. Studies suggest that peer support, including collaborative learning and peer tutoring, enhances understanding and promotes active engagement in the classroom (Putnam, 2020). However, peer influence can also have negative effects, such as bullying and social exclusion, which may affect learners' confidence and participation. This dual role of peers underscores the importance of fostering positive social environments in schools to support both academic and emotional development.

## ***Environmental and Community Context***

The community environment significantly influences learners' access to education and overall school experience. Rural communities often face infrastructural limitations, including poor roads, limited transportation, and lack of basic services. These conditions affect not only school attendance but also learners' physical and emotional well-being. Cultural values and community expectations also shape learners' attitudes toward education. In some rural areas, education is viewed as a pathway to a better future, while in others, immediate economic contributions to the family may take priority (Valdez & Dela Cruz, 2022). Community support systems, such as local organizations and informal networks, can provide resources and encouragement that sustain learners' participation in school.

## ***Psychosocial Factors and Learner Resilience***

Psychosocial factors, including motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being, play a significant role in academic performance. Rural learners often experience stress due to poverty, academic difficulties, and environmental challenges (Quizon & Santos, 2021). However, they also develop resilience and coping strategies that enable them to persevere. Studies show that



learners' aspirations and personal goals serve as strong motivators that sustain engagement in learning. Resilience, combined with support from family, teachers, and peers, allows learners to overcome barriers and continue pursuing their education. This highlights the importance of addressing both the external and internal factors that influence learning.

## *Educational Programs and Interventions*

Educational programs and government interventions aim to address disparities in rural education. Initiatives such as the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and the ARAL Program are designed to improve comprehension and accessibility of learning (DepEd, 2020). While these programs provide opportunities for learners, their effectiveness depends on proper implementation, availability of resources, and teacher preparedness. Research suggests that context-responsive interventions are more effective in addressing the unique needs of rural learners. Learners' perceptions of these programs also play a role in determining their impact on academic performance.

## *Synthesis and Research Gap*

The reviewed literature reveals that rural learners' school performance is influenced by multiple factors, including socio-economic conditions, family support, teacher practices, peer relationships, environmental context, and psychosocial factors. These studies consistently show that challenges such as poverty, lack of resources, and geographic isolation create significant barriers to learning.

At the same time, support systems from family, teachers, peers, and the community serve as important enablers that enhance learners' motivation and resilience. Educational programs also provide opportunities, although their effectiveness varies depending on implementation and context.

Despite the extensive literature, most studies focus on identifying challenges or evaluating interventions using quantitative approaches. There is limited research that deeply explores how rural learners themselves interpret, experience, and give meaning to these factors in their daily lives. In particular, the voices of young learners in geographically isolated areas remain underrepresented.

This gap highlights the need for a qualitative, phenomenological approach that captures the lived experiences of rural learners. The present study addresses this gap by providing in-depth insights into how learners navigate challenges and opportunities, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of rural education and informing context-sensitive educational practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the research design, sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations employed in the study. It outlines the systematic procedures undertaken to ensure that the research objectives were achieved with rigor, credibility, and ethical integrity.

### *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of rural learners and the challenges and opportunities that shape their school performance. Phenomenology is appropriate for this study as it focuses on understanding how individuals perceive, interpret, and give meaning to their experiences.

Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the study examined how learners' experiences are influenced by interactions within their home, school, and community environments. This approach enabled the researcher to capture rich, in-depth narratives and identify common themes that reflect both the challenges and sources of resilience among rural learners.

### *Sampling Technique and Participants*

The study utilized purposive sampling; a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. This method allowed the researcher to intentionally select participants who possess relevant knowledge and firsthand experience of the phenomenon being studied.



A total of fifteen (15) learners from Grades 4 to 6 were selected from five rural elementary schools in District I, Division of San Carlos City. Three learners were chosen from each school to ensure a range of perspectives. The selection criteria included: (1) current enrollment in the school, (2) residence in a rural or geographically isolated area, (3) ability to communicate in Cebuano, Filipino, or English, and (4) willingness to participate with parental consent and personal assent.

The sample size of fifteen participants is considered sufficient for a phenomenological study. Qualitative research prioritizes depth of understanding rather than generalization. According to Creswell and Poth (2020), phenomenological studies typically involve 5 to 25 participants, which allows for rich and detailed data collection. Similarly, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found that data saturation is often achieved within the first 12 interviews, with no new themes emerging beyond this point. In this study, data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, confirming that the number of participants was adequate to capture meaningful patterns and variations in the learners' experiences.

### ***Research Instrument and Validation***

The primary data-gathering instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview guide composed of open-ended questions. This instrument was designed to elicit detailed responses regarding learners' lived experiences, challenges, opportunities, coping strategies, and perceptions of their educational journey.

To ensure content validity, the interview guide was evaluated by three experts in education and qualitative research using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR). Each item was assessed based on relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives, and only those deemed essential were retained.

To establish reliability, inter-rater reliability was applied during the coding process. Two independent raters analyzed selected responses and categorized them into themes. Agreement between raters was measured using Cohen's Kappa coefficient to ensure consistency and credibility of interpretations.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The data collection process followed systematic and ethical procedures. Permission was first secured from the Schools Division Office and the respective school heads of the participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians, and assent was secured from the learners prior to participation.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in a quiet and comfortable environment within the school premises. Participants were allowed to use Cebuano, Filipino, or English to ensure that they could express their thoughts freely and accurately.

Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent. Field notes were also taken to document non-verbal cues and contextual observations. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and responses in Cebuano or Filipino were carefully translated to preserve their original meaning.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected for its systematic approach to identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

The analysis involved the following steps: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) grouping of codes into potential themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) presenting the findings supported by participants' narratives.

This approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the participants' lived experiences while addressing the research questions effectively.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research. Informed consent from parents and assent from learners were obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the exclusion of identifying



information in all reports and transcripts. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

All data were securely stored in password-protected devices and used solely for academic purposes. Interviews were conducted in a respectful and child-friendly manner to ensure participants' comfort and well-being. If any participant showed signs of discomfort, the interview was paused and appropriate support was provided.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an in-depth discussion of the findings derived from interviews with rural learners. The analysis examines how learners' lived experiences influence their school performance. The findings reveal that academic outcomes are shaped not only by intellectual ability but also by socio-economic conditions, environmental barriers, emotional well-being, and the availability of support systems.

Two major themes emerged: (1) challenges experienced by rural learners affecting school performance, and (2) opportunities and support systems that enhance school performance. These themes demonstrate that learning is shaped by both constraints and enabling factors within learners' environments.

### *Theme 1: Challenges Experienced by Rural Learners*

The findings indicate that rural learners face multiple and interconnected challenges that affect their school performance. These challenges include financial hardship, environmental barriers, lack of resources, and emotional stress. This finding supports UNESCO (2020), which highlights that rural learner experience structural disadvantages that limit access to quality education.

These conditions explain why learners struggle with consistent attendance, participation, and task completion, as barriers exist both inside and outside the classroom. The interaction of these factors shows that academic performance is not solely based on ability but is strongly influenced by contextual limitations.

#### *Financial Hardship and Economic Limitations*

Financial hardship emerged as a major barrier to school performance. Many learners come from low-income families where educational needs compete with basic household necessities. This finding supports Villanueva and Lim (2019), who emphasized that socio-economic status significantly affects access to educational resources.

This explains how lack of financial resources limits participation, as learners are unable to secure materials needed for classroom tasks. In addition, financial difficulties create psychological stress, as learners worry about their family's situation while in school. This reduces concentration and affects comprehension during lessons.

Over time, the combined effect of material deprivation and emotional strain leads to reduced engagement and inconsistent academic performance. Thus, poverty functions as both a direct (material) and indirect (psychological) barrier to learning.

#### *Distance and Environmental Barriers*

Distance from school and poor environmental conditions significantly affect learners' school participation. Many learners travel long distances under difficult conditions such as muddy or unsafe roads. This finding aligns with Javier and Soriano (2022), who identified geographic isolation as a key barrier in rural education.

This explains how physical exhaustion impacts learning readiness. Learners who arrive at school fatigued are less able to focus, participate, and retain information. Fatigue reduces attention span, which directly affects comprehension and academic performance.

Furthermore, long travel time limits opportunities for rest and study at home. This imbalance explains why learners may struggle to maintain consistent academic preparation, leading to gaps in performance. Environmental barriers, therefore, affect both access to education and quality of engagement.



## ***Insufficient Learning Materials***

The lack of learning materials limits learners' ability to fully engage in classroom activities. Many learners reported incomplete supplies and reliance on borrowed materials. This finding supports UNESCO (2020), which identifies resource scarcity as a major contributor to learning inequality.

This explains how limited resources reduce participation and academic output, as learners cannot complete tasks effectively. In addition, borrowing materials may lead to feelings of embarrassment or hesitation, which reduces confidence.

Over time, this affects learners' independence and willingness to participate, resulting in passive learning behavior. Thus, unequal access to materials creates disparities in performance, even among learners with similar abilities.

## ***Emotional Stress and Family Responsibilities***

Emotional stress and family responsibilities significantly influence learners' cognitive and academic functioning. This finding supports Quizon and Santos (2021), who emphasized that psychosocial factors affect learners' ability to concentrate and learn.

This explains why learners experience difficulty focusing in class, as emotional concerns interfere with attention and memory. Household responsibilities further reduce time for study and rest, leading to fatigue and reduced academic readiness.

As a result, learners may become mentally disengaged despite being physically present in class. This highlights how emotional and social factors directly impact participation and performance.

## ***Negative Peer Experiences***

Negative peer interactions, such as bullying and teasing, also affect learners' school performance. This finding aligns with Putnam (2020), who emphasized the role of social environments in shaping learning experiences.

This explains how fear of judgment leads to withdrawal behavior, where learners avoid participation to prevent embarrassment. Reduced participation limits opportunities for active learning, which negatively affects comprehension and retention.

Additionally, the absence of a supportive classroom environment affects learners' sense of belonging. When learners feel unsafe or excluded, they are less likely to engage, which directly impacts academic outcomes.

## ***Theme 2: Opportunities and Support Systems***

Despite the challenges, learners benefit from various support systems that enhance their school performance. These include teachers, peers, family, and personal motivation. This finding supports Cabansag (2021), who emphasized that support systems strengthen resilience and persistence among learners.

These factors explain how learners are able to cope with and overcome challenges, as support systems act as protective mechanisms that sustain motivation and engagement.

## ***Teacher Support and Instructional Guidance***

Teacher support plays a critical role in improving learners' understanding and performance. This finding supports Creswell and Poth (2020), who emphasized the importance of teacher–learner relationships in promoting engagement.

This explains how instructional scaffolding enhances comprehension, as teachers break down complex concepts and provide clear explanations. Learners are able to process lessons more effectively, resulting in improved academic output.

Additionally, teacher encouragement builds confidence, which increases participation. Active participation strengthens retention and understanding, leading to better performance.



## *Emotional Support from Teachers*

Emotional encouragement from teachers strengthens learners' resilience and motivation. This finding supports Cabansag (2021), who highlighted the role of emotional support in sustaining learner persistence.

This explains how encouragement promotes a growth mindset, allowing learners to view challenges as manageable. Emotional support also fosters a sense of belonging, which increases engagement and attendance.

As a result, learners are more likely to persist in their studies despite difficulties.

## *Peer Collaboration*

Peer collaboration enhances learning through shared understanding and support. This finding aligns with Putnam (2020), who emphasized the benefits of collaborative learning.

This explains how peer interaction improves comprehension, as learners reinforce knowledge by explaining concepts to each other. It also reduces academic isolation, making learners more comfortable seeking help. Increased interaction leads to higher engagement, which positively influences academic performance.

## *Family Support*

Family support plays a vital role in sustaining learners' motivation. This finding supports Cabansag (2021), who emphasized the importance of parental encouragement in promoting resilience.

This explains how emotional reinforcement strengthens persistence, as learners feel supported in their educational journey. Family encouragement helps learners remain focused on long-term goals despite present challenges.

## *Personal Motivation and Aspirations*

Learners' personal goals and aspirations serve as strong drivers of academic success. This finding aligns with Valdez and Dela Cruz (2022), who noted that education is viewed as a pathway to a better future.

This explains how goal-oriented behavior promotes persistence, as learners associate education with future success. Internal motivation enhances discipline, effort, and commitment to schooling.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study provides deeper insight into how rural learners' school performance is shaped by the complex interaction of personal, social, and environmental factors. Rather than viewing academic outcomes as solely dependent on learners' abilities, the findings highlight that performance is influenced by conditions that extend beyond the classroom.

From an interpretive perspective, the study reveals that the challenges experienced by rural learners—such as poverty, limited resources, environmental barriers, and emotional stress—are not isolated issues but interconnected realities that collectively shape their learning experiences. These challenges explain why learners may struggle with consistent engagement, not due to lack of motivation, but because of constraints embedded in their daily environments.

At the same time, the presence of support systems—particularly teachers, peers, families, and learners' own aspirations—demonstrates how positive relationships function as enabling forces that sustain participation and resilience. These findings suggest that academic success in rural contexts is not merely the absence of barriers, but the result of learners' ability to navigate and respond to these challenges through available support mechanisms.

Anchored in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the study affirms that learners' development is shaped by interactions within multiple systems. The microsystem, including family, teachers, and peers, directly influences learners' motivation and engagement. The mesosystem reflects the connections between home and school, where support or conflict can either strengthen or weaken learning experiences. The exosystem, such as community conditions and infrastructure, indirectly affects learners by shaping access to resources and school participation. Finally, the macrosystem, which includes socio-economic structures and educational policies, frames the broader inequalities experienced by rural learners.



These interconnected systems explain how both challenges and opportunities emerge simultaneously in learners' lives. The findings suggest that resilience among rural learners is not simply an individual trait but a product of continuous interaction between the learner and their environment. Learners adapt, cope, and persist not in isolation, but within a network of influences that either constrain or support their development.

Ultimately, the study highlights that improving rural learners' school performance requires a holistic and context-sensitive approach. Addressing only classroom-based factors is insufficient; instead, meaningful educational improvement must consider the broader ecological conditions that shape learners' experiences. By recognizing the dynamic relationship between learners and their environments, educators and policymakers can design interventions that are more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several actionable recommendations are proposed to enhance the academic performance and learning experiences of rural learners. Anchored on the identified themes of challenges and support systems, these recommendations address key stakeholders and are prioritized based on urgency and feasibility.

For learners, it is recommended to establish weekly peer study groups to strengthen collaboration and understanding of lessons, which is linked to findings on peer support and coping strategies (medium priority, high feasibility). Additionally, learners are encouraged to adopt structured help-seeking routines, such as consulting teachers or classmates when lessons are unclear, to enhance academic engagement (high priority, high feasibility).

For parents and families, the study highlights the importance of emotional and motivational support. Parents are encouraged to set a daily "learning time" of 30 to 60 minutes to monitor and assist with schoolwork, addressing findings related to family influence on motivation (high priority, medium feasibility). Providing consistent non-financial support, such as encouragement and monitoring academic progress, is also recommended to sustain learners' resilience (high priority, high feasibility).

For teachers, the findings emphasize the critical role of instructional and emotional support. Teachers are encouraged to implement differentiated instruction strategies to address diverse learning needs (high priority, medium feasibility) and to conduct weekly remediation or catch-up sessions for learners affected by absenteeism or learning gaps (high priority, medium feasibility). Incorporating short emotional check-ins on a weekly basis is also recommended to support learners' well-being and engagement (medium priority, high feasibility).

For school administrators, addressing resource limitations and school climate is essential. It is recommended to provide monthly school supply kits for identified learners experiencing financial hardship, directly responding to findings on lack of materials (high priority, medium feasibility). Strengthening anti-bullying programs through regular awareness campaigns and reporting mechanisms is also necessary to create a safe learning environment (high priority, high feasibility). Additionally, establishing peer tutoring programs can further support collaborative learning (medium priority, high feasibility).

For the Department of Education (DepEd), broader systemic interventions are needed. Expanding financial assistance programs for rural learners is highly recommended to address economic barriers (high priority, medium–low feasibility). Ensuring the timely and complete distribution of learning materials each quarter will help reduce disparities in access to resources (high priority, medium feasibility). Furthermore, providing teacher training on rural-responsive pedagogy can enhance instructional effectiveness in diverse contexts (medium priority, medium feasibility).

For Local Government Units (LGUs) and community stakeholders, infrastructure and community support must be strengthened. Improving road access to schools, particularly in geographically isolated areas, is crucial to address distance-related challenges (high priority, low–medium feasibility). Providing transportation support, such as bicycles or shared transport systems, can further improve school attendance (high priority, medium feasibility). Community-led donation drives for school supplies are also encouraged to supplement resource needs (medium priority, high feasibility).

Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term academic development of rural learners (medium priority, medium feasibility). Additionally, further research on the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as peer tutoring and supply distribution programs, is suggested to inform evidence-based educational practices (high priority, medium feasibility).



## Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there are no known conflicts of interest.

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