



**NAVIGATING CHALLENGES: STRUGGLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE REVISED K-12 CURRICULUM AMIDST BUDGET  
CONSTRAINTS AMONG REMOTE SCHOOLS**

**<sup>1</sup>Ailyn B. Eria, LPT**  
*Tantangan Central Elementary School*

**<sup>2</sup>Jaime Boy U. Ngag, PhD**  
*South Cotabato State College*

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**ABSTRACT**

The implementation of the Revised K–12 Curriculum represents a major reform in the Philippine education system aimed at strengthening foundational skills and developing learners’ twenty-first-century competencies. However, its successful execution in remote and financially constrained schools remains a significant challenge. This study explored the struggles encountered in implementing the Revised K–12 Curriculum due to limited budget in selected remote schools in Tantangan District, Division of South Cotabato. Specifically, it sought to understand the lived experiences of teachers and school administrators and identify adaptive strategies used to sustain effective teaching and learning. A qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach was employed. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and reflective accounts from teachers and school leaders and were analyzed thematically to capture shared meanings and patterns of experience.

Findings revealed that educators face persistent challenges, including insufficient funding, limited instructional and ICT resources, inadequate infrastructure, restricted access to professional development, and heavy administrative demands. These constraints affect instructional practices and limit student engagement and competency development. Despite these difficulties, participants demonstrated strong resilience, creativity, and commitment by improvising materials, adapting curriculum activities, collaborating with colleagues, and engaging in community partnerships. Emotional responses such as frustration, stress, and perseverance emerged alongside a strong sense of professional responsibility. The study further showed that adaptive strategies, peer support, and contextualized teaching practices enable educators to sustain curriculum implementation despite limited resources. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and community stakeholders played a crucial role in mitigating structural constraints. In conclusion, effective implementation of the Revised K–12 Curriculum in remote settings requires not only policy mandates but also equitable resource allocation, responsive support systems, and recognition of teachers’ professional agency. The resilience and ingenuity of educators remain central to sustaining quality education. The study underscores the importance of context-sensitive policies and community partnerships in promoting inclusive and effective curriculum implementation.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Implementation, Educational Inequality, Teacher Resilience, Remote Schools

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

The implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum marks a significant reform in the Philippine education system, aiming to enhance foundational skills and 21st-century competencies among learners. However, its execution faces substantial challenges, particularly amidst budget cuts affecting public education. Limited financial resources restrict schools from acquiring necessary instructional materials, upgrading infrastructure, and providing adequate teacher training. In this context, understanding how schools implement the curriculum despite their struggles is essential to ensuring its effectiveness and sustainability.

Globally, educational reforms are often hindered by financial constraints, particularly in developing nations. Studies have shown that budget reductions in education significantly impact curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, and student learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2021). In Africa, for instance, austerity measures in public education have resulted in insufficient teaching resources, large class sizes, and disparities in learning opportunities (Abuya & Ngware, 2020). Similarly, in the United States, underfunded public schools struggle with teacher shortages and outdated curricula, affecting student performance (Darling-Hammond, 2019). However, while existing research highlights the general effects of budget cuts on education, there is limited literature specifically examining how curriculum reforms are impacted in low-resource settings.

In the Philippines, educational reforms have undergone several shifts, with the Revised K-12 Curriculum being the latest initiative aimed at strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy skills (Department of Education [DepEd], 2023). However, the implementation of this new curriculum coincides with significant budget cuts in the education sector, raising concerns

about its feasibility (Congress of the Philippines, 2023). Prior studies indicate that financial limitations in Philippine education have historically led to inadequate classroom resources, insufficient teacher training, and overcrowded classrooms, particularly in public schools (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2022). Despite these challenges, there is minimal research on how these financial constraints specifically affect the Revised K-12 Curriculum, creating a gap in understanding its real-world implementation.

South-Central Mindanao, which includes provinces such as South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani, faces persistent educational challenges due to budget limitations, particularly in remote and Indigenous communities (Manila & Delos Reyes, 2021). Schools in these areas often experience shortages of learning materials and struggle with outdated facilities, making it difficult to implement new curriculum frameworks effectively (Reyes, 2022). While studies have discussed general education struggles in Mindanao, few have specifically investigated how the Revised K-12 Curriculum is being adapted within these budgetary constraints.

South Cotabato, a province known for its diverse cultural communities and rural landscapes, encounters additional difficulties in implementing educational reforms due to funding shortages and infrastructural gaps (Gonzales et al., 2023).

Many public schools rely on local government and non-governmental support to sustain operations, yet these resources are often insufficient to meet the demands of a new curriculum framework (Baconguis, 2023). Previous studies have focused on general challenges in education across Mindanao; however, but there is a lack of research addressing the specific struggles of South Cotabato schools in implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum amidst financial constraints.

Existing studies have extensively examined the impact of budget cuts on public education (UNESCO, 2021; Abuya & Ngware, 2020) and the challenges of curriculum reforms in resource-limited settings (DepEd, 2023; Reyes, 2022). However, there is limited research that investigates how budget constraints influence the implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum in South Cotabato schools. Addressing this gap is crucial to understanding the real-world challenges and developing strategies for sustainable curriculum execution.

This study aligns with SDG 4: Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable education for all (United Nations, 2023). By examining the challenges of the Revised K-12 Curriculum's implementation, this research identifies policy recommendations that can help improve access to quality education, particularly in financially constrained schools. Additionally, it aligns with SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, as it highlights the disparities in curriculum implementation between well-funded and underfunded schools, ensuring that necessary interventions are proposed.

This study aims to explore the challenges of implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum amidst budget cuts in Philippine education, with a specific focus on South Cotabato. It sought to identify the key struggles faced by teachers, school administrators, and learners, analyze the impact of financial constraints on curriculum execution, and propose solutions for more effective implementation.

## Theoretical Frameworks

This study is grounded in different theories that provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the challenges in implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum amidst budget cuts. The Systems Theory highlights the interconnected impact of financial constraints. The Resource Dependency Theory explains the struggles in securing resources, and the Curriculum Implementation Theory sheds light on practical challenges in enacting curriculum changes.

The Systems Theory sites that educational institutions function as interconnected systems where changes in one component (e.g., budget cuts) can significantly affect the entire structure (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). In the context of the Revised K-12 Curriculum, reduced financial resources may disrupt the availability of learning materials, teacher training, and student support services, thereby affecting curriculum implementation. This theory helps analyze how different stakeholders (teachers, students, policymakers) adapt to budget constraints and how systemic inefficiencies can be addressed.

The Resource Dependency Theory suggests that organizations depend on external resources, and their success is influenced by the availability of these resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

The Revised K-12 Curriculum requires funding for teacher development, instructional materials, and infrastructure. Budget cuts limit these essential resources, forcing schools to seek alternative funding sources, adjust teaching strategies, or modify curriculum delivery. This theory provides a lens to explore how schools manage financial constraints and the extent to which they can maintain quality education under limited resources.

Fullan's Curriculum Implementation Theory emphasizes that successful curriculum reform depends on teacher motivation, leadership support, and resource availability (Fullan, 2007). In the context of the MATATAG Curriculum, educators may struggle with adapting to new instructional approaches without adequate funding for training and resources. This theory helps examine the real-world challenges of implementing a curriculum reform amidst financial constraints and how stakeholders navigate these issues to sustain educational quality.

## Research Questions

This study aims to explore the challenges of implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum amidst budget constraints in some selected schools in South Cotabato.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers and school administrators in implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum in the context of limited financial resources in remote schools?
2. How do educators perceive the impact of budget constraints on key components of the Revised K-12 Curriculum, such as instructional materials, teacher capacity-building, and student learning outcomes?
3. What adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms have teachers and school leaders adopted to maintain effective curriculum implementation despite persistent financial limitations?

4. In what ways do the collective experiences of educators and administrators provide deeper insights into the systemic and structural challenges of implementing the K-12 Curriculum in financially constrained, remote settings?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In this study, qualitative research, specifically the phenomenological approach, was employed to explore the challenges of implementing the **Revised K-12 Curriculum** under budget constraints in selected remote schools in Tantaran District in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

Phenomenological research is a method that aims to delve into individuals lived experiences to gain deeper insights into how these are interpreted. It assumes that individuals employ a universal structure or essence to derive meaning from their encounters. This research covers the participants' emotions, perceptions, and beliefs to shed light on the fundamental of the phenomenon under investigation. An essential aspect of the phenomenological research design is the researcher's obligation to set aside any preconceived assumptions about the experience or phenomenon (Delve & Limpaecher, 2012).

### Respondents of the Study

Table 1 presents the participants' qualifications, determined by the researcher's established criteria before selecting eligible informants for the study. The study will involve a total of ten (10) teachers, and five (5) school heads who met the researcher's specified inclusion criteria:

**Table 1.** Participants' Inclusion Criteria

<b>Qualifications</b>
<i>Participants: 10 Teachers &amp; 5 School Heads</i>
<p><b>1. Currently Assigned in a Remote Public School in Tantaran District</b> Participants must be currently teaching or serving as school heads in <b>DepEd-identified remote or geographically isolated public schools</b> within the Tantaran District for the SY 2025–2026.</p> <p><b>2. Actively involved in the Implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum</b> Only those <b>directly implementing or overseeing</b> the Revised K-12 Curriculum—such as subject teachers, curriculum coordinators, and school heads—will be included to ensure relevance of experience.</p> <p><b>3. Has at least One Year of Teaching or administrative experience in the current School.</b> Participants must have at least <b>one full year of service</b> in their current school to ensure they have sufficient familiarity with both the school context and the curriculum-related challenges.</p> <p><b>4. Willing to provide Informed consent and participate in interviews or focus group discussions.</b> Participants must be willing to <b>voluntarily participate</b> in the study and <b>provide informed consent</b>, including participation in interviews or focus group discussions.</p>

## Sampling Technique

During the conduct of this study, a Purposive Sampling Technique was used to carefully select teachers and school heads within DepEd Tantaran District, South Cotabato Division during the academic year 2025-2026, who met the specific inclusion criteria established by the researcher.

Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, constitutes a variant of non-probability sampling. Within this approach, researchers exercise their own judgment and discretionary acumen in the selection of individuals from the population to partake in their survey endeavors (Alchemer, 2021). This method of sampling mandates that researchers possess prior knowledge of the objectives underpinning their study so as to effectively pinpoint and contact eligible participants through online survey platforms like Alchemer. Researchers resort to purposive sampling to secure access to a distinct subgroup of individuals, whereby all survey respondents are meticulously chosen based on their alignment with a specific demographic or criterion.

## Research Instruments

In the context of this research, a semi-structured interview functioned as an investigative instrument during both in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Its purpose is to explore the challenges of implementing the **Revised Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in selected remote schools in Tantaran district in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

The validity and appropriateness of this tool were substantiated through a rigorous evaluation process conducted by a panel of experts who possess expertise in the development of relevant research instruments.

## Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure the research's reliability, a predefined set of procedure. The primary objective of this study was to explore the the challenges of implementing the **Revised Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in some selected remote schools in Tantaran District in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

In the initial phase, the researcher sought formal authorization from both the Superintendent of DepEd-South Cotabato and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (CGS). This authorization is essential to obtain the necessary permissions for the researcher to conduct the study, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations. Following this, a secondary authorization letter will be sent to the District Supervisor, explicitly requesting access to the specific data required for this research. A meticulously crafted survey questionnaire will be developed, subjected to rigorous evaluation, and then administered to the targeted participants.

The researcher will employ a Purposive Sampling Technique to carefully select elementary school teachers as participants in this study. Assuming strict adherence to established health protocols, the researcher will proceed with conducting interviews and facilitating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), all of which will be conducted through face-to-face interactions.

Ultimately, the data collected from interviews and FGDs will be systematically organized, subjected to comprehensive analysis, and interpreted using the thematic analysis approach. This approach was expected to provide a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation.

### **Data Transcription Process**

All gathered raw data from the participants through interviews and FGDs were transcribed using the transcription process of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). By following these step-by-step processes, the researcher aligned their transcription approach with the guidelines outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). This rigorous transcription process ensured the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative data, which served as the foundation for the subsequent narrative analysis and the meaningful interpretation of the gathered raw data.

These categories were either drawn from established frameworks or custom-crafted to align with the study's objectives. To execute this analytical process, a series of vital steps were meticulously followed:

**Step 1: Data Organization and Preparation.** In the initial phase, all data sources, including interview transcripts, notes from FGDs, and pertinent documents, were thoroughly organized and prepared for analysis. This step ensured the structured arrangement and accessibility of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

**Step 2: Data Immersion.** Subsequently, the researcher deeply immersed herself in the data by reviewing interview transcripts and FGD notes. This immersive process helped her understand the content and context inherent in the collected information (Nowell et al., 2017).

**Step 3: Systematic Coding Process.** The third step involved commencing a systematic coding process. Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments or patterns within the data. These codes encapsulated fundamental concepts, ideas, or themes relating navigating challenges: struggles in the implementation of the K-12 Curriculum among remote schools in Tantaran in the school year 2025-2026 (Clarke & Braun, 2021).

**Step 4: Clustering and Preliminary Themes.** Following coding, the identified codes were clustered into preliminary themes based on shared meaning or relevance. This step established an initial framework for organizing the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

**Step 5: Theme Scrutiny and Refinement.** Following this, the emerging themes and their corresponding codes were scrutinized and refined. Researchers ensured their coherence and clarity, making necessary adjustments as needed. Each refined theme was assigned a descriptive label that succinctly represented its content, facilitating easy identification and interpretation (Terry et al., 2017).

**Step 6: Linking Data Excerpts.** Relevant data excerpts, such as quotations or segments from interviews and FGDs, were selected and linked to the themes. These excerpts served as supporting evidence for the identified themes (Nowell et al., 2017).

**Step 7: Thematic Analysis.** Finally, the thematic analysis transcended superficial identification. Researchers delved into interpreting the significance and implications of each

theme within the context of the study's objectives, ensuring a deeper understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

They identified patterns, correlations, and variations within the themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing K-12 Curriculum.

This meticulous and well-structured process of thematic analysis empowered researchers to investigate and comprehend the strategies systematically and approaches teachers employed in addressing the specific challenges in implementing the K-12 Curriculum. Ultimately, this approach yielded valuable insights contributing to the enhancement of intervention programs aimed at addressing the issues on Navigating Challenges: Struggles in the Implementation of the K-12 Curriculum Amidst Budget Constraints among Remote Schools in Tantaran in the school year 2025-2026.

### **Data Analysis**

In the context of the study centered on exploring the narratives of the teachers with regard to the challenges of implementing the **Revised K-12 Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in some selected remote schools in Tantaran District, South Cotabato Division, for the school year 2025-2026, a content or thematic analysis approach employed to examine the collected data. This methodology, as described by Flick (2014), Ngag (2023), and Braun (2009), involved the systematic categorization of textual components, including statements, phrases, and words, into organized groupings or categories. These categories either derived from established frameworks or custom-developed to align with the study's specific objectives. To execute this analytical process, a series of essential steps were diligently followed:

Initially, all data sources, such as interview transcripts, notes from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and relevant documents, were meticulously organized and prepared for analysis. This phase ensured the systematic arrangement and accessibility of the data. Subsequently, the researcher deeply engaged with the data by conducting a thorough review of interview transcripts and FGD notes. This immersive process gained a comprehensive understanding of the content and context embedded within the collected information.

The third step involves initiating a systematic coding process. Initial codes will be generated by identifying meaningful segments or patterns within the data. These codes will capture essential concepts, ideas, or themes related to the narratives of the teachers regarding their professional development and its outcomes in their teaching effectiveness.

Following coding, the identified codes were grouped into preliminary themes based on shared meaning or relevance. This step aimed to establish an initial structure for organizing the data.

Next, the emerging themes and their corresponding codes underwent review and refinement. Researcher ensured the consistency and clarity of these themes, making necessary adjustments. Each refined theme was assigned a descriptive name that succinctly represents the content it encapsulates, facilitating easy identification and interpretation.

Relevant data excerpts, such as quotes or segments extracted from interviews and FGDs, were selected and associated with the respective themes. These excerpts will serve as supporting evidence for the identified themes.

Finally, the thematic analysis was extended beyond surface-level identification. The researcher interpreted the meaning and implications of each theme within the context of the study's objectives. Also, the researcher sought patterns, connections, and variations within the themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of **narratives of the** participants.

This meticulous and structured process of thematic analysis will enable researchers to systematically explore and comprehend the challenges of implementing the **Revised k-12 Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in some selected remote schools in Tantaran District in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

Ultimately, this approach yielded valuable insights that could address financial constraints in Tantaran, South Cotabato Division.

### **Scope and Limitations**

This study investigated the struggles encountered in implementing of the Revised K-12 Curriculum due to budget constraints in remote schools within the Tantaran District, Division of South Cotabato, during the School Year 2025–2026. It explored the lived experiences, perceptions, and coping mechanisms of public-school teachers and school administrators as they navigated curriculum implementation despite financial limitations. The study is qualitative, utilizing interviews and focus group discussions to gather in-depth data.

It is **delimited** to selected remote schools identified by the district and did not cover urban or well-funded institutions. The research aimed to understand **how budget constraints affected curriculum delivery**, teacher preparedness, and student learning outcomes, and to generate insights that may inform future policy and support mechanisms for sustainable implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum in similarly challenged contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter provides the results and discussion of the study related to the research questions presented in Chapter I. Data Analyses of the data were based on the statistical tools defined earlier in this paper. The gathered data and implications are provided in the succeeding tables.

### **Lived Experiences of Teachers and School Administrators in Implementing the Revised K-12 Curriculum in Remote Schools with Limited Financial Resources**

The implementation of the Revised K-12 Curriculum in remote schools with limited financial resources presents a complex interplay of systemic, logistical, and emotional challenges. Teachers and school administrators navigate constraints that funding, resource availability, infrastructure, and technology, while simultaneously demonstrating creativity, resilience, and commitment to providing meaningful learning experiences. The lived experiences of the

participants reveal recurring patterns that align with international and local research on the challenges faced in resource-constrained educational settings.

### **Financial Constraints in Curriculum Implementation**

A dominant theme emerging from the participants' experiences is the persistent **financial constraints** that limit the effective delivery of the K-12 Curriculum. Participants consistently reported insufficient funds for instructional materials, laboratory equipment, ICT tools, and hands-on activities. For example, P1 noted, *"Implementing the revised K-12 Curriculum in remote schools reveals deep inequalities; students lack access to resources"* (*"Ang pagpapatupad ng Revised K-12 Curriculum sa malalayong paaralan ay nagpapakita ng hindi pantay na sistema; kulang ang mga mag-aaral sa kagamitan"*), while P2 shared that teachers were compelled to use personal funds to print learning modules. P4 and P6 highlighted the inability to conduct practical lessons due to budget and technological constraints, emphasizing the tangible impact on teaching quality. Similarly, P14 observed that financial constraints restrict classrooms, materials, and equipment necessary for effective instruction.

These challenges are consistent with recent studies in low-resource contexts, where limited funding directly affects access to learning materials, hands-on activities, and technology integration, thereby compromising curriculum implementation (Delacruz et al., 2021; Santos & Mendoza, 2023). Financial disparities in remote schools perpetuate inequities, forcing teachers to compensate with personal resources, as echoed in other studies on rural Philippine schools (Garcia & Reyes, 2022).

### **Creativity and Resourcefulness**

In response to financial and material shortages, participants demonstrated remarkable **creativity and resourcefulness**. Teachers improvised materials, adapted lessons, and used whatever resources were available to deliver meaningful instruction. P3 stated, *"Despite frustration, I found ways to make it work for my pupils"* (*"Kahit frustrasyon, nakahanap ako ng paraan para magtagumpay ang mga mag-aaral ko"*), while P7 and P8 highlighted spending personal funds and creating improvised teaching resources to meet curriculum requirements. P9 and P10 further noted the necessity of creativity to make lessons engaging despite limited materials.

This aligns with research indicating that teacher ingenuity is a critical coping mechanism in under-resourced schools (Mendoza et al., 2022; Almonte, 2021). Improvisation not only mitigates immediate instructional gaps but also fosters adaptable pedagogy, which is essential for implementing competency-based curricula in contexts where standardized resources are unavailable (Ramirez & Lagrada, 2020).

### **Emotional Responses:**

Frustration and ResilienceThe emotional impact of resource constraints was evident in participants' reflections. Teachers experienced mixed feelings of frustration, stress, pride, and motivation. P3 expressed both frustration and resilience, while P5 emphasized commitment despite pressure. P12 shared, *"Mixed emotions: excitement for deeper learning but challenged by lesson planning and time management"* (*"Halo-halong damdamin: tuwa sa mas malalim na*

pagkatuto ngunit hamon sa lesson planning at pamamahala ng oras”), highlighting the duality of professional satisfaction and occupational stress. P13 and P7 expressed motivation driven by the potential of the curriculum, tempered by the inadequacy of resources.

These findings resonate with studies on teacher well-being in low-resource settings, which report that while educators feel overwhelmed by structural challenges, resilience and professional dedication allow them to sustain effective teaching (Valdez & Santos, 2021; Cortes & Belmonte, 2023). Emotional resilience emerges as a critical factor in ensuring curriculum fidelity, particularly when external support is limited.

### **Challenges of Technological and Infrastructure Limitations**

Participants consistently identified **technological and infrastructure gaps** as significant barriers. P15 noted the lack of internet connectivity and ICT tools, while P4 emphasized outdated ICT equipment that hindered alignment with competencies. P2 highlighted insufficient instructional materials for subjects like Science and MTB-MLE, exacerbating teaching difficulties. P10 remarked that limited books and materials necessitated creative lesson design, and P15 further observed that curriculum mandates for technology integration were constrained by inadequate school infrastructure.

This mirrors broader research indicating that digital inequities limit the effectiveness of technology-enhanced learning in rural and remote contexts (Torres & Lim, 2022; Ramos et al., 2023). Access to reliable ICT and infrastructure is essential for implementing modern curricula, including competency-based approaches that rely on interactive and practical learning experiences. Without these, teachers face compounded challenges in delivering equitable and high-quality instruction.

### **Educators’ Perceptions on the Impact of Budget Constraints on the Revised K–12 Curriculum**

Financial constraints have long been recognized as a significant factor affecting the quality of education in developing contexts, particularly in the implementation of complex curricular reforms like the Revised K–12 Curriculum. Limited funding not only restricts access to essential instructional materials but also constrains professional development opportunities for teachers, which can ultimately affect student learning outcomes. Educators in remote and resource-challenged schools often develop coping strategies to navigate these limitations, demonstrating resilience and innovation despite systemic barriers (UNESCO, 2021; Olayemi & Nwogu, 2023). The following discussion synthesizes the experiences of educators in relation to **resource availability, professional development, student outcomes, and coping strategies**, supported by recent literature.

#### **Limited Availability of Instructional Materials**

Budget constraints were repeatedly highlighted as a barrier to effective curriculum implementation. Participant 1 noted, *“Because we often lack sufficient instructional materials, some lessons become more teacher-centered, limiting hands-on learning”* (P1), while Participant 3 emphasized that *“limited budget means outdated or insufficient textbooks, lack of digital resources, and inadequate classroom supplies”* (P3). These statements illustrate that insufficient

funding not only limits the quantity of materials but also restricts the pedagogical approaches teachers can employ, often resulting in traditional, lecture-based instruction.

This aligns with findings from recent studies indicating that **resource shortages in underfunded schools lead to diminished student engagement and reduced opportunities for experiential learning** (Al-Emran et al., 2021; Tan & Lim, 2022). Participant 6 further emphasized, *“Essential learning materials are limited or absent, especially in remote schools”* (P6), highlighting the compounding effect of geographic isolation on material access.

Similarly, Participant 4 observed that schools are often unable to procure *“updated textbooks, teacher guides, and laboratory equipment essential for effective instruction”* (P4), reflecting systemic inequities in resource allocation. Collectively, these perceptions underscore the persistent challenge of providing equitable instructional resources across diverse school settings.

### **Impact on Teacher Capacity-Building**

Limited funding was also reported to restrict teacher professional development, directly influencing instructional quality. Participants 5b and 8 explained that *“funding limitations reduce opportunities for teachers to attend trainings and seminars”* (P5b) and *“budget constraints limit the number of training programs teachers can attend”* (P8), respectively. Participant 12 further noted that *“insufficient funds can reduce access to professional development that helps teachers effectively use new materials”* (P12), emphasizing that capacity-building is tightly linked to financial support.

Research has shown that **continuous professional development is crucial for successful curriculum implementation and pedagogical innovation** (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Inoferio, 2023). In resource-limited contexts, reduced access to training impedes teachers’ ability to apply new instructional strategies, particularly in STEM subjects where hands-on activities are essential (Siddiqui & Farooq, 2021). Participant 13 succinctly summarized this challenge: *“Limited funding affects not only materials but also professional growth of teachers”* (P13), reinforcing the dual impact of budget constraints on both resources and teacher competence.

### **Effect on Student Learning Outcomes**

Participants reported that limited resources and constrained professional development have direct repercussions on student learning. For instance, Participant 1 observed that *“budget limitations affect student learning outcomes. Students struggle to grasp concepts in science and mathematics”* (P1), and Participant 5c added that *“students have fewer opportunities for hands-on activities and enrichment tasks, which can affect mastery of competencies”* (P5c). Participant 14 emphasized that *“lack of budget greatly impacts the smooth, quality, and effective transmission of learning”* (P14).

These findings are consistent with research demonstrating that **financially constrained schools experience wider learning gaps, lower engagement, and reduced mastery of competencies** (Olayemi & Nwogu, 2023; Ramli & Mahmud, 2024). Limited instructional materials, large class sizes, and restricted access to technology collectively hinder students’ ability to participate in meaningful, inquiry-based learning experiences (Al-Emran et al., 2021; Siddiqui & Farooq, 2021). Such constraints highlight the systemic nature of inequities in

education and the need for targeted policy interventions to improve both resources and teaching support.

### **Personal and Collaborative Coping Strategies**

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated resourcefulness and resilience in navigating funding limitations. Participant 7 noted, “*Challenges push me to be creative and find ways to make learning meaningful*” (P7), while Participant 11 shared, “*I use recycled materials and collaborate with other teachers to share materials and lesson plans*” (P11A-B). Participant 15 highlighted administrative prioritization, stating, “*As a school head, I prioritize allocating limited funds to teachers and students’ essential needs first*” (P15).

These coping strategies align with studies emphasizing **teacher resilience, improvisation, and collaborative practices as mechanisms to mitigate resource scarcity** (Tan & Lim, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Sharing materials, co-creating lessons, and utilizing alternative resources reflect adaptive strategies that maintain curriculum delivery despite systemic constraints, underscoring educators’ dedication and innovation in challenging educational environments.

### **Adaptive Strategies and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers and School Leaders Amid Financial Limitations**

Educational settings in financially constrained and remote areas often pose significant challenges for teachers and school leaders, necessitating innovative adaptive strategies to maintain instructional quality. The experiences of the participants in this study reveal several mechanisms through which educators cope with limited resources while ensuring student learning outcomes, reflecting a blend of resourcefulness, collaboration, curriculum adaptation, and ongoing professional growth.

### **Resourcefulness and Creativity**

**Resourcefulness and Creativity** emerged as a key adaptive strategy among teachers, who maximize available resources and improvise instructional materials. Participants shared that they create self-made modules, use recycled or household materials, and employ free online platforms for lesson delivery.

For instance, P1 noted, “Through LAC sessions, we share self-made modules and visual aids; we adapt activities so one material serves multiple classes” (“*Sa LAC sessions, nagbabahagi kami ng mga self-made modules at visual aids; inaangkop namin ang mga aktibidad para magamit sa maraming klase*”), while P10 highlighted turning household items into teaching tools.

This aligns with recent studies emphasizing teachers’ inventive approaches in resource-limited settings, demonstrating that creative material adaptation can enhance learner engagement and promote active learning even in the absence of formal instructional resources (Gomez et al., 2022; Santos & Reyes, 2021). Such strategies reflect the teachers’ capacity to optimize what is available, ensuring that learning experiences remain meaningful despite financial constraints.

### **Collaboration and Peer Support**

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**Collaboration and Peer Support** were also instrumental in addressing resource gaps and compensating for professional limitations. Teachers relied on sharing materials, mentoring, and informal networks to navigate challenges. P1 stated, “Collaboration is our strongest resource; emotional support from colleagues helps us survive challenges” (“*Ang kolaborasyon ang aming pinakamalakas na yaman; ang suporta mula sa mga kasamahan ay tumutulong sa amin na malampasan ang mga hamon*”), while P13 emphasized leveraging community stakeholders and LGU partnerships. Similar findings in recent literature indicate that teacher collaboration and peer mentoring can buffer against the negative effects of limited resources, facilitating knowledge exchange, emotional support, and problem-solving in underserved schools (Lopez et al., 2023; Ahmed & Al-Mansoori, 2021).

The collective strategies of educators underscore that social capital within school communities is essential for sustaining instructional quality.

### **Prioritization and Curriculum Adaptation,**

Another critical theme, **Prioritization and Curriculum Adaptation**, illustrates how teachers adjust lesson plans and activities to fit the realities of their context. Participants shared strategies such as simplifying curriculum activities, using low-cost local materials, and contextualizing lessons to local needs. P6 stated, “Simplify or redesign curriculum activities to align with learning competencies within resource constraints” (“*Pinapasimple o nire-redesign ang mga curriculum activities upang akma sa learning competencies kahit limitado ang resources*”), while P12 emphasized flexibility to local contexts.

These adaptive practices are supported by research highlighting that context-based curriculum adjustments enhance student comprehension and engagement, particularly in remote or marginalized areas, allowing teachers to meet learning competencies despite limited instructional tools (Reyes & Tan, 2020; Nakamura et al., 2024). By prioritizing core competencies and aligning resources to learning goals, teachers ensure that curriculum implementation remains feasible and effective.

### **Professional Growth through Low-Cost Learning Opportunities**

Finally, **Professional Growth through Low-Cost Learning Opportunities** reflects teachers’ commitment to ongoing development despite budgetary constraints. Participants utilized webinars, online tutorials, school-based INSET sessions, and peer learning to enhance instructional skills. P7 reported, “I learn from webinars or online tutorials to improve lessons” (“*Natututo ako sa webinars o online tutorials upang mapabuti ang mga aralin*”), and P14 noted paying for trainings upfront to ensure participation.

Recent studies emphasize that low-cost or technology-mediated professional development opportunities enable teachers in resource-constrained settings to continue improving their pedagogical competencies, fostering instructional innovation and supporting student outcomes (Cruz et al., 2022; Li & Chen, 2021). This demonstrates that adaptive professional learning can mitigate systemic limitations, empowering teachers to maintain instructional quality.

## **Collective Experiences of Educators and Administrators in Implementing the K-12 Curriculum in Financially Constrained, Remote Settings**

The collective experiences of educators and administrators in implementing the K-12 curriculum in financially constrained, remote schools reveal complex systemic and structural challenges that influence both teaching and learning outcomes. Insights from the participants underscore the interplay between funding limitations, professional development, curriculum adaptation, administrative workload, and community collaboration. These findings align with recent literature that emphasizes the multidimensional nature of curriculum implementation in resource-limited educational contexts (Cruz et al., 2022; Ramirez & Santos, 2023)

### **Inadequate Funding and Resource Limitations**

A dominant theme emerging from the participants' experiences is the insufficiency of financial resources and material support, which directly impacts teaching effectiveness. Participants emphasized the need for **targeted funding for disadvantaged schools**, rather than uniform allocation, to ensure that remote schools receive the infrastructure, instructional materials, and teacher training they critically require (P1, P2, P3, P9, P15). For instance, P1 noted that prioritizing funding for the most disadvantaged schools and ensuring accessible teacher training is essential for enhancing learner outcomes. Similarly, P9 highlighted that financial allocations should focus on infrastructure, resources, and professional development. These experiences are consistent with recent research showing that inadequate funding in remote school's limits access to learning materials, reduces instructional quality, and perpetuates educational inequities (Villanueva & Dela Cruz, 2021; Tan & Lim, 2020). As such, addressing financial disparities is foundational to creating equitable learning environment.

### **Limited Access to Professional Development**

Closely linked to funding constraints is the limited access to professional development. Participants repeatedly stressed that **continuous, practical, and localized training** is necessary for teachers in remote areas to implement the K-12 curriculum effectively (P1, P2, P5, P7, P10). P2 emphasized that training should be conducted near the schools rather than centralized in urban areas, while P7 expressed frustration over limited opportunities for professional growth. Related literature supports these concerns, indicating that professional development in remote settings is often sporadic, geographically inaccessible, or insufficiently contextualized, which hampers teachers' capacity to adopt innovative teaching strategies (Gonzalez & Reyes, 2022; Alarcon et al., 2023). Therefore, expanding access to localized training is critical for both teacher competence and learner success.

### **Curriculum Adaptation and Contextualization**

Participants highlighted the importance of **flexible and contextually relevant curriculum design**, particularly for culturally and geographically diverse learners (P1, P2, P5, P6, P13). P1 noted that curriculum flexibility allows teachers to adapt lessons without fear of penalties, while P2 and P5 emphasized the need for culturally contextualized materials for IP, Muslim, and Christian learners. These observations align with research indicating that curriculum adaptation enhances student engagement, ensures cultural relevance, and supports meaningful learning in marginalized communities (Salvador et al., 2021; Del Rosario & Manalo, 2024).

Moreover, participant P13 pointed out that teacher collaboration in sharing resources and mentoring peers facilitates effective adaptation despite limited institutional support. This underscores that context-responsive teaching not only depends on curriculum design but also on collaborative practices among educators.

Another recurrent theme is the **heavy administrative workload and insufficient monitoring**, which reduces instructional time and hinders curriculum implementation (P4, P6, P8, P10, P12). P6 highlighted the need to streamline reporting requirements to allow educators to focus on teaching, while P12 stressed that continuous monitoring and technical support from higher offices are essential. Recent studies confirm that excessive administrative demands and poor policy responsiveness negatively affect teacher morale and instructional quality in remote settings (Librado & Santos, 2022; Tan et al., 2023). These findings suggest that reducing bureaucratic burdens and strengthening system-level support are critical to effective curriculum delivery.

### **Collaboration and Community Support**

Finally, participants consistently emphasized the role of **collaboration and community engagement** in mitigating resource constraints (P2, P7, P11, P13, P14). P13 described how teachers co-create lesson plans, share materials, and reach out to LGUs or community stakeholders when resources are insufficient. Similarly, P14 noted that conducive classrooms and small teacher-student ratios facilitate focused learning. Supporting literature underscores that collective efforts, partnerships with local government units, and active community involvement are crucial in sustaining curriculum implementation in resource-limited contexts (Ramos & Villanueva, 2021; De Guzman et al., 2023). This demonstrates that collaborative networks can partially compensate for systemic limitations and enhance teaching and learning outcomes

### **Conclusion**

The following conclusions were made considering this study's findings: implementing a modern, competency-based curriculum in remote schools requires more than policy directives. It demands practical support, flexible resources, and recognition of teachers' professional judgment. The resilience and creativity underscore their dedication, but the systemic challenges they face also call for targeted interventions that address funding, infrastructure, and professional development gaps.

Teachers' ability to creatively navigate challenges and collaborate with colleagues ensures that learning continues despite systemic limitations. This underscores the importance of addressing structural inequities while recognizing and supporting whose commitment remains central to achieving meaningful educational outcomes.

The resilience, agency, and ingenuity of educators working in challenging contexts demonstrate that adaptive strategies, collaboration, and continuous professional growth are essential for sustaining quality education despite systemic and financial constraints.

Finally, it has been concluded that successful curriculum implementation in remote settings requires not only equitable resource allocation and professional development but also systemic flexibility, supportive policies, and strong community partnerships.

Reflecting on this, the study underscores the importance of listening to teachers' and administrators lived experiences to inform policies that are both practical and context-sensitive, ultimately fostering more equitable and effective education.

## Recommendations

Considering the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. **Department of Education (DepEd)** may prioritize **needs-based and location-sensitive funding**, ensuring that remote and financially challenged schools receive additional support for instructional materials, ICT tools, and basic infrastructure. Mobile training teams and online-offline blended professional development programs may be strengthened to reach teachers in the distant areas.
2. **School Administrators** are encouraged to maximize available resources through **effective planning, transparent budgeting, and collaborative decision-making**. They may strengthen partnerships with local government units, NGOs, and private organizations to support school needs. Encouraging peer mentoring, sharing of teaching materials, and regular learning action cell (LAC) sessions can also help teachers cope with limited resources.
3. **Policy Makers may develop context-responsive education policies** that consider the realities of remote and disadvantaged schools. Budget allocation frameworks may be reviewed to prioritize schools with greater needs rather than uniform distribution. Policies on curriculum implementation, reporting, and monitoring may also be streamlined to reduce administrative burden.
4. **Teachers** are encouraged to continue strengthening their **resourcefulness, collaboration, and creativity** in maximizing available materials. Participating actively in peer mentoring, LAC sessions, and online learning communities can help enhance professional growth at minimal cost. Teachers may also document and share best practices in improvisation and contextualized teaching, which can serve as models for others in similar contexts.
5. **Future Researchers** may conduct **longitudinal and mixed-method studies** to examine how funding, professional development, and policy reforms affect teaching and learning outcomes over time. Studies focusing on students' perspectives, the emotional well-being of teachers, and the effectiveness of low-cost innovations are also recommended.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

In preparation for implementation, all the plans and recommendations will be presented to East-West Mindanao Colleges Inc. to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures and protocols. Within the context of the research focused on examining the narratives of the teachers about the challenges of implementing the **Revised K-12 Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in some selected remote schools in Tantaran District in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026, it is imperative to emphasize the paramount importance of ethical considerations. Before commencing this study, the following ethical principles were highlighted.

### Informed Consent:

Before participation, consent was obtained from all school heads involved in the study. They possess a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, methodologies, potential risks, and benefits. Furthermore, participation will remain entirely voluntary, allowing participants to withdraw from study at any juncture without any adverse consequences.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:**

To safeguard the identities and responses of the teachers, rigorous measures were in place to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Rather than using actual names, pseudonyms or codes will be employed, upholding the privacy of the participants. Data collected was securely stored with access restricted solely to the research team.

**Avoiding Harm:**

Delicate subjects, such as the challenges inherent in the participants' roles, were discussed with meticulous consideration for the potential emotional and psychological impact. Strategies were in place to minimize distress, and a support system was readily available to assist participants should the need arise.

**Researcher-Participant Relationship:**

The researcher maintained a professional and respectful rapport when engaging with the school heads. Any actions that may exploit or harm the participants were scrupulously avoided, ensuring their utmost dignity and respect throughout the research process.

**Data Protection:**

Adherence to data protection regulations and laws was observed to safeguard the personal information of the participants. Stringent measures will be employed to ensure the secure storage and transmission of data.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participants were assured that their involvement in the study was voluntary, devoid of any form of coercion or external pressure.

**Researcher Bias:**

The researcher will remain vigilant regarding potential biases that might influence data collection and analysis, upholding objectivity and transparency throughout the research endeavor.

**Institutional Approval:**

Before initiating the study, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the pertinent institutional review boards or ethics committees.

**Honesty and Integrity:**

The research findings were reported truthfully and accurately, devoid of any manipulation or distortion to align with preconceived notions or biases.

**Beneficence:**

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The potential benefits of the research to educational practices and policies were thoughtfully considered, ensuring that the study positively contributes to the education system.

### **Cultural Sensitivity:**

The researcher demonstrated cultural sensitivity by respecting local customs, beliefs, and practices within the research setting, refraining from imposing external values on the participants.

### **Inclusion and Diversity:**

The study's structure will prioritize inclusivity and diversity, encompassing a wide spectrum of the challenges of implementing the **Revised K-12 Curriculum** amidst budget constraints in selected remote schools in Tantaran District in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

By meticulously adhering to these ethical considerations, the research will be conducted responsibly and respectfully, prioritizing the rights and well-being of the participating teachers. Simultaneously, it will contribute valuable insights to the field of education within the specific context of DepEd South Cotabato, specifically among elementary schools in Tantaran District.

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### **AI Tools Declaration**

I do hereby declare the use AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly for grammar checking and sentence organization purposes only.

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