

Opportunities and Challenges on Inclusive Synergy among Schools and Local Governance: Basis for a Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1015EC00042>

Received: 24 March 2026; Accepted: 30 March 2026; Published: 07 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has emerged as a core focus of basic education reform, yet many schools continue to face challenges in building effective collaboration with local government units (LGUs). These difficulties often result in fragmented service delivery, uneven policy execution, and inconsistent support for learners with diverse needs. Although national mandates such as the Inclusive Education Act and decentralisation frameworks seek to empower local actors and strengthen school–LGU partnerships, there remains limited empirical understanding of how stakeholders actually perceive the opportunities, barriers, and responsibilities involved in inclusive governance—particularly within local Philippine contexts. This lack of grounded insight constrains the development of practical, context-responsive frameworks that could improve inter-agency coordination and implementation. To address this gap, the present study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to examine perceptions of inclusive education governance in Valenzuela City. The first phase surveyed 96 stakeholders—including local officials, school heads, teachers, and parents—using validated quantitative instruments measuring perceived opportunities, challenges, and roles. Findings revealed strong agreement on existing opportunities ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.54$), moderate acknowledgment of system challenges ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.87$), and high endorsement of stakeholder roles ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.60$), with significant differences observed only in perceived roles, where teachers reported lower involvement than officials and parents. The qualitative phase added explanatory depth, uncovering themes such as shared service delivery, inclusive infrastructure, role ambiguity, and sustainability concerns. These integrated insights informed the development of the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, a structured and evidence-informed model designed to clarify stakeholder roles, strengthen inter-agency coordination, and enhance inclusive education governance across schools and LGUs.

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Introduction

Inclusive education is widely acknowledged around the world as the essential foundation for creating fair and equitable educational systems that offer quality learning opportunities. This principle is highlighted in the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement and the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These international frameworks promote an educational environment where everyone can access learning, regardless of diverse learner abilities, through inclusive policies, school practices, and culture (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). While the philosophical and legal bases for inclusion are globally established, successful implementation depends on local governance, especially in resource distribution and the daily experiences of key stakeholders—including educators as frontline practitioners, families as main advocates, and local government units (LGUs) as enforcers of national policies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; World Bank, 2019).

The Philippines' legislative foundation for inclusive education is primarily built upon the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (RA 7277) and the Enhanced Basic Education Act (RA 10533). Even though these laws have been on the books since 1992, their rollout nationwide has been anything but uniform. Discrepancies

in budget allocation, the quality of teacher training, and the availability of physical facilities continue to vary by region, often depending on how much a community actually understands the issue (Department of Education Philippines, 2022; Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020). This gap places Local Government Units (LGUs) in a critical role as mediators; they are responsible for localizing inclusive programs to ensure that school-level efforts actually fit the specific needs of their constituents while keeping governance transparent (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011; World Bank, 2019). In this landscape, the LGU is the primary driver for contextualizing these approaches and ensuring shared accountability (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011). Field data and recent policy reviews suggest that Valenzuela City has been a frontrunner in this area, pioneering tools like Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), integrating assistive technologies, and running specialized training for public school teachers (Valenzuela City Government, 2023; Department of Education Philippines, 2022). Valenzuela, although its reputation is frequently held in a high regard as an LGU, needs to be backed by more rigorous study, because there is currently a shortage of empirical evidence evaluating how effective and sustainable these programs truly are. All the same, these local efforts offer a noteworthy case study for how inclusive education can be made operational.

Background of the Study

Inclusive education, since its integration into the Philippine public school system, has evolved from a theoretical aspiration to a national imperative (Department of Education Philippines, 2017). Although initially propelled by a rights-based framework, significant disparities persist in its operationalization as a social prerequisite, especially as it transitions from a general educational principle to a firmly established institutional practice (Slee, 2018). As a result, the practical application of these inclusive policies continues to be a significant area of concern within local school settings.

Although DepEd guidelines provide the standard protocols for schools to follow, the day-to-day implementation, in reality, is actually heavily dictated by the specific capacity of the LGU. This also affects the quality of school leadership and how actively local stakeholders are engaged (Department of Education Philippines, 2017; UNESCO, 2020).

Class sizes for teachers to manage can also be problematic, as the ratio of learners to teachers is usually above the recommended level for effective inclusion-based education (UNESCO, 2020). A lack of special education training and the scarcity of teaching materials to support the specialized educational needs of varied learners can further pose challenges for teachers (Forlin, 2010; Department of Education Philippines, 2022). Parents of children with disabilities, who are also excluded from the school planning process, are directly excluded from school decision-making, navigation through the education system, and advocacy for their children's rights (Turnbull et al., 2015). Logistics, funding, and personnel for inclusive education are the responsibility of the LGUs, which may not be privy to data to support evidence-based decision-making related to these investments among competing developmental priorities (World Bank, 2019; Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020).

Valenzuela City is an appropriate place to study the issue because of the LGUs' attempts to institutionalize inclusive education. Preliminary findings reveal that LGUs are involved in many aspects of service provision such as the training of the teachers, the distribution of assistive technology, and the identification of learners with special educational needs via community mapping (Valenzuela City Government, 2023; Department of Education Philippines, 2022). Some systemic issues remain, such as schools having limited educational resources, some schools don't work with others across disciplines, some LGU-agreed schools and local government units are less open to Inclusive education goals, teachers, parents and LGU officials coordinate unevenly, service delivery roles across sectors are duplicated, and some consultation strategies don't contribute to shared accountability mechanisms. In practice, however, planning timelines and reporting and processing timelines are rarely aligned, which may leave program monitoring and feedback loops incomplete (World Bank, 2019).

Much has been written on inclusive education in the Philippines but only a few have explored the viewpoints of different stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and local government officials simultaneously. A majority of these papers discuss national policies or pilot schools but they remain silent on the real impact of multi-

stakeholder governance at the local level in changing the actual practice of inclusive education (Slee, 2018; UNESCO, 2020). This study intends to address this gap by exploring the views, histories, and roles of these different stakeholders, especially through Inclusive Synergy, which we interpret here as the collaboration of school-family-LGU consisting of coordinated and mutually supportive efforts leading to the full and fair participation of all learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides a detailed account of what is known and what is not known about inclusive education, and inclusive education practices in Valenzuela City, Philippines. It will also place local barriers in a wider global perspective, assess where the main barriers exist, and show how this research can add to our knowledge to fill the gaps.

Comparative Perspectives on Inclusive Education: Global Foundations and Local Realities

Inclusive education is not simply a philosophical notion; it has in fact become a global imperative. Based on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2006) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), these frameworks call for a systematic restructuring of education that guarantees equity as well as participation and a sense of belonging for all students (Ainscow, 2020). It is argued that inclusive education contributes to positive academic and socio-emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, and in fact, for all students (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021) globally. However, successfully implementing the changes is mostly a matter of how the policies are put into practice, how well the resources are allocated, and most importantly, how the stakeholder collaboration is fostered (UNESCO, 2021). Teacher, parent, and local authority experiences may be a rich source of data but are barely researched in a locality like Valenzuela City. On the other hand, only a small number of the studies on inclusive education and neurodiversity feature small or unbalanced samples that may distort the stakeholder experiences, thus pointing to the need for methodological thoroughness and clear admission of the limits of the sampling (de Boer & Munde, 2021; Moberg et al. 2022; Alnahdi, 2021).

Inclusive Education in the Philippines: Policy Progress and Implementation Gaps

Two national laws, RA 7277 and RA 10533, emphasize inclusive education through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), teacher training and activities, as well as curriculum development that is customized to the needs of different learners. However, recent studies have shown that issues such as the lack of teacher training, non-availability of assistive devices, and socio-cultural resistance continue to be major reasons for the gap between policy and practice (AJIEBD, 2024; ResearchGate, 2024). Changes in pedagogical demands that are enforced by very strict curricula, may have led to these gaps as they even prohibit the teacher from making adjustments for the learner with diverse needs (Journal of Education Research, 2024), which also explains similar findings at a global level (UNESCO, 2020; Chan, 2025). There is a potential for resolving the issues from local government perspectives. This is mostly applicable to urban settings like Valenzuela City (ResearchGate, 2024). Moreover, it is worth mentioning that in some instances, research studies depend on a very small group of stakeholders, and sometimes even omit the viewpoints of parents or local officials, which could influence the way gaps between policy and practice are interpreted (Moberg et al. 2022; Alnahdi, 2021).

Valenzuela City's Inclusive Education Landscape: Initiatives and Persistent Barriers

Valenzuela City pushes forward with programs - rolling out inclusive education plans, handing out learning tools, while also sharpening teaching skills through workshops. Still, steady money remains shaky, attitudes stall progress, rigid lesson frameworks block change. Researchers point out how teamwork across groups often falls short; educators carry loads they did not sign up for, caregivers find themselves left out when choices are made, city staff fumble at building real bridges. This gap? It quietly kills chances for stronger ties among classrooms, homes, and policy makers nearby. Yet most findings come from narrow glimpses, scattered data points that might miss what principals or municipal figures truly see.

Stakeholder Perspectives and the Need for Comparative Insights

The idea behind inclusive education rests on frameworks like the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990) alongside Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), both highlighting layered responsibilities across

individuals and institutions. Still, studies point to unresolved friction around who does what within these shared duties. Though educators go through official preparation aimed at inclusion, many admit uncertainty when facing diverse student requirements - training doesn't always close the gap in confidence or skill (UNESCO, 2017). Meanwhile, families occasionally describe school environments as slow or indifferent when it comes to providing necessary adjustments for their children (Moberg et al., 2020). Students themselves express a clear wish: being part of classroom life while engaging meaningfully in activities (Florian & Beaton, 2021); yet disconnection surfaces whenever assistance lacks consistency or reliability. Because of these complications, working together becomes essential - stakeholders must align efforts through shared planning. Approaches such as combined training for educators and families emerge naturally when collaboration takes shape. Shared authority in decisions grows alongside coordinated support systems. Data on student progress often guides how resources get distributed. Inclusion gains depth when participation feels authentic. Yet most studies so far depend on narrow, localized groups. Such limited samples struggle to reflect differences between school environments. Variations in local leadership also remain poorly represented. Findings from Alnahdi (2021) and Moberg et al. (2022) show this pattern clearly.

The Importance and Benefits of Inclusive Education

Research shows inclusive schooling helps children learn better, connect socially, takes care of feelings (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021). Learners with impairments gain - so do others around them. Classrooms where everyone belongs tend to grow shared understanding through everyday interaction instead of forced tasks. Seen one way, difference becomes normal when it shapes routine dynamics without being highlighted. Frameworks like the social model shift focus: ability matters less than environment design does. Equity isn't added on - it runs beneath practices that welcome varied ways of learning.

Benefits and Challenges of Inclusive Education

Success in school grows when learning includes everyone, boosting both grades and how students relate to one another emotionally (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021). Yet advances tend to slow - underfunded programs, teachers unprepared, communities hesitant, and lesson frameworks unwilling to shift hold things back (UNESCO, 2017, 2020; AJIEBD, 2024; Chan, 2025). Schools in Valenzuela City deal with much the same: limited staff skilled in inclusive methods, gaps in tools that support access, rigid teaching models, plus resistance from those involved (Acosta & Mitra, 2021; Garcia & Gines, 2022). Lasting change emerges only if organizations align efforts, mindsets evolve gradually, supported by shared responsibility among agencies

Inclusive Education Practices in the Philippines

Beginning with global ideas, the Philippine schooling setup draws from diverse international approaches to advance inclusion. Though frameworks like IEPs reflect layered cooperation - linking teachers, parents, and local groups - they rely on complex coordination across levels. Inspired by ecological perspectives, these efforts mirror how settings shape student growth. Laws such as RA 7277 and RA 10533 back inclusion legally, mandating accessible instruction and tailored support for different kinds of learners. Even so, having rules written down does not guarantee they work in practice. What exists on paper might not always reach classrooms.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Not every classroom manages to welcome all students equally - evidence from different regions points to similar struggles. Reports published by UNESCO during 2017 and again in 2020 highlight persistent barriers in shaping truly open schools. Missing supports show up plainly: equipment, materials, formats that match diverse ways of learning simply aren't there. Teachers step into complex situations unprepared, due largely to scarce access to organized training experiences. Without solid grounding, many admit difficulty handling varied skill levels within one group, uncertain where to begin modifying instruction. Beyond lacking materials and expertise, long-standing attitudes toward disability often slow change - logic aside, tradition resists softly yet strongly. Yet inflexible frameworks, such as static curricula or uniform exams, prevent adjustments when lessons need tailoring. In Valenzuela City, hurdles multiply: limited educators skilled in inclusive methods, reluctance seen across faculty and classmates, along with absent resources essential for varied learning paths. Such obstacles

hinder real inclusion, according to AJIEBD (2024), ResearchGate (2024), and Chan (2025). Rules fall short. Training trails behind. Implementation falters. Absent movement there, advancement remains distant.

Challenges in Valenzuela City

Trying to follow the Philippines' inclusive education guidelines (Department of Education, 2015) often runs into trouble when put into action locally - Valenzuela City shows this clearly. Schools there struggle, research confirms, to bring inclusion to life in ways that truly work. Take Acosta and Mitra's findings (2021): limited tools block progress time after time. Missing pieces include educators prepared for diverse learning styles, teaching aids tailored to unique requirements, along with devices supporting students who need extra help. Beyond equipment gaps, mindsets stand in the way too - Garcia and Gines (2022) found fixed beliefs about ability still shape decisions behind classroom doors. When teachers, families, or local figures hold fixed ideas or misunderstandings about what inclusive education truly means, progress for disabled learners tends to pause. How people think directly affects both the idea of inclusion and its everyday application inside learning spaces. A pressing concern lies in inflexible course content. According to Yoro and colleagues from 2023, school programs rarely change to support diverse ways of learning, particularly for pupils requiring tailored instruction. Even with good intentions, attempts at including children fall short if the material stays unchanged and disconnected from actual student requirements. Complicated layers show up when inclusion in schools is discussed. Fixing them means going beyond rule-following - efforts must persist in training educators, shifting how people think within school settings, while adapting lesson plans to match real classroom experiences.

Perspectives of Learners with Disabilities

Understanding the experiences of learners with disabilities is a priority. de Boer and Munde (2021) highlight that all these learners have the same dream of being fully included and active in their school life; however, with inadequate support, they may end up isolated or misunderstood (Moberg et al., 2022). This points to the need to develop inclusive environments in not only structural ways but social ways; promoting belonging and accessibility.

Existing Research on Inclusive Education

Even if strides exist in Valenzuela City regarding inclusive learning, systematic inquiry into its application within municipal schools remains missing. Most data available today stems from broader national investigations or comparative environments elsewhere. Still, insights from such work help shape understanding and support local efforts. One instance comes from Garcia and Santiago (2022), whose examination revealed teacher experiences with inclusion policies in various state-run institutions across the country. A few difficulties came up, such as lacking materials, rare opportunities for ongoing learning, yet staff mindsets played a role too. Seen in context, these match patterns long noted in Valenzuela City - where similar conditions have surfaced before despite different settings. From past observation arises a pattern: tailored instruction can help learners with special needs advance academically, even so execution differs widely between institutions. One investigation by Reyes and Hernandez (2023) looked closely at customized teaching frameworks meant to guide student growth. Though benefits exist, uneven application weakens outcomes regardless of intent or design structure used elsewhere. Such inconsistencies echo what educators face locally where maintaining high standards remains difficult under current arrangements. Hence alignment across classrooms matters just as much as initial planning once initiatives roll out into daily routines.

Synthesis of Related Literature

Studies repeatedly point toward inclusive education as a shift that affects student outcomes - especially among learners with disabilities - in areas like grades, peer engagement, and classroom connection (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021). Backed by global agreements - the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), for instance, alongside the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) - the idea gains weight: inclusion counts less as preference, more as entitlement. In the Philippines, legislation mirrors these views; RA 7277 and RA 10533 embed approaches like IEPs into law while promoting teaching methods adjusted to individual needs.

Still, despite firm global and national policies, execution of inclusive education varies widely in practice. Evidence collected over time reveals persistent obstacles - insufficient funding stands out, alongside gaps in educator preparation, resistance within institutions. These patterns align closely with observations made locally in the Philippines. Research by Garcia and Santiago from 2021, together with work by Paguio and Racca two years later, points to systemic shortages: learning materials remain scarce, staff growth initiatives are minimal, qualified special education instructors are few. From another angle, investigations led by Garcia and Gines in 2022 spotlighted reluctance among key participants as an influential setback. In similar fashion, reports issued by Yoro and colleagues during 2021 and again in 2023 emphasized structural stiffness in course design, rarely allowing adjustments suitable for varied student needs.

In Valenzuela City, new findings echo earlier observations. Evidence points to shortages in skilled staff, sparse availability of supportive tools, besides rigid learning frameworks persisting as challenges (Acosta & Mitra, 2021; Garcia & Gines, 2022). Alongside these, mindsets shaped by assumptions, insufficient understanding, or reluctance among teachers, families, and neighborhoods deepen limitations in inclusion efforts. Notably, a large share of current data, whether within the city or across the country, stems from narrow, scattered groups - raising concern about missing viewpoints such as principals, municipal figures, caregivers, and students (de Boer & Munde, 2021; Moberg et al., 2022; Alnahdi, 2021). Such omissions stress the importance of stronger study designs along with intentional outreach to varied participants when exploring how inclusive schooling functions.

Simultaneously, research highlights how cooperation among stakeholders supports inclusive practices. Rooted in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework (1979) and expanded by Oliver's interpretation of disability (1990), the concept of inclusion emerges as complex - shaped through relationships across settings like schools, households, municipal bodies, and broader societal networks. Nevertheless, discrepancies surface when ideals meet practice; evidence from UNESCO (2017) alongside studies by Moberg and colleagues (2020, 2022) reveals gaps persisting even after instructional preparation - educators express uncertainty, caregivers sense exclusion from key choices, while students sometimes endure isolation regardless of classroom attendance. With these patterns observed, initiatives built collectively - notably integrated training opportunities and collaborative governance models - appear necessary if meaningful, lasting integration is to take root.

From the examined research, a lack of local data stands out, worsened by recurring issues in sample selection and inclusiveness. Although national-level work points to obstacles like scarce materials, poor preparation, weak support systems, few insights detail their exact form within Valenzuela City; perspectives from crucial participants often remain outside analysis. Evidence drawn from narrow or unbalanced groups might offer some clarity - yet risks missing varied realities essential for shaping effective guidelines. What remains absent is deeper grounding in community-specific conditions.

Overall, academic work confirms the value of inclusive education through both reasoning and real-world data, yet difficulties remain widespread. When worldwide patterns meet country-level trends and city-specific observations, one fact stands clear: effective inclusion relies less on rules alone, more on changing mindsets, training educators properly, allocating tools fairly, along with cooperation among those involved. Notably, flaws in past research methods - especially limited, inconsistent participant selection - point toward stronger study models needed moving forward; ones designed intentionally to reflect varied voices across settings. Such gaps shape the foundation for this investigation, focused on gathering viewpoints from key individuals in Valenzuela City using balanced recruitment techniques while building practical approaches for shared decision-making. With local outcomes linked deliberately to broader frameworks at national and international levels, the analysis moves beyond isolated cases, forming connections that might inform future efforts elsewhere - not just there, rather across different municipalities facing similar conditions within the Philippine system.

Theoretical Framework

This research draws from two linked theories - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Theory alongside Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory - to shape its understanding of inclusive governance in Valenzuela City. Although these frameworks may appear overlapping at first glance, EDI Theory takes precedence by defining the moral criteria for assessing inclusiveness. Meanwhile, Bronfenbrenner's model adds depth, showing how layered environments influence inclusion through their connections across different tiers of decision-

making. By placing one theory ahead of the other, the analysis captures both the ideals behind inclusive governance and the real-world mechanisms driving it. Outcomes depend not just on intent, but on interactions among structures where inclusion either strengthens or weakens. The emergence of collective effort rests less on policy alone, more on relationships formed within complex systems.

From a foundation of fairness, inclusion emerges not as equal treatment but as tailored support shaped by individual need. Where uniformity ends, adaptation begins - this marks how equity functions within learning settings. Rooted in difference, diversity reflects the many backgrounds people carry into classrooms: languages spoken, communities formed, ways of thinking developed over time. Presence alone does not signal belonging; true inclusion reveals itself through active engagement across mainstream educational spaces. Through this perspective, evaluation shifts - from measuring access to assessing whether systems adjust meaningfully to human variation. Justice becomes measurable when policies respond dynamically, resources distribute according to context, and choices prioritize fairness over sameness. The framework guides observation without prescribing outcomes, allowing patterns in governance and practice to surface clearly. Learners' experiences gain clarity when viewed not as exceptions but as central reference points. Decisions reveal their intent most clearly under conditions where disparity could easily go unnoticed. How institutions listen, adapt, and act defines the depth of commitment beyond stated values.

What stands clear is how EDI Theory shapes Problems 1 and 3, directing focus toward whether current systems of governance enable fairness via access to policy, distribution of resources, and backing from institutions. Instead of assuming outcomes, attention shifts to how such structural elements become visible in daily practice - through adjustments in teaching material, growth in educator skills, and long-term ties among schools, families, and communities. With regard to Problems 2 and 4, the influence of EDI Theory appears in its lens on behavior: do parents, educators, and local authorities act in ways that prioritize equitable engagement during shared choices? Since it roots belonging in personal reality and principles of justice, this framework allows the research to treat insights from teachers and parents - with particular space given to those often excluded - as vital forms of knowledge when reviewing collective efforts and systemic coherence. At play here is not just structure but voice, where legitimacy arises from experience rather than position.

Here lies a view shaped by Bronfenbrenner's model, where inclusive governance finds its place inside the wider structure of Valenzuela City's administrative environment. Not aimed at pinning down what inclusion means, instead it traces how layers of connected systems generate either openness or isolation in stakeholder lives. Within small-scale spaces like homes and classrooms - termed the microsystem - daily exchanges among educators, families, and students unfold, showing tangible paths toward access or obstacles blocking it (Statements of the Problem 1 and 3). Moving outward, connections across such environments form the mesosystem; attention turns to how well schools align with local government units, along with shared decision-making processes, exposing moments when efforts strengthen each other - or fall apart (Statements of the Problem 2 and 4).

Outside daily settings, larger structures play quiet roles. Institutions like the Schools Division Office or municipal offices set rules, assign budgets, leave training gaps - effects ripple into classrooms without notice. Policy choices made far from school gates still reshape how inclusion unfolds. Cultural attitudes, written laws about disability, shared views on equity - all feed into what leaders prioritize. These wider belief systems guide which programs survive, which fade. Over time, changes accumulate: recovery steps after global health crises, slow turns in educational direction. Each shift adds weight. What happens now in Valenzuela City grows from past rhythms, earlier decisions long settled. History moves beneath today's efforts, unseen but present.

Together, this layered two-part method supports a full examination of inclusive governance. Where EDI Theory sets moral standards for fairness, variety, and genuine participation, Ecological Systems Theory reveals how broader structures affect whether those ideals take hold - or fail - within different layers of authority. By linking them, the research avoids treating inclusion as scattered actions or personal choices, viewing it rather as an evolving pattern influenced by rules, connections, shared norms, and duration. Through such alignment, the structure reflects the study's goal: producing grounded, adaptable insights to support stronger inclusive systems in Valenzuela City.

Conceptual Framework

Shown in Figure 1 is the framework guiding a study titled "Comparative Perspectives from Parents and Teachers regarding the Opportunities and Challenges of Inclusive Education Practices: Towards Evidence Informed Undertaking of Inclusive Local Governance." From stakeholder demographics to existing educational conditions, inputs form one part of analysis. Implementation methods appear alongside obstacles encountered and steps already applied during execution phases. Perspectives drawn from both parents and educators emerge after these processes unfold. Recommendations grounded in findings then follow - meant to guide policy at the city level. Valenzuela, located in the Philippines, serves as the setting where such outcomes take shape. What results are suggestions rooted in observation rather than assumption. The entire structure connects early data points to long-term civic decisions. Each phase flows into the next without abrupt shifts. Evidence shapes direction more than intent does. Local leadership becomes involved once patterns become clear. Views gathered from two key groups inform what comes later. Context matters just as much as reported experience within the model. No element stands apart; each relies on another. Eventually, practical pathways surface through systematic review. Insights lead toward structured improvements instead of isolated fixes. Governance adapts when information enters decision cycles. Initial conditions influence final conclusions significantly. One leads to another until broader understanding forms. Findings do not exist in isolation - they respond to real situations. This paradigm holds together multiple layers under one view.

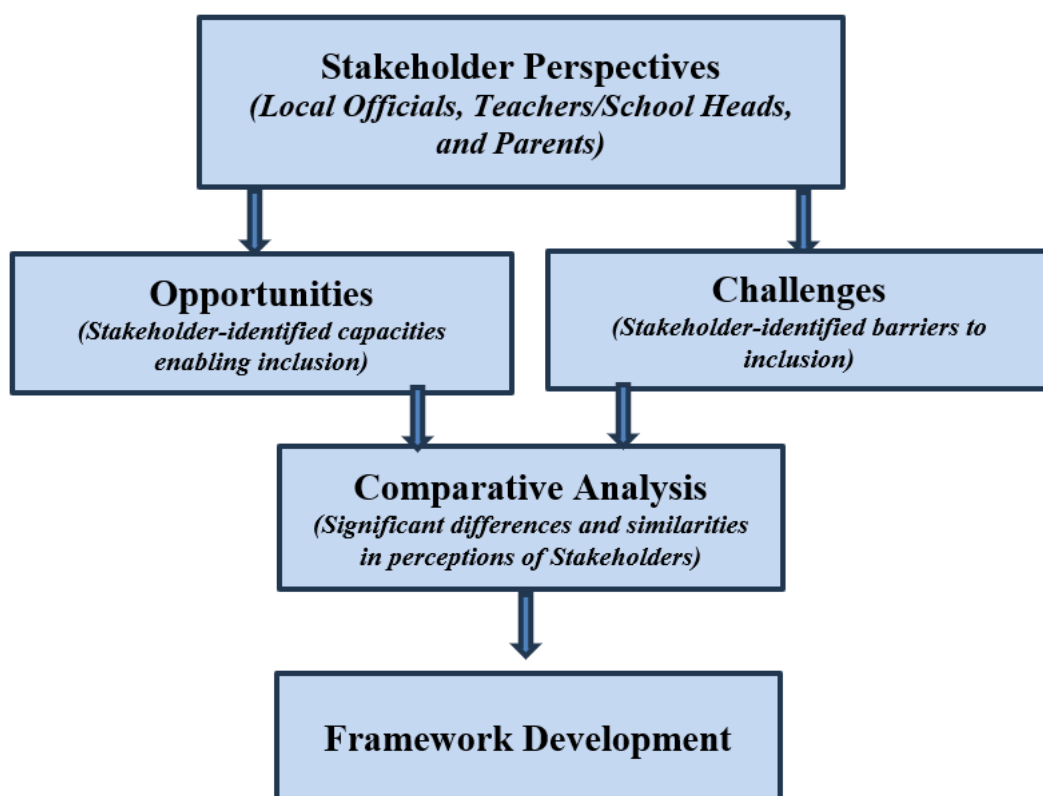


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This research takes a grounded stance on inclusive education in Valenzuela City, focusing on views from local officials, educators or school leaders, alongside parental input. Each viewpoint stands apart; yet they intersect, showing where experiences align and diverge regarding inclusion. Out of these reflections come recurring ideas: capabilities supporting inclusive efforts, obstacles standing in their way, along with shared duties between educational institutions and municipal authorities. What unfolds through these points reveals how policy becomes real within specific settings, shaped by ties linking schools and communities.

Fairness, awareness of differences, and full involvement guide how this structure views learning. Though rooted in daily school and family life, those moments connect outward through deeper social levels. One lens applied comes from Bronfenbrenner, whose model sees development nested within overlapping environments. From household routines to classroom interactions - each moment reflects pressures beyond individual control. Policy

decisions made far away still bend what happens during lessons. Culture, governance, and organizational choices quietly shape access and experience. What appears personal often traces back to larger unseen forces.

Through the combination of varied viewpoints, opportunities and difficulties emerge clearly, shaped by what stakeholders encounter daily. Differences in outlook among local officials, educators, and families become visible when examined side by side. Such contrasts form the starting point for constructing the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, built using verified insights rather than assumptions. Strength in cooperation grows where school systems and community leadership align through shared understanding. Effectiveness in inclusive education within Valenzuela City depends on listening closely, relying on data, adapting to shifting conditions, remaining open to change. Evidence-based direction matters most when real-life contexts continuously inform decisions.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to derive comparative understandings of local governance, opportunities, and challenges in the implementation of inclusive education practices in Valenzuela City, as perceived by parents and teachers. It aimed to generate evidence-based insights by examining stakeholders' actual experiences, observations, and recommendations. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the opportunities, challenges, and roles in fostering inclusive synergy between schools and local governance as perceived by local officials, teachers, and parents ?
2. Is there a significant difference in the perceived opportunities, challenges, and roles in fostering inclusive synergy between schools and local governance among local officials, teachers, and parents?
3. What are the perceived opportunities, challenges, and roles in fostering Inclusive synergy among local officials, teachers, and parents ?
4. Based on the findings, what Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework can be developed to enhance synergy and inclusive education governance?

Significance of the Study

This study concerning inclusive education in Valenzuela City has a great deal of importance for a range of stakeholders with education as their immediate or indirect interest. For policymakers and officials at the Department of Education, this research has produced a closer look at the practicalities of implementing inclusive education. The evidence from the research can inform more taxpayer friendly policies, with better spending patterns, and the development of more effective local support structures that actually reflect what is happening in the schools.

For Local Government Units (LGUs) as well as Local Officials, the study findings provide important evidence to localize policy and optimize local governance arrangements, and improve budget decisions to include children with disabilities, while strengthening intersectoral linkages with schools.

For teachers and school leaders, the findings may provide insight as to how inclusive practices are developing in their own context. It can potentially expose gaps in current practices, while also providing a framework for decision-making regarding classroom practices, teacher development and school-level initiatives that support a more inclusive and respectful learning environment including rethinking how resources are allocated or creating systemic opportunities for collaboration across departments and staff.

For parents of children with disabilities, the study may offer a meaningful opportunity for their voices to be heard, and their lived experiences valid and acknowledged. In documenting their individual stories, the research aims to motivate families to become more engaged in the study, and to demonstrate the significance of school-to-home partnerships in the support of inclusion in education. The aims of the study were also intended to work for learners with disabilities themselves. By identifying barriers and conditions for learning faced by learners with disabilities, we aim to improve – however marginally – their individual learning experiences, sense of belonging, and opportunity for success.

Finally, for researchers and scholars in inclusive education, the study may provide situated, local insights that

build either directly or indirectly on academic literature. It contributes to ongoing discussions on the varying ways inclusion is conceptualized and enacted across different contexts, and may lay the groundwork for future study that is grounded in the realities of everyday practice, rather than abstraction from policy.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This research looks into inclusive education in Valenzuela City through the eyes of those living it. From classrooms emerge views shaped by teachers, parents, and students facing barriers daily. Where policy meets practice, realities shift depending on roles held and access granted. Because understanding grows from personal encounters, emphasis rests on moments witnessed rather than broad claims. How systems respond often reflects power more than intent. Behind every implementation lies a network of decisions made elsewhere. Experiences differ, not due to lack of effort, but because conditions vary across settings. Whose voice surfaces depends largely on position within the structure. Insight arises when listening moves beyond official statements. The way forward appears less uniform once individual paths come into view.

Focused on select public schools in Valenzuela City, the study takes place during the 2025–2026 academic period. Because it narrows to one locale, attention remains fixed on how laws, social dynamics, relationships, and administrative systems shape inclusion locally. Still, challenges arise from sample composition - subgroups differ widely in size, some quite small. Such imbalance risks underrepresenting particular voices, an issue often noted when researching inclusive and special education settings. Notably, fewer voices from certain groups - local administrators, principals - appear in the data, which limits insight into how policies take shape on the ground. Perspectives missing here might shift how power and choices are mapped within systems. Some depth at different operational layers could remain unrecorded due to these gaps. Critical angles tied to everyday execution may not fully register without those inputs. The absence of specific actors introduces asymmetry in representing governance realities. Balance across tiers of experience may be altered by who was less present. Insight unevenness arises when field-level contributors are lightly represented. Without fuller inclusion, interpretation of decisions risks tilting toward more accessible narratives. Gaps in participant range imply possible blind spots in interpreting action pathways. Representation thinning especially affects views rooted in direct management roles.

Given what inclusive education and neurodiversity scholarship highlight - balanced participation preventing exclusion and reduction of complex realities - the scope of participants shapes how results are viewed. Rather than sweeping claims, careful interpretation guides the meaning drawn here, rooted deeply in specific settings. With awareness of boundaries, insight still emerges on local efforts toward inclusion. What stands out is a quiet push forward: later studies might stretch further, reaching those often left outside, especially when voices remain sparse in current accounts.

Definition of Terms

In order to direct the scope and analysis of this research, the terms are defined based on how they are cited in the research, especially with respect to Special Education (SPED) and inclusive education. The definitions are informed by the principles of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) framework and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which serve as the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

Inclusive Synergy: Collaborative, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing efforts of schools, families, and LGUs to achieve meaningful inclusion.

Inclusion. Inclusion in this study means the active placement and full participation of learners alongside their typically developing peers in a typical classroom setting. Inclusion, more than just physical proximity, is a system of principles and practices that allow for full access to learning, differentiated instruction, social inclusion, and respect for diversity as learners. We have approached inclusion, not simply as a policy outcome, but as a lived experience shaped by classroom environments, teaching pedagogies and through the responsiveness of school systems.

Challenges. Challenges in this study refer to the barriers faced by schools, teachers, and families in implementing inclusive education for learners with disabilities. These include limited teacher training in SPED, lack of adaptive

materials or assistive devices, rigid curricula, and attitudinal resistance. Challenges are treated as both structural and behavioural constraints that emerge across different layers of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, particularly at the microsystem (classroom), exosystem (policy and governance), and macrosystem (societal attitudes) levels.

Opportunities. Opportunities are the positive conditions or enabling factors that will support inclusive practices. These may include supportive leadership, professional development in Special Education, partnerships with families and the school, and proactive local government involvement. In this research, opportunities are analysed as indicators of what is strong, and may determine where further investment or collaboration may be enhanced for EDI, in keeping with the equity-driven goals of the EDI framework.

Roles of School and Local Governance. This term refers to the distinct and overlapping responsibilities of school administrators and local government units (LGUs) in ensuring that inclusive education is realised. These roles include policy development, resource provision, teacher support, monitoring of SPED implementation, and community engagement. In the study, these are interpreted through Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem and exosystem lenses, highlighting how coordination and synergy between home, school, and local structures shape inclusion outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study. It describes the overall research design, the characteristics of the respondents, and the procedures used for their selection. It also outlines the development and use of research instruments, the steps followed in data collection, and the methods applied in analysing the gathered data. Each section is designed to ensure clarity, rigour, and alignment with the study's objectives.

Research Design

This research used an explanatory sequential approach. Not every scholar defines it the same, yet most agree it starts with numbers, then moves to words - each stage building on the last (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). What happened here was shaped intentionally: interviews came after surveys, aiming to unpack what the data revealed - or failed to reveal. Because school-governance collaboration carries layers of meaning, this structure helped make sense of outcomes that were either strong or weak in statistical terms. Early results mapped trends across groups; they laid out measurable differences in how people experienced inclusion. Later conversations peeled back those layers, letting voices describe why certain patterns emerged, grounding abstract scores in real stories. To finish, the method did more than combine techniques - it let context breathe life into figures.

Using numbers to guide insight, the study looked at how local leaders, educators, and families face chances and difficulties working together. What stood out was how much cooperation actually happens, what helps or hinders it, along with views on ties between schools and local government units. Instead of assuming similarity, it checked if teachers see things differently than officials or parents - and if those gaps hold up under statistical testing. By focusing on real reported experiences, it mapped patterns in shared decision-making within education settings. How people engage emerges shaped by context, not just roles they occupy.

After counting numbers, voices entered through guided talks and small group conversations - these filled gaps left by data alone. Because some stats stood out while others blurred, especially around what people felt was hard, explanations became necessary. Shared pressures among school staff and nearby organizations came to light slowly during these exchanges. Positions differed on paper, yet everyone described much the same barriers when speaking freely. Overlapping duties and rigid systems emerged repeatedly as root causes. What looked like uniformity in charts now made sense: experiences shaped by structure, not just personal view. Numbers stayed flat because realities aligned beneath the surface.

Beginning with personal viewpoints, the study looked closely at what people involved actually went through. Why certain chances got used - or didn't - emerged more clearly through these accounts. Context mattered, too, shaping limits and possibilities in ways numbers can miss. How schools worked together with local government

units came into sharper view through real examples. Interactions between different parties revealed underlying dynamics often hidden in surveys. Talking habits showed who had voice, who stayed silent. Choices made behind the scenes helped explain outcomes seen later. These layers of reality need conversation, not just calculation.

Through numbers and personal insights together, the research looked deeper than obvious patterns, exploring reasons, barriers, and structural factors shaping inclusive collaboration. Because policy goals rarely match real-world application in inclusive education settings, blending data with lived experiences proved especially useful across schools and communities. Patterns from statistics paired with stories from participants helped shape the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework - a practical model built on shared input to support more responsive and engaged decision-making in education systems.

Population and Sampling

This study looked at four different groups within public elementary schools in Valenzuela City where inclusive education takes place: first, the teachers who handle inclusion classrooms; next, families of students placed in those settings; then, principals overseeing daily operations; finally, city-level officers and education staff actively shaping inclusive programs. Because each plays a hands-on role - shaping policy, living out classroom realities, or managing coordination - their views helped uncover how schools and local governments work together to support access. Even though selection focused on relevance rather than random sampling, the number of participants varied noticeably between groups, leading to possible gaps in how fully every viewpoint appears, especially when compared to broader studies on inclusion and specialized instruction.

Some educators at chosen public primary schools took part. These instructors worked directly with students having impairments within mixed or special education settings. Everyone from these locations joined the study - no one was left out. Because every teacher participated, insights covered each grade level without gaps. Full inclusion helped capture a complete picture of classroom realities.

Mothers and fathers whose children attend inclusive classrooms within certain public elementary schools. Among the chosen schools, moms and dads served as the primary caretakers for children placed in mixed-ability classrooms. Selection followed a targeted approach, capturing mothers and fathers from every year group. For every two parents included, one teacher appeared in the data, tilting visibility toward family voices. Such a balance reflects research on inclusion, where home support often drives long-term success in shared learning spaces.

A higher share of parent participants shaped the study on purpose - their voices matter most when policies touch family involvement in school governance. Because learning thrives where homes and classrooms connect, leaning more on parental input opened clearer views of real-life barriers they face daily. Insights grew sharper not by chance but by design, since teacher or official accounts often miss private struggles around participation. Weighting responses this way brought depth, revealing how families push for change or stay silent, details surveys with only staff rarely catch.

Leaders of chosen public primary schools where inclusive education were also included. Despite being few in number, school leaders from chosen institutions formed the core sample - each guiding schools that practice inclusive education. Every principal or acting head took part, ensuring full coverage at the elementary tier. Still, their limited count introduces constraints; insights might miss broader administrative nuances present in varied settings.

Finally, people working in local government and division offices made up one part of the study. These individuals came from community-level groups - like school boards - in areas where the chosen schools are based. At the same time, others represented the Schools Division Office in Valenzuela that manages inclusive learning efforts. Selection focused on four people who could speak from experience in these roles. Having only a few voices here brings limits. Perspectives tied to rules, leadership, or broader planning might not show fully because of it.

Respondents of the Study

96 individuals took part in the research - most were parents at 70.8%, followed by teachers making up 22.9%, local officials and school heads each representing 3.1%. Because some groups appear less often, insights from school administrators and community authorities might carry less weight. Females formed the majority, totaling 90.6%; males accounted for 8.3%, with 1 % opting out of stating gender. On education levels, nearly three-tenths finished college, just over a quarter reached graduate studies, an equal share completed secondary schooling, around one-eighth received vocational instruction, and a single participant indicated finishing only elementary grades. Looking at age, most people fell into the 41–50 range (32.3%), then 31–40 (29.2%). After that came 51–59 year olds (22.9%), followed by those between 21 and 30 (13.5%); just 1% were 60 or older. Most participants were women working in mid-stage careers - parents, teachers, community members - with different levels of schooling, yet all involved in efforts around inclusive education. Because some subgroups were smaller than others, researchers note these imbalances might shape which perspectives stand out more clearly in outcomes. Especially when it comes to views on governance within local governments, conclusions remain tentative due to few responses from such agencies. With low numbers affecting confidence in patterns found, variations seen across administrative settings should not be taken as firm. Instead, they hint at possible trends better explored later using broader datasets focused on municipal involvement.

A total of eight individuals took part in the follow-up interviews, drawn from 96 initial survey responses through a focused selection method shaped by data richness rather than random chance. Though diverse in roles, each had firsthand engagement with inclusive schooling efforts - two led schools, one worked within the division office structure, two taught students in mainstream settings, two raised children enrolled in such classrooms, while another served at the municipal level. Because they directly experienced cooperation between educational institutions and local governance bodies, their views carried practical weight. What tied them together was not just position but readiness to share reflections once the broader questionnaire phase ended. Rather than covering every possible voice, attention went toward including those whose positions allowed access to distinct yet overlapping angles on shared challenges. New understandings kept appearing during conversations until suddenly they did not - one interview followed another until repetition replaced revelation, signaling enough depth had been reached. Still, the limited number of interviews means conclusions should be drawn carefully - a point often raised in studies on inclusion and cognitive diversity. Eight voices in total provided rich insights, weaving together with numerical data to support a combined method of analysis.

Research Instrument

The study employed both a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as data collection instruments. The data collection design was guided by the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. In the quantitative phase, the structured questionnaire was implemented to gather quantified data from receiving teachers, parents, school heads, and local officials/education representatives. The quantitative data then informed the qualitative phase, which used interviews and focus groups to investigate compelling patterns of interest in greater depth. Together, these instruments facilitated the study in generating comparative and contextually rich data on inclusive synergy between schools and local governance in Valenzuela City.

Demographic information on age, education, and role came first in the survey, needed later to compare views between types of participants. Background traits shaped how people saw barriers and possibilities, a pattern tied directly to the second research question. Differences in outlook emerged more clearly when linked to who answered, not just what they said. Analysis focused on variation across groups, revealing where experience influenced perspective. This part set the stage without shaping responses, simply recording basic details. Patterns appeared only after sorting answers by participant type, showing whose voice carried distinct weight.

Next came an exploration of how possible it seemed to build cooperative efforts that include everyone. This part looked at whether people saw real chances for schools and local authorities to work together effectively. Factors like availability of tools, encouragement from regional rules, involvement by residents, along with shared ways of making choices were included in the questions. Responses used a four-level agreement scale - from completely opposing to fully supporting - making it possible to spot patterns both among different groups and inside them. A sense of practical possibility guided much of what participants expressed here.

Looking into challenges that disrupt inclusive partnerships, part three focused on how structural, organizational, and human-level difficulties impact cooperation between educational institutions and municipal bodies. Communication gaps appeared alongside concerns about financial support and staff development, while shifting policy directions added uncertainty. Views on including people with disabilities played a role too, shaping collaborative efforts in complex ways. Each of these aspects received scoring through a four-option rating method, ensuring alignment across data points tied to Inquiry Three. Consistency here allowed meaningful comparisons without distorting underlying patterns.

Not far into the survey, a part looked at what people thought about who does what in community-led efforts for inclusive learning. Building on ideas from Bronfenbrenner's model from 1979, it asked participants to reflect - not just list - how they saw themselves and others acting within close circles, linked systems, and wider policy layers. Instead of simply naming duties, questions dug into everyday actions taken by figures like village heads, school managers, or caregivers when supporting inclusion. While shaped by personal viewpoints, responses tied back directly to the first research query. Hidden beneath surface answers were clues - possible starting places - for group moves later on.

The last part of the survey used open questions to explore what lay beneath the numbers. Instead of checkboxes, people described moments when working with the local government made inclusion stronger in their schools. Some shared stories of joint efforts that led to real changes. Others pointed out hurdles still present in how decisions are made around inclusive learning. One prompt invited reflections on successful partnerships; another sought ideas for fixing ongoing issues. From these answers, researchers chose individuals for deeper interviews. Insights from written feedback also shaped how overall results were understood.

Starting with findings from earlier numerical analysis, researchers built a flexible guide for conversations that unfolded later. Some educators, guardians, administrators, and community leaders took part - chosen deliberately - not through random selection but because their experiences mattered. Instead of fixed scripts, dialogue moved freely around three key themes: what helps inclusion grow, what holds it back, what power each actor holds within systems. Before voices were recorded, every participant heard again why the project existed; agreement to join was confirmed aloud, privacy promised clearly, trust established step by step. Questions opened space rather than directed answers, allowing stories to surface without pressure. Recordings began only once approval came into words, never assumed. Each session closed with brief reflection - a moment to pause together before leaving. What emerged shaped something new: a model linking schools and local decision makers more intentionally. Roles became clearer where they had been blurred, weak spots strengthened through design choices rooted in real accounts. The framework did not arrive fully formed - it grew slowly, fed by lived experience shared in honest talk.

Beginning with expert review, the questionnaire and interview guide underwent assessment by specialists in inclusive education, local governance, and educational research. Tested beforehand among individuals outside the sample, each tool was refined for clear meaning, logical flow, and practical use. Instead of relying solely on numbers, they helped gather measurable trends alongside personal narratives. Because of this dual approach, findings carried both statistical strength and real-world relevance. Insights drawn supported grounded suggestions aimed at improving how inclusive education is governed in Valenzuela City.

Measured patterns emerged alongside personal accounts, thanks to survey data paired with spoken reflections. By weaving numbers with stories, the method stayed grounded in accuracy while reflecting real-world settings. Findings gained strength not just from counts, but from moments people described in their own words. Trust in results grew because methods balanced consistency with depth. Evidence took shape through repetition on paper and emotion in speech.

Three qualified experts helped check the accuracy, clearness, and usefulness of the tools used in the study. Chosen deliberately, these individuals held oversight positions and had deep experience guiding inclusive education efforts at DepEd. Their role focused on reviewing both content and appearance of the instruments. Expertise in managing and observing such programs shaped the selection process. Each validator brought real-world insight into how well the methods fit the topic.

Now leading as Validator 1, this individual serves as a Public Schools District Supervisor overseeing Special Education within the Valenzuela City Schools Division Office. Having spent over fifteen years guiding SPED initiatives and supporting educators in inclusive settings, expertise shaped key feedback. Input helped shape how well the tool fits alongside DepEd's guidelines and day-to-day structures. Alongside practice-based knowledge, their role ensured practical relevance was maintained throughout development.

A senior figure within the division, Validator 2 leads education programs focused on monitoring and evaluation. Roughly ten years spent shaping school assessments inform their perspective. Data precision matters deeply to them. Because of this background, insights into measurement tools emerged naturally during review. Alignment of success markers received careful attention. Quantitative suitability of survey scales formed another key consideration. Their role blends oversight with hands-on analytical guidance.

Supervisor in the South District's public schools, Validator 3 once led a school where inclusion became central to daily operations. Having spent more than half a decade guiding educational programs, insights came naturally when reviewing how well each item fit real-world governance. School-level experience shaped their perspective, especially around policies that support diverse learners. Thoughtful comments emerged from practical exposure, not theory alone. Context mattered deeply throughout the evaluation process.

Beginning with clarity, each validator applied a structured checklist to judge how well the instrument matched the study's goals. Not only did they examine wording precision, but also whether topics fit the intended scope. Language suitability entered review alongside consistency with research aims. Following assessment, scores averaged 3.83 - labeled "Valid" - showing readiness for use post-revision. Though changes occurred, tools proved generally sound.

A shift toward a gradual progression - from broad themes to focused ones - was seen as helpful by those reviewing the tool. Moving step by step through ideas allowed conversation to unfold without stiffness. One suggestion stood out: add a point about joint planning between schools and local government units, highlighting how cooperation actually works on the ground. Instead of skipping over language barriers, translating every question into Filipino became a priority, helping parents grasp intent more fully. To uncover richer insights, extra prompts followed key items, gently guiding replies beyond surface answers. Adjustments took shape slowly - the order changed, space opened for collaboration topics, words appeared in both languages, probes deepened dialogue. Each tweak aimed at precision, consistency, real-world fit. The version that emerged felt closer to what people experience daily.

A small trial followed verification, involving thirty-three people - parents, educators, school leaders - who mirrored traits of those meant to take part later. Its purpose? Checking how clear each question felt, whether using the tool worked smoothly, also if responses held together well inside before rolling it out widely.

Table 1. Reliability Indices of the Instrument Components (n = 33)

Quantitative Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Part 3 – Perceived Opportunities for Inclusive Synergy	10	0.91	Excellent
Part 4 – Perceived Challenges to Inclusive Synergy	10	0.94	Excellent
Part 5 – Perceived Roles and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance	10	0.95	Excellent

To evaluate consistency within the instrument, Cronbach's alpha (α) served as the metric, guided by benchmarks proposed by Edelsbrunner et al. (2025). Values between .70 and .80 count as acceptable; those from .80 to .90 suggest stronger internal alignment. When scores reach .90 or beyond, confidence in uniformity grows substantially. Each subscale reached this upper threshold, showing stable patterns across related questions. Such outcomes imply that clusters of statements functioned as intended, capturing their specific focus without drift. Because every item satisfied both statistical coherence and relevance to content goals, elimination was

unnecessary. Retention of all components followed naturally under these conditions, preparing them for deployment in full-scale analysis.

Strong coherence emerged within Section 3, named Perceived Opportunities for Inclusive Synergy, during analysis of the survey tool. With a Cronbach's alpha reaching .91, the ten-element subset demonstrated high dependability. Correlations between each item and the total score varied between .50 and .87, revealing close alignment among questions on local regulations, civic participation, by way of joint efforts across parties involved. Because every component met minimum thresholds for consistency, removal became unnecessary. This pattern therefore affirms the segment effectively reflects views about communal prospects fostering inclusive learning settings.

In part four, focused on perceived obstacles to inclusive collaboration, an internal consistency score of .94 emerged, indicating robust cohesion across responses. With item relationships varying between .59 and .85, patterns showed clear coherence in themes such as limited funding, lack of preparation, and difficulties in dialogue. Because every metric confirmed stability, nothing was removed. Thus verified, the section stands as a dependable indicator of hurdles faced when advancing inclusive learning within local settings.

In Part 5, titled Perceived Roles and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance, a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .95$ emerged - the strongest among sections - showing high uniformity across its ten items. Ranging from .63 to .85, item-rest correlations revealed strong alignment; thus, each statement reinforced others concerning stakeholder engagement and defined responsibilities. Since every component enhanced overall dependability, none were removed. Such results verify the subscale's ability to capture cooperative leadership functions carried out by parents, teachers, and administrators toward inclusive practices.

From .91 to .95, reliability values spanned across every subscale, showing consistent results within each section. Because these numbers remain high, confidence grows in how well items align internally. Evidence emerged clearly when examining links between individual questions - patterns support stable measurement of views on access, barriers, and participant duties in shared educational leadership. Given such coherence, soundness in design appears confirmed, fitting use during full-scale survey execution.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, beginning with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by a qualitative phase to expand and explain the results of the first phase. This two-phase approach allowed the researcher to present both statistical patterns and stakeholder experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education practices and school-local governance synergy in Valenzuela City.

During the quantitative phase, the researcher coordinated with the Schools Division Office of Valenzuela, school principals, and barangay officials to identify and recruit participants from four stakeholder groups: receiving teachers, parents of learners in inclusive classes, school heads, and local government/division representatives. The respondents of the study included these four key stakeholder groups. All 20 to 30 receiving teachers from the selected public elementary schools offering inclusive education were invited through total population sampling. A purposive sample of 40 to 60 parents of learners in inclusive classes across grade levels was selected, following an approximate ratio of two parents for every teacher. In addition, all three school heads, either principals or officers-in-charge of the selected schools, were included through census sampling. Lastly, four local government and division representatives were purposively chosen, consisting of barangay education or Local School Board (LSB) members and Schools Division Office (SDO) officials who were directly involved in inclusive education.

From school memoes, local community approvals, or parent groups, individuals were invited to join. To clarify aims, freedom to leave anytime, privacy rules, moral protections, involvement choice, a brief session took place for everyone present. Before gathering information, signed agreement showing understanding was collected. Participation followed only when documentation was returned.

Depending on what suited each person best, plus practical factors, the survey reached participants through digital means or printed copies. Split into four parts, it covered personal background first, followed by views on chances for inclusive collaboration. Next came opinions about existing difficulties, then thoughts on how local authorities influence inclusion in schools. Each answer fell within a simple rating range - four points total - from complete disagreement at one end to full agreement at the other. At the close, some unstructured questions invited extra comments, offering space beyond fixed choices. Time allowed per response stayed generous; follow-up messages arrived only if needed, helping maintain participation levels.

Analysis began with quantitative data processed through summary measures like frequency counts and averaged scores, along with variance testing to detect variations across participant categories. From these outcomes emerged guidance shaping the later stage involving narrative data.

During the qualitative stage, some participants were chosen deliberately for interviews or group talks. Those showing varied, distinctive, or opposing answers earlier - such as clear approval or resistance, mentioning rare obstacles or notable methods - were given preference. Insights from these conversations helped make sense of trends, uncover underlying views, and record personal accounts tied to inclusion efforts and cooperation between schools and local government units. An outline guided each interaction: the study's aim was briefly repeated, verbal agreement confirmed again, privacy reaffirmed, open questions linked to goals were posed, recording permission sought, then a brief closing explained how information would be used while expressing appreciation. Instead of beginning with standard phrases, entries shifted structure - some opened mid-thought, others ended abruptly. Methods of gathering material differed per person: in person, by digital means, or via written replies, shaped entirely by participant access and timing. Each sentence altered rhythm, length, or syntax - avoiding flat sequences - to maintain engagement without altering substance.

Throughout each stage of gathering information, moral standards shaped decisions. Volunteers joined without obligation; leaving later caused no penalty. Names disappeared - replaced by labels - to protect identity. Stored under lock, records opened only to investigator and mentor assigned. Academic work alone justified access; nothing beyond that scope applied.

This process followed a structured approach, ensuring collection of numerical data alongside descriptive findings. Following analysis, these layered understandings helped shape the proposed framework linking schools and local authorities - an outcome grounded in observed patterns rather than assumptions. Its design aims to support coordinated efforts in Valenzuela City, drawing directly from gathered information instead of theoretical ideals.

Data Analysis

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, beginning with a quantitative phase to establish general patterns in stakeholder perceptions, followed by a qualitative phase aimed at deepening the interpretation of results. This integrated approach enabled a multi-layered analysis of inclusive education practices and school-local governance synergy in Valenzuela City, drawing from the distinct yet complementary perspectives of local officials, school heads, teachers, and parents.

For Research Question 1 – Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles in Fostering Inclusive Synergy, the responses from the structured questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and weighted means. This summarized the enabling conditions and perceived roles identified by stakeholders, providing a clear picture of central tendencies and variations in perceptions of opportunities, challenges, and governance roles.

For Research Question 2 – Significant Differences in Perceptions, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in perceptions of opportunities, challenges, and roles among the stakeholder groups. The test addressed whether local officials, teachers, and parents differed statistically in how they perceived opportunities and challenges in fostering inclusive synergy. It is acknowledged that unequal group sizes, particularly the very small number of local officials and school heads, resulted in zero or near-zero standard deviations in some variables. These zero standard deviations reflect

a high degree of homogeneity in respondents' ratings within these subgroups rather than a computational or procedural error, a condition commonly observed in studies involving small or elite samples. Despite this limitation, ANOVA was retained as an exploratory inferential tool consistent with prior governance and education research involving decision-making populations. Accordingly, interpretations of statistically observed governance-related differences, particularly those involving LGU respondents, are framed cautiously due to the limited number of LGU participants, which reduces statistical power and generalizability. These findings are therefore positioned as preliminary patterns that warrant validation through larger and more balanced samples in future research.

The ANOVA formula used was:

$$F = \frac{MST}{MSE}$$

Where:

F = ANOVA coefficient

MST = Mean sum of squares due to treatment

MSE = Mean sum of squares

For Research Question 3 – Perceived Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles, descriptive statistics (frequency and weighted mean) were computed to capture patterns in stakeholder perceptions. These quantitative results were complemented by qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process. This combination ensured that the analysis reflected both measurable patterns and lived experiences of stakeholders regarding inclusive synergy.

For Research Question 4 – Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, the qualitative phase served as the primary foundation. Experiential narratives, governance practices, collaborative strategies, and contextual challenges were coded into themes through thematic analysis. These findings directly informed the development of a stakeholder-informed framework designed to strengthen inclusive education governance. In the quantitative phase, the weighted mean will be computed using the formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

Where:

X = weighted mean

f = frequency of responses per Likert scale point

x = numerical value assigned to each Likert scale option (e.g., Strongly Agree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 1)

The qualitative phase validated, contrasted, and expanded the quantitative findings, ensuring that stakeholder narratives illuminated dimensions of inclusive synergy not fully captured by survey data alone. While the presence of unequal and small subgroup sizes—particularly among local officials and school heads—constitutes a recognized limitation of the study, this was addressed through methodological triangulation and the deliberate weighting of qualitative insights. Future studies are therefore recommended to employ larger and more balanced stakeholder samples or alternative inferential techniques suited for small-n designs to strengthen statistical generalizability. This recommendation is particularly emphasized for local governance respondents, as a larger LGU sample would allow more robust and representative comparisons of governance-related perceptions and practices in inclusive school–community collaboration. Overall, the integration of both phases provided a comprehensive and triangulated analysis, directly supporting the study's goal of producing evidence-based, stakeholder-informed recommendations for inclusive education governance in Valenzuela City.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines shaped every phase of this work, ensuring participant welfare remained central. Before gathering any information, each individual confirmed agreement through written consent. A detailed outline of the purpose followed, then methods used, emphasizing freedom to join or leave freely. Respect during interactions stood as a core expectation, clearly stated up front. Questions could be skipped if someone felt uneasy - no reason needed. Withdrawal at any moment stayed possible, with no effect on treatment or status. Clarity mattered: anyone might ask for more detail whenever uncertainty arose. Fairness guided conduct from start to finish. Procedures held steady, aligned with established principles throughout. Each person retained control over involvement until completion.

Throughout the research, keeping participant identity hidden remained a priority. Respondent details stayed separate from answers given, while any personal markers capable of tracing replies to persons went uncollected. Instead of real names, labels such as codes took their place. Access to gathered material limited strictly to the investigator and approved team members. Information appeared later only when combined, never isolated. What one person shared did not surface alone. Protection of privacy shaped each step taken.

Should any unease arise during responses on inclusive education, support was available. Through carefully structured conditions, emotional safety remained prioritized at all stages. Insights gathered may inform future decisions around educational inclusion within Valenzuela City. A calm setting helped ensure each participant felt at ease while sharing personal perspectives. Value emerged not from immediate outcomes but from long-term applicability of collected data.

To begin the qualitative stage, a set protocol guided interviews, ensuring consistency and adherence to ethical standards. Each conversation - be it individual or group - opened with a clear reminder of the study's intent, followed by a reaffirmation of privacy protections. Verbal agreement to continue was confirmed anew prior to any questioning. Questions, carefully shaped around core goals, remained open but focused, allowing space for authentic answers without direction. Silence or exit remained permissible throughout; participants held full control over engagement. Recording occurred solely when explicitly approved, while written notes supported completeness. Following conclusion, every person received clarification on data handling procedures alongside appreciation for their contribution.

When it comes to handling information, every form of recorded data stayed under secure conditions. Digital versions required passwords and used encryption methods. Physical documents rested inside secured cabinets, reachable solely by authorized researchers. After finishing the project and sharing outcomes, records met permanent removal - electronic ones erased beyond recovery, paper ones reduced to fragments. Respect for individual rights shaped each step taken during interviews. Participation remained fully optional throughout. Privacy controls stayed active at all stages. Guidelines followed established moral frameworks without deviation. The entire process reflected careful attention to responsible conduct. Protection of those involved stood central to how work unfolded. No gaps appeared in compliance with accepted norms. Confidentiality functioned as a constant, not an afterthought. Measures applied consistently supported trustworthiness over time. Data control procedures aligned strictly with predefined rules. Nothing occurred outside approved boundaries. Ethical consistency showed clearly in everyday actions. Outcomes relied on disciplined execution, not assumptions. Security did not weaken at any phase. Rules governed storage, usage, and final deletion alike. Integrity emerged through routine adherence, not claims.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from parents and teachers to address the study's aim of generating comparative insights into the opportunities and challenges of inclusive education practices within the local governance context of Valenzuela City. Guided by the Statement of the Problem, the chapter examines the opportunities perceived by stakeholders, determines whether significant differences exist between groups, identifies the challenges that hinder inclusive synergy between schools and local government, and draws from these perceptions to inform the development of the Proposed Inclusive School-Local Governance Collaboration Framework, designed to enhance school-local governance partnerships.

1. The Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles in Fostering Inclusive Synergy Between Schools and Local Governance as Perceived by Local Officials, Teachers, and Parents.

This section presents the quantitative results on the opportunities, challenges, and roles that shape inclusive synergy between schools and local governance as perceived by local officials, teachers, and parents. Descriptive statistics, specifically the weighted mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the respondents' levels of agreement with each indicator. These measures allowed the study to identify well-established strengths, where higher mean scores reflect stronger endorsement of inclusive governance practices, and to pinpoint potential areas for enrichment, indicated by comparatively lower ratings.

Through this analytic approach, the findings provide a clearer understanding of how key community actors experience supportive mechanisms, encounter barriers, and assume roles within the broader landscape of inclusive education governance.

Table 2. Perceived Opportunities for Inclusive Synergy by Role

Statements	Local Official		Parent		School Head		Teacher		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Local policies support inclusive education in our community.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.49 (SA)	0.63	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.32 (SA)	0.65	3.47 (SA)	0.63
2. Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion.	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.38 (SA)	0.67	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.23 (A)	0.43	3.36 (SA)	0.62
3. The local government provides resources for inclusion.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.43 (SA)	0.63	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.91 (A)	0.68	3.33 (SA)	0.68
4. Community events promote inclusive values and practices.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.29 (A)	0.62	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.05 (A)	0.65	3.27 (A)	0.64
5. Stakeholders are included in school-level planning related to inclusion.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.38 (SA)	0.69	3.33 (SA)	0.58	3.05 (A)	0.65	3.32 (SA)	0.69
6. There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership.	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.40 (SA)	0.65	3.33 (SA)	0.58	3.09 (A)	0.75	3.33 (SA)	0.68
7. Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies.	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.44 (SA)	0.58	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.95 (A)	0.65	3.33 (SA)	0.63
8. There are accessible support services (e.g., SPED, health services).	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.38 (SA)	0.62	3.33 (SA)	0.58	3.14 (A)	0.47	3.34 (SA)	0.60
9. Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.40 (SA)	0.63	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.18 (A)	0.66	3.39 (SA)	0.64
10. Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay.	4.00 (SA)	0.00	3.37 (SA)	0.60	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.14 (A)	0.71	3.34 (SA)	0.63
Overall Opportunities	3.90 (SA)	0.17	3.40 (SA)	0.54	3.57 (SA)	0.45	3.10 (A)	0.49	3.35 (SA)	0.54

Legend: 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree, 1.76–2.50 = Disagree, 2.51–3.25 = Agree, 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree

The respondents strongly agree that their communities provide meaningful opportunities for inclusive synergy between schools and local governance, as shown by the overall mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.54). The highest-rated strengths highlight that “Local policies support inclusive education in our community” (M = 3.47, SD = 0.63), “Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders” (M = 3.39, SD = 0.64), and “Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion” (M = 3.36, SD = 0.62), which reflect a supportive policy framework, active community participation, and open channels of communication. While these results are positive, several indicators suggest areas that could benefit from greater attention and resources, including “There are accessible support services (e.g., SPED programs, health services)” (M = 3.34, SD = 0.60), “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay” (M = 3.34, SD = 0.63), “The local government provides resources (materials, manpower, training) for inclusion” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.68), “There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.68), and “Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.63). Similarly, “Stakeholders are included in school-level planning related to inclusion” (M = 3.32, SD = 0.69) shows slightly lower endorsement, suggesting the need for more inclusive planning efforts. The lowest-rated item, “Community events promote inclusive values and practices” (M = 3.27, SD = 0.64), points to limited community-wide engagement, indicating this as a key area for future improvement. Overall, the data reflects a promising foundation for inclusive governance, alongside identifiable areas where collaborative efforts can be deepened. Below are the interpretation per stakeholder.

Local officials reported a very strong perception of opportunities for inclusive synergy, as reflected in the overall mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.17), which stands noticeably higher than the overall opportunities mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.54). In contrast to the broader sample, which showed slight variation in responses, local officials gave perfect ratings of 4.00 (SD = 0.00) to several indicators, including “Local policies support inclusive education in our community,” “Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders,” “There are accessible support services (e.g., SPED, health services),” “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay,” “The local government provides resources for inclusion,” “Stakeholders are included in school-level planning related to inclusion,” and “Community events promote inclusive values and practices.” This uniformity reflects a highly confident and favorable view of inclusive governance, with no variability in these responses. Even the slightly lower-rated items “Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion,” “There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership,” and “Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies” (all M = 3.67, SD = 0.58) still exceeded the corresponding overall means. Altogether, local officials show minimal needs, as they rated nearly all opportunities with perfect scores, suggesting they believe inclusive systems are already well established. However, their key need lies not in improving specific indicators, but in aligning their highly positive perceptions with the more varied and nuanced experiences of teachers, parents, and school heads. This alignment is essential to ensure that governance decisions are grounded in the actual conditions and lived realities of inclusive education in their communities.

Faculty respondents reported a consistently positive perception of opportunities for fostering inclusive synergy, with an overall mean of 3.40 (SD = 0.54), slightly above the overall score of 3.35. Their strongest endorsements include “Local policies support inclusive education in our community” (M = 3.49, SD = 0.63), “Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies” (M = 3.44, SD = 0.58), and “The local government provides resources for inclusion” (M = 3.43, SD = 0.63), all of which scored higher than the overall averages and suggest that faculty view governance and advocacy efforts more favorably than the broader sample. They also expressed strong agreement with “Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders” (M = 3.40, SD = 0.63) and “There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership” (M = 3.40, SD = 0.65), indicating that they experience school–community partnerships as active and present. Meanwhile, items such as “There are accessible support services (e.g., SPED programs, health services),” “Stakeholders are included in school-level planning related to inclusion,” “Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion,” and “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay” received means between 3.37 and 3.38, reflecting alignment with the overall trend and a slightly more optimistic outlook. The lowest-rated item, “Community events promote inclusive values and practices” (M = 3.29, SD = 0.62), remains consistent with the broader finding that community-wide inclusion initiatives are less developed. Overall, faculty exhibit slightly stronger perceptions of policy, advocacy, and inter-agency collaboration than the general group, while their areas for improvement closely mirror the overall weaknesses, indicating common challenges in community-level engagement and support services.

School heads reported consistently strong perceptions of opportunities for inclusive synergy, with an overall mean of 3.57 (SD = 0.45), which is higher than the overall group rating of 3.35. Their strongest endorsement was “Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders” (M = 4.00, SD = 0.00), reflecting exceptional confidence in participatory school governance. Other indicators that received strong agreement include “Local policies support inclusive education in our community,” “The local government provides resources for inclusion,” “Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion,” “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay,” and “Community events promote inclusive values and practices,” all of which scored 3.67 (SD = 0.58) and were above the overall means. In contrast, the indicators “Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies,” “There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership,” “There are accessible support services,” and “Stakeholders are included in school-level planning,” each with a mean of 3.33 (SD = 0.58), were more aligned with the general areas needing improvement. Compared with the broader sample, school heads showed particular strengths in their confidence around participatory mechanisms and visible inclusive practices, while also reflecting similar needs in advocacy, collaboration, and access to support services that still require system-wide attention.

Teachers reported generally positive perceptions of opportunities for inclusive synergy, reflected in an overall mean of 3.10 (SD = 0.49), interpreted as Agree. Their key strengths centre on supportive policy and school culture, with the highest endorsement for “Local policies support inclusive education in our community” (M = 3.32, SD = 0.65). Additional strengths include “Teachers, parents, and local officials communicate regularly about inclusion” (M = 3.23, SD = 0.43), “Schools are open to input from parents and community leaders” (M = 3.18, SD = 0.66), “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay” (M = 3.14, SD = 0.71), and “There are accessible support services (e.g., SPED, health services)” (M = 3.14, SD = 0.47), suggesting that teachers recognise ongoing efforts that support inclusion at the school level. However, several indicators emerged as areas for enrichment, including “There is strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership” (M = 3.09, SD = 0.75), “Community events promote inclusive values and practices” (M = 3.05, SD = 0.65), and “Stakeholders are included in school-level planning related to inclusion” (M = 3.05, SD = 0.65), which point to opportunities to strengthen collaboration and engagement beyond the school. The lowest-rated items—“Local officials advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies” (M = 2.95, SD = 0.65) and “The local government provides resources for inclusion” (M = 2.91, SD = 0.68)—indicate that teachers see governance support as inconsistent or less visible. Compared with the overall results, teachers show unique strengths in their trust in school-based policies and communication, yet they also express distinct needs in terms of stronger inter-agency collaboration, more active local government involvement, and greater visibility of inclusive practices at the community level.

The findings suggest broad approval regarding chances for shared progress, yet opinions shift noticeably among different participant types, uncovering varied assets and points needing attention. Perfect ratings came mostly from municipal officers, who rated almost every measure at maximum level - a sign they see inclusion as already achieved, even if real-world alignment with others’ realities remains uncertain. Strong trust in joint systems marked the attitude of school administrators, particularly around decision-making that includes public voices; top consensus appeared on openness to feedback from families and local figures, still some weaknesses emerged in coordination, outreach, and availability of aid. Parent viewpoints leaned toward cautious optimism, affirming clarity in messaging and backing rules meant to include, although deeper integration into community processes and improved entry to assistance stood out as necessary steps forward. Educators voiced the least certainty overall, along with the most defined shortcomings: while awareness of regulations and exchange methods held firm, repeated shortfalls surfaced when working alongside village authorities, engaging participants, rallying neighborhoods, and notably receiving push behind initiatives or material help from regional administration.

Although perceptions differ, the Equity Development Index offers a framework for understanding them. When evaluating fairness, local authorities often rely on established systems and documented initiatives. Because their view centers on policy existence, outcomes appear favorable. Meanwhile, educators operate within real-time classroom settings. Resource constraints show clearly during instruction. Staff training opportunities vary greatly across locations. Collaboration between schools and community units lacks consistency. Being near students daily exposes staff to structural shortcomings. As a result, teaching personnel report weaker confidence in

administrative backing. Officials, working farther from practice, see stronger performance. Distance shapes interpretation. What shapes this difference becomes clearer through Ecological Systems Theory, placing actors across distinct layers of influence. Within the broader policy environment - seen in the exosystem and macrosystem - local authorities mostly function here, shaping rules and administrative direction. In contrast, educators reside directly in the microsystem, facing daily demands of turning broad directives into real instructional choices and student assistance. Where connections falter is often at the mesosystem, the space where municipal bodies and educational institutions should align. As a result, decision-making appears more structured when viewed from above than it does on the ground. Such misalignment points quietly toward deeper structural gaps, urging better pathways between city planning and what unfolds inside classrooms.

In brief, although inclusive governance tends to receive favorable views, optimism runs highest among local officials. School heads along with parents express measured belief in its value. Teachers, by contrast, highlight issues that demand broader structural focus.

Observations across studies reveal variations in how individuals view inclusive decision-making within schools, shaped by position and personal context. While district-level administrators frequently voice positive assessments - pointing to structured policies and involvement processes - as seen in recent analysis (Jubran et al., 2024). In nations with distributed school management, such as Finland, principals generally agree, associating regional control with heightened responsibility and community participation in fostering inclusivity (Al-Thani, 2024). Still, educators at classroom level demonstrate tempered agreement, recognizing value yet noting recurring challenges: minimal professional development, lack of strong representation, uneven assistance from municipal authorities (Mokhampanyane, 2024; Motitswe, 2025). Early childhood teachers share similar worries, mentioning limited resources along with insufficient training slow progress even when concepts are understood (Balık & Ozgun, 2024). From another angle, families tend to view inclusion positively - yet they seek stronger roles in shaping rules and choices (Sowiyah & Perdana, 2022). When comparing viewpoints across institutions versus government offices, gaps appear: officials lean toward hopeful visions whereas on-site staff highlight daily obstacles (Sakarneh, 2014). Together, such results reflect common ground on valuing collaborative leadership - but also stress the necessity of bridging high-level expectations with lived experiences.

It appears the findings point toward four central aspects for the suggested Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, aiming to support coherent and functional governance practices. What stands out is how firmly local authorities trust their current methods - yet this assurance calls for grounding mechanisms like jointly developed monitoring forms, visible progress trackers used by both parties, and organized channels for ongoing reflections that tie decision-making closer to real classroom and neighborhood contexts. Another consideration involves school leaders; they may gain from stronger frameworks for cooperative design work, where defined procedures for working together, mutual planning aids, and resources guiding public involvement take on greater importance.

Meaningful involvement from parents grows when pathways to connect with schools become clearer, through straightforward guides and tools designed for regular updates. Communication improves if families receive gentle cues on how to take part without confusion. Support materials presented simply allow consistent input from home. On another note, educators face distinct challenges requiring hands-on aids tailored to real situations they encounter daily. Assistance gains effectiveness once structured around shared plans for teamwork among staff members. Mapping out steps for student referrals brings order to complex processes. Practical illustrations work well when showing links between teaching methods and local government units' roles.

To meet both specific and shared needs, the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework should include three core components: (1) a unified set of indicators and shared language to align stakeholder perspectives, (2) structured communication and coordination workflows to bridge the gap between policy and practice, and (3) targeted community engagement strategies to strengthen weak areas, especially stakeholder participation, barangay collaboration, and the visibility of inclusive practices. Depending on significance testing outcomes, the framework may either offer integrated systemwide solutions or differentiated components tailored to each stakeholder group if meaningful variations are confirmed.

Table 3. Perceived Challenges for Inclusive Synergy by Role

Statements	Local Official		Parent		School Head		Teacher		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.51 (A)	0.91	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.77 (A)	1.02	2.58 (A)	0.95
2. Budget allocation for inclusive education is insufficient.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.79 (A)	0.87	3.00 (A)	0.00	3.00 (A)	1.02	2.81 (A)	0.91
3. There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity.	2.00 (D)	1.00	2.57 (A)	0.95	3.33 (SA)	0.58	3.05 (A)	1.00	2.69 (A)	0.98
4. Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.63 (A)	0.93	3.00 (A)	0.00	2.68 (A)	1.17	2.63 (A)	0.98
5. Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education.	1.33 (SD)	0.58	2.50 (D)	0.98	2.67 (A)	0.58	2.50 (D)	1.10	2.47 (D)	1.00
6. Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.56 (A)	0.95	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.91 (A)	0.97	2.64 (A)	0.96
7. There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.46 (D)	0.90	2.67 (A)	0.58	2.64 (A)	1.18	2.48 (D)	0.96
8. Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.51 (A)	0.94	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.64 (A)	1.22	2.55 (A)	1.01
9. Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak.	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.51 (A)	1.03	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.59 (A)	1.14	2.53 (A)	1.05
10. There is a lack of coordination across departments (DepEd, barangay councils).	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.51 (A)	0.92	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.59 (A)	1.14	2.53 (A)	0.97
Overall Challenges	1.67 (SD)	0.58	2.56 (A)	0.84	3.20 (A)	0.3	2.74 (A)	0.99	2.59 (A)	0.87

Legend: 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree, 1.76–2.50 = Disagree, 2.51–3.25 = Agree, 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree

The overall results indicate that respondents generally agree that several challenges hinder inclusive synergy, with the composite score of “Overall Challenges” (M = 2.59, SD = 0.87) reflecting a moderate level of concern across stakeholder groups. The highest-rated concerns, which represent the most prominent systemwide issues, were “Budget allocation for inclusive education is insufficient” (M = 2.81, SD = 0.91), “There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity” (M = 2.69, SD = 0.98), “Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities” (M = 2.64, SD = 0.96), and “Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices” (M = 2.63, SD = 0.98). These items fall within the “Agree” range and highlight areas needing urgent attention. Mid-level concerns such as “Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent” (M = 2.58, SD = 0.95), “Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented” (M = 2.55, SD = 1.01), “Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak” (M = 2.53, SD = 1.05), and “There is a lack of coordination across departments” (M = 2.53, SD = 0.97) point to structural and procedural issues that hinder effective inclusive governance. The lowest-rated items, “There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion” (M = 2.48, SD = 0.96) and “Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education” (M = 2.47, SD = 1.00), fall in the “Disagree” range, indicating that cultural and political barriers are perceived as less pressing. Overall, the data shows that 1) funding limitations, 2) lack of training, 3) infrastructure barriers, and 4) gaps in parental awareness are the most critical challenges to advancing inclusive education systems.

Local officials conveyed the lowest overall level of perceived challenges, with a mean score of 1.67 (SD = 0.58) categorized under “Strongly Disagree,” indicating that they generally do not view these issues as barriers to inclusive synergy. Their highest-rated concern, though still minimal, was “There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity” (M = 2.00, SD = 1.00), showing only limited recognition of training needs. All other items received consistent ratings of (M = 1.67, SD = 0.58), including “Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent,” “Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices,” “Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities,” “There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion,” “Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented,” “Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak,” and “There is a lack of coordination across departments.” The lowest-rated concern was “Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education” (M = 1.33, SD = 0.58), reflecting strong confidence that LGU leadership prioritizes inclusive education. Overall, local officials seem to hold a highly optimistic view of inclusive governance, perceiving far fewer challenges compared to other stakeholder groups.

Parents showed moderate agreement regarding the presence of challenges in inclusive governance upon garnering a weighted mean score of 2.56 (SD = 0.84) falling within the Agree range. Their top concerns were “Budget allocation for inclusive education is insufficient” (M = 2.79, SD = 0.87) and “There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity” (M = 2.57, SD = 0.95), reflecting notable worries about funding and educator capacity. They also agreed that “Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices” (M = 2.63, SD = 0.93), “Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities” (M = 2.56, SD = 0.95), and “Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent” (M = 2.51, SD = 0.91). Additionally, governance-related issues such as “Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented” (M = 2.51, SD = 0.94), “Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak” (M = 2.51, SD = 1.03), and “There is a lack of coordination across departments” (M = 2.51, SD = 0.92) were rated as ongoing concerns. Meanwhile, the least emphasized but still relevant issues were “Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education” (M = 2.50, SD = 0.98) and “There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion” (M = 2.46, SD = 0.90). Compared with the overall results, parents showed a similar pattern of agreeing with most challenges in inclusive governance, though they were slightly more optimistic, disagreeing that local governance lacks prioritisation and that cultural resistance is strong, making their perceptions generally aligned but somewhat less severe than the overall group. Overall, parents acknowledged a range of challenges, particularly around resources, training, information-sharing, and system coordination, while showing less concern about cultural and governance priorities.

School heads have strong agreement regarding the presence of challenges in inclusive governance, as indicated by their weighted mean score of 3.20 (SD = 0.30), which falls within the Agree range and represents the highest level among all stakeholder groups. The most strongly endorsed concerns were “Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent” (M = 3.67, SD = 0.58) and “Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented” (M = 3.67, SD = 0.58), suggesting that communication issues and policy ambiguity are major barriers. They also agreed that “There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.58), “Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.58), “Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.58), and “There is a lack of coordination across departments such as DepEd and barangay councils” (M = 3.33, SD = 0.58), indicating consistent concern across various implementation areas. Moderate agreement was recorded for “Budget allocation for inclusive education is insufficient” (M = 3.00, SD = 0.00) and “Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices” (M = 3.00, SD = 0.00). The least emphasized items, while still agreed upon, were “Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education” (M = 2.67, SD = 0.58) and “There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion” (M = 2.67, SD = 0.58). Compared with the overall results, school heads consistently rated the challenges more strongly, showing greater concern across all areas of inclusive governance. Their responses reflect a heightened awareness of systemic weaknesses and a stronger need for improved communication, clearer policy implementation, and greater structural support.

Teachers showed moderate agreement regarding the presence of challenges in inclusive governance, as reflected in their “Overall Challenges” score (M = 2.74, SD = 0.99), which falls within the Agree range and suggests recognition of several system-wide barriers. The highest-rated concerns were “There is a lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity” (M = 3.05, SD = 1.00) and “Budget allocation for inclusive education is insufficient” (M = 3.00, SD = 1.02), indicating strong concerns around limited capacity-building and financial resources.

Teachers also agreed that “Physical infrastructure is not friendly to learners with disabilities” ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.97$) and “Communication between schools and LGU is inconsistent” ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.02$), pointing to structural and coordination challenges. Mid-level concerns included “Parents are not adequately informed about inclusive practices” ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.17$), “Policies on inclusive education are unclear or inconsistently implemented” ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.22$), “There are cultural biases or resistance toward inclusion” ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.18$), “Monitoring and evaluation of inclusive programs are weak” ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.14$), and “There is a lack of coordination across departments” ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.14$), reflecting shared concerns about weak governance processes. The only item that fell below the Agree threshold was “Local governance does not prioritize inclusive education” ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.10$), showing slight disagreement on whether LGUs deprioritize inclusion. Compared with the overall results, teachers closely aligned with the general pattern but tended to rate challenges slightly higher, particularly in training, funding, and infrastructure, positioning them as the group most directly affected by implementation-level gaps.

When looking at different groups, weak support appeared for problems tied to decision-making focus, reluctance toward change, poor interdepartmental cooperation, yet stronger attention went elsewhere. Instead, clear agreement formed around three main matters: funding shortfalls in inclusive learning, missing preparation in inclusivity and awareness, along with unsuitable building conditions for students facing impairments - these stood out broadly too. Among local authorities, just one concern gained notice - the absence of proper instruction - implying a belief that operations work fairly well if skills were strengthened. Families brought forward financial constraints, difficulty obtaining details, alongside unmet training needs, highlighting gaps in material aid plus clarity reaching households. From those working in classrooms emerged the broadest list of pressing matters - shortfalls in professional development, financial limits, structural shortcomings, along with uneven contact between institutions and local government units. Direct involvement shapes such awareness of operational hurdles. Leading educational facilities brought forward numerous points tied to oversight: erratic exchanges with municipal bodies, vague directives, inadequate preparation, fragile support frameworks, disjointed departmental efforts, and flawed tracking methods. When viewed side by side, patterns appear - not every group weighs each factor equally. Though skill enhancement surfaces universally as necessary, access to tools, physical conditions, and information flow draw stronger attention from families and instructors. Oversight mechanics and alignment across offices matter more to administrators. Elected community representatives display minimal emphasis throughout. Perception shifts noticeably depending on position held inside the learning network.

One reason for varied views among stakeholders lies in how the Equity Development Index frames understanding. Although policy existence suggests fairness to local authorities, educators measure fairness by what happens inside classrooms. Where rules appear sufficient at administrative levels, actual conditions reveal gaps when seen through teacher experience. Instead of abstract frameworks, classroom professionals focus on material access - training opportunities, available tools, physical environments, individualized assistance. Because their work touches students directly, difficulties become more visible. Systems theory adds context: decision makers often remain distant from implementation sites. While leaders shape directives from outer layers of influence, teachers inhabit immediate settings where plans meet reality. Outcomes therefore differ, shaped less by intent than position. What counts as progress depends heavily on vantage point. Where ties between schools and local government units lack strength, plans often fail to reach classrooms effectively. Though goals may appear sound on paper, their real-world application tells a different story. From one angle, officials see progress; from another, teachers face ongoing challenges. Beneath broad statements lies a gap - between what is decided and what happens daily. Coordination, when absent, allows that gap to grow unnoticed. One outcome stands clear: without stronger connections, efforts remain uneven. Reality at the ground level does not always reflect higher-level expectations. Linking systems more closely could shift how strategies take shape in practice. If alignment improves, so might the flow of meaningful support. Ultimately, better integration may determine whether inclusion stays theoretical or becomes tangible.

Among findings about inclusive education, certain approaches stand out when addressing issues tied to preparation, oversight, structure, and support. Though often overlooked, sustained professional development gains strength when paired with clear guidelines and stable financial backing, according to Supriyono (2024), who links such conditions directly to stronger teaching performance. In a similar light, work by Nuphanudin et al. (2021) points toward structured monitoring alongside state-driven review systems as ways to maintain follow-through across educational levels. Meanwhile, insight from Orozco and Moríña (2022) turns attention to shared

learning among educators, readiness to manage complex classroom emotions, and adaptable instruction methods - each contributing quietly yet significantly to real-world inclusion efforts. Systemic change, according to Shutaleva and colleagues (2023), depends on consistent leadership involvement alongside cooperation among departments, with durability built into operations. Beyond this framework, attention shifts - Shiwani (2021) together with Nel and team (2016) - toward alliances between schools and local populations, along with reliable infrastructures that distribute duties and manage supplies effectively. From such analysis emerges a pattern of five central strategies: first, teacher training that continues over time and responds directly to needs; second, clear oversight mechanisms combined with administrative strength; third, learning through joint effort where educators guide one another; fourth, unified initiatives ensuring lasting impact while linking different units within institutions; fifth, deeper ties to public groups and decision-makers fostering openness, clearer reporting, and access to tools. Each piece fits - not by chance but by design - into broader demands for growth in skill, alignment across tiers, and enduring commitment to inclusion throughout educational environments.

Despite differing views among stakeholders, a shared requirement emerges: an Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework. Where budget constraints appear consistently, attention shifts toward strategic allocation rather than broad solutions. Training deficits surface repeatedly - responses must include skill-building grounded in daily practice. Infrastructure weaknesses demand designs adapted to local conditions, not standardized models. Guidance within professional growth initiatives proves more effective when tied directly to real tasks. Policy alignment matters most when it follows operational realities, not precedes them. Access to funds influences implementation success; availability shapes what becomes feasible. Each layer of support adjusts according to context, yet maintains structural coherence.

Starting with school leaders, where weaknesses in oversight and joint operations were noted, a set of organized planning formats, choices supporting references, and defined interaction methods could improve coherence across institutions and municipal bodies. From another angle, educators - facing the widest variety of practical hurdles - might find value in materials encouraging shared practice, adaptable instruction styles, and readiness to manage affective demands within diverse learning spaces. Shifting focus, parental input suggests usefulness in straightforward information channels alongside scheduled involvement pathways linked directly to academic sites. In contrast, regional administrators, seeing obstacles less frequently, might gain perspective through concise instruments designed to sharpen insight into on-the-ground educational conditions.

In essence, the framework must strike a balance between universal solutions—such as (1) capacity-building, (2) coordination systems, and (3) communication tools—and tailored components that reflect the unique experiences of each stakeholder. If statistical analysis reveals no significant differences across groups, a unified version may be sufficient. If differences are significant, differentiated pathways should be considered to ensure the framework remains responsive and effective for all users.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance

Sample Statements	Local Official		Parent		School Head		Teacher		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners.	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.46 (SA)	0.68	4.00 (SA)	0	3.32 (SA)	0.48	3.45 (SA)	0.63
2. Parents are regularly consulted in school decisions.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.43 (SA)	0.65	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.05 (A)	0.72	3.36 (SA)	0.68
3. Barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programs.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.34 (SA)	0.68	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.77 (A)	0.75	3.23 (A)	0.73
4. Local governance policies support inclusive practices in schools.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.31 (A)	0.67	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.82 (A)	0.8	3.22 (A)	0.73

5. Schools and local officials jointly plan inclusion activities.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.29 (A)	0.67	3.33 (SA)	0.58	2.86 (A)	0.77	3.22 (A)	0.71
6. LGU provides clear guidance on inclusion through ordinances/resolutions.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.28 (A)	0.69	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.68 (A)	0.84	3.18 (A)	0.77
7. School heads involve local leaders in planning for inclusive learners.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.29 (A)	0.69	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.86 (A)	0.83	3.23 (A)	0.75
8. Coordination bodies (school boards, task forces) function effectively.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.24 (A)	0.69	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.86 (A)	0.64	3.19 (A)	0.7
9. Roles and responsibilities related to inclusion are well-defined.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.28 (A)	0.67	3.67 (SA)	0.58	2.86 (A)	0.56	3.22 (A)	0.67
10. I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education.	4.00 (SA)	0	3.38 (SA)	0.71	3.67 (SA)	0.58	3.59 (SA)	0.59	3.46 (SA)	0.68
Overall Roles	3.97 (SA)	0.06	3.33 (A)	0.6	3.60 (SA)	0.46	2.97 (A)	0.48	3.27 (A)	0.6
<i>Legend: 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree, 1.76–2.50 = Disagree, 2.51–3.25 = Agree, 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree</i>										

The analysis of stakeholders’ perceived roles in inclusive education governance reveals generally positive involvement across the system, with an overall mean of 3.27 (SD = 0.60), indicating agreement that key actors are actively contributing to inclusion efforts. The highest-rated items reflected strong personal and instructional commitment, particularly “I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education” (M = 3.46, SD = 0.68) and “Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners” (M = 3.45, SD = 0.63), both falling within the Strongly Agree range. Positive perceptions also extended to engagement practices, as seen in “Parents are regularly consulted in school decisions” (M = 3.36, SD = 0.68). Other governance-related areas such as collaboration with barangay officials (M = 3.23, SD = 0.73), school heads involving local leaders (M = 3.23, SD = 0.75), policy support for inclusive practices (M = 3.22, SD = 0.73), joint planning between schools and local officials (M = 3.22, SD = 0.71), and clarity in roles and responsibilities (M = 3.22, SD = 0.67) were all rated within the Agree range, suggesting that while structures are in place, they are still maturing. The lowest-scoring areas, though still positive, were “Coordination bodies function effectively” (M = 3.19, SD = 0.70) and “LGU provides clear guidance on inclusive education” (M = 3.18, SD = 0.77), highlighting the need for improved alignment and stronger inter-agency coordination. Overall, the data points to strong individual commitment but also signals that formal structures and collaborative mechanisms need further development to fully support inclusive governance.

Local officials demonstrated the strongest and most consistent sense of role fulfilment in inclusive education governance, with every indicator rated in the Strongly Agree range (M=3.97, SD=0.06). They expressed full confidence in their active involvement, assigning perfect scores of (M = 4.00, SD = 0.00) to key statements such as “I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education,” “Parents are regularly consulted in school decisions,” “Barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programs,” “School heads involve local leaders,” “Local governance policies support inclusive practices,” “Schools and local officials jointly plan inclusion activities,” “Roles and responsibilities are well-defined,” “Coordination bodies function effectively,” and “LGU provides clear guidance on inclusion.” Even their lowest-rated item, “Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners,” still received a Strongly Agree score of (M = 3.67, SD = 0.58). Their overall role perception was exceptionally high at (M = 3.97, SD = 0.06), reflecting a highly confident and optimistic view of their contributions to inclusive governance.

Parents demonstrated generally positive perceptions of their roles in inclusive education governance, with an overall mean score of (M = 3.33, SD = 0.60), which falls within the Agree range. Their highest-rated strengths included “Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners” (M = 3.46, SD = 0.68), “Parents

are regularly consulted in school decisions” ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.65$), “I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education” ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.71$), and “Barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programs” ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.68$). These responses suggest that parents feel most confident in areas related to instructional responsiveness, consultation, their own role as contributors, and community-school collaboration. Other aspects, while still positively rated, indicated opportunities for improvement. These included “Local governance policies support inclusive practices” ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.67$), “School heads involve local leaders in planning” ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.69$), “Joint planning between schools and officials” ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.67$), “Roles and responsibilities are well-defined” ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.67$), “LGU provides clear guidance on inclusion” ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.69$), and “Coordination bodies function effectively” ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.69$). These findings suggest that while parents recognize and value their involvement in inclusive education, enhanced clarity in governance processes, stronger guidance, and better coordination mechanisms would help deepen their engagement.

School heads reported very strong perceptions of their roles in inclusive education governance, with an overall rating of 3.60 ($SD = 0.46$) falling within the Strongly Agree range. Their highest-rated item was “Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners” ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.00$), showing full confidence in instructional responsiveness. Several other indicators also received strong endorsement at ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.58$), including “Parents are regularly consulted in school decisions,” “I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education,” “School heads involve local leaders in planning for inclusive learners,” “Roles and responsibilities related to inclusion are well-defined,” “LGU provides clear guidance on inclusion through ordinances/resolutions,” and “Coordination bodies (school boards, task forces) function effectively.” While still positively rated, areas identified for improvement at 3.33 mean score and SD of 0.58 included “Barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programs,” “Local governance policies support inclusive practices in schools,” and “Schools and local officials jointly plan inclusion activities.” These results suggest that school heads view their leadership role in inclusive governance as well-established but also recognize the need for stronger policy support, improved collaboration with barangay officials, and more structured planning mechanisms with local government.

Teachers reported moderately positive perceptions of their roles in inclusive education governance, with an overall rating of ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.48$) within the Agree range, suggesting that while they acknowledge their participation, their confidence is lower compared to other stakeholder groups. Their strongest ratings were for “I see myself as a key contributor to inclusive education” ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.59$) and “Teachers adjust and modify teaching strategies for diverse learners” ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.48$), showing solid instructional commitment and a clear sense of contribution to inclusion efforts. There was also agreement, though more moderate, with “Parents are regularly consulted in school decisions” ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.72$). Several indicators rated in the Agree range pointed to areas needing further development, including “School heads involve local leaders in planning for inclusive learners” ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.83$), “Roles and responsibilities related to inclusion are well-defined” ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.56$), “Coordination bodies function effectively” ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.64$), “Schools and local officials jointly plan inclusion activities” ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.77$), and “Local governance policies support inclusive practices in schools” ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.80$). The lowest-rated items were “Barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programs” ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 0.75$) and “LGU provides clear guidance on inclusion” ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.84$), highlighting gaps in external collaboration and governance support. Overall, teachers demonstrated commitment at the classroom level but showed more uncertainty in areas involving policy, coordination, and broader governance structures.

Across all stakeholders, the overall needs in inclusive education governance focused on strengthening system-level mechanisms, particularly in planning and collaboration. These included more 1) effective involvement of school heads and local leaders, 2) stronger barangay–school partnerships, 3) clearer role definitions, 4) improved joint planning between schools and local officials, 5) enhanced policy support for inclusive practices, 6) more functional coordination bodies, and 7) clearer guidance from LGUs. Although these needs were shared, they appeared differently across groups. Local officials identified only one gap, which was supporting teachers in adjusting strategies for diverse learners, suggesting they perceive the system as largely functional. Parents emphasized the need for stronger policy alignment, defined roles, joint planning structures, visible LGU support, and better coordination. School heads noted issues mainly in barangay collaboration and planning with local authorities. Teachers expressed the broadest concerns, highlighting weak leadership involvement, unclear

responsibilities, limited coordination, insufficient joint planning, inconsistent policy support, poor barangay collaboration, and lack of clear guidance from LGUs. Despite these variations, a common pattern is evident. While stakeholders generally feel confident in their individual roles, the wider structures that support inclusive governance such as shared planning, coordination, and inter-agency collaboration remain the most consistently identified areas for improvement.

From studies into how inclusive education systems are managed, lasting improvements rely heavily on better organization across institutions - especially when schools, local governments, and neighborhood groups work together. With focus placed on school principals and municipal figures, Bastida and Gonzales (2024) point out growth comes more reliably where long-term strategies exist alongside training efforts. In similar fashion, Niez et al. (2016) along with Yasay (2018) observe village-level cooperation between learning centers and communities brings deeper engagement by families within educational choices. Where roles remain undefined, complications arise; thus, clarity matters - a view supported by both Heinonen et al. (2000) and Laranang (2022), who favor structured co-planning methods linking classrooms and governing bodies. Through such alignment, distribution of supplies improves, goals match up, oversight grows stronger. Still, Dalisay et al. (2024), alongside Dayapera et al. (2024), emphasize stronger policies together with operational coordination units, observing how cooperation across education, health, and local initiatives sustains inclusive access. Meanwhile, clear financial oversight paired with collective decision structures surfaces as vital, since Bantilan et al. (2023) find pooled funding models combined with public engagement strengthen responsibility. Finally, Biñas et al. (2023) and Escasinas and Padro (2024) highlight the necessity of consistent LGU guidance, adaptive leadership, and continuous communication channels to sustain inclusive practices. In summary, the solutions identified across these studies are as follows: (1) stronger involvement of school heads and local leaders; (2) deepened barangay-school partnerships; (3) clarified role and responsibility structures; (4) institutionalized joint school-LGU planning; (5) reinforced policy and coordination support systems; (6) functional inter-agency collaboration; and (7) regular, transparent guidance and resource support from LGUs. Collectively, these measures demonstrate that shared governance and inter-stakeholder collaboration are central to building effective, inclusive education systems.

2. Significant Differences in the Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles for Fostering Inclusive Synergy Between Schools and Local Governance Among Local Officials, Teachers, and Parents

Understanding whether stakeholder groups differ in their perceptions of Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles in fostering inclusive synergy between schools and local governance is essential because effective inclusive governance relies on aligned expectations, coordinated actions, and shared accountability. If perceptions differ significantly across groups, this may suggest communication gaps, inconsistent policy implementation, or unequal access to resources, which are critical considerations in designing a responsive Proposed Inclusive School-Local Governance Collaboration Framework.

To investigate these potential differences among local officials, teachers, parents, and school heads, the study applied a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This method was appropriate because the independent variable (stakeholder role) included four unrelated groups, while the dependent variables were continuous composite scores based on Likert-scale items.

Prior to conducting ANOVA, key statistical assumptions were assessed. Normality of residuals was evaluated through Q-Q plots, which showed acceptable conformity to the theoretical distribution across all models. Levene's Test was used to examine the assumption of equal variances, producing nonsignificant results for Opportunities ($p = .23$), Challenges ($p = .08$), and Roles ($p = .07$), confirming that variances across groups were sufficiently equal for ANOVA. When ANOVA revealed significant group differences in Opportunities ($p = .03$) and Roles ($p < .01$), Tukey's HSD post hoc test was conducted. This test was appropriate given the homogeneity of variance and is effective in managing Type I error across multiple comparisons. Interpretation focused on identifying which groups differed, the direction of those differences, and what the results revealed about systemic or role-specific gaps. This approach ensured a valid and meaningful analysis of whether stakeholder perceptions of inclusive governance vary across roles.

2.1 Perceived Opportunities Across Stakeholder Groups

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA for Perceived Opportunities Across Stakeholder Groups

Groups	Mean	SD	F(3, 92)	p	Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
Local Officials	3.90	0.17	3.1	0.03	Reject H ₀	Significant
Parents	3.40	0.54				
School Heads	3.57	0.45				
Teachers	3.10	0.49				

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether perceptions of opportunities for fostering inclusive synergy differed significantly across stakeholder groups, including local officials, parents, school heads, and teachers. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference, $F(3, 92) = 3.10$, $p = .03$, indicating that at least one group perceived opportunities differently from the others. Descriptive statistics revealed that local officials reported the highest perceived opportunities ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.17$), followed by school heads ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.45$), parents ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.54$), and teachers ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.49$). This pattern suggests that teachers consistently perceived fewer opportunities for inclusive synergy compared to the other groups. Because the overall ANOVA was significant, a post hoc analysis using Tukey’s HSD was conducted to determine which specific group differences contributed to the observed effect. The results of this post hoc comparison are provided in the table below.

Table 6. Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparisons for Perceived Opportunities Across Stakeholder Groups

Comparison	Mean Difference	SE	t	p (Tukey)	Interpretation
Local Official – Parent	0.5	0.31	1.64	0.36	Not Significant
Local Official – School Head	0.33	0.42	0.79	0.86	Not Significant
Local Official – Teacher	0.8	0.32	2.49	0.07	Not Significant
Parent – School Head	-0.17	0.31	-0.56	0.94	Not Significant
Parent – Teacher	0.29	0.13	2.28	0.11	Not Significant
School Head – Teacher	0.46	0.32	1.44	0.48	Not Significant

Tukey HSD post hoc tests were conducted to identify which stakeholder groups differed significantly in their perceived opportunities for inclusive synergy. None of the pairwise comparisons reached statistical significance after adjustment (all p-values > .05). The largest observed difference was between local officials and teachers ($p = .07$), suggesting that local officials perceived notably higher opportunities, but this difference did not meet the conventional threshold for statistical significance. All other group comparisons showed small mean differences and nonsignificant p-values, indicating that although the overall ANOVA was significant, no individual group pair demonstrated a statistically meaningful difference when accounting for multiple comparisons.

The nonsignificant post hoc results suggest that while stakeholder groups show slight differences in how they perceive opportunities, these differences are not statistically meaningful. This supports the use of a shared collaborative framework rather than separate role-specific versions. The framework should therefore focus on improving the most commonly identified areas for enhancement across all groups. These include making “Inclusive practices are clearly visible in my school/barangay,” increasing “Accessible support services such as SPED and health services,” promoting “Strong collaboration between schools and barangay leadership,” encouraging “Local officials to advocate for inclusive education in decision-making bodies,” ensuring “The local government provides resources for inclusion,” involving “Stakeholders in school-level planning,” and organizing “Community events that promote inclusive values and practices.” By addressing these shared priorities, the framework can help establish more consistent and inclusive governance for all.

2.2. Perceived Challenges Across Stakeholder Groups

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA for Perceived Challenges Across Stakeholder Groups

Groups	Mean	SD	F(3, 92)	p	Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
Local Officials	1.67	0.58	1.89	0.14	Accept H ₀	Not Significant
Parents	2.56	0.84				
School Heads	3.20	0.30				
Teachers	2.74	0.99				

Data analysis indicated no statistically significant difference across the four stakeholder groups, $F(3, 92) = 1.89$, $p = .14$. Although mean scores varied with local officials reporting the lowest perceived challenges ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.58$) and school heads the highest ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.30$) these differences were not statistically meaningful. As a result, the null hypothesis was retained, suggesting that all groups shared generally similar levels of concern regarding inclusive governance challenges. Since the overall test was not significant, no post hoc analysis was necessary, and attention may instead be focused on addressing the common systemwide challenges identified in the descriptive data.

Since the differences in perceived challenges across stakeholder groups were not statistically significant, the framework and intervention efforts should focus on the most strongly endorsed systemwide challenges, as these reflect shared concerns across all roles. Key priorities include 1) improving budget allocation for inclusive education, 2) increasing training on inclusion and sensitivity, 3) upgrading physical infrastructure to accommodate learners with disabilities, and 4) ensuring parents are well-informed about inclusive practices. Addressing these four areas will help overcome the most critical barriers identified by all groups and promote more unified, system-level progress in inclusive governance.

2.3. Perceived Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA for Perceived Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance

Groups	Mean	SD	F(3, 92)	p	Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
Local Officials	3.97	0.06	4.15	< .01	Reject H ₀	Significant
Parents	3.33	0.60				
School Heads	3.60	0.46				
Teachers	2.97	0.48				

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether perceived roles and involvement in inclusive education governance varied significantly among local officials, parents, school heads, and teachers. The results showed a statistically significant difference, $F(3, 92) = 4.15$, $p < .01$, suggesting meaningful variation in how each group views its contributions and responsibilities. Local officials reported the highest perceived involvement ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.06$), followed by school heads ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.46$), parents ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.60$), and teachers ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.48$). Since the ANOVA indicated a significant difference, post hoc tests were conducted to determine which specific group comparisons accounted for the overall effect. Results are presented in the table below.

Table 9. Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparisons for Perceived Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance

Comparison	Mean Diff.	SE	t	p _{Tukey}	Interpretation
Local Officials – Parents	0.64	0.34	1.90	0.24	Not Significant
Local Officials – School Heads	0.37	0.46	0.79	0.86	Not Significant
Local Officials – Teachers	1.00	0.35	2.85	0.03	Significant
Parents – School Heads	-0.27	0.34	-0.81	0.85	Not Significant

Parents – Teachers	0.36	0.14	2.59	0.05	Significant
School Heads – Teachers	0.63	0.35	1.81	0.28	Not Significant

Post hoc comparisons using Tukey’s HSD revealed that local officials scored significantly higher than teachers in their perceived roles ($p = .03$). Parents also viewed themselves as significantly more involved compared with teachers ($p = .05$). No significant differences were observed among local officials, parents, and school heads, nor between school heads and teachers. These results suggest that teachers consistently reported the lowest levels of perceived role involvement, while governance actors like local officials and school heads expressed stronger self-perceived roles in inclusive education governance

While the overall results show that all stakeholders share a need for stronger involvement in planning and governance, the specific pattern of teachers’ responses provides a clear roadmap for prioritising the framework. Systemwide, attention is needed in areas such as (1) how school heads involve local leaders in planning for inclusive learners, (2) how barangay officials collaborate with schools on inclusion-friendly programmes, (3) how roles and responsibilities related to inclusion are defined, (4) how schools and local officials jointly plan inclusion activities, (5) how local governance policies support inclusive practices, (6) how coordination bodies such as school boards and task forces function, and (7) how the LGU provides clear guidance through ordinances and resolutions. These same areas are reflected in teachers’ responses but at consistently lower levels, showing that they feel least involved in planning, collaboration, and governance structures. As such, while the framework should support all groups, it must give focused attention to strengthening teachers’ participation in each of these domains—particularly in collaborative planning, role clarification, coordination processes, and inter-agency engagement.

One reason behind teachers’ reports of fewer chances and narrower duties, when set beside local leaders and principals, lies in how different frameworks shape perception - this shows clearly in both the Equity Development Index and Ecological Systems Theory. Seen through EDI, those in authority often judge fairness by whether rules, initiatives, or administrative setups exist, a view that tilts toward positive outlooks on involvement and responsibility. In contrast, educators measure fairness not by policy presence but by what happens daily: who gets training, which materials reach classrooms, how heavy workloads become, and how well varied student needs are met - views that bring sharper evaluations. Another layer appears via Ecological Systems Theory: individuals like government representatives engage largely in outer layers - the planning zones where decisions take form yet remain distant from practice. Meanwhile, instructors dwell at ground level, inside the immediate environment where every rule meets reality, friction included. Such placement shapes what each group notices, values, and ultimately says about their place in the system. Where connections falter between schools and local government units, execution often falls short, revealing a gap between high-level plans and actual teaching conditions. Because of this misalignment, classroom outcomes may fail to reflect what policies promise on paper. A framework designed for inclusive cooperation might bridge these divides through structured dialogue and mutual oversight. Instead of isolated decisions, joint review sessions could allow both parties to adjust strategies based on real experiences. With consistent interaction, planning becomes less theoretical, more grounded in daily educational demands. Such alignment does not guarantee perfection; it increases the chance that administrative goals reach students in usable forms. Over time, repeated collaboration builds trust - something documents alone cannot deliver. The intent is clear: turn structural intention into visible, tangible presence within learning spaces. Without stronger links, even well-meaning reforms risk fading before they arrive at the point of impact. Through deliberate connection, governance shifts from distant authority to active participant in education's everyday flow.

3. Qualitative Data to Quantitative Findings to Identify Patterns and Support Needs for Strengthening Inclusive School–LGU Collaboration

The qualitative component of the study was designed to deepen, explain, and theorize the quantitative findings by uncovering the underlying patterns, relational dynamics, and support needs that shape school–LGU collaboration for inclusive education. Guided by Braun and Clarke’s (2021) reflexive thematic analysis, the analysis moved beyond surface categorization toward the development of analytical themes that interpret

stakeholder experiences through the lenses of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Theory and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory.

Eight (8) key informants—two school principals, one LGU representative, two teachers, two parents, and one Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS)—were purposively selected to represent governance actors across system levels. Using open-ended interview questions, participants reflected on collaboration opportunities, LGU support mechanisms, barriers to inclusion, communication gaps, role clarity, task distribution, and proposed strategies for improving school–LGU synergy. They were also asked to suggest possible components for the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, including policies, training programs, support systems, and communication mechanisms.

After becoming acquainted with the data and applying reflective coding methods, recurring ideas emerged by repeatedly comparing them against numerical results. Because of this process, insights drawn from personal accounts helped clarify broader statistical observations. Patterns that matched real-world experiences stood out clearly at times. Yet differences appeared when official goals did not lead to fair outcomes in actual settings. As a result, overarching concepts reflect structured interpretations rather than simple summaries. These show reasons behind effective joint efforts or their breakdowns. Where assistance structures require reinforcement becomes evident through such analysis.

It matters greatly that although numbers appear solid, conversations show educators feel less supported by governance structures than local authorities believe they provide. Because of how systems interact, those who teach notice shortages and mismatches directly - these stem from broken links among institutions and unequal access to tools needed daily. From another angle, people managing regions view efforts through broader policy lenses, judging success by what is intended or supplied, not by whether it reaches classrooms effectively. What stands out emerges slowly - a divide shaped by where one stands within overlapping layers of influence; classroom staff see realities on the ground, while planners measure outcomes against blueprints designed far removed from school walls.

Table 10. Thematic Summary of Perceived Opportunities for School–LGU Collaboration in Inclusive Education

Theme	Codes	Sample Statements	Theoretical Link
1. Fragmented Service Delivery as a Barrier to Equity: The Need for Integrated, Cross-System Supports	Teacher training on disabilities; shared therapists; support services; medical referrals; assistive devices; coordinated support services	“Sharing support services, including therapists, aides, or medical referrals.” (Principal 1); “LGU involvement can help provide essential resources such as trained personnel, assistive devices, infrastructure improvements, and community-based programs that complement the efforts of the school.” (Principal 2); “Programmes like ValSPED show how the LGU and schools can collaborate to provide free therapy: Speech, OT, PT, and SPED teachers.” (Parent 1)	EDI: Equity requires differentiated and sustained support; Exosystem–Mesosystem interaction
2. Physical Access as a Structural Enabler of Inclusion: Infrastructure as an Equity Issue	Ramps; SPED-friendly classrooms; improved learning spaces; therapy access; decentralised services	“Improving accessible infrastructure such as ramps, SPED-friendly classrooms, and learning spaces.” (Principal 1); “It would help greatly if each school had its own therapy services—speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy—and a full multidisciplinary team.” (Teacher 4); “The SPED Center... provides specialised rooms, equipment, and learning spaces tailored for SPED learners.” (PSDS)	EDI: Inclusion beyond placement; Exosystem–Macrosystem

3. Policy– Practice Misalignment in Inclusive Governance: Coordination Gaps Across Systems	Coordinated planning; data sharing; resource mobilisation; joint implementation of policies	“Coordinating data and planning to identify and support learners with special needs.” (Principal 1); “Through shared planning, resource mobilization, and coordinated support services, both institutions are able to address the diverse needs of learners more effectively.” (Principal 2); “Opportunities for strong and meaningful partnerships between the SDO and the LGU.” (PSDS)	EDI: Responsiveness and justice; Mesosystem– Exosystem
4. Inclusion Beyond Schooling: Weak Transition Systems Across the Chronosystem	LGU–industry partnerships; work exposure; post-school opportunities; skills development	“The LGU can help create opportunities by partnering with establishments... each establishment can possibly take in at least one learner for simple tasks such as serving, assisting, receiving guests, or accommodating customers.” (Teacher 4); “The Bridge Program... gives the children the opportunity to develop their skills and talents.” (Parent 2)	EDI: Lifespan inclusion; Chronosystem– Exosystem
5. Family and Community Empowerment	Unequal Burden on Families: Community Empowerment as an Equity Imperative	“Raising community awareness about inclusive education.” (Principal 1); “Kapag na-educate sila nang maayos tungkol sa special children... nawawala ang bullying... sila pa ang nagiging mas caring at mas concerned.” (Principal 2); “It would be better if schools or LGUs offered programs where parents can earn or volunteer.” (Teacher 4)	EDI: Shared responsibility; Microsystem– Mesosystem
6. Broadening Inclusion: Disability, Culture, and Governance Responsiveness	Equal access; culturally inclusive programmes; Madrassa support	“Inclusive education provides equal access to services for all learners—whether they are typical learners, SPED learners, or learners with special developmental needs.” (LGU); “The Madrassa Education Program... the LGU provides honoraria for asatids, logistical support, and coordination with schools.” (PSDS)	EDI: Diversity and cultural responsiveness; Macrosystem

Overall, the responses to this question on opportunities for schools and local government units to work together in supporting inclusive education revealed six major, interrelated themes that reflect both existing gaps and potential areas for strengthened collaboration. These include: (1) Integrated, Cross-System Support Services to Address Fragmented Service Delivery, highlighting the need to coordinate therapy services, trained aides, assistive devices, and medical referrals to ensure equitable access for learners; (2) Inclusive and Accessible Infrastructure as a Structural Enabler of Participation, emphasizing that ramps, SPED-friendly classrooms, therapy rooms, and decentralized services are essential for meaningful inclusion; (3) Aligned Planning, Policy Implementation, and Resource Mobilization, which points to the persistent gap between inclusive education policies and their actual implementation at the school and local levels; (4) Transition and Community-Based Employment Pathways, recognizing inclusion as a lifelong process that extends beyond schooling into post-school participation and employment; (5) Family and Community Empowerment as an Equity Imperative, underscoring the need to redistribute the responsibility of inclusion from families alone to schools, LGUs, and the broader community; and (6) Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Local Governance, which broadens inclusion to address disability alongside cultural and religious diversity through responsive and context-sensitive leadership. Collectively, these themes suggest that inclusive education is widely viewed as a shared, multi-level responsibility that requires coordinated services, accessible environments, aligned governance mechanisms, empowered families, sustainable transition systems, and culturally responsive leadership to translate policy commitments into meaningful inclusion.

Theme 1: Fragmented Service Delivery as a Barrier to Equity: The Need for Integrated, Cross-System Supports

Appearing first as shared services, the idea later revealed itself through analysis: it answered disorganized support systems, something many saw as unfair. Therapy help, skilled assistants, tools for access, medical

guidance - these were mentioned often, yet spread unequally among schools. Not extras, participants stressed, but essentials delivered without balance. Seen through inclusion lenses, fairness requires ongoing aid shaped by individual student conditions, not one-time fixes or top-down decisions.

A key point raised was sharing support roles like therapists, assistants, or health referrals across schools. One observation pointed out that local government units may bring skilled staff, tools for accessibility, better facilities, along with neighborhood learning activities that align with classroom work. Family mentions of ValSPED showed smoother entry into services, revealing how broader municipal actions can reinforce individual student help if planning connects clearly.

Theme 2: Physical Access as a Structural Enabler of Inclusion: Infrastructure as an Equity Issue

What emerged from infrastructure discussions was how access shapes belonging - this goes beyond convenience, touching core conditions for equity. When participants spoke of ramps, specialized classrooms, therapy areas, or locally available support, these were seen not as extras, but necessary foundations. From an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion perspective, true inclusion means being able to engage fully inside educational settings, not simply showing up on a roster.

Looking beyond individual schools, construction projects take form within broader municipal plans and policy frameworks. Where local governments align budgets with inclusive education mandates, physical improvements tend to reflect those priorities more clearly. Mention of the SPED Center in official documents signals its role in guiding resource placement across regions. Depending on oversight patterns, such hubs may limit opportunity to few locations or spread support widely. Without consistent coordination between agencies, certain areas risk being overlooked entirely.

Theme 3: Policy–Practice Misalignment in Inclusive Governance: Coordination Gaps Across Systems

Despite recognition of current policies and mandates, stories told showed plans often fail at execution. In this layer of systems, links between schools and local governments lack steady alignment. Data sharing and joint scheduling matter much to school heads aiming to find students needing extra help. The PSDS pointed out alliances could grow stronger, yet such chances see little follow-through. What exists on paper rarely matches what happens inside classrooms.

From an analytical standpoint, this concept fits closely with EDI's focus on adaptability - since meaningful participation depends less on written rules and more on operational frameworks, turning promises into practical aid. It appears inclusion struggles not when guidelines are missing, but when coordination breaks between layers of operation, especially within strategy design, funding assembly, and defined responsibilities.

Theme 4: Inclusion Beyond Schooling: Weak Transition Systems Across the Chronosystem

Participants' discussion of employment pathways revealed inclusion as a lifespan concern, extending beyond basic education. Teachers' suggestions for LGU–industry partnerships and parents' references to the Bridge Program highlight the absence of systematic transition planning for learners with disabilities. Within EDI Theory, this reflects a limited conception of inclusion that ends at schooling, rather than supporting participation in social and economic life.

Ecologically, this theme operates within the chronosystem, capturing how post-school opportunities—or their absence—shape long-term outcomes. The findings indicate that without LGU-led transition frameworks, inclusion risks becoming time-bound rather than sustained.

Theme 5: Unequal Burden on Families: Community Empowerment as an Equity Imperative

Parents often bear too much weight when taking children to therapy or managing scattered support systems. As a result, families began pushing back, demanding more influence in decision-making. Awareness campaigns started to emerge, along with efforts to combat bullying. Some communities introduced opportunities to work or volunteer, aiming to shift responsibilities from individuals to broader networks.

A fresh look through equity-focused eyes shows fairness isn't just up to parents pushing forward. Instead, how homes connect with classrooms and local offices shapes real progress. Support works best when systems step in, not when families shoulder everything themselves. When schools link clearly with communities, effort spreads more evenly across everyone involved.

Theme 6: Broadening Inclusion: Disability, Culture, and Governance Responsiveness

The final theme expands inclusion beyond disability to include cultural and religious diversity, as reflected in references to the Madrasa Education Program. This theme aligns strongly with EDI's diversity principle, emphasizing that inclusive governance must respond to intersecting identities.

Located within the macrosystem, this theme reflects how cultural norms, governance priorities, and local interpretations of inclusion shape access to services. The LGU's articulation of inclusion as equal access across learner types signals progress, yet also underscores the need for sustained, culturally responsive policy implementation.

Taken together, the six analytical themes reveal that stakeholders conceptualize inclusive education in Valenzuela City as a shared, system-wide responsibility that requires coordinated services, accessible environments, aligned policies, transition planning, empowered families, and culturally responsive governance. Importantly, these themes explain *why* quantitative findings point to uneven collaboration and *where* governance structures must be strengthened. By grounding stakeholder narratives in EDI principles and Ecological Systems levels, the qualitative findings move beyond description to offer theoretically informed, evidence-based directions for strengthening inclusive school-LGU collaboration.

Table 11. Thematic Summary of Barangay and LGU Support for Inclusive Education in Valenzuela City

Theme	Codes	Sample Statements	Theoretical Link
1. Physical Accessibility as an Equity Enabler: Infrastructure as a Governance Responsibility	Renovated SPED classroom; LGU-provided buildings; barangay-provided ALS classrooms; specialised facilities	“Renovated a SPED-friendly classroom in our school.” (Principal 1); “Established the Valenzuela Special Learning Center.” (Principal 1); “Barangays... providing classrooms and facilities for ALS learners and mobile teachers.” (Teacher 7); “The LGU provided the building, equipment, and specialized materials required for instruction and therapy.” (PSDS)	EDI: Equity requires removal of structural barriers; Exosystem–Macrosystem
2. Differentiated Learning Supports as a Condition for Inclusive Participation	Sensory tools; adaptive learning materials; assistive devices; manipulatives	“The local government provided essential equipment and manipulatives for our learners with special needs, including sensory tools, adaptive learning materials, and assistive devices.” (Principal 2)	EDI: Equity and inclusion through differentiated support; Microsystem–Exosystem
3. Integrated Clinical–Educational Support Systems as Foundations of Inclusion	Free therapy (OT, PT, Speech); SPED teachers; rehabilitation doctors; neuropsychiatrists; free seminars; behaviour support	“They offer free therapy: Speech, OT, PT, and SPED teachers... rehabilitation doctors... neuropsychiatrists.” (Teacher 4); “May libreng therapy tulad ng Occupational Therapy (OT)... natutulungan silang maayos ang kanilang behavior... handa sila para sa inclusion.” (Teacher 5); “Free seminars – for learners, teachers, and parents.” (Teacher 4)	EDI: Responsiveness to learner needs; Exosystem–Mesosystem

4. Strengths-Based Inclusion Beyond Academics	SNED Holiday; talent shows; strengths-based placement; skills development	“SNED Holiday – the City Government organizes a party for all SPED learners... learners showcase their talents.” (Teacher 4); “Talent Shows – learners with special talents were invited to perform.” (Teacher 4); “The approach is nakatutok sa strengths ng bata, hindi sa kahinaan.” (Parent 2)	EDI: Inclusion as participation and dignity; Microsystem–Macrosystem
5. Flexible Learning Pathways as Equity Mechanisms for Marginalised Learners	Support for ALS; Open High School; mobile teachers; flexible pathways	“They also support ALS and Open High School programs... provide education for working learners or learners with special circumstances.” (Teacher 7); “Barangays... providing classrooms and facilities for ALS learners and mobile teachers.” (Teacher 7)	EDI: Equity through access and choice; Exosystem–Chronosystem
6. Intersectional Inclusion: Disability, Culture, and Faith in Local Governance	Equal access; uniforms and supplies; Madrasa support; honouraria; cultural inclusion	“Whatever support regular schools receive, SPED learners also receive... free uniforms, school bags, and complete school supplies.” (LGU); “The Madrasa Education Program... the LGU provides honoraria for asatids, logistical support, and coordination with schools.” (PSDS)	EDI: Diversity and cultural responsiveness; Macrosystem

The qualitative findings reveal that barangay and LGU support for inclusive education in Valenzuela City extends beyond isolated interventions and instead reflects a multi-layered governance response to learner diversity. When examined analytically, these supports illustrate how inclusive education is operationalized through structural investments, differentiated services, and culturally responsive policies, consistent with EDI principles and shaped across ecological system levels.

Theme 1: Physical Accessibility as an Equity Enabler: Infrastructure as a Governance Responsibility

When people talk about help with buildings, they show how space shapes who gets to join. Old rooms made new for special ed, schools built by local leaders, community-backed spaces for adult learners - each treated like a must-have, not just nice-to-add. Places like the Valenzuela center come up again and again as key doors opened or left shut.

Out here, a school head mentioned how the local government fixed up a classroom suited for SPED students. Another noted they set up the Valenzuela Special Learning Center. Teachers brought up village-backed efforts - spaces and setups made ready for ALS participants along with moving instructors who go where needed. Seen through equity eyes, such moves clear real-world hurdles that often block disabled students or others outside standard classrooms. Picture it like roots feeding upward - the way city plans and spending push support into schools from beyond the campus itself. Decisions far off still touch daily access.

Theme 2: Differentiated Learning Supports as a Condition for Inclusive Participation

One school head pointed out that having the right tools made a real difference. Not just desks and buildings matter, but also things like sensory items and customised learning aids. The local government stepped in with supplies - items students could touch, hold, or use in unique ways. These supports helped teachers meet varied needs without treating everyone the same. What stood out was how availability shaped actual classroom experiences. Without them, some learners simply fell behind.

Equal help doesn't always mean fair results - that idea fits how EDI sees fairness in action. What happens in classrooms, who joins in, shifts because of these resources. Behind the scenes, local governments handle buying and delivering them, making it possible. The small daily actions link back to bigger structural moves.

Theme 3: Integrated Clinical–Educational Support Systems as Foundations of Inclusion

Therapy and assessments came up again and again when people talked about what local governments do well. Some educators pointed out they now get speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy - doctors too, like neuro-peds - all without cost. These supports make a difference in how students manage their actions, one parent noted, helping them stay steady enough to join regular classrooms. Training sessions offered at no charge to teachers, mothers, fathers, even children show how different kinds of aid are stitched together. What stands out is how these pieces fit, not just handed out but linked in daily school life.

This idea sees inclusion as something built through many fields working together, because getting children into education depends on meeting their physical, thinking, and acting needs. In EDI Theory, reacting in this way ties closely to fair inclusion. From an ecological view, these supports show clear connections between outer and middle systems, with local government units providing health and social help that backs up schools.

Theme 4: Strengths-Based Inclusion Beyond Academics

Inclusive programs such as SNED Holiday celebrations and city-wide talent shows reflect a shift from deficit-based views of learners, with disabilities toward strengths-based inclusion. Teachers noted that these initiatives allow learners to “showcase their talents,” while parents emphasized that the approach is “nakatutok sa strengths ng bata, hindi sa kahinaan.”

Analytically, this theme positions inclusion as social participation and dignity, not merely academic access. It aligns with EDI’s inclusion principle, for it emphasizes belonging and recognition, and operates across the microsystem (learner experience) and macrosystem (community norms and values).

Theme 5: Flexible Learning Pathways as Equity Mechanisms for Marginalised Learners

Outside regular classrooms, learning finds a way through efforts shaped by local need. Mobile instructors move where students are, meeting them beyond traditional schools. One teacher mentioned the Spence Center makes space for those balancing jobs and studies. Instead of waiting for kids to come, lessons go directly into communities. Some barangay halls turn into quiet spots where reading and math happen. Programs like ALS open doors without requiring fixed schedules. Working teens show up after shifts, fitting school around their lives. Local governments back these options when standard systems fall short. Support grows quietly, built on real situations rather than big plans.

This idea shows fairness by bending, not breaking, shaped around how each person learns differently. From an environmental view, these routes exist inside broader systems, yet touch deeper layers as they adjust to shifts in someone's life across years.

Theme 6: Intersectional Inclusion: Disability, Culture, and Faith in Local Governance

One last idea widens access by including different cultural and spiritual backgrounds, shown through fair distribution of school materials and consistent local government backing for Islamic education initiatives. It is stated clearly: benefits given to mainstream institutions are mirrored exactly for special needs students, revealing a system focused on balance rather than mere equality. What stands out here is not just policy but its steady application across varied learning environments. Support does not shift based on location or belief - it remains fixed, predictable, extended without distinction. When resources reach both groups at once, the message becomes structural, built into how decisions unfold behind the scenes. Equal treatment emerges not as exception, but routine practice embedded in administrative rhythm. Funding patterns follow principle, not preference, shaping outcomes quietly over time. Inclusion gains depth when differences in faith or ability prompt neither hesitation nor separate planning. Fairness shows up most strongly where it goes unannounced, simply part of standard procedure. Consistency defines progress more than any single announcement ever could.

When viewed through equity-focused principles, inclusion emerges as layered - entwining disability, cultural background, and religious belief without separation. Positioned at the broadest structural level, such decision-making influences which individuals are acknowledged, assisted, or regarded across learning environments.

What emerges from the six analysis points is a pattern where barangay and local government efforts in Valenzuela City form connected supports instead of separate actions. Not only infrastructure upgrades but also tailored teaching materials contribute - alongside combined health interventions - to reach students in special education, alternative learning, regular schools, and faith-based settings. Because insights come directly from participant stories, viewed using equity and systems frameworks, the outcomes highlight how inclusion holds together across policy layers, deliberate allocation of means, and attention to varied student needs. While one level acts, others adjust; such coordination keeps the whole structure functional over time. From daily realities rises evidence: sustainability grows not from single fixes, but layered alignment among people, plans, resources. Thus, inclusion here depends less on isolated projects than ongoing interaction between context-sensitive rules and community involvement. Though distinct in design, each piece gains purpose through connection - with overlap creating stability otherwise absent. Where governance spreads across sites, success follows linkages more than size of spending. As practices adapt locally, they gain strength not by uniformity, but through fit with environment. So it is mutual reinforcement - not standalone effort - that maintains access across diverse educational paths.

Table 12. Thematic Summary of Challenges Affecting Inclusive Education Collaboration

Theme	Codes	Sample Statements	Theoretical Link
1. Systemic Under-Resourcing as an Equity Barrier: The Gap Between Policy Mandates and Implementation Capacity	Limited funding; limited barangay budget; difficulty supporting big projects	“Limited funding for assistive devices, training, and accessible facilities.” (Principal 1); “The biggest challenge is funding... big projects are difficult for barangays to shoulder alone.” (LGU)	EDI: Equity requires resource redistribution; Exosystem (LGU budgeting)
2. Human Capital Deficits in Inclusive Education: When Expertise Becomes a Gatekeeper	Shortage of SPED teachers; shortage of therapists; high cost of assessment; lack of developmental paediatricians	“Shortage of trained SPED personnel, such as SPED teachers, therapists, and aides.” (Principal 1); “One major challenge... securing a dedicated and qualified SPED teacher.” (Principal 2); “Isa sa pinakamalaking hirap ay ang kawalan ng assessment mula sa developmental doctors... napakamahal ng developmental pediatrician.” (Teacher 5)	EDI: Responsiveness to diverse needs; Exosystem–Mesosystem
3. Governance Fragmentation and Role Ambiguity Across Systems	Unclear roles; slow coordination; delays in planning and implementation	“Unclear roles and responsibilities between schools and LGUs.” (Principal 1); “Slow coordination and communication, which delays planning and implementation.” (Principal 1)	EDI: Shared responsibility; Mesosystem
4. Sociocultural Exclusion and the Limits of Policy-Driven Inclusion	Discrimination; rejection by business owners; limited opportunities due to limited acceptance; removal from inclusive classes	“One major challenge is acceptance, especially from business owners.” (Teacher 4); “Opportunities are limited because acceptance is limited.” (Teacher 4); “Meron pa ring discrimination sa mga special children.” (Parent 1); “Ang anak ko ay tinanggal sa inclusive class... parang naalis sa bata ang karapatan niyang matuto kasama ang iba.” (Parent 1)	EDI: Inclusion as belonging and justice; Macrosystem

5. Unsafe and Non-Inclusive Public Spaces as Structural Constraints on Participation	Uneven sidewalks; crowded areas; sensory issues; safety concerns	“Uneven sidewalks and crowded areas make it difficult for them to move safely due to sensory issues.” (Teacher 4)	EDI: Access as a right; Exosystem–Macrosystem
6. Institutional Misalignment and Fragile Sustainability of Inclusive Programmes	DepEd vs LGU timelines; procurement differences; sustainability; shortage of personnel affecting programmes	“Alignment of priorities, schedules, and processes... DepEd has strict timelines... LGU operates under its own governance structure.” (PSDS); “Shortage of trained personnel... critical for sustaining programs.” (PSDS); “Sustainability – programs require continuous funding, regular monitoring, and updated materials.” (PSDS)	EDI: Justice-oriented governance; Exosystem–Chronosystem

Structural patterns appear clearly when school practices meet local government operations in Valenzuela City. Through the lens of EDI and Ecological Systems frameworks, issues are seen not as occasional setbacks but as woven into institutional layers. Equity shortfalls become visible, alongside disjointed decision pathways and cultural assumptions affecting daily interactions. Some themes repeat what numbers show; others only come forward during open-ended interviews. Together, different data forms expose realities one method alone could miss. What stays hidden in surveys often surfaces in personal accounts. Methods influence what truths get uncovered. Complex social settings demand more than a single way of looking. Insights gain depth when varied approaches align without forcing agreement. Findings resist simple summaries because context shapes meaning. Repeated patterns do not always mean uniform causes across sites. Responses depend on where people stand within broader systems. Layers matter - personal, organizational, societal - all at once. Observations shift depending on who speaks, when, and how questions unfold. Data type affects which voices grow louder or fade in analysis. Balance emerges not from equal weight but from attentive contrast. Gaps in access mirror divides in power, though they manifest differently. Not every barrier shows up on charts or spreadsheets. Meaning accumulates slowly, shaped by repeated exposure to raw narratives. Context alters interpretation, even when facts seem fixed.

Theme 1: Systemic Under-Resourcing as an Equity Barrier: The Gap Between Policy Mandates and Implementation Capacity

Funding shortfalls repeatedly emerged as central to barriers in inclusive education, according to stakeholders. When discussing resources, principals highlighted gaps in support for tools, staff development, along with physical access upgrades. At the local level, officials noted that major initiatives often exceed what small communities can manage independently. From an analytical standpoint, this pattern reveals a structural imbalance - policies promote inclusion yet fail to align financial backing accordingly.

Equity, seen through an EDI lens, demands deliberate shifts of support to students facing deeper challenges. Still, within broader administrative layers, decisions made by local government units frequently restrict long-term funding for inclusive efforts. That tension - between intent and execution - echoes patterns found in numerical data on financial shortfalls. What stands out is how consistently resource limits block meaningful progress. Central to the issue remains a system unable to align available means with stated goals.

Theme 2: Human Capital Deficits in Inclusive Education: When Expertise Becomes a Gatekeeper

A critical lack emerged when discussing personnel beyond funding concerns. Not only were special education instructors scarce, but therapists and support staff also remained limited. Administrative figures voiced concern over attracting educators committed to SPED roles. Within classrooms, evaluation costs created further strain. High fees for child development experts stood out clearly - “napakamahal ng developmental pediatrician” - as one educator remarked. Availability of skilled professionals shaped much of the challenge.

Still, this pattern shows knowledge can limit access, especially when families lack funds for personal evaluations. From an EDI standpoint, slow reactions leave student requirements unresolved because systems fall short. Across layers, the issue touches wider service networks alongside links between schools and providers - surfacing only through interviews, suggesting emotions surveys fail to reach.

Theme 3: Governance Fragmentation and Role Ambiguity Across Systems

Despite ongoing efforts, alignment between educational institutions and local government units remains inconsistent. Uncertainty about assigned duties surfaces repeatedly in participant accounts. Delays in decision-making often follow such ambiguity. When information moves slowly, program execution tends to become disjointed. Planning stages stretch longer than expected under these conditions. Inclusive initiatives, once launched, show uneven results across regions. Structure within collaborative frameworks appears weak at multiple levels.

Where institutional connections lack strength, joint efforts tend to falter - a pattern seen clearly at the mesosystem level. Seen through equity, diversity, and inclusion principles, learning environments thrive only when duties are jointly held, yet unclear roles weaken that foundation. Rather than standing apart, this idea aligns closely with numerical data showing breakdowns in coordination. Repeatedly, such misalignment points toward deeper structural challenges in oversight.

Theme 4: Sociocultural Exclusion and the Limits of Policy-Driven Inclusion

Even with official rules in place, stories from those involved showed ongoing prejudice, unequal treatment, and isolation. Acceptance remains shallow, educators observed, especially within small enterprises. Personal accounts from caregivers highlighted painful moments of bias; one told of a youngster taken out of a mainstream classroom - likened to stripping away the right to learn alongside peers. For parents, this is often described as ““parang naalis sa bata ang karapatan niyang matuto kasama ang iba.””

From a standpoint of analysis, the boundaries of policy-led inclusion become visible if social mindsets stay fixed. Inclusion, according to EDI Theory, goes beyond entry - it involves being valued, respected. At an ecological level, deep-seated customs and collective assumptions influence routine behaviors across settings. Largely drawn from non-numerical findings, this idea highlights moral and affective layers typically missing in statistical measures.

Theme 5: Unsafe and Non-Inclusive Public Spaces as Structural Constraints on Participation

Beyond school walls, access problems continue in shared environments. Uneven paths, dense pedestrian zones - these were noted by educators as hazards for students sensitive to sensory input. From an analytical standpoint, such conditions reveal how physical settings can block involvement. Participation in local events becomes difficult when surroundings are unwelcoming. Engagement falters where design ignores diverse needs.

For equity, inclusion demands that access be seen not as earned but as due. In broader ecological terms, patterns across outer layers - such as city design and transport rules - influence how people move each day. Evidence drawn from numbers shows weak systems often fail users, highlighting links between built spaces and fair learning chances.

Theme 6: Institutional Misalignment and Fragile Sustainability of Inclusive Programmes

Ending on a note of structural disconnect, mismatches in scheduling, purchasing methods, and authority frameworks stood out among attendees. Although DepEd enforces fixed deadlines, local government units follow separate workflows, the PSDS noted - this divergence slows alignment. Long-term viability drew attention too, given reliance on steady financial support, ongoing oversight, and refreshed resources

From an analytical standpoint, this idea points to mismatches among institutions, where differing structures weaken lasting effectiveness. In EDI Theory, fair governance depends on consistency and steady progress; yet instability appears when broader system layers lack coordination. What emerged clearly in interviews went

beyond numbers, revealing concerns about how programs may falter over time. Though data showed patterns, deeper insight came from narratives that stressed fragility across extended periods.

Themes 1 (systemic under-resourcing), 3 (governance fragmentation), and 5 (environmental barriers) demonstrated strong convergence with quantitative findings, particularly regarding limited budgets, coordination challenges, and inadequate infrastructure. This convergence confirms that these barriers are widely recognized across stakeholder groups and data sources.

Conversely, Themes 2 (human capital deficits), 4 (sociocultural exclusion), and 6 (institutional misalignment and sustainability) emerged primarily from the qualitative data. These themes illuminate deeper systemic and ethical challenges not fully captured by survey instruments, including access to diagnostic services, lived experiences of discrimination, and long-term governance coherence.

Table 13. *Thematic Summary of Roles in Promoting Inclusion*

Theme	Codes	Sample Statements	Theoretical Link
1. Inclusive Instructional Leadership and Differentiated Pedagogy	Differentiated instruction; identifying learner needs; IEP implementation; inclusive classroom; training for teachers	“Lead teachers in delivering differentiated instruction.” (Principal 1); “Identify learners’ needs, especially those with disabilities.” (Principal 1); “Gawin ang IEP... natutukoy namin ang needs ng bata... nagagawa namin ang tamang approach... at nasisiguro naming may progress.” (Teacher 5); “Create an environment where diversity is respected... instructional practices are inclusive.” (Principal 2)	EDI:Operationalizes equity through responsiveness to learner diversity and individualized support. Ecological Systems Theory: Situated primarily in the microsystem, where daily instructional interactions shape learners’ inclusive experiences.
2. Intersectoral Coordination and Shared Responsibility for Inclusion	Coordination with parents; collaboration with LGUs; stakeholder bridge; referrals	“Coordinate with parents who support and advocate for their children.” (Principal 1); “We also coordinate with schools when they have SPED cases or children needing special support.” (LGU); “Kami ang tulay sa pagitan ng parents, school, at iba pang stakeholders.” (Teacher 5); “Coordinate with parents, teachers, and the LGU to provide holistic assistance.” (PSDS)	EDI:Emphasizes collective accountability and participatory governance. Ecological Systems Theory: Reflects the mesosystem, where alignment (or misalignment) between institutions determines inclusive outcomes.
3. Learner Advocacy, Protection, and Developmental Guidances	Building awareness; child protection; SPED learner advocacy; guidance on future pathways	“Help his classmates understand his diagnosis so they can accept and support him.” (Teacher 4); “Programs that address issues like bullying—where SPED learners are usually more vulnerable.” (LGU); “Guide parents... help them see what the future looks like for their child.” (Teacher 4)	EDI:Frames advocacy as a justice-oriented response to discrimination and marginalization. Ecological Systems Theory: Spans microsystem and mesosystem, linking classroom culture to institutional protection mechanisms.

<p>4. Family Engagement as a Foundation of Inclusive Practice</p>	<p>Continuous learning at home; values teaching; cooperating with teachers; parent advocacy</p>	<p>“Dapat sinusupportahan namin ang continuous learning ng bata.” (Parent 6); “Irelate namin sa bata ang tama at mali.” (Parent 6); “As parents... we should act as primary stakeholders, supporting schools and LGUs in promoting inclusion.” (Parent 7)</p>	<p>EDI:Recognizes families as co-constructors of inclusive learning grounded in cultural context. Ecological Systems Theory: Anchored in the microsystem, where home environments directly influence learner development.</p>
<p>5. Inclusive Governance, Policy Implementation, and Programme Oversight</p>	<p>Ensuring programme alignment; monitoring; providing facilities; supporting ALS/SPED programmes</p>	<p>“Ensure that school policies are implemented consistently.” (Principal 2); “Provide free printing, free Wi-Fi, and free use of facilities.” (LGU); “Monitor program implementation (SPED and Madrasa) in my district.” (PSDS); “Ensure policies and guidelines align with DepEd’s vision of accessible, equitable education.” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI:Links inclusion to equitable policy enactment and accountability. Ecological Systems Theory: Located in the exosystem and macrosystem, where governance structures and national mandates shape school-level inclusion.</p>

Findings show stakeholders view their duties in inclusive education not separately, yet as linked parts inside a wider network of participation. Within instruction, relationships, family engagement, and decision-making, five key ideas took shape. Instead of individual efforts, inclusion operates across layers, shaped by mutual responsibility. This understanding aligns with EDI values, also resonating with Bronfenbrenner’s model of human development. In Valenzuela City, educational inclusiveness emerges through coordinated involvement at multiple levels.

Theme 1: Inclusive Instructional Leadership and Differentiated Pedagogy

Central to inclusive methods lies teaching leadership shaped by attention to varied student backgrounds. Rather than one-size-fits-all strategies, educators highlighted adjustments based on ongoing observation. School leaders along with staff outlined efforts in crafting distinct learning paths, spotting individual requirements, ensuring customized plans were built. These accounts reveal fairness taking form through adaptation during regular class activities. Inside this framework, change begins close - within immediate settings where educator-student exchanges occur. Equity gains meaning not via equal handling, but through measured differences in support. What unfolds daily in classrooms reflects a broader principle: sameness does not serve all equally well. Context matters most when defining what counts as just provision. Responses must shift because needs do not remain fixed across individuals. The environment surrounding each learner influences outcomes more than generalized policies ever can. Customization becomes necessary once diversity is truly acknowledged. Equal opportunity emerges only when variation in assistance is accepted as standard. This approach aligns with views holding that justice in schools depends on flexibility. Routine practices either reinforce exclusion or reduce its presence gradually. Attention to detail transforms abstract ideals into lived experience. Differences among students are starting points, never obstacles. Support structures work best when they respond rather than prescribe. Inclusion lives less in policy documents and more in moment-to-moment decisions. Educational fairness reveals itself through sustained effort, not isolated gestures. Each interaction holds potential to include or unintentionally distance.

Theme 2: Intersectoral Coordination and Shared Responsibility for Inclusion

Outside academic settings, continuity in inclusion emerges when educational institutions, households, and local government units operate in step. Participants viewed their roles as connectors - enabling pathways, matching tools, offering comprehensive assistance. Such dynamics mirror the mesosystem, wherein institutional ties can deepen or disrupt inclusivity attempts. Aligned with equity-driven initiatives, participation becomes a joint duty

instead of an isolated directive, emphasizing decision-making that involves many voices and mutual ownership across groups.

Theme 3: Learner Advocacy, Protection, and Developmental Guidance

From quiet classrooms came actions that challenged unfair treatment, especially when students faced unkindness or confusion from peers. Where bias appeared, educators stepped in - not only to shield those at risk but also to open clearer paths forward for their homes and communities. Such support does not stand alone; instead, it grows from deeper values tied to fairness and belonging within education systems. Seen through a wider lens, these acts link daily school life with broader safety structures beyond the classroom walls. One layer connects directly to another, forming subtle threads between individual experience and organizational duty.

Theme 4: Family Engagement as a Foundation of Inclusive Practice

Seen through their own perspectives, parents acted less like service users and more like contributors to inclusion. Learning that continues beyond school hours matters deeply, they said, along with shaping character early. Such views place family life at the core of lasting inclusivity. From this angle, the household functions as a foundational layer, fitting naturally with equity frameworks that treat cultural insight and personal history as strengths. What emerges is a setting where home becomes both anchor and influence.

Theme 5: Inclusive Governance, Policy Implementation, and Programme Oversight

Inclusion takes form through systems of authority that shape how policies connect, resources distribute, and initiatives endure. Whether outcomes align with DepEd requirements depends on clarity among principals, local government units, and the PSDS in tracking SPED, ALS, and Madrasa efforts. Functioning behind the scenes, broader frameworks - exosystem and macrosystem alike - affect what schools can practically achieve. From an equity, diversity, and inclusion standpoint, governing processes decide whether fairness advances or stalls.

Layered connections among stakeholders shape how inclusive education functions. Instruction and home involvement define the immediate setting, while links between institutions hinge on cooperation and active representation. Broader influence emerges through administrative decisions and overarching regulations. Patterns in Tables 10 and 11 reflect this structure clearly. What appears there supports the view that inclusion in Valenzuela City stems from structured interdependence, not chance or isolated effort. Systemic reliance, relationship depth, and governing mechanisms matter most. From such understanding grows the framework proposed here - crafted so responsibilities become clearer, collaboration smoother, fairness more embedded, across every tier of schooling.

Table 14. Thematic Summary of Framework Components for Strengthening School–LGU Inclusive Collaboration

Theme	Codes	Sample Statements	Theoretical Link
1. Equity-Driven Policy Coherence and Role Clarification	Policies; RA 11650; Accessibility Law; Magna Carta for PWDs; clear guidelines; role clarification; ordinances	“Clear policies and guidelines defining roles and responsibilities.” (Principal 1); “Policies—clear policies that involve all sectors.” (Teacher 4); “Policies (hal. Inclusive Education Act RA 11650, Accessibility Law, Magna Carta for PWDs...)” (Teacher 5); “Policies: Clear, localized policies or ordinances for LGUs.” (PSDS)	EDI: Institutionalizes equity by translating rights-based laws into actionable local governance. Ecological Systems Theory: Located in the macrosystem and exosystem, shaping inclusive practice through legal and policy environments.

<p>2. Systematic Capacity-Building for Inclusive Practice</p>	<p>Training modules; seminars; free sessions; capacity-building; competency-based training</p>	<p>“Training modules for teachers, staff, and volunteers on inclusive practices.” (Principal 1); “Training sessions so that teachers, LGUs, and even parents understand the policies correctly.” (Teacher 4); “Seminars at free sessions para sa teachers at parents.” (Teacher 5); “Capacity Building: Teachers and frontline staff need training....” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI: Ensures inclusion is enacted through informed, culturally responsive practice. Ecological Systems Theory: Strengthens the microsystem and mesosystem by enhancing stakeholder competence across settings.</p>
<p>3. Community-Based Support Groups and Collaborative Networks</p>	<p>Support groups; PTA for PWDs; barangay support groups; parent support groups; stakeholder networks; NGOs</p>	<p>“Support groups for parents, teachers, and learners.” (Principal 1); “Creating support groups... is an effective strategy.” (Principal 2); “Support groups sa bawat barangay... Parent-Teacher associations for PWDs.” (Teacher 5); “Support Groups: Increase collaboration with external stakeholders.” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI: Validates lived experience and collective care as foundations of inclusion. Ecological Systems Theory: Operates within the mesosystem, reinforcing social connections among institutions and communities.</p>
<p>4. Accessible, Inclusive, and Responsive Communication Systems</p>	<p>Communication channels; GC; hotline; templates; Braille; sign language; assistive devices</p>	<p>“Communication tools such as templates and platforms for coordination.” (Principal 1); “Clear communication channels (GC, hotline, text messaging).” (LGU); “Communication tools tulad ng Braille, Sign language, Assistive devices.” (Teacher 5); “Communication tools: directories, templates, digital channels.” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI: Promotes inclusion by removing communication barriers and honoring diverse needs. Ecological Systems Theory: Bridges microsystem-mesosystem interactions through accessible information flow.</p>
<p>5. Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Systems</p>	<p>Checklists; progress trackers; evaluation systems; tracking learning outcomes</p>	<p>“Monitoring and evaluation tools like checklists and progress trackers.” (Principal 1); “Monitoring and Evaluation: A system to track the progress of inclusive education.” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI: Advances accountability and fairness through evidence-based reflection. Ecological Systems Theory: Anchored in the exosystem, influencing sustained program improvement.</p>
<p>6. Transparent Resource Mapping and Inclusive Learning Environments</p>	<p>Facilities; therapy rooms; assistive devices; resource inventory; modules</p>	<p>“Resource inventory of facilities, assistive devices, and personnel.” (Principal 1); “Activity rooms o therapy rooms para sa hands-on learning.” (Teacher 6); “Materials: Modules addressing inclusive teaching strategies....” (PSDS)</p>	<p>EDI: Ensures equitable access to material and human resources. Ecological Systems Theory: Links exosystem decisions (allocation) to microsystem experiences (learning spaces).</p>

7. Institutionalized Coordination Mechanisms and Shared Decision-Making	Ugnayan sessions; regular meetings; early reporting; joint LGU–DepEd committees	“Regular meetings or ‘Ugnayan’ sessions between teachers, parents, and the barangay.” (LGU); “Regular meetings... para marinig ang panig ng mga magulang.” (Teacher 5); “Joint LGU–DepEd committees to promote sustainability.” (PSDS)	EDI: Embeds participation and voice in governance processes. Ecological Systems Theory: Strengthens the mesosystem, ensuring alignment across institutions over time.
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What appears in Table 14 reveals how participants viewed the suggested partnership between schools and local government - not just as tools, yet as an integrated approach meant to tackle deep-rooted imbalances, broken connections, because of skill shortages in putting inclusion into practice. From analysis, seven core ideas took shape; each one targets a pivotal spot inside the network linking schools with governing bodies, rooted firmly in fairness, variety, inclusion standards.

Theme 1: Equity-Driven Policy Coherence and Role Clarification

Policy clarity, when rooted in community context, forms the foundation of inclusive practices. Though legal references like RA 11650 and disability access legislation reflect a commitment to rights, their impact fades if left unadapted locally. Despite national intent, implementation stumbles without tailored directives on the ground. Frameworks gain meaning not just through high-level design but via alignment across governance layers. When rules echo unevenly from capital to classroom, outcomes diverge - shaping what equity can become inside schools.

Theme 2: Systematic Capacity-Building for Inclusive Practice

One key element stood out: preparation through structured learning. Not simply kindness drives inclusive teaching - skills matter. Those involved emphasized development opportunities grounded in ability, open access, ensuring cost was never a barrier - for educators, families, family figures, local government staff alike. When viewed through equity, diversity, integration lenses, building skill translates into steady, capable application of fair practices. Seen another way, it reinforces immediate settings like classrooms while connecting broader organizational efforts across systems.

Theme 3: Community-Based Support Groups and Collaborative Networks

One key suggestion came forward: structured support circles at the local community tier, especially aimed at caregivers of children facing learning challenges. Not merely meeting points, these gatherings serve emotional stability while circulating practical insights - grounded directly in personal involvement rather than theory alone. Their role fits within middle-layer interactions according to ecological models, where family units, educational institutions, municipal bodies, and outside collaborators begin aligning more closely. Connection thrives when daily realities shape dialogue instead of policy abstractions.

Theme 4: Accessible, Inclusive, and Responsive Communication Systems

Working well together requires clear ways of sharing information, which must reach everyone equally. Input gathered through various channels - including online tools, tactile formats like Braille, and visual methods such as sign language - shows recognition that some people are left out when messages are not adapted. Seen one way, this idea supports equity goals by challenging long-standing obstacles; viewed differently, it functions within broader systems, bridging individual experiences with wider organizational structures.

Theme 5: Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Systems

Not seen as ways to enforce rules, monitoring and evaluation served instead to support collective understanding. Progress checks, along with observation of results, received strong emphasis from those involved. Evidence-based choices emerged as a central expectation throughout discussions. Tied closely to accountability within

EDI, this approach takes shape in the exosystem. Its presence there shapes how programs evolve and endure over time.

Theme 6: Transparent Resource Mapping and Inclusive Learning Environments

A demand for accounting of available resources stems from ongoing unease regarding unequal availability of services, tools, and dedicated environments. Clear processes in distribution are seen by involved parties as central to equitable outcomes. From an ecological standpoint, this idea connects broader structural choices - such as planning and assignment - with immediate conditions faced by learners, including reach and engagement.

Theme 7: Institutionalized Coordination Mechanisms and Shared Decision-Making

Stakeholders pointed to consistent coordination formats - Ugnayan gatherings, standing committees - as vital for ongoing cooperation. Through such structures, involvement gains form, expression finds space, collective responsibility takes root: essentials within equity-driven practice. From an ecosystem lens, these links strengthen connections among organizations, maintaining coherence despite shifts in setting or timeline.

Together, these seven elements build a connected system meant to support fair decision-making. Reflecting past findings on obstacles and duties - shown in Tables 12 and 13 - they turn shortcomings into practical parts of a working model. Instead of separate fixes, progress comes by linking efforts across different layers of context. Rooted in need, informed by research, shaped by those involved, the approach takes form as a tool for shared oversight. Because it matches real conditions with tested ideas, its relevance for guiding inclusive schooling policies in Valenzuela City becomes clear.

4. The Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework Developed to Enhance School–Local Governance Partnerships Based on Stakeholders’ Perceptions

Studies now show clear structures can shape better ways to manage inclusive education by blending cooperation with shared decision methods. From Rusconi and Nogueira (2025), a model named Democracy Radar emerged, aiming to deepen involvement while balancing power across groups. Work led by Best and colleagues (2021) revealed techniques such as collaborative mapping plus future modeling help align varied viewpoints effectively. A system formed together by Sirimsi et al. (2023) gives teams organized support, encouraging joint work alongside thoughtful oversight practices. Still, Gold et al. (2019), together with Keh et al. (2021), pointed to open data and digital platforms as key for broader access and clearer processes. Along similar lines, Horgan and Dimitrijevic (2019) found tech-supported methods help align community voices with policy decisions. From these works, a set of five central ideas takes shape: ways to visually involve participants, shared design structures, assessment-based oversight forms, online openness tools, and mixed engagement formats - each placing organized systems, such as the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, within efforts to strengthen inclusion through deliberate educational governance strategies.

A solid structure functions as a grounded approach, informed by research, to support fair involvement in educational leadership via collaborative methods. Because engagement matters, systems often rely on linked parts - each shaping how people move from understanding goals toward action (Rusconi & Nogueira, 2025; Best et al., 2021). Starting points clarify intent and foundational ideas; following these, role charts map who does what, exposing weak links in cooperation across institutions. Where plans meet reality, alignment grows when schools and local governments use common formats and agreed-upon schedules (Sirimsi et al., 2023). Information flows improve through structured dialogue channels, whereas adaptable guidance illustrates real-world ways marginalized voices join decisions (Keh et al., 2021). Review cycles, paired with electronic records, allow adjustments based on collected insights rather than assumptions (Gold et al., 2019; Horgan & Dimitrijevic, 2019).

Aligned with studies on participatory systems, core elements involve involvement of users, repeated refinement cycles, flexible structure units, openness in process, along with broad representation - features that support a model responsive to people at every level of oversight. Because each part interconnects with these guiding ideas, the suggested school-community coordination approach for inclusive education takes shape; shaped by shortcomings in current arrangements and voices gathered via combined findings shown beneath, forming what underlies assessment requirements throughout this work.

Table 15. Integrated Results Matrix for the Quantitative

Variables	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings	Integrated Results
Perceived Opportunities for Inclusive Synergy	<p>Very high endorsement (M=3.35,, SD=0.54)</p> <p>Highly endorsed: 1)strong community policies, 2)open school-community dialogue, and 3) regular communication</p> <p>Least endorsed: 1)making inclusive practices more visible, 2) expanding access to support services, 3) strengthening school–barangay collaboration, 4) increasing LGU advocacy and resource provision, and 5) ensuring broader stakeholder involvement in school-level inclusion planning.</p>	<p>Qualitative findings identified six core opportunity domains reflecting multilevel collaboration: (1) <i>shared and coordinated service delivery</i> (therapy, referrals, assistive services); (2) <i>development of inclusive and accessible infrastructure</i>; (3) <i>joint planning and policy alignment</i> among schools, LGUs, and barangays; (4) <i>transition pathways</i> linking education to livelihood and employment; (5) <i>family and community empowerment</i> through participation and awareness; and (6) <i>culturally responsive and equitable governance</i>, including support for SPED, ALS, and marginalized learners. These opportunities reflect enabling conditions within the mesosystem and exosystem, where institutional partnerships shape inclusive access. pathways, (5) community empowerment, and (6) culturally responsive governance.</p> <p>On the other hand, six key areas of barangay and LGU support for inclusive education: (1) improved infrastructure, (2) assistive devices and materials, (3) therapy and professional services, (4) inclusive learner programs, (5) support for ALS and flexible pathways, and (6) culturally responsive governance—highlighting a strong, coordinated local effort to promote equity and inclusion.</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative findings converge in showing that strong foundations for inclusive synergy already exist in terms of policy intent, communication, and collaborative structures. However, both data strands reveal persistent gaps in service accessibility, inclusive visibility, and coordinated planning, indicating that while enabling environments are present, equitable operationalisation remains uneven. From an EDI and ecological perspective, inclusive governance requires not only supportive policies but intentional cross-system action to translate opportunity into lived inclusion.</p>

Variables	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings	Integrated Results
<p>Perceived Challenges for Inclusive Synergy by Role</p>	<p>Participants agreed on challenges statement with 2.55 mean score (SD=1.01). Highly endorsed- (1) insufficient budget allocation, (2) lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity, (3) inadequate physical infrastructure for learners with disabilities, and (4) limited parental awareness of inclusive practices. Least endorsed- (1) inconsistent school–LGU communication, (2) unclear or unevenly implemented policies, (3) weak inter-agency coordination, (4) limited monitoring of inclusive programs, (5) cultural resistance to inclusion, and (6) low prioritisation of inclusion in local governance.</p>	<p>Thematic analysis revealed six interrelated challenge domains: (1) resource and funding constraints affecting infrastructure and services; (2) shortage of skilled personnel and accessible assessment services; (3) coordination, communication, and role clarity issues across schools and LGUs; (4) persistent stigma, discrimination, and barriers to acceptance; (5) physical and environmental accessibility barriers; and (6) system misalignment and sustainability concerns arising from differing institutional mandates and timelines. These challenges reflect structural pressures across the microsystem to macrosystem, reinforcing inequities for vulnerable learners.</p>	<p>Both quantitative and qualitative findings confirm that challenges to inclusive synergy are systemic rather than isolated. While survey data highlight material and capacity-related constraints, qualitative narratives surface deeper issues of stigma, fragmented systems, and sustainability risks. Integrated results underscore that inclusive education barriers are ecologically interconnected, requiring multi-level responses that address resources, capacity, culture, and governance simultaneously to meet EDI commitments.</p>
<p>Perceived Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance</p>	<p>Strongly agreed on the statements related to Roles of Stakeholders and Involvement in Inclusive Education Governance (M=3.27, SD=0.60) Highly endorsed items are: (1) stakeholders see themselves as key contributors to inclusive education, (2) teachers adjust strategies for diverse learners, and (3) parents are regularly consulted in school decisions. Least endorsed items in terms of roles point to governance and coordination gaps: (1) limited involvement of local leaders in planning, (2) weak barangay–school collaboration, (3) unclear roles and responsibilities, (4) lack of joint planning between schools and LGUs, (5) insufficient policy</p>	<p>Qualitative findings identified five analytically defined role domains: (1) instructional leadership and inclusive pedagogy; (2) parent–school–LGU coordination and support; (3) learner advocacy, protection, and guidance; (4) family engagement and home-based support; and (5) policy implementation, governance, and programme oversight. While inclusion is viewed as a shared responsibility, narratives reveal unequal participation and authority, with teachers and parents often excluded from higher-level decision-making within the mesosystem and exosystem.</p>	<p>Integrated findings reveal a paradox of high individual commitment but weak systemic coordination. Stakeholders recognise their roles in principle, yet unclear governance frameworks and fragmented collaboration limit effective action. From an EDI and ecological standpoint, inclusive governance requires clearly defined, shared, and supported roles across systems to ensure that responsibility does not fall disproportionately on teachers while decision-making remains centralized.</p>

Variables	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings	Integrated Results
	support, (6) ineffective coordination bodies, and (7) unclear LGU guidance on inclusion.		
Significant Differences in the Perceived Roles, Opportunities, and Challenges	<p>There is no significant difference in perceived opportunities among stakeholder groups, $F(3, 92) = 3.10, p = .03$, but Tukey post hoc tests found no significant pairwise differences (all $p > .05$).</p> <p>There is no statistically significant difference across the four stakeholder groups, $F(3, 92) = 1.89, p = .14$.</p> <p>A significant difference was found in how stakeholders perceived their roles in inclusive education, $F(3, 92) = 4.15, p < .01$, with local officials and parents reporting significantly greater involvement than teachers ($p = .03$ and $p = .05$, respectively).</p>	<p>Qualitative data explain these differences through role-specific perspectives: local officials emphasized policy and resource provision; school heads articulated governance and accountability concerns; teachers highlighted heavy implementation demands amid limited support; and parents focused on communication, acceptance, and learner protection.</p> <p>Framework-related themes further showed teachers and parents calling for clearer coordination structures, capacity-building, and participatory governance.</p>	<p>Integrated results indicate that while opportunities and challenges are shared across stakeholder groups, perceptions of roles differ significantly due to unequal authority, support, and voice. Teachers bear the greatest implementation burden yet report the weakest governance support, explaining the quantitative divergence. This finding directly informs the need for a teacher-responsive, coordination-focused Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework, grounded in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles and Ecological Systems Theory.</p>

Findings show a complex picture of how inclusion works within Valenzuela City’s education system, highlighting what functions well alongside ongoing structural difficulties. Although numbers and personal accounts differ in form, they agree on one point: cooperation between educational institutions and city authorities rests on firm ground. Supportive rules at the municipal level help shape this environment, while physical access to facilities remains widely available. Communication flows without major blockage, participation in school events by neighborhood members is visible. This network allows schools, village units, and local government bodies to function together more smoothly than in many comparable settings. Such patterns echo ideas from Ecological Systems Theory, where layers of influence connect across levels. Instead of isolated efforts, relationships matter - these links create conditions favorable to inclusive methods. Equity, diversity, and inclusion values appear reflected here, especially through shared decision-making and balanced opportunities among students.

Even so, combined results point to key shortcomings affecting how inclusive governance functions. Notably, collaboration during planning and choices by schools alongside local government units shows inconsistency, leading to scattered efforts across initiatives. Where structures like advisory groups or shared teams exist, uncertainty about duties slows progress, despite their intended purpose. Without steady visibility, campaigns promoting inclusion fail to gain traction within policies or neighborhoods, limiting both understanding and support over time.

Implementation demands fall most heavily on teachers, pointing to gaps in support systems. Despite established

frameworks for collaboration between schools and local governments, engagement varies significantly by position. Those who lead classrooms frequently face unclear responsibilities, calling for stronger preparation and inclusion during policy formation. Meanwhile, community leaders and families prioritize consistency between municipal rules and educational efforts, seeking joint development of strategies. Coordination mechanisms, however, remain loosely connected or absent altogether across levels. What emerges is a system where access to influence depends strongly on one's function within it.

To achieve full implementation of inclusive practices, stronger collaboration among agencies appears necessary. Clearer lines of responsibility, jointly upheld, help sustain progress instead of isolated efforts. Support through consistent funding and learning opportunities remains central. Shaping systems involves attention to physical structures alongside policies that align purposefully. Engagement grows when voices participate meaningfully, not merely symbolically. Movement happens when power distributes evenly rather than concentrating at certain levels. Shared decision-making reflects fairness more directly. Principles rooted in equity, diversity, and inclusion gain relevance here. Layers of influence - personal, organizational, societal - interact continuously beneath surface outcomes.

Table 16. Stakeholder-Driven Implications for the Development of the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework

Identified Needs (from Integrated Results)	Summary of Stakeholder Suggestions	Implications for the Framework	Suggested Actions
1. Clear Policies and Governance Structures	Stakeholders stressed the need for explicit policies that define roles and responsibilities across schools, LGUs, and barangays, anchored in RA 11650, Accessibility Law, and Magna Carta for PWDs.	Develop a Policy and Governance Alignment Component that maps stakeholder roles, clarifies mandates, and ensures coherence with national inclusion frameworks.	Create governance maps and role matrices; conduct policy alignment workshops among DepEd, LGUs, and community leaders; institutionalize adoption
2. Capacity-Building and Training	Participants highlighted the importance of inclusive education training for teachers, staff, and parents, recommending accessible, continuous, and competency-based development programs.	Include a Capacity-Building and Professional Development Guide with modular training content and mentoring frameworks for continuous learning.	Design inclusive education modules; organize cross-sector workshops, mentoring, and peer-learning programs for teachers and LGU officials.
3. Support Groups and Collaborative Networks	Stakeholders suggested establishing peer support and advocacy networks among teachers, parents, and learners, and partnering with NGOs to enhance community collaboration.	Integrate a Support and Collaboration Network Module that promotes peer mentoring, advocacy, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.	Establish school–barangay–NGO support groups; create parent and teacher advocacy committees; conduct quarterly community collaboration meetings
4. Inclusive and Effective Communication Tools	Respondents recommended accessible and standardized communication systems, including digital coordination platforms, assistive technologies, and inclusive language tools.	Embed a Communication and Coordination Framework that standardizes protocols, ensures accessibility, and facilitates timely stakeholder interaction.	Develop inclusive communication templates and directories; implement accessible technologies such as SMS hotlines and digital reporting platforms.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	Stakeholders called for tools to track implementation progress, assess inclusive practices, and provide evidence for planning and policy improvement.	Integrate a Monitoring and Reflection Module with checklists, dashboards, and participatory assessment methods.	Create participatory scorecards; conduct quarterly review meetings; implement data-driven evaluation processes for inclusive education.
6. Resource Mapping and Learning Facilities	Participants recommended maintaining updated resource inventories, identifying gaps in assistive tools, and improving accessibility of learning spaces.	Include a Resource Inventory and Infrastructure Planning Component to consolidate facilities, equipment, and human capital for inclusive education.	Develop shared resource maps; maintain digital databases for facilities and equipment; align LGU and school resource management.
7. Regular Coordination and Stakeholder Meetings	Stakeholders emphasized institutionalizing regular coordination meetings, such as Ugnayan sessions and DepEd–LGU joint committees, for shared planning and review.	Create a Coordination and Partnership Framework that formalizes routine inter-agency collaboration for inclusive governance.	Establish joint DepEd–LGU committees; include coordination schedules in annual governance plans; ensure continuous stakeholder participation.

From combining numerical data with descriptive insights comes clarity: those involved agree on building a clearer, open, and collaborative system for managing inclusive education. Emerging patterns reveal seven central themes, each shaping one pillar of an emerging model. One such theme handles how rules align across levels, another focuses on growth in teaching practice, yet another improves information flow between parties. Goals tied to these areas follow clear criteria - focused, trackable, realistic, meaningful, scheduled - to ensure practical progress. Instead of standing alone, every element connects, much like layers within a broader environment where classrooms, families, institutions, and policies influence one another. Ideas around fairness, variety, and belonging gain form here, not as slogans but as defined steps rooted in real-world conditions. What begins as analysis ends as structure - an organized response shaped by voices, evidence, and systemic thinking.

Among initial requirements, defined policies stood out clearly. Where schools, barangays, and LGUs took part, agreement emerged on defining duties under national frameworks like RA 11650 and the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. To meet this, a module focused on policy coherence offers alignment charts alongside guided group sessions. Full uptake of these role definitions should occur within one year, promoting steady implementation and oversight at every administrative layer. By building fairness and transparency into systems, it supports EDI values indirectly. Connections among educational institutions, households, and municipal bodies grow more cohesive through this structure.

Notably, building capability stood out during discussions. Gaps in readiness for inclusive education were noted by educators alongside local government unit staff. Training modules rooted in defined competencies will form part of the upcoming guide - these will be paired with mentorship initiatives along with joint-sector sessions. Eighteen months is the timeframe set for reaching 85 percent of teaching personnel and 70 percent of LGU workers through these efforts, aimed at improving execution of inclusion strategies and engagement in shared decision-making structures. Viewed systemically, support flows toward immediate instructional settings while linking outward to partnerships between schools and communities, allowing long-term change to take root.

Functioning through shared involvement, peer and community systems strengthen psychological and social resilience alongside collective voice. Instead of isolated efforts, structured backing among parents, educators, learners emerges as a priority, extended via collaboration with non-government organizations. Introduced as the Support and Collaboration Network Module, this strategy puts into motion localized assistance circles targeted in four out of five barangays by year two. Rooted in broader environmental theory, it recognizes external group dynamics - those beyond immediate reach - nudge educational progress forward, widen access rooted in local

initiative, spread accountability across roles.

In addition, repeated attention was given to difficulties in exchanging information. To support consistent contact among participants, the structure introduces electronic listings, sample documents, short message services, along with readable options such as Braille, signed conversation, and aid tools. A reduction of thirty percent - or more - in preparation and reaction time is expected during the initial twelve months, enabling faster access to shared updates for all involved parties. As shown across Tables 12 through 15, shortcomings in mid-level cooperation are met through these means.

Starting anew, oversight mechanisms support choices grounded in data. Through structured observation and shared review processes, progress in inclusion gains visibility. Tools like guided forms and visual summaries appear within the system. These allow consistent follow-up across learning environments. Reports emerge every six months, expected in nearly all institutions by the second year. Oversight shifts gradually - less about rule-checking, more part of daily leadership.

Later on came the need to track supplies and learning areas carefully. Updated records of rooms, support tools, staff availability, and access features drew strong attention from involved parties. When combined, such data form part of a broader system meant to organize educational assets logically. Completion of detailed resource reviews in every school is expected before the second year passes. Fair distribution improves when information stays current. Planning physical setups becomes more responsive to varied learner requirements through structured oversight.

Later on, steady interaction between stakeholders supports long-term cooperation. Through the Coordination and Partnership Framework, scheduled Ugnayan gatherings, every-three-month conferences, and combined DepEd–LGU groups become official practice. As early as Year 3, each division along with local government units must maintain functioning coordination mechanisms - offering reliable spaces where planning together happens, advancement gets examined, responsibility stays mutual, thus strengthening links across layers of public oversight. Despite variations in pace, alignment grows when routines take shape.

When combined, these objectives built on SMART criteria outline a step-by-step approach to change. During the initial phase - lasting one to two years - core efforts center on defining guidelines, beginning educational programs, while aligning messaging across channels. As time progresses into the three- to five-year window, attention moves gradually toward embedding procedures into routine operations, broadening availability of support tools, deepening local partnerships, with sustained involvement from participants guiding oversight structures.

This analysis shows the proposed framework functions as an integrated, research-supported model for inclusive governance - not just separate rules or steps. Because it includes defined results, input from participants, and broad organizational awareness, progress in inclusive education continues over time. What makes it effective is turning abstract policy goals into real cooperation - supported through joint decision-making, flexible arrangements, underpinned by a well-defined path forward.

Title: *Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework*

I. Rationale

Though inclusive education forms a key part of basic learning reforms in the Philippines, results differ widely because cooperation between schools and local governments lacks consistency. Even with laws like RA 11650 and decentralized systems in place, progress slows when plans do not align, responsibilities blur, support falls short, while involvement from involved parties wavers. A city noted across the country for creative inclusion efforts - Valenzuela - offers a fitting setting where data-guided actions could deepen collaboration tailored to community needs.

A structure emerged through a step-by-step mixed approach involving numerical data followed by descriptive insights. Ninety-six individuals answered surveys, eight contributed detailed interviews - each drawn from groups such as educators, caregivers, community leaders, and administrative staff. Numbers revealed how

different participants viewed chances for progress, obstacles faced, and responsibilities held across sectors. Insights from conversations uncovered motivations shaping those trends, drawing attention to moments where cooperation worked alongside persistent structural barriers. Patterns unfolded not only in alignment but also in divergence among viewpoints.

Purpose and Scope:

Designed for schools together with local government units, this structure supports teamwork in advancing inclusive learning environments. Beginning at the foundational level, it moves through stages like awareness sessions, matching rules, shared goal setting, training efforts, information exchange, systems that assist, tracking outcomes, handling materials, record keeping, and lasting cooperative ties. Integrated within are clear instruments, sample formats, along with guided actions meant for straightforward adoption regardless of location or scale. Built to remain functional over time, each piece fits into different community contexts without requiring major adjustments.

II. Objectives of the Proposed Framework

The framework aims to translate evidence into actionable governance practices by:

1. Promoting policy coherence across schools, barangays, and LGUs, aligning local strategies with RA 11650 and SDG 4 targets.
2. Enhancing stakeholder competencies through modular training, mentorship, and inter-sectoral learning.
3. Establishing inclusive and responsive communication systems for transparent and timely information exchange.
4. Embedding participatory monitoring and evaluation to support data-driven planning and shared accountability.
5. Cultivating sustainable partnerships among schools, families, LGUs, and community-based organizations.
6. Supporting equitable service delivery via resource mapping, inventories of inclusive infrastructure, and assistive devices.
7. Institutionalizing structured coordination platforms, such as Ugnayan meetings, joint committees, and annual inclusive education summits.
8. Providing ready-to-use tangible tools including a School–LGU Inclusive Education Action Plan template, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) sample, and Stakeholder Meeting Agenda and Minutes template.

III. Framework Structure and Implementation Workflow

The framework consists of ten interrelated components implemented across three progressive phases, forming a practical workflow from orientation to institutionalization. Each component is explicitly informed by stakeholder priorities and mixed-methods findings.

Table 17. Stakeholder-Identified Priorities for Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework

Component	Objectives	Key Activities	Timeline	Responsible Units	Expected Outputs	Success Indicators
1. Orientation Component	Define the framework’s purpose, audience, and introduce inclusive governance principles..	Conduct divisional and barangay-level orientation workshops; distribute framework guides (digital and printed); facilitate orientation for	Month 1–3	DepEd SDO, LGU	Orientation materials, attendance sheets, feedback reports	100% of stakeholders oriented; 90% report understanding of framework’s purpose

Component	Objectives	Key Activities	Timeline	Responsible Units	Expected Outputs	Success Indicators
		school heads, LGUs, and stakeholders.				
2. Policy and Governance Alignment Module	Clarify stakeholder roles and align local policies with national mandates.	Develop Roles and Responsibilities Matrix (School–LGU–Parents); conduct policy alignment workshops; draft localized guidelines; finalize MOAs	Month 3–6	DepEd Policy and Planning Division, LGU Council	Governance matrices, MOAs, localized policy briefs	Policy and role alignment completed in all pilot areas by Month 6
3. Joint Planning Framework	Institutionalize joint school–LGU planning and budgeting.	Facilitate Ugnayan planning sessions; co-create SIPs & AIPs; conduct resource-sharing workshops; follow step-by-step collaboration process	Month 6–12	DepEd Planning Office, LGU Budget Office	Jointly approved plans, coordination minutes	80% of schools integrated into local development plans
4. Capacity-Building and Training Guide	Strengthen leadership and inclusive governance competencies.	Develop modular training guides; conduct train-the-trainer sessions; organize learning circles on inclusive pedagogy and resource management; facilitate mentorship programs.	Year 1–2	DepEd HR Division, DILG, NGOs	Training modules, evaluation summaries	85% of participants show competency improvement post-training
5. Communication and Coordination Component	Create transparent, inclusive, and efficient communication systems.	Develop stakeholder directories and digital platforms (email, SMS, group chats); implement feedback tools (forms, surveys); integrate accessible communication methods (Braille, translations).	Year 1	LGU IT Unit, DepEd ICT Division	Active communication platforms, communication templates	Coordination delays reduced by 30%; >80% satisfaction rate in communication flow

Component	Objectives	Key Activities	Timeline	Responsible Units	Expected Outputs	Success Indicators
6. Support and Collaboration Network Module	Establish advocacy, psychosocial, and peer support networks.	Form barangay-level support and advocacy groups; partner with NGOs/CSOs for outreach; conduct parent support sessions; hold inclusive community engagement events.	Year 1–2	PTA, NGOs, Barangay Councils	Established community support networks, advocacy reports	80% of barangays maintain active inclusive advocacy networks
7. Monitoring and Reflection Module	Track performance, outcomes, and accountability.	Develop participatory scorecards; conduct quarterly review meetings; document reflection journals; publish annual Inclusive Governance Reports; integrate M&E guide and templates	Year 2 onward	DepEd QA Division, LGU Planning Office	M&E scorecards, dashboards, annual review reports	90% of schools submit M&E reports twice a year
8. Resource Inventory and Infrastructure Planning	Map and update educational resources and facilities for inclusion.	Conduct inventory assessments (facilities, tools, staff); create digital databases; identify resource gaps; prepare resource-sharing and improvement plans.	Year 1–2	LGU Planning, Engineering, School Heads	Updated resource maps, database of materials	100% of pilot schools have active resource databases by Year 2
9. Digital Documentation Tools	Centralize documentation and promote data transparency.	Develop shared online repositories; build digital dashboards for tracking; train users in data entry and management; ensure compliance with privacy laws.	Year 2–3	DepEd MIS, LGU IT Department	Online documentation system, real-time dashboards	All participating LGUs maintain updated data repositories by Year 3
10. Coordination and Partnership Framework	Institutionalize ongoing collaboration mechanisms for sustainability.	Formalize quarterly Ugnayan coordination sessions; create DepEd–LGU joint education committees; organize annual inclusive education summits for review and planning.	Year 1–3	DepEd–LGU Joint Committees, DILG	Coordination reports, summit proceedings	Regular meetings sustained from Year 3 onward; documented evidence of collaborative actions

IV. Components Implementation Phases

The **Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework** is implemented through a phased, data-informed strategy that gradually builds toward sustainable collaboration between schools and local government units (LGUs). Each component of the framework is interlinked and designed to support governance transformation, moving from orientation and policy alignment to long-term institutional practices. All phases follow SMART indicators and specific deliverables to track measurable progress.

Phase 1: Short Term (Year 1)

Focus begins with mutual clarity, consistent rules, together with organized cooperation across parties involved. Early attention goes to the first trio of elements: starting guidance, rule alignment, along with joint preparation design. Starting guidance includes fair decision-making ideas, holds sessions at district and village levels, while sharing structure outlines through online plus paper versions. Rule alignment explains who does what via a structured chart linking schools, local government units, families - also matches city regulations with country directives. Step by step, the Joint Planning Framework builds cooperation through scheduled Ugnayan gatherings, weaving inclusive learning aims directly into school advancement strategies alongside community planning efforts. For quicker application, one finds three concrete tools provided - an adaptable School–LGU Inclusive Education Action Plan layout, a ready reference MOA example, also meeting agenda and record formats meant for stakeholder discussions, enabling swift implementation when needed.

Phase 2: Medium Term (Years 2 to 3)

Inclusion takes shape during the second stage, driven by growth in skills, systems refined over time, while links between teams grow stronger. Among what unfolds now: building skill levels, ways people exchange information, shared effort structures, ongoing review practices, tracking of assets alongside planning for physical needs. Training follows a structured path - rooted in clear abilities - with learning blocks, guidance relationships, joint sessions across fields meant for educators and local government staff. Contact methods rely on updated listings, online spaces designed for access, channels allowing responses that influence decisions. A framework for mutual aid sets up official circles where parents, instructors, students connect, at the same time outside organizations become more tightly linked. With participatory scorecards guiding input, quarterly reviews shape ongoing assessment through structured formats. Dashboards display progress, whereas reflection logs capture insights over time. Updated records of facilities appear alongside details on assistive tools and learning environments within the Resource Inventory. Three physical outcomes from Phase 1 still apply without change. Continuity emerges naturally when moving between stages. Immediate use carries forward by design.

Phase 3: Long Term (Years 4 to 5)

Sustainability becomes possible when structures take root. Digital tools for recording information appear alongside a system that links groups through clear roles. Collaboration flows into daily work at local government and education offices because of these supports. Groups that coordinate tasks begin functioning smoothly once shared records are in place. Summits happen each year to keep efforts moving forward. Resources stay available - action plans, agreement samples, meeting layouts - for consistent use across sites. These materials fit within broader frameworks meant to guide joint decision-making. Progress tracking gains clarity when everyone uses the same formats. Recording cooperation turns into routine practice over time. Data moves between parties on a predictable schedule. Policies undergo review not just once, but repeatedly. People involved remain part of discussions without pause. Stability grows where routines exist.

Beginning with early steps, the rollout creates order through gradual advancement from basic understanding to deep integration. First comes familiarity and shared direction, followed by growth in infrastructure and skill. Later stages weave equity-focused actions into routine decision-making processes. Progress unfolds so institutions learn to maintain inclusive methods using teamwork, responsibility checks, and evidence-based tools. Three clear results appear along the way, grounding the model in real-world function rather than theory alone. Step by step, what emerges is ready for use from the start.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan ensures that the implementation of the **Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework** remains systematic, evidence-informed, and outcomes-oriented. It provides structured mechanisms for tracking progress, evaluating stakeholder engagement, and guiding iterative improvement. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are integrated through participatory evaluation strategies that promote transparency and shared accountability among schools, LGUs, and community actors.

Key Indicators:

- School adoption rate of framework components – Assesses the extent of institutional integration across educational settings.
- Training coverage among teachers, school heads, and LGU officers – Evaluates reach and impact of capacity-building initiatives.
- Reduction in coordination delays – Measures improvements in efficiency and responsiveness of planning and communication systems.
- Number of jointly initiated inclusive programs – Reflects effectiveness of collaborative governance in driving programmatic outcomes.
- Submission frequency and quality of monitoring reports – Tracks compliance and accountability across participating units.
- Use of tangible framework resources (School–LGU Inclusive Education Action Plan template, MOA sample, Stakeholder Meeting Agenda and Minutes template) – Monitors the practical application of frameworks and templates in stakeholder activities.
- Adherence to Roles and Responsibilities Matrix (School–LGU–Parents) and step-by-step collaboration process – Evaluates clarity of roles, coordination, and workflow efficiency.

Data Collection Tools

- Evaluation Forms: Administered post-training to assess knowledge gains and satisfaction.
- Dashboards: Digital systems displaying key performance indicators (KPIs) and real-time tracking.
- Meeting Reports: Records from coordination meetings and Ugnayan sessions documenting progress and follow-through.
- Reflection Logs: Stakeholder journals capturing insights, innovations, and emerging challenges.
- Template Usage Checklists: To verify consistent use of Action Plan, MOA, and Meeting Agenda templates.

Monitoring Frequency

- Quarterly Monitoring: Conducted by DepEd Quality Assurance and LGU Planning Units to assess implementation fidelity and uptake of framework components.
- Annual Review Summits: Stakeholder-led forums presenting outcomes, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations for refinement.
- This framework ensures that decisions remain data-informed and responsive to emerging challenges, while reinforcing a culture of accountability, systematic use of templates and step-by-step processes, and continuous learning.

VII. Sustainability Measures

To ensure long-term viability, the **framework** incorporates built-in sustainability strategies that embed inclusive governance into institutional structures and community norms.

1. Institutional Integration: Embed framework use, reporting protocols, and tangible tools (Action Plan template, MOA, Meeting Agenda) in DepEd–LGU Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and integrate

related objectives into School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and local investment frameworks.

2. **Leadership Development:** Identify and empower inclusive education champions across stakeholder groups, supported by mentorship chains, peer learning communities, and training on step-by-step collaboration processes.
3. **Funding Strategy:** Allocate budget lines in Annual Investment Plans (AIPs) and leverage external partnerships with NGOs or CSR initiatives to ensure financial continuity.
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Conduct annual framework reviews based on M&E data, stakeholder feedback, and template usage evaluation. Components and resources will be updated regularly to reflect evolving policy environments and local needs.
5. **Community Ownership:** Foster participatory governance by encouraging parent and community involvement, ensuring long-term support, shared accountability, and active use of the Roles and Responsibilities Matrix for clear role definition.

These strategies collectively promote institutionalization, resource continuity, and local ownership of inclusive governance practices.

VIII. Expected Outcomes

The implementation of the framework is expected to yield progressive results across three key timelines, with direct integration of tangible tools, templates, and step-by-step collaboration processes:

Short-Term Outcomes (Year 1)

- Orientation of all stakeholder groups completed.
- Framework materials disseminated and pilot components initiated.
- Governance mapping, initial policy alignment, and Roles and Responsibilities Matrix application completed.
- At least 80% of stakeholders report increased awareness and engagement.
- Immediate use of tangible tools (Action Plan template, MOA sample, Meeting Agenda template) in planning sessions.

Medium-Term Outcomes (Years 2–3)

- Coordination mechanisms institutionalized through Ugnayan sessions and joint committees.
- Operational resource maps and communication systems established in all participating schools and barangays.
- Increased capacity and confidence among teachers and LGU officers in implementing inclusive practices.
- Documented reduction in administrative delays and duplication of initiatives.
- Consistent application of step-by-step collaboration processes and monitoring tools ensures improved workflow and accountability.

Long-Term Outcomes (Years 4–5)

- Inclusive education governance fully embedded in DepEd and LGU systems.
- Sustained, data-driven collaboration across all stakeholder groups.
- Improved equity and access through co-implemented policies and shared decision-making.
- Replicable governance model, with tangible templates and processes fully institutionalized, available for adaptation in other divisions or regions.

This Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, together with clear sustainability measures, provides a robust foundation for the effective rollout of the framework. Over time, it is expected to shift inclusive education from fragmented efforts to an institutionalized, participatory, and system-led governance model that is responsive to both policy standards and community needs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary of findings from the gathered and analyzed data, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations offered by the researcher in the light of the findings and conclusions.

Summary of Findings

1. Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles in Fostering Inclusive Synergy Between Schools and Local Governance as Perceived by Local Officials, Teachers, and Parents

- a. **Opportunities-** Quantitative findings revealed a very high overall perception of opportunities for inclusive synergy between schools and local government units ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.54$), with respondents affirming that open communication, enabling local policies, and inclusive mechanisms are already in place. The most strongly endorsed opportunities included (1) established community policies promoting inclusion, (2) regular dialogues between schools and local stakeholders, and (3) ongoing communication among teachers, parents, and officials. However, several indicators emerged as areas for further development, particularly the need to (4) enhance the visibility of inclusive practices, (5) expand access to specialized support services, (6) deepen school–barangay collaboration, (7) increase LGU advocacy and resource mobilization, and (8) involve more stakeholders in planning for inclusion at the school level.
- b. **Challenges-** Participants reported moderate agreement on inclusive education challenges, with a mean score of 2.55 ($SD = 1.01$). The most strongly endorsed concerns were: (1) insufficient budget allocation, (2) lack of training on inclusion and sensitivity, (3) inadequate physical infrastructure for learners with disabilities, and (4) limited parental awareness of inclusive practices. These highlight the most pressing systemic barriers that directly impact implementation. Meanwhile, the least endorsed concerns included: inconsistent school–LGU communication, unclear or unevenly implemented policies, weak inter-agency coordination, limited monitoring of inclusive programs, cultural resistance to inclusion, and low prioritisation of inclusion in local governance.
- c. **Roles -** Participants strongly agreed with the statements related to their roles in inclusive education governance ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.60$), with the most highly endorsed items indicating that stakeholders see themselves as key contributors to inclusion, that teachers adjust strategies to meet diverse learner needs, and that parents are regularly consulted in school decisions. However, areas for enrichment emerged from the least endorsed items, which reflect governance and coordination gaps: (1) limited involvement of local leaders in planning, (2) weak barangay–school collaboration, (3) unclear roles and responsibilities, (4) lack of joint planning between schools and LGUs, (5) insufficient policy support, (6) ineffective coordination bodies, and (7) unclear LGU guidance on inclusion.

2. Significant Differences in the Opportunities, Challenges, and Roles for Fostering Inclusive Synergy Between Schools and Local Governance Among Local Officials, Teachers, and Parents

- a. **Opportunities-** Local officials reported the highest perceived opportunities for inclusive synergy ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.17$), followed by school heads ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.45$), parents ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.54$), and teachers ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.49$). A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference across groups, $F(3, 92) = 3.10$, $p = .03$, indicating variation in how stakeholders view opportunities. However, Tukey HSD post hoc tests showed no significant pairwise differences (all p -values $> .05$), suggesting that while overall differences exist, no specific group's perception was significantly higher or lower than another.
- b. **Challenges-** Descriptive statistics revealed that school heads perceived the greatest challenges in inclusive education ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.30$), followed by teachers ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.99$), parents ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.84$), and local officials ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.58$). Despite this variation, a one-way ANOVA showed that the differences were not statistically significant, $F(3, 92) = 1.89$, $p = .14$.
- c. **Roles-** Descriptive data showed that local officials reported the highest perceived involvement in inclusive education governance ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.06$), followed by school heads ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.46$), parents ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.60$), and teachers ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.48$). A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference across groups, $F(3, 92) = 4.15$, $p < .01$. Tukey's HSD post hoc test showed that both local officials ($p = .03$) and parents ($p = .05$) rated their roles significantly higher than teachers, while other comparisons were not statistically significant.

3. Qualitative Data to Quantitative Findings to Identify Patterns and Support Needs for Strengthening Inclusive School–LGU Collaboration

- a. Stakeholders identified six key opportunities for school–LGU collaboration in inclusive education: (1) shared services, (2) accessible infrastructure, (3) joint planning, (4) transition pathways, (5) community empowerment, and (6) culturally responsive governance. Correspondingly, six core areas of existing barangay and LGU support were highlighted: (1) improved infrastructure, (2) provision of assistive devices and learning materials, (3) access to therapy and professional services, (4) inclusive learner development programs, (5) support for ALS and alternative pathways, and (6) culturally responsive governance—reflecting a strong, coordinated local effort to advance equity and inclusion.
- b. Qualitative findings revealed six key challenges affecting inclusive education governance: (1) resource and funding limitations, (2) shortage of skilled personnel and assessment services, (3) issues in coordination, communication, and role clarity, (4) barriers to acceptance, discrimination, and persistent stigma, (5) accessibility and physical environment challenges, and (6) system misalignment and concerns about programme sustainability. These interconnected issues highlight the structural and systemic barriers that stakeholders encounter in implementing inclusive practices effectively.
- c. The data revealed five central themes that describe how stakeholder groups perceive their roles in inclusive education: (1) instructional leadership and inclusive pedagogy, (2) parent–school–LGU coordination and support, (3) learner advocacy, protection, and guidance, (4) family engagement and home-based support, and (5) policy implementation, governance, and programme oversight.

4. The Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework Developed to Enhance School–Local Governance Partnerships Based on Stakeholders’ Perceptions:

- a. **Opportunities** – Stakeholders reported strong foundations for inclusive governance rooted in existing policies, open school–community communication, and active school–LGU collaboration. However, both data strands emphasized the need to strengthen support services, enhance visibility of inclusive practices, and ensure broader stakeholder participation.
- b. **Challenges** – The most widely acknowledged barriers were limited funding, lack of training, inadequate infrastructure, and weak coordination mechanisms. These quantitative trends were reinforced by qualitative insights, which revealed deeper, systemic issues such as stigma, limited access to assessment services, and concerns about sustainability indicating that challenges are both structural and cultural.
- c. **Roles** – While stakeholders broadly recognized their responsibility in inclusive education, both strands of data revealed gaps in role clarity and coordination structures. Teachers, in particular, reported the lowest perceived support and carried the greatest implementation burden, highlighting a divergence that supports the need for more structured, role-specific capacity-building and governance mechanisms.
- d. **Framework Suggestions** – As a synthesis of stakeholder responses across all groups, seven key components emerged as essential for the development of the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework to enhance school–LGU partnerships: (1) clear policies and governance frameworks, (2) structured capacity-building programs, (3) peer support networks and community partnerships, (4) inclusive and accessible communication tools, (5) participatory monitoring and evaluation systems, (6) inventories of learning resources and infrastructure, and (7) regular coordination mechanisms. These reflect a convergent understanding of the structural and relational elements needed to operationalize inclusive governance effectively.

Conclusions

This study offers a significant contribution to the field of inclusive education governance by examining how schools and local government units (LGUs) in Valenzuela City collaborate to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. Using Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Theory and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory as guiding frameworks, the study bridges policy analysis and stakeholder experience to better understand how inclusive governance functions within layered systems.

1. Despite favorable conditions, progress stalls. Valenzuela City operates within a framework of supportive local policies that mirror national mandates on inclusive education. Communication channels between

schools and communities exist, not through design but by sustained effort over time. Joint efforts are already in place, though they function below potential. Synergy appears achievable, especially where policy clarity meets regular conversation among actors. Visibility of inclusion initiatives stays low, even when opportunities arise. Access to assistance varies, often depending on awareness rather than structure. Engagement in decision-making widens only slowly, despite expressed intent. Improvement hinges less on new systems, more on activating what is present. Despite acknowledgment of differences, actual fairness remains unmet. In environmental terms, stronger links are needed - those linking classrooms to city oversight bodies. What appears is misalignment: seen when variety gains notice yet equal involvement does not follow. Viewed another way, proximity matters; learning sites must interact more fully with regional decision hubs.

2. Despite consistent data patterns, financial shortfalls remain a central issue. Funding gaps appear alongside poorly developed staff capabilities, which together hinder access. Physical environments often fail to accommodate diverse needs, compounding exclusion. Disjointed efforts between organizations surface repeatedly, indicating deeper organizational friction. From an equity standpoint, such conditions reflect embedded limitations rather than isolated setbacks. When viewed through the lens of ecology, mismatches arise mainly in external support structures - such as regulation and inter-agency function. Progress depends less on individual effort and more on alignment within broader operational layers.
3. Though stakeholders recognized their responsibilities within inclusive education, views on actual contribution differed widely. Central to execution, teachers felt least supported and involved, unlike local authorities and families, who saw deeper participation. A mismatch emerges when official assumptions meet classroom experience. From an equity perspective, access to influence and resources appears unevenly shared. Viewed through an ecological framework, misalignment surfaces between those shaping policy and those enacting it daily.
4. A key result from the ANOVA stands out: although views on opportunities and difficulties showed no statistical divergence, perceptions of roles did differ - teachers assigned themselves lower importance compared to others. Such a gap suggests adjustments are needed so that educators gain stronger representation within administrative frameworks and policy discussions.
5. From these results emerges a suggested model: the Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework. Built on seven elements - including policy coherence, training pathways, mutual aid networks, accessible dialogue formats, shared oversight practices, asset mapping, and structured cooperation channels - it offers direction for deepening ties between schools and local government units. Though still theoretical, its foundations come directly from participant insights, allowing space ahead for joint refinement, field testing, and embedding within regional operations.

Boundaries within this work arise from multiple conditions affecting reach and meaning. Though findings emerge clearly, their transfer to distant settings remains uncertain - especially where institutions operate differently. Valenzuela City hosts the entire inquiry; it bears traits like active schooling policies and stable oversight, yet similar patterns might not appear elsewhere. Data relies on personal accounts, checked through discussion but still open to distortion - one might present actions more favorably when speaking about duties. Instead of full execution, only early shaping of the suggested school-governance model occurred due to narrow windows in scheduling. What lies beneath frameworks - political will, money flows, rule application - is touched lightly, leaving deeper structures less examined. Interpretation must account for these untested layers. Though rooted in EDI concepts alongside Bronfenbrenner's model, insights emerged observationally, lacking forward-looking measurement across time. Even so, findings anchor meaningfully within real-world settings, enriching discussions of how inclusion functions structurally in educational leadership - opening pathways for later inquiry and systematic refinement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived directly from the study's conclusions and are intended to offer concrete, evidence-based actions to improve inclusive education governance between schools and local government units (LGUs). These suggestions aim to expand on existing opportunities, respond to identified challenges, clarify the roles of stakeholders, and outline a step-by-step approach for developing the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework. They also account for the study's limitations, ensuring feasibility within both short- and long-term implementation periods.

1. Reinforce current opportunities through formalized collaboration. Schools and LGUs are encouraged to institutionalize joint planning as well as regular review meetings. This helps maintain effective communication and coordination around inclusive education. These meetings should produce shared action plans and annual progress reports. Within one year, both parties should work together to draft a localized inclusion roadmap that highlights inclusive practices through policy awareness campaigns, school-community events, and other participatory initiatives.
2. Systemic issues require coordinated financial support alongside focused skill development. During the next planning phase, DepEd together with local government units must assign dedicated funds toward initiatives that prioritize inclusion and staff growth. Such commitments need appearance in yearly investment documents, covering demands like physical access adjustments, improvements to buildings, wherever necessary. Progress could show through higher rates of training finished, better conditions in facilities, along with wider availability of supportive resources across a twenty-four-month span.
3. Stakeholder roles must be set early within shared governance systems. During year one, collaboration builds a transparent structure showing who does what - teachers, parents, school leaders, community representatives included. This map covers duties plus how choices are made across levels. Every three months, joint meetings shape plans forward. Once yearly, everyone reviews their part in the system. Balance comes through regular check-ins where presence matters equally. Fairness grows when each voice stays present throughout cycles. Oversight becomes routine rather than reactive by design.
4. Foster balanced participation and shared responsibility. To bridge disparities in engagement, quarterly “Ugnayan” meetings should be standardized. Such should involve representatives from schools, barangays, and parent associations. Documentation such as minutes and action plans should promote transparency. Annual leadership training for teacher and parent leaders can support inclusive dialogue and build confidence in contributing to governance processes.
5. Implement the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework in structured phases. Framework development should proceed in two stages: an initial 6–12-month phase focused on co-design, drafting, and pilot testing in selected schools; followed by a 2–3-year phase for policy integration, scaling, and refinement. The framework should include practical templates and framework-aligned resources for communication, role alignment, planning, and monitoring—designed to be flexible and responsive to diverse school–LGU settings. Development should be informed by prior findings on coordination, inclusivity, and resource limitations.
6. Address Sampling Limitations and Representation Concerns. Given the study’s small subgroup sizes, there is a potential risk of misrepresentation, particularly in research involving inclusive and special education contexts. To enhance the reliability and generalizability of future studies, it is recommended that sampling limitations be explicitly discussed (Limitations and Recommendations). Additionally, future research should incorporate relevant literature on representation issues in inclusive and neurodiversity studies to inform methodology and interpretation. Expanding the sampling strategy to include broader and more diverse respondent groups will help capture a wider range of perspectives and experiences, thereby improving the validity, inclusivity, and applicability of research findings.
7. Promote Continuous Evaluation and Future Research. Future studies should expand to various localities and include long-term monitoring and participatory evaluation of the Proposed Inclusive School–Local Governance Collaboration Framework. This will assess its adaptability, effectiveness, and sustainability over time, supporting the evolution of inclusive education governance into a more equitable, coordinated system tailored to the needs of all learners and stakeholders.

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