

# Lived Educational Experiences: Learning in Rural Environments

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## ABSTRACT

Education in rural communities is often discussed through indicators of access, infrastructure, and performance, yet such perspectives provide limited insight into how learning is actually experienced by those situated within constrained environments. This study examined the lived educational experiences of residents in a rural community in Mankayan, Benguet, Philippines, with particular attention to how learners navigate educational challenges, adapt to limited learning conditions, and interpret the influence of home, school, and community contexts on their educational journeys.

Using a qualitative phenomenological approach informed by Colaizzi's method, the study engaged ten community residents through semi structured interviews. Analysis focused on participants' narratives of schooling under conditions of geographic isolation, resource constraints, and socio-economic demands. Findings revealed that learning in rural environments is experienced as a process of sustained adaptation rather than linear progression. Participants described delayed exposure to educational resources, constrained instructional conditions, and early formation of self-reliance as central features of their schooling. Educational challenges were normalized within everyday life, shaping expectations about learning, responsibility, and preparedness. Transitions to higher levels of education often surfaced gaps in exposure and skill development, influencing confidence and adjustment. At the same time, learning was sustained through personal accountability, peer support, family encouragement, and teacher guidance embedded within close community relationships.

The study highlights rural education as a lived, relational, and contextually embedded experience shaped by interaction across individual, familial, institutional, and community levels. By foregrounding residents' perspectives, the findings contribute to international discussions on rural education by emphasizing that meaningful educational improvement requires attention not only to structural provision but also to lived experience and local meaning making.

**Keywords:** rural education, lived experience, phenomenology, learning environments, educational adaptation

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Education plays a central role in individual development and community life, yet the experience of schooling varies significantly across geographic and socio-economic contexts. In rural and remote communities, learning often unfolds within environments shaped by limited resources, geographic isolation, and constrained institutional support. Research on rural education has shown that these conditions influence not only access to schooling but also how learners engage with education, sustain participation, and prepare for future opportunities (Barrett et al., 2019; Felongco, Regis, & De Guzman, 2022)

This study is situated in Mankayan, Benguet, a mountainous municipality within the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines. Mankayan is characterized by geographic remoteness and a local economy largely sustained by mining and agriculture. These conditions create a distinct educational context in which learners, families, and schools engage with schooling amid environmental challenges, economic limitations, and uneven access to learning resources. The physical landscape, distance from urban centers, and livelihood demands shape everyday educational experiences and influence how learning is pursued and valued within the community.

Existing literature indicates that rural learners often face delayed exposure to learning materials, limited access to digital resources, and constrained instructional conditions compared to their urban counterparts (UNESCO, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). In communities such as Mankayan, access to stable internet connectivity, updated learning tools, and specialized instructional support remains uneven. These conditions affect how learners adapt to technology-based education and how prepared they feel for academic transitions beyond the rural school context. Rather than encountering education as a seamless progression, learners often navigate schooling through gradual adjustment to what is available.

Socio-economic conditions further shape educational experience in rural communities. Studies have documented how livelihood demands, including involvement in agricultural or mining related work, intersect with schooling and influence attendance, persistence, and educational aspirations (Felongco et al., 2022; Ederio, 2023). Financial constraints, limited scholarship access, and uneven academic preparation contribute to challenges in sustaining education and in transitioning to higher levels of learning. These factors are not experienced in isolation but are woven into daily life, shaping how learners interpret educational possibility and responsibility.

Teaching and learning in rural contexts are also shaped by instructional and professional conditions. Research has shown that rural teachers often work under conditions of professional isolation, limited access to development opportunities, and expanded roles that include academic instruction, mentorship, and socio-emotional support (Ab Aziz et al., 2019; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). These realities influence instructional practices and the forms of support available to learners. In such contexts, education is sustained not only through formal teaching but through relational engagement and adaptive practice

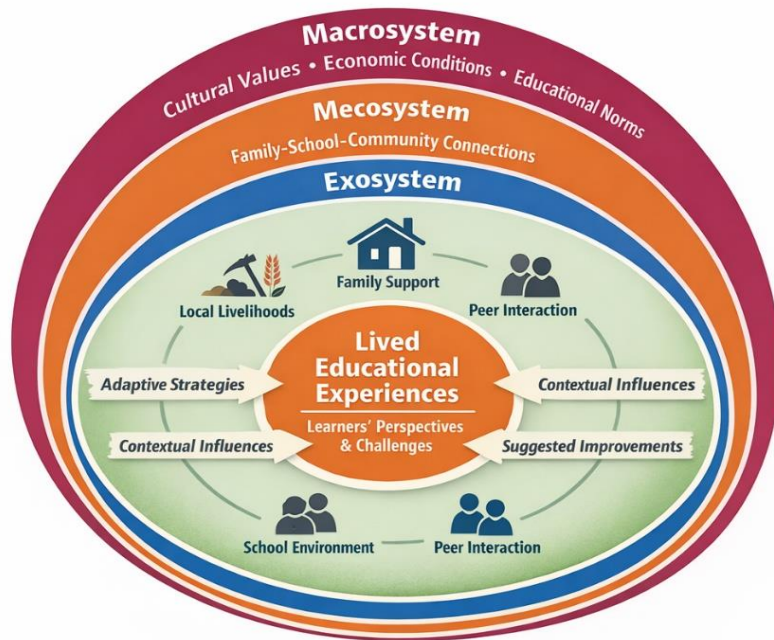
Understanding education in rural communities therefore requires attention to the interaction between learners, families, schools, and the broader community environment. Ecological perspectives on learning emphasize that educational experience is shaped through interconnected systems, including family life, schooling structures, community norms, and socio-economic conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Goodwin, 2024). Within this framework, learning is experienced as situated and relational rather than purely institutional.

Despite increasing attention to rural education in the Philippines, there remains limited qualitative research that foregrounds residents' own accounts of how education is lived, navigated, and imagined within geographically isolated communities such as Mankayan. Much of the existing work has emphasized infrastructure and access, with fewer studies examining how learners interpret their educational journeys and articulate meaningful improvements based on experience (Felongco et al., 2022; Ederio, 2023). Addressing this gap requires approaches that privilege lived experience and preserve participant voice.

Guided by a phenomenological–thematic approach, this study seeks to understand the lived educational experiences of residents in Mankayan, Benguet. By examining how learners encounter challenges, adapt to constrained conditions, experience the influence of home, school, and community, and recommend improvements for educational growth, the study aims to contribute a grounded understanding of rural education that is anchored in everyday realities rather than abstract comparison.

## Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored in **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory**, which views human development as shaped through dynamic interaction between individuals and multiple, interconnected environmental systems. Within this perspective, learning is not treated as an isolated school-based activity but as an experience formed through continuous engagement with family, school, community, and broader socio-economic conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Tudge et al., 2016). The framework provides a suitable lens for examining educational experience in a rural context where learning is embedded in everyday life and social relationships.



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Applied to Rural Education

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the conceptual framework situates residents' lived educational experiences at the center of overlapping ecological layers. At the individual level, learners bring personal histories, motivations, and responsibilities shaped by early exposure to constrained learning conditions. These experiences influence how educational challenges are perceived and how learning is approached across time. Rather than isolating learner attributes, the framework emphasizes how individual experience is continuously shaped by interaction with surrounding systems.

The **microsystem**, as reflected in Figure 1, includes immediate environments such as home, school, and peer relationships. In this study, the microsystem captures daily learning encounters, including classroom instruction under limited resources, reliance on teachers for guidance, peer-based assistance, and family support. These direct interactions form the most immediate context through which educational challenges are experienced and addressed.

The **mesosystem** represents the relationships among elements of the microsystem. Within the rural community context of Mankayan, Benguet, learning is influenced by how home expectations, school practices, and community involvement intersect. Family encouragement, teacher engagement, and community participation are not separate influences but operate through their connections. Figure 1 reflects these linkages as shaping learning continuity, motivation, and stability.

The **exosystem** includes structures that indirectly influence learning, such as livelihood demands, availability of resources, and access to educational opportunities beyond the community. In Mankayan, mining and agricultural economies shape household responsibilities and time allocation, which in turn affect educational participation. Although learners may not directly control these conditions, they experience their effects through daily life. These influences are represented in Figure 1 as contextual forces shaping educational experience.

The **macrosystem** encompasses broader socio cultural and economic patterns, including values placed on education, rural development conditions, and structural inequalities between rural and urban schooling contexts. Rather than being treated as abstract forces, these elements are understood in this study through how residents experience them in concrete ways, such as delayed exposure to learning technologies and constrained academic preparation. Figure 1 situates these broader conditions as shaping, but not determining, lived educational experience.

Guided by this framework, the study examines how educational challenges, adaptive strategies, contextual influences, and resident recommended improvements emerge from interaction across ecological levels. The framework does not function as a causal model but as an organizing lens that informed interpretation during analysis. It supports understanding education as a lived, relational, and contextually embedded experience within a rural community.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education in rural communities continues to be discussed largely through indicators of access, infrastructure, and performance, yet these approaches often overlook how learners themselves experience schooling within constrained environments. In geographically isolated communities such as Mankayan, Benguet, education unfolds within conditions shaped by limited resources, livelihood demands, and close interdependence between home, school, and community life. While these conditions are widely acknowledged, there remains insufficient understanding of how residents interpret, navigate, and respond to them in their everyday educational journeys.

Existing studies on rural education in the Philippine context have primarily focused on system level challenges such as facility shortages, teacher deployment, and connectivity gaps (Felongco et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Although valuable, these perspectives provide limited insight into how learners and residents experience these conditions over time, how they adapt to learning constraints, and how such experiences shape educational trajectories and aspirations. Without attention to lived experience, educational challenges risk being reduced to abstract problems rather than understood as realities embedded in daily life.

In communities where mining and agriculture shape household economies, learners often balance schooling with economic and family responsibilities. These socio-economic conditions influence attendance, persistence, preparation, and transition to higher levels of education. However, there is limited qualitative documentation that captures how residents make sense of these experiences, how they sustain learning despite constraint, and how they understand the role of family, teachers, and community in supporting education. The absence of such perspectives constrains efforts to appreciate education as it is actually lived within rural contexts.

Furthermore, while adaptive practices such as self-directed learning, reliance on interpersonal support, and instructional adjustment are frequently mentioned in discussions of rural schooling, they are rarely examined through the voices of those who enact them. There is a lack of phenomenological inquiry that explores how these practices emerge, what meanings residents attach to them, and how they contribute to learning continuity under limited institutional support. This gap limits understanding of education as a relational and experiential process.

Finally, although rural education research often points to the need for improvement, fewer studies examine how residents themselves articulate meaningful recommendations for strengthening educational growth. Understanding what learners and community members believe should change, based on their lived experiences, remains underexplored. Without such insight, proposed interventions risk misalignment with local realities.

In response to these gaps, this study seeks to examine the lived educational experiences of residents in Mankayan, Benguet. Specifically, it aims to understand how residents experience educational challenges, how they adapt to constrained learning conditions, how home, school, and community contexts shape learning, and how residents articulate recommendations for improving educational growth and learning conditions within their rural community.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do residents of the rural community experience and respond to educational challenges in ways that shape their learning journeys and future opportunities?
2. What strategies do residents use to sustain learning and cope with constrained educational conditions in the rural context?

3. How do home, school, and community conditions influence residents' learning experiences in the rural community?
4. What improvements do residents recommend for strengthening educational growth and learning conditions in the rural community?

These research questions were designed to foreground residents' perspectives and lived meanings, providing a coherent structure for examining educational experience as it unfolds within a specific rural context.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study focused on the lived educational experiences of residents in a rural community located in Mankayan, Benguet. The scope of the inquiry was deliberately defined to capture how education is experienced, navigated, and interpreted within a geographically isolated and socio economically constrained setting. Emphasis was placed on understanding learning as it unfolds across everyday contexts shaped by home, school, and community life.

The participants of the study were ten residents who had direct experience with schooling in the community. This number was intentionally selected to allow for in depth exploration of lived experience rather than broad representation. The study did not aim to produce statistically generalizable findings but to develop a rich, contextualized understanding of educational experience within a specific rural setting. The focus on a single community allowed for sustained attention to local conditions, relationships, and meanings.

The scope of the study included participants' reflections on educational challenges, adaptive strategies, contextual influences, and recommended improvements for educational growth. Data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions, allowing participants to articulate experiences in their own language and terms. The analysis centered on residents' perspectives and did not include direct observation of classrooms or analysis of institutional performance indicators.

Several delimitations were established to maintain clarity and analytic focus. The study did not include school administrators or policymakers as participants, as its purpose was to foreground resident and learner experiences rather than institutional perspectives. Teachers were discussed only insofar as they appeared in participant narratives. The study also did not examine academic achievement outcomes, policy effectiveness, or comparative analysis between rural and urban schools.

Additionally, the study was delimited to qualitative phenomenological inquiry. As such, it did not seek to measure causal relationships or evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions. The findings represent participants' interpretations of their experiences at a particular point in time and within a specific context. These delimitations do not represent limitations of rigor but reflect intentional methodological choices aligned with the study's purpose.

By clearly defining its scope and delimitations, the study maintains coherence between its research questions, methodology, and findings. This focus supports a disciplined examination of rural educational experience while preserving the depth and integrity of participant voices.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Education as Lived Experience in Rural Contexts**

Education in rural contexts has increasingly been examined as a lived and situated experience shaped by everyday interactions, material conditions, and social relationships. Rather than viewing schooling solely as an institutional process defined by curriculum and assessment, recent qualitative scholarship emphasizes how learners experience education through daily negotiation with their environments. This perspective recognizes that learning is embedded within place, livelihood, family life, and community relations, all of which shape how education is understood and sustained (Barrett et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2024).

Phenomenological and interpretive studies highlight that rural learners often encounter schooling as an extension of everyday life rather than as a separate or protected space. Educational experiences are shaped by distance from learning centers, availability of resources, and the need to balance schooling with household and economic responsibilities. These conditions influence how learners perceive effort, responsibility, and persistence, shaping educational meaning beyond formal instruction (Hawes & Nelson, 2021). Learning, in this sense, is experienced not as a uniform pathway but as a process marked by adaptation and adjustment to context.

In the Philippine context, qualitative studies on rural education have begun to document how learners' experiences are shaped by geographic isolation and uneven access to educational support. Felongco, Regis, and De Guzman (2022) note that rural learners often develop strong self reliance and relational learning practices as responses to constrained instructional environments. These practices emerge from lived necessity rather than from structured intervention, underscoring the importance of examining education through participant narratives.

Viewing education as lived experience also draws attention to how meaning is constructed through interaction with teachers, peers, and family members. Research suggests that for rural learners, relationships often play a central role in sustaining motivation and learning continuity, especially where formal support systems are limited (Goodwin, 2024). Education is thus experienced as relational, with learning shaped through guidance, encouragement, and shared effort.

Recent phenomenological work further emphasizes that understanding rural education requires attention to how learners interpret their experiences over time. Educational meaning is shaped not only by present conditions but by cumulative encounters with constraint, support, and transition. This temporal dimension of lived experience helps explain how early schooling conditions influence later preparedness and educational aspiration (Barrett et al., 2019). Such insights are difficult to capture through quantitative indicators alone.

By situating education as a lived experience within rural contexts, existing literature supports the need for inquiry approaches that prioritize participant voice and contextual meaning. Phenomenological studies provide a means of understanding how learners make sense of education as part of their everyday lives, offering depth that complements broader structural analyses. This orientation provides a critical foundation for the present study, which seeks to understand rural education as experienced by residents within their specific community context.

### **Resource Constraints and Instructional Conditions in Rural Schools**

Research on rural education consistently documents how material and instructional conditions shape learning environments in ways that differ markedly from urban schooling contexts. Resource constraints in rural schools often include limited classroom facilities, shortages of updated learning materials, and restricted access to digital technologies. These conditions influence not only what is taught but how instruction is delivered and experienced by learners (UNESCO, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). In such settings, instructional practice is frequently shaped by what is available rather than by curricular ideal.

The digital divide remains a persistent concern in rural education, particularly in geographically isolated areas. Studies have shown that delayed or inconsistent access to internet connectivity and digital tools affects learners' exposure to technology mediated instruction and limits opportunities for developing digital competence (Barrett et al., 2019; Trucano, 2022). For rural learners, engagement with technology-based learning often occurs later and less consistently, which may influence preparedness for academic transitions that increasingly rely on digital platforms.

Instructional conditions in rural schools are also shaped by human resource constraints. Teacher shortages, particularly in specialized subject areas such as mathematics and science, have been widely reported in rural contexts (Felongco et al., 2022). Teachers in these settings often manage multiple subjects or grade levels, which affects instructional pacing and depth. These conditions require educators to adapt instruction continually; balancing curriculum demands with practical limitations.

Qualitative studies suggest that instructional practices in resource constrained schools are frequently characterized by flexibility and improvisation. Teachers adjust lesson delivery, rely on locally available

materials, and emphasize foundational understanding to accommodate learners' varying levels of access and preparation (Hawes & Nelson, 2021). While such practices demonstrate instructional commitment, they also reflect the structural conditions that limit exposure to enriched or specialized learning experiences.

In the Philippine context, rural schools face additional challenges related to infrastructure and geographic accessibility. Mountainous terrain and distance from educational centers contribute to delayed provision of learning resources and reduced opportunities for professional development among teachers (Ederio, 2023). These factors shape instructional environments in ways that extend beyond classroom walls, influencing both teacher practice and learner experience.

Importantly, recent literature cautions against interpreting resource constraints solely through deficit-based frameworks. Instead, scholars emphasize examining how instructional conditions shape learning experiences and expectations over time (Goodwin, 2024). Understanding rural instruction through an experiential lens allows for recognition of how learners and educators navigate limitation, rather than reducing rural education to absence or inadequacy. This perspective provides a critical foundation for examining how instructional conditions are lived and interpreted within specific rural communities.

### **Adaptive Learning Strategies and Educational Resilience**

Adaptive learning strategies have been increasingly recognized as central to how learners and educators sustain education within resource constrained environments. In rural contexts, adaptation is often not an optional enhancement but a necessary response to limited instructional materials, uneven access to support, and competing demands on learners' time. Research emphasizes that adaptive practices emerge through lived experience, shaped by everyday encounters with constraint rather than through formally designed interventions (Barrett et al., 2019; Hawes & Nelson, 2021).

Studies examining learner adaptation in rural settings highlight the role of self-directed learning in sustaining academic engagement. Learners frequently take initiative in reviewing lessons independently, seeking additional explanations, or accessing learning materials beyond what is provided in school. These practices are shaped by necessity, particularly when instructional time is limited or when resources are insufficient to meet diverse learning needs (Trucano, 2022). Such strategies reflect how learners actively participate in constructing their educational pathways.

Peer based learning has also been identified as a significant adaptive strategy in low resource contexts. Qualitative research shows that learners often rely on classmates for clarification, shared study, and encouragement, forming informal support networks that supplement formal instruction (Felongco et al., 2022). These peer interactions contribute to learning continuity and help address gaps in understanding, especially where individualized instructional support is limited.

Educators likewise engage in adaptive practices to sustain instruction under constrained conditions. Studies document how teachers modify lesson plans, use locally available materials, and adjust instructional pacing to align with learners' circumstances (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Ederio, 2023). Such adaptations are often shaped by deep familiarity with students' contexts and needs, reinforcing the relational dimension of rural instruction.

Educational resilience in rural settings is increasingly understood as a relational and contextual process rather than as an individual trait. Scholars argue that resilience emerges through interaction with supportive relationships, meaningful learning experiences, and opportunities for agency within constraint (Goodwin, 2024). This perspective shifts attention away from deficit narratives and toward understanding how learners and educators sustain engagement through collective effort and adaptive practice.

By examining adaptive learning strategies and resilience through qualitative and phenomenological lenses, existing literature underscores the importance of understanding how education is lived under constraint. These insights support inquiry approaches that foreground participant meaning and context, providing a foundation for exploring how adaptive practices are experienced and interpreted within specific rural communities.

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## Home, School, and Community Influences on Learning

Learning in rural contexts is shaped by the interaction of multiple social environments, particularly the home, school, and broader community. Ecological perspectives on education emphasize that learners' experiences are formed not within a single setting but through ongoing interaction across these interconnected spaces (Tudge et al., 2016; Goodwin, 2024). In rural communities, where boundaries between home, school, and community life are often closely intertwined, these influences become especially visible in everyday educational practice.

Family environments play a central role in shaping learners' educational engagement and continuity. Research indicates that emotional encouragement, practical guidance, and financial support from family members contribute significantly to learners' persistence in school, particularly in contexts where institutional support is limited (Felongco et al., 2022). Families often influence how learners prioritize education, manage academic demands, and navigate challenges related to attendance, workload, and transition. These influences are experienced as part of daily life rather than as formal educational interventions.

Schools function as both instructional and relational spaces within rural communities. Beyond curriculum delivery, schools serve as sites where learners encounter guidance, affirmation, and expectations shaped by close interpersonal relationships. Studies highlight that in rural settings, teachers often assume expanded roles that include mentoring, emotional support, and community engagement, reflecting the integrated nature of educational life (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Ederio, 2023). These roles influence how learners experience schooling and interpret their educational possibilities.

Community contexts further shape learning experiences by reinforcing values, providing informal support, and influencing access to educational opportunities. In many rural areas, community members contribute to schooling through encouragement, shared resources, and participation in educational activities. Research suggests that community involvement can strengthen learners' sense of belonging and motivation, particularly where education is viewed as a collective responsibility (UNESCO, 2021). These communal influences often operate informally but have meaningful impact on learning continuity.

The interaction among home, school, and community environments highlights that educational experience in rural contexts is inherently relational. Learning is sustained through networks of support rather than through isolated institutional provision. Understanding these interconnected influences provides a more comprehensive view of how education is lived and experienced within rural communities, supporting inquiry approaches that attend to context, relationship, and meaning.

## Educational Transitions and Preparedness in Rural Settings

Educational transitions represent critical points in learners' academic journeys, often revealing how earlier learning conditions shape readiness for new demands. In rural settings, transitions such as moving to higher grade levels or preparing for post secondary education are frequently experienced as challenging due to uneven access to resources, limited instructional exposure, and constrained academic preparation. Research suggests that preparedness for these transitions is influenced not only by academic content but also by learners' familiarity with learning tools, instructional expectations, and self-directed study practices (Barrett et al., 2019; Trucano, 2022).

Studies on rural education highlight that learners may encounter gaps in preparedness related to technology use, academic rigor, and independent learning skills. Delayed exposure to digital learning environments and limited access to enrichment opportunities can affect learners' confidence and adjustment during transitions, particularly when moving into more resource intensive educational settings (UNESCO, 2021). These challenges are often experienced as sudden shifts rather than gradual progression, shaping how learners interpret their readiness and future possibilities.

Preparedness for educational transitions is also shaped by social and relational factors. Family encouragement, teacher guidance, and peer support have been shown to influence how learners manage academic change and maintain motivation during periods of transition (Felongco et al., 2022). In rural contexts, where formal

transition programs may be limited, these interpersonal supports play a significant role in sustaining learners' engagement and confidence.

Instructional continuity has been identified as an important factor in easing educational transitions. Research indicates that alignment between instructional practices across educational levels can support learners' adjustment by reducing discontinuities in expectations and learning approaches (Hawes & Nelson, 2021). In rural schools, however, structural constraints and staffing limitations may affect the extent to which such alignment is possible, contributing to variability in transition experiences.

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of understanding educational transitions from learners' perspectives. Rather than treating preparedness as a measurable outcome, qualitative studies examine how learners experience transition, interpret challenge, and draw on prior learning experiences to navigate new educational contexts (Goodwin, 2024). This perspective underscores the value of examining preparedness as lived and relational, shaped by cumulative experiences rather than isolated indicators.

By situating educational transitions within rural learning conditions, existing research highlights the need for inquiry that attends to how learners make sense of preparedness and change. These insights provide a foundation for examining how educational trajectories are experienced across time, supporting studies that foreground resident perspectives on learning continuity and growth.

### **Synthesis of Literature and Research Gap**

The reviewed literature demonstrates that rural education is shaped by a complex interplay of resource conditions, instructional practices, adaptive strategies, and social environments. Studies across international and Philippine contexts have established that learners in rural settings often experience constrained access to learning materials, uneven instructional support, and delayed exposure to technology. At the same time, qualitative research highlights how learners and educators adapt through self-directed learning, peer-based assistance, and flexible instructional practices. These bodies of work collectively underscore that education in rural contexts is experienced as situated, relational, and shaped by everyday realities rather than by institutional design alone.

Ecological and phenomenological perspectives further emphasize that learning is embedded within interconnected systems of home, school, and community. Family encouragement, teacher guidance, and community participation have been shown to influence learning continuity and motivation, particularly in contexts where formal support structures are limited. Research on educational transitions adds a temporal dimension, illustrating how early learning conditions shape preparedness and adjustment across educational stages. Together, these studies provide a nuanced understanding of rural education as a lived process formed through cumulative experience.

Despite these contributions, a clear gap remains in the literature. Much of the existing research documents rural education through structural analysis, program evaluation, or comparative assessment. While some qualitative studies explore rural learning, fewer foreground residents' own accounts of how educational challenges are experienced, navigated, and interpreted over time within geographically isolated communities. In the Philippine context, research has largely focused on infrastructure, access, and policy concerns, with limited attention to how learners and community members themselves make sense of education in smaller, mountain based municipalities such as Mankayan, Benguet.

There is also limited integration of residents' perspectives across multiple dimensions of educational experience. Existing studies often examine challenges, strategies, or contextual influences separately, leaving less understood how these elements interact within lived experience. Moreover, residents' articulated recommendations for improving educational growth, grounded in their own learning journeys, remain underexplored in qualitative scholarship. This limits understanding of how improvement is imagined from within the community rather than from external frameworks.

In response to these gaps, the present study adopts a phenomenological–thematic approach to examine the lived educational experiences of residents in a rural community. By centering participant narratives, the study seeks

to understand how educational challenges are encountered, how adaptive practices emerge, how home, school, and community conditions shape learning, and how residents articulate meaningful improvements for educational growth. This focus addresses the need for context specific, experience grounded inquiry and provides a coherent foundation for the research questions that guide the study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a **qualitative phenomenological research design** to examine the lived educational experiences of residents in a rural community in Mankayan, Benguet. The design was chosen to capture how participants experience, interpret, and give meaning to education within conditions shaped by limited resources, geographic isolation, and interconnected home, school, and community contexts. Rather than seeking to measure variables or test hypotheses, the study aimed to understand education as it is lived and experienced by those situated within the rural setting.

Phenomenology is concerned with exploring human experience as perceived and described by individuals, emphasizing meaning rather than explanation or prediction. In this study, phenomenology provided an appropriate lens for examining how residents encounter educational challenges, develop adaptive practices, and articulate aspirations for educational improvement. The design allowed participants to describe their experiences in their own words, preserving the texture and depth of lived meaning that cannot be captured through quantitative approaches.

The study adopted a **Colaizzi informed phenomenological approach** to guide data analysis. Colaizzi's method emphasizes systematic engagement with participant narratives through the identification of significant statements, formulation of meanings, and development of thematic structures grounded in participants' accounts. In this study, Colaizzi's logic was adapted to support thematic organization while maintaining fidelity to phenomenological principles. This adaptation ensured that themes emerged inductively from the data and remained closely anchored to verbatim statements.

The phenomenological design aligned with the study's conceptual framework grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. While Bronfenbrenner's framework informed interpretation by highlighting the interaction of individual, family, school, community, and broader contextual influences, it was not used as a causal or predictive model. Instead, it served as a lens for understanding how educational experience is shaped across interconnected environments, consistent with the study's focus on lived experience.

This research design also supported the study's emphasis on participant voice and contextual depth. By focusing on a single rural community and engaging participants through interviews and focus group discussions, the design enabled sustained attention to local realities and meanings. The intent was not to generalize findings to all rural contexts but to provide a rich, situated account of educational experience that could inform understanding of similar settings.

The qualitative phenomenological research design provided a coherent foundation for addressing the study's research questions. It ensured alignment between the purpose of the inquiry, the nature of the data collected, and the analytic procedures used. This design supported a disciplined exploration of rural educational experience as lived, relational, and contextually embedded.

### Research Locale

This study is conducted in a rural community, located in the municipality of Mankayan, at a raging river, located in a mountainous region of the Cordillera Administrative Region, and it is known for natural resources, cool climate. The Community also have a local economy such as agricultural and sari-sari stores. Most residents are working adults, they work as a farmers, small business owners, laborers and etc. The Community has a facility such as local government and school centers which help and serve the needs of the community. This locale is suitable for this study because the residents themselves are the primary respondents.

## Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were ten residents of a rural community in Mankayan, Benguet who had direct experience with schooling within the community. Participants were selected based on their lived engagement with education in the rural context, allowing them to meaningfully describe educational challenges, adaptive practices, contextual influences, and recommendations for improvement. The focus on residents rather than institutional representatives was intentional, as the study sought to foreground experiential perspectives rather than administrative or policy viewpoints.

| Name   | Age          |
|--------|--------------|
| Sandra | 23 years old |
| Mica   | 23 years old |
| Vena   | 36 years old |
| Julie  | 23 years old |
| Jey-an | 40 years old |
| Alex   | 40 years old |
| Ana    | 36 years old |
| Leizle | 23 years old |
| Ambhit | 42 years old |
| Donna  | 34 years old |

A **purposive sampling strategy** was employed to identify participants who could provide rich and relevant descriptions of the phenomenon under study. Purposive sampling is appropriate in phenomenological research because it prioritizes depth of experience and relevance over representativeness. Participants were selected based on their ability to articulate their educational experiences and reflect on learning within the rural setting. This approach ensured that the data collected were closely aligned with the study's research questions.

The sample size of ten participants was determined based on the study's qualitative and phenomenological orientation. Rather than aiming for statistical generalization, the study prioritized in depth exploration of lived experience. The number of participants allowed for careful engagement with individual narratives while also enabling identification of shared meanings across accounts. This size was sufficient to support thematic analysis while maintaining analytic manageability and rigor.

Participants included individuals with varied educational experiences within the community, allowing the study to capture diverse yet interconnected perspectives on rural learning. Variation in educational background and learning trajectories enriched the data by illustrating how educational experience is shaped across different circumstances while remaining grounded in a shared community context. All participants met the inclusion criteria of having direct experience with schooling in Mankayan.

Ethical considerations guided participant selection and engagement. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in reporting findings, and identifying details were excluded from transcripts and analysis.

By employing purposive sampling and clearly defined inclusion criteria, the study ensured alignment between its research design and analytic goals. The selection of participants supported a focused exploration of rural educational experience while preserving the depth and authenticity essential to phenomenological inquiry.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study were collected through **ten individual semi structured interviews**. This combination of methods was selected to support the phenomenological aim of capturing both individual lived experiences and shared reflections on education within the rural community. Individual interviews allowed for in depth exploration of personal educational journeys.

Semi structured interview guides were used for the individual interviews to ensure alignment with the research questions. The guides covered key areas including educational challenges encountered in the rural context, strategies used to sustain learning, influences of home, school, and community conditions, and participants' recommendations for improving educational growth. The semi structured format allowed consistency across sessions while enabling participants to elaborate on experiences they considered significant.

All interviews were conducted in languages comfortable for the participants, including English, Filipino, and local language expressions. This approach ensured that participants could articulate their experiences naturally and without linguistic constraint. Sessions were audio recorded to capture exact verbatim statements, which were later transcribed for analysis. Brief field notes were taken during and after each session to document contextual details that informed interpretation.

The individual interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis within the community setting to support openness and focused reflection. Each interview lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes, allowing each participant to share experiences without dominance or interruption. The researcher guided the discussion to remain aligned with the study focus while allowing organic interaction to unfold.

Through the use of individual interviews the data collection process generated rich, experience grounded narratives that supported the study's phenomenological and thematic analysis. This approach ensured that both personal and shared dimensions of rural educational experience were captured in a manner consistent with the study's design and research questions.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a **phenomenological, Colaizzi informed thematic approach**, designed to preserve participants' voices while allowing systematic interpretation of lived educational experience. Analysis began after all interview and focus group discussion recordings were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts retained original language use, including English, Filipino, and local language expressions, to ensure fidelity to participants' accounts.

The first stage of analysis involved repeated and careful reading of all transcripts to achieve immersion in the data. This process allowed the researcher to become familiar with the breadth and depth of participants' experiences and to gain an overall sense of how education was lived within the rural community. Attention was given to tone, emphasis, and contextual meaning rather than to frequency of statements.

In the second stage, **significant statements** directly related to the research questions were identified and extracted from the transcripts. These statements were selected based on their relevance to participants' experiences of educational challenges, adaptive strategies, contextual influences, and recommended improvements. Each significant statement was copied exactly as expressed by the participant, without correction or modification, to preserve original meaning.

The third stage involved **formulating meanings** from the extracted significant statements. Formulated meanings were written using neutral analytic language and remained closely grounded in participants' descriptions. Interpretation at this stage focused on capturing the essential meaning of each statement without introducing

theory, explanation, or speculation. Where statements were expressed in local language, English translations were prepared to clarify meaning while preserving tone and intent.

Following meaning formulation, statements were **organized thematically** in relation to the research questions. Rather than imposing pre-existing categories, meanings were clustered based on shared experiential focus. These clusters served as the foundation for developing subthemes and superordinate themes presented in Chapter IV. Throughout this process, care was taken to ensure that each theme remained traceable to specific participant statements, maintaining a clear audit trail from transcript to interpretation.

The final stage of analysis involved integrating the thematic structures into a coherent description of the phenomenon. Themes were reviewed across participants to ensure internal consistency and conceptual distinction. This process supported the development of interpretive narratives that reflected shared meanings while respecting variation in experience. The resulting thematic organization formed the basis for the Results and Discussion.

Throughout the analysis, reflexive attention was maintained to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the data. The Colaizzi informed approach supported analytic rigor by requiring continuous reference to original statements and by preventing premature abstraction. This systematic process ensured alignment between the research questions, data, and findings, while preserving the phenomenological focus on lived experience.

### Data Validation

Data validation in this study was guided by qualitative principles aimed at ensuring that findings remained faithful to participants lived experiences and grounded in the data. Validation was embedded throughout the research process rather than treated as a single procedural step. This approach supported the phenomenological intent of preserving meaning while maintaining analytic rigor.

A primary strategy for data validation involved maintaining a clear **audit trail** from data collection to interpretation. All interviews and the focus group discussion were transcribed verbatim, and original statements were retained during analysis. Significant statements, formulated meanings, and thematic groupings were documented systematically, allowing each interpretive claim to be traced back to specific participant accounts. This process ensured transparency and coherence between raw data and reported findings.

Data validation was further supported through **careful and repeated engagement with the transcripts**. The researcher reviewed the transcripts multiple times across different stages of analysis to confirm consistency of interpretation and to prevent selective attention to particular narratives. Emerging meanings were continually checked against the full set of participant accounts to ensure that interpretations reflected shared and divergent experiences within the dataset.

**Member checking** was conducted to enhance the credibility of the findings. The researchers returned to the participants to present a summary of the analyzed results, including key themes and interpretations derived from the data. Participants were invited to review these summaries and to comment on whether the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences. Feedback from participants was used to clarify meanings, confirm interpretations, and refine thematic descriptions where necessary. This process ensured that the findings remained aligned with participants' intended meanings and lived realities.

The inclusion of both individual interviews and a focus group discussion also contributed to validation through **methodological triangulation**. Individual narratives provided depth and personal perspective, while the focus group discussion allowed shared meanings and points of convergence to emerge through interaction. Comparing insights across these data sources strengthened confidence in the thematic patterns identified.

Throughout the analysis, the researchers practiced **reflexive awareness** by continuously examining assumptions and interpretations in relation to the data. Interpretations were revisited and refined to ensure that they were grounded in participant accounts rather than researcher expectations. This reflexive process further supported the trustworthiness of the study.

By integrating audit trails, iterative engagement with data, member checking, triangulation, and reflexive practice, the study ensured that its findings remained credible, coherent, and faithful to participants lived educational experiences. These validation procedures strengthen confidence in the integrity of the analytic outcomes presented in subsequent chapters.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the conduct of this study to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Given the qualitative and phenomenological nature of the research, particular attention was given to ensuring that participation was voluntary, informed, and respectful of participants lived experiences.

Prior to data collection, participants were clearly informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the type of information that would be requested during interviews and the focus group discussion. They were made aware that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced.

Confidentiality and anonymity were upheld throughout the research process. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants, and identifying details were removed from transcripts and analytic materials to prevent identification. Audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents were handled with care and used solely for research purposes. Access to these materials was limited to the researchers to ensure data security.

The study was conducted with sensitivity to participants' social and community context. Interviews and the focus group discussion were carried out in settings that were familiar and comfortable for participants, allowing them to share experiences without undue pressure. The researchers remained attentive to participants' emotional responses during data collection and ensured that discussions did not cause harm or distress.

Ethical responsibility was also observed during analysis and reporting. Participants' statements were reproduced verbatim to preserve meaning, and interpretations were grounded in the data to avoid misrepresentation. Findings were presented in a manner that respected participants' voices and avoided judgment, stereotyping, or deficit framing of the rural community.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the study ensured that participants were treated with respect and that the research process upheld standards of integrity, responsibility, and care. These considerations support the credibility of the study and reinforce trust between the researchers and the community involved.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

The trustworthiness of this qualitative study was established through strategies aligned with the criteria of **credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability**. These criteria guided the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to ensure that the findings faithfully represent participants lived educational experiences within the rural community.

**Credibility** was supported through prolonged engagement with the data and systematic analytic procedures. The researchers engaged in repeated and careful reading of interview and focus group discussion transcripts to achieve immersion and familiarity with participants' accounts. Significant statements were extracted directly from verbatim transcripts, and interpretations were continuously checked against the original data to ensure that meanings reflected participants' intended experiences. Credibility was further strengthened through member checking, where participants reviewed summaries of the findings and confirmed that the interpretations resonated with their lived realities.

**Dependability** was addressed by maintaining a clear and transparent documentation of the research process. Data collection procedures, analytic steps, and decision points were recorded systematically to allow for traceability. The use of a Colaizzi informed phenomenological approach provided a structured and consistent

analytic pathway, ensuring that findings were derived through an orderly and repeatable process rather than ad hoc interpretation.

**Confirmability** was ensured through reflexive practice and the maintenance of an audit trail. The researchers remained attentive to personal assumptions and interpretations throughout analysis, regularly revisiting transcripts to ground interpretations in participant statements. The audit trail linking raw data, significant statements, formulated meanings, and themes allowed findings to be traced back to participants' accounts, supporting interpretive neutrality.

**Transferability** was supported through thick description of the study context, participants, and educational setting. By providing detailed accounts of the rural community of Mankayan, Benguet, and the conditions shaping educational experience, the study enables readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. While the study does not aim for statistical generalization, the depth of contextual description allows for meaningful comparison and analytic transfer to other rural settings.

Through the integration of these strategies, the study ensured that its findings are credible, coherent, and grounded in participants lived experiences. These trustworthiness measures reinforce the integrity of the research process and support confidence in the analytic outcomes presented in the study.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this study. The research was conducted independently, and no external funding, sponsorship, or organizational affiliation had any role in the design of the study, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, or preparation of the manuscript. All authors affirm that the study was carried out with full academic integrity and transparency, and that the findings presented reflect the authentic lived experiences of the participants without bias or undue influence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on the lived educational experiences of residents learning in a rural environment. Guided by a phenomenological approach and informed by Colaizzi's method, the analysis foregrounds participants' voices while moving carefully toward interpretive understanding. The chapter integrates results and discussion to show how meanings emerged directly from the data and how these meanings can be understood within the context of rural education. Throughout the chapter, interpretations remain grounded in verbatim accounts and aligned with the study's purpose, scope, and research design.

The findings are organized strictly according to the four revised Research Questions. Each Research Question is addressed through one superordinate theme that captures the shared meaning of participants' experiences, followed by conceptually distinct subthemes. This structure reflects the phenomenological intent of the study, allowing patterns to emerge from individual narratives without fragmenting participants' lived realities. The organization ensures clarity, coherence, and a transparent audit trail from raw data to interpretation.

The analysis draws exclusively from interview data provided by residents of Barangay Guinaoang, most of whom are working adults who experienced education within the rural community. As described in Chapter III, these participants were selected because of their direct and sustained engagement with rural learning contexts. Their accounts reflect both past schooling experiences and reflective assessments shaped by later educational or work transitions. This dual perspective allows the findings to capture not only immediate challenges but also the long term implications of rural education on opportunities and self-understanding.

In keeping with the phenomenological orientation of the study, the chapter prioritizes meaning over frequency. The focus is not on how many participants shared a particular experience, but on how experiences were described, felt, and interpreted by those who lived them. Each verbatim statement is treated as a meaningful expression of lived reality, and interpretations are developed cautiously to preserve participants' intent. No

themes or interpretations introduced in this chapter extend beyond what is supported by the data and earlier chapters.

While the discussion section incorporates scholarly literature, this engagement is intentionally restrained and supportive. Literature is used to corroborate participants' meanings, not to overshadow or reinterpret them through external theory. This approach aligns with the study's aim of centering local voices while situating them within broader conversations on rural education. The integration of participant narratives and scholarly work strengthens the credibility and analytic rigor of the findings without shifting the focus away from lived experience.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates how educational challenges, coping strategies, contextual supports and barriers, and resident generated recommendations are interconnected within the rural learning environment. By presenting findings in an integrated results and discussion format, the chapter answers each Research Question clearly while preparing the groundwork for the analytical synthesis and implications discussed in Chapter V.

### **Superordinate Theme 1: Learning Within Persistent Resource and Preparedness Constraints**

This superordinate theme captures how residents' educational journeys were shaped through prolonged exposure to constrained learning conditions and the early assumption of responsibility for educational progress. Participants described schooling that unfolded within limited material, instructional, and institutional contexts, requiring learners to adjust expectations and effort from an early stage. These conditions did not merely present obstacles but actively shaped how learners understood schooling, responsibility, and future possibility. Educational trajectories emerged through continuous negotiation with these realities.

Across narratives, constraint was experienced as a stable condition rather than a temporary disruption. Limited access to resources, delayed exposure to educational tools, and restricted instructional variation formed the backdrop of early schooling experiences. Learners did not describe these conditions as exceptional; instead, they were treated as normal features of education within the community. This normalization influenced how learners approached learning tasks and evaluated their own preparedness over time.

Alongside structural limitations, participants described assuming responsibility for learning earlier than expected. Understanding lessons, keeping pace with academic demands, and sustaining motivation were often framed as individual obligations rather than institutional guarantees. Learners learned to endure, persist, and self-regulate within environments where external support was limited. This early internalization of responsibility became part of how they directed their educational journeys.

These experiences shaped not only day to day learning but also longer term educational direction. As learners transitioned to higher levels of education or encountered different learning environments, earlier conditions became points of comparison. Gaps in exposure, skill development, and academic confidence were recognized in hindsight, linking early schooling experiences to later challenges and opportunities. Educational trajectories were thus formed through the interaction of constraint, adaptation, and emerging awareness.

Taken together, the theme reflects how residents' educational paths were neither solely determined by limitation nor defined only by resilience. Instead, learning trajectories were shaped through persistent constraint that required early responsibility, influencing how learners navigated schooling and envisioned future possibilities. The subthemes that follow examine how these conditions were experienced, internalized, and carried forward across educational stages.

#### **Subtheme 1.1: Delayed Exposure to Educational Resources and Institutional Opportunities**

This subtheme focuses on how learners encountered key educational resources later than expected, shaping early learning experiences and expectations. Participants described schooling where access to facilities, technology, and institutional learning opportunities was introduced gradually or only after several years. These delays influenced how learners understood what schooling could offer and what was expected of them academically. Educational exposure unfolded unevenly, shaping both confidence and preparedness over time.

Residents' narratives show that delayed exposure was experienced as part of ordinary schooling rather than as an identified disadvantage at the time. Learners adjusted to what was available and structured their learning around these conditions. Only through later comparison, often during transitions to higher education or different institutions, did the implications of delayed access become more apparent. This subtheme captures how timing, not only availability, shaped educational direction.

**“Sandra”** described initial access to technological facilities by stating, **“*Din computer room ayduy...dakami di first batch ay nang usar.*”** (*There was a computer room, and we were the first batch to use it.*)

This statement reflects how access to educational facilities was phased rather than universal. Being part of the “first batch” suggests that learners encountered technology only after a period of schooling without it. Exposure to digital tools occurred later in the educational timeline, influencing when learners began developing related skills.

The experience highlights how delayed access shaped early academic routines. Prior learning habits were formed without digital support, emphasizing manual methods and limited instructional tools. When technology was eventually introduced, learners had to adjust existing practices rather than build skills gradually. This sequencing influenced confidence and fluency with new resources.

Research on educational access emphasizes that timing of exposure matters for skill development. Ast (2014) noted that delayed access to learning technologies can affect learners' readiness for subsequent academic demands. More recent studies confirm that late exposure often requires accelerated adjustment during educational transitions (Goodwin, 2024).

**“Vena”** described restricted access to digital tools by stating, **“*Adi dan ipaagem endakami... di ipa-agem da et din typewriter.*”** (*They would not let us use computers; they gave us typewriters.*)

This statement highlights institutional decisions that limited learners' exposure to contemporary tools. Even when computers existed, students were directed toward outdated alternatives. Access was shaped not only by availability but by policy and control.

The experience shows how delayed exposure was reinforced through instructional choices. Using typewriters restricted opportunities to develop digital literacy aligned with emerging academic expectations. Learners adapted to what was permitted, shaping their understanding of what learning tools were considered appropriate within the school context.

Studies on technology use in rural schools note that restricted access policies can delay digital skill acquisition despite the presence of equipment (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's account reflects how such policies were lived in everyday schooling.

**“Vena”** situated delayed exposure within a broader historical context by stating, **“*Sin time me lang ed edi et kurang di gamit kaman dadin computers.*”** (*In our time, there were lacking resources like computers.*)

This statement frames limited access as characteristic of a particular period rather than a temporary condition. Learners understood scarcity as part of their educational era. Exposure to resources was shaped by when they attended school, not only by individual effort.

The experience highlights how generational timing influenced learning opportunities. Learners adjusted expectations to what was available during their schooling years. This normalization of scarcity influenced how learners evaluated their own preparedness later on.

Research supports the role of temporal context in shaping educational experience. Ast (2014) emphasized that prolonged exposure to low resource environments shapes learners' academic identities and expectations. These effects often become visible during later transitions (Goodwin, 2024).

“Sandra” described limited access to learning spaces by stating, “*Siduy din library sisi, am amey kami man bukuklat sisi.*” (*We would go to the library and read there.*)

This statement reflects how access to institutional learning spaces required additional effort. Libraries were not embedded in daily school routines but accessed through deliberate action. Exposure to reference materials depended on learners’ initiative.

The experience illustrates how delayed or limited access shifted responsibility onto learners. Instead of structured library use within school hours, students sought resources independently. This influenced how learners associated access with effort rather than entitlement.

Studies on library access in rural contexts show that limited integration of learning spaces delays familiarity with research practices (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account demonstrates how learners navigated these conditions.

“Sandra” described the need to travel for academic tasks by stating, “*Din ngay man print ka man research ka amey ka ed abatan.*” (*When you need to print or do research, you have to go to Abatan.*)

This statement situates educational access within geographic realities. Printing and research, typically supported within school settings, required travel outside the community. Exposure to academic processes was therefore shaped by distance and mobility.

The experience highlights how delayed access extended beyond tools to include services. Learners encountered institutional academic practices later and under more demanding conditions. These constraints influenced how learners planned and valued academic tasks.

Research on rural education consistently notes that geographic isolation delays access to institutional academic support (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s experience reflects how distance shaped exposure and preparedness.

The accounts in this subtheme show that delayed exposure to educational resources and institutional opportunities shaped early learning experiences in lasting ways. Learners encountered key tools, spaces, and practices later than expected, influencing habits, confidence, and expectations. These delays were normalized within schooling, becoming visible mainly through later comparison.

Through these narratives, delayed exposure emerges as a formative condition shaping educational trajectories. Timing influenced not only what learners accessed, but how they understood learning itself. This understanding clarifies how early educational environments directed learning journeys and framed future opportunities under Research Question 1.

## Subtheme 1.2: Instructional Conditions Shaping Early Learning Expectations

This subtheme examines how everyday instructional conditions shaped learners’ early understanding of what teaching and learning looked like. Participants described classroom experiences where lessons were delivered through limited methods and materials, forming expectations about pace, depth, and interaction. Instructional practices were shaped by availability rather than by curricular choice, influencing how learners perceived the scope of learning. These conditions became the reference point against which later educational experiences were judged.

Residents’ narratives indicate that early learning expectations were formed within classrooms where instructional variety was constrained. Lessons emphasized listening, copying, and memorization, with fewer opportunities for exploration or extended practice. These practices were treated as normal and sufficient during early schooling. Over time, they shaped how learners anticipated instruction and assessed their own readiness.

“Vena” described the materials commonly used in instruction by stating, “*Visual aids... manila paper aside sin board, books.*” (*Visual aids like manila paper, aside from the board and books.*)

This statement reflects how instruction relied on manual and improvised materials. Manila paper and chalkboards served as the primary means of presenting lessons. The absence of varied instructional tools shaped how content was delivered and received.

The experience shows how these materials influenced learning expectations. Lessons were structured around what could be written, displayed, and copied. Learners became accustomed to linear presentation and repetition, shaping habits that emphasized recall over inquiry.

Research on instructional practice in low resource settings notes that reliance on basic materials often narrows instructional approaches (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's account reflects how such practices were experienced as routine rather than limiting.

**“Sandra”** reflected on how instruction proceeded during class time by stating, *“Nu maga di man isuro, free time.”* (If there was no teaching, it became free time.)

This statement highlights how instructional continuity depended on immediate teacher preparation and availability. When lessons could not proceed, structured learning was replaced by unplanned time. Instructional gaps shaped expectations about how class periods functioned.

The experience illustrates how learning was closely tied to direct instruction. Without alternative activities or materials, learning paused altogether. This shaped learners' expectations that instruction occurred only when actively delivered by teachers.

Studies on instructional continuity emphasize that limited resources reduce flexibility in lesson delivery (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's experience demonstrates how such conditions influenced learning norms.

**“Sandra”** described instructional support through teacher guidance by stating, *“Sin teachers metlang iman di mangidalan sin adal mi.”* (The teachers are also the ones who guide us in our learning.)

This statement reflects the centrality of teachers in shaping instruction. Guidance was experienced as direct and personal, with limited supplementary materials. Learning expectations were anchored in teacher explanation rather than independent exploration.

The experience shows how instruction was person centered rather than system supported. Learners expected understanding to come through teacher guidance. This shaped reliance patterns that later influenced transitions to more autonomous learning environments.

Research on teacher centered instruction in rural schools notes similar dynamics. Escamilla (2015) highlighted that teacher guidance becomes the primary instructional mechanism where resources are limited. Goodwin (2024) further emphasized the long term influence of such reliance.

**“Donna”** reflected on instructional methods by stating, *“Kasjay ladta di way di panagadal mi idi.”* (That was just how our way of studying was before.)

This statement frames instructional conditions as normalized practice. The participant described learning methods as established and unquestioned. Instructional limitations were internalized as standard rather than as areas for improvement.

The experience illustrates how expectations were shaped through repetition and familiarity. Learners did not anticipate alternative instructional approaches because they had not experienced them. This normalization influenced how learners evaluated later instructional environments.

Research supports the idea that prolonged exposure to limited instructional practices shapes learner expectations (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account reflects how early norms guided later perceptions.

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“**Ambhit**” described instructional pacing by stating, “*Nu malpas di lesson et man sardeng metlang.*” (*When the lesson was finished, it also stopped there.*)

This statement reflects how instruction was bounded by lesson completion rather than extended practice or reinforcement. Learning followed a start and stop pattern, with limited follow up. Instructional expectations were shaped around completion rather than mastery.

The experience shows how pacing influenced learning habits. Once a lesson ended, learners did not expect further engagement or deepening of understanding. This shaped expectations about responsibility for practice and review.

Studies on instructional pacing in constrained classrooms highlight similar patterns. Felongco et al. (2022) noted that limited time and materials often result in lesson closure without reinforcement. The participant’s account grounds this observation in lived experience.

The narratives in this subtheme show that early instructional conditions shaped how learners understood teaching, learning, and responsibility. Instruction relied on limited materials, direct guidance, and bounded lesson structures. These conditions formed expectations that learners carried forward into later educational stages.

Through these accounts, instructional conditions emerge as formative influences on learning expectations. Early schooling shaped how learners anticipated instruction and assessed their readiness, clarifying how educational trajectories were directed under persistent constraint within Research Question 1.

### **Subtheme 1.3: Early Formation of Self Reliance and Learning Accountability**

This subtheme examines how learners began to assume responsibility for their own learning at an early stage as a response to constrained instructional and resource conditions. Participants described educational experiences where understanding lessons, keeping pace with academic demands, and completing requirements were perceived as personal obligations rather than guaranteed supports. Self-reliance emerged not as an explicitly taught value, but as a practical response to everyday schooling realities. These early assumptions shaped how learners directed their effort and evaluated their role in the learning process.

Residents’ narratives indicate that learning accountability developed through repeated exposure to situations where assistance was limited or inconsistent. Learners learned to endure difficulty, manage frustration, and persist without immediate clarification or reinforcement. Responsibility for comprehension and completion gradually shifted inward, shaping learning identity. This subtheme captures how early schooling experiences cultivated a sense of personal accountability that influenced later educational direction.

“**Julie**” described this experience by stating, “*Kadakdakean ay karit siguro panag anus ay man skwela.*” (*The biggest challenge is having patience to continue studying.*)

This statement reflects how persistence became central to learning. The emphasis on patience suggests that learning required endurance rather than immediate understanding. The participant framed difficulty as something to be endured personally rather than resolved through external support.

The experience shows how accountability was internalized early. Learners came to expect that continuing to study depended on their own capacity to endure academic strain. This shaped learning as a test of personal discipline rather than solely of comprehension.

Research on learner persistence highlights that early exposure to constrained learning environments often fosters self-regulation as a coping response (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account reflects how endurance became part of learning identity.

“**Julie**” described taking responsibility for understanding lessons by stating, “*Nu wada di adin mi maawatan, dakami metlang di mangusisa.*” (*If there was something we did not understand, we were the ones who asked and figured it out.*)

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This statement highlights proactive responsibility for comprehension. Rather than waiting for structured remediation, learners sought clarification through their own initiative. Learning accountability was enacted through action.

The experience illustrates how learners adapted to limited instructional follow up. Responsibility for understanding shifted toward the learner, reinforcing independence. This practice shaped confidence in seeking solutions while also reflecting limited systemic support.

Research supports this pattern. Escamilla (2015) noted that learners in low support environments often develop proactive learning behaviors. More recent studies continue to emphasize how self-initiated inquiry compensates for limited instructional scaffolding (Goodwin, 2024).

**“Donna”** framed learning responsibility through effort by stating, *“Kasjay ladta adi di way di panagadal mi idi.”* (That was just how our way of studying was before.)

This statement reflects normalization of self-reliance. The participant described learning practices as established routines rather than conscious choices. Responsibility for learning was internalized as part of what schooling required.

The experience shows how self-reliance became embedded in learning culture. Learners did not question the need to manage their own understanding. This normalization shaped expectations about support and responsibility.

Research on learning culture formation indicates that repeated exposure to self-directed demands shapes learner identity over time (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account reflects how early routines influenced later learning orientation.

**“Ambhit”** emphasized endurance through task completion by stating, *“Nu ada ti project mi, agtutulong kami tapno malpas.”* (When we had projects, we helped each other so we could finish.)

This statement reflects accountability focused on completion. Learners organized themselves to meet requirements despite limited guidance or resources. Responsibility was oriented toward finishing tasks rather than refining understanding.

The experience illustrates how accountability was shaped by output expectations. Learners prioritized meeting requirements through cooperation. This shaped learning as goal directed and effort based.

Research highlights that task-oriented accountability often emerges in constrained learning contexts (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account shows how responsibility was enacted collectively.

**“Vena”** described personal effort in learning by stating, *“Kailangan metlang ay isagana mi din adal mi.”* (We also needed to prepare our studies ourselves.)

This statement directly expresses self-preparation as a learner responsibility. Preparation was not framed as teacher directed but as an expected personal task. Learning accountability was clearly individualized.

The experience shows how preparation became part of learning identity. Learners expected to organize their own study practices. This shaped autonomy while also reflecting limited structured guidance.

Research supports the idea that self-preparation emerges as a response to limited instructional support (Goodwin, 2024; Escamilla, 2015). The participant’s experience reflects how accountability developed through necessity.

The narratives in this subtheme show that early learning accountability emerged through endurance, initiative, and normalization of self-reliance. Learners assumed responsibility for understanding, preparation, and task completion in response to constrained conditions. These practices shaped learning identity and persistence.

Through these accounts, self-reliance appears as a formative outcome of early educational experience. Accountability for learning was carried forward into later stages, shaping how learners navigated challenges and directed their educational journeys under Research Question 1.

#### **Subtheme 1.4: Educational Direction Influenced by Preparedness Gaps and Transition Challenges**

This subtheme examines how earlier learning conditions became visible and consequential during educational transitions. Participants described moments when moving to higher levels of schooling or encountering new learning environments revealed gaps in preparation that were not apparent during earlier stages. These realizations were shaped by comparison, exposure, and increased academic demands. Educational direction was influenced not only by aspiration but by how prepared learners felt to meet new expectations.

Residents' narratives indicate that preparedness gaps were often recognized retrospectively. During basic education, limited exposure and constrained instructional practices were treated as normal. It was only when learners entered different institutional contexts that differences in skill, confidence, and familiarity with academic tools became apparent. This subtheme captures how transitions functioned as points of recognition where earlier experiences shaped future possibilities.

“Alex” described encountering difficulty during transition by stating, *“Idi nag college ak et nakitak nga nagadu ti kurang ko.”* (When I entered college, I realized I had many deficiencies.)

This statement reflects awareness that emerged through transition. The participant did not frame earlier schooling as inadequate at the time, but recognized gaps only after entering a more demanding environment. The realization suggests that preparedness was assessed through comparison rather than prior evaluation.

The experience highlights how transitions exposed the cumulative effects of earlier constraints. Skills and knowledge assumed to be foundational were revealed as underdeveloped. This awareness shaped how learners understood their educational direction and the effort required to continue.

Research on educational transitions emphasizes that preparedness gaps often become visible only when learners encounter different institutional standards (Goodwin, 2024; Ast, 2014). The participant's account reflects how transition served as a moment of recalibration.

“Julie” described adjustment challenges by stating, *“Narigat di adjustment ko idi.”* (My adjustment was difficult.)

This statement captures the experiential weight of transition. Adjustment was not framed as a brief inconvenience but as a significant challenge. The participant's reflection suggests that earlier learning conditions did not fully prepare them for new academic demands.

The experience shows how transitions required learners to renegotiate learning habits and expectations. Difficulty in adjustment reflected gaps in exposure, pacing, and instructional style. These challenges influenced confidence and persistence during early stages of transition.

Research supports the link between instructional background and adjustment difficulty. Felongco et al. (2022) noted that learners from constrained environments often experience challenges adapting to resource rich settings. Similar findings highlight the role of preparedness in shaping transition experiences (Goodwin, 2024).

“Alex” reflected on skill related challenges by stating, *“Nu kasjay ay computer, awan ti ammok idi.”* (With computers like that, I did not know how before.)

This statement highlights how delayed exposure translated into skill gaps during transition. Encountering unfamiliar tools emphasized differences between prior learning conditions and new expectations. The participant framed the challenge as lack of prior opportunity rather than lack of ability.

The experience illustrates how preparedness gaps were tied to exposure rather than motivation. Learners faced steep learning curves during transition, shaping how they evaluated their readiness. These challenges influenced confidence and academic pacing.

Research on digital preparedness notes that late exposure increases adjustment demands during transitions (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account grounds this issue in lived experience.

**“Donna”** described how earlier learning habits influenced later performance by stating, *“Idi high school ket kasjay ladta di adal mi.”* (In high school, that was just how we studied.)

This statement links earlier instructional norms to later difficulty. The participant framed prior study practices as fixed routines that did not align with new expectations. Transition required unlearning established habits.

The experience shows how preparedness gaps extended beyond skills to include learning approaches. Habits formed under constrained instruction shaped how learners engaged with new academic environments. Adjustment required both skill acquisition and behavioral change.

Research highlights that learning habits developed early strongly influence transition outcomes (Escamilla, 2015; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's account reflects how earlier norms shaped later challenges.

**“Ambhit”** described emotional responses to transition by stating, *“Na pressure ak idi gapu sin ad adal.”* (I felt pressured because of the studies.)

This statement captures the affective dimension of preparedness gaps. Pressure emerged from recognizing increased academic demands without corresponding preparation. Emotional strain accompanied cognitive adjustment.

The experience shows how preparedness gaps influenced motivation and wellbeing. Learners navigated both academic and emotional challenges during transition. These experiences shaped decisions about persistence and future direction.

Research emphasizes that emotional adjustment is a critical component of educational transitions (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's reflection illustrates how preparedness gaps affect multiple dimensions of learning.

The narratives in this subtheme show that educational transitions functioned as moments where earlier learning conditions became visible. Preparedness gaps influenced adjustment, confidence, and emotional response. These experiences shaped how learners evaluated their educational direction and future opportunities.

Through these accounts, transitions emerge as critical points linking early educational experiences to later outcomes. Preparedness gaps did not originate at transition but were revealed through it. This understanding completes the analysis of how lived experiences shaped educational trajectories under Research Question 1.

The findings under Research Question 1 show that educational trajectories were shaped through prolonged exposure to constrained learning conditions coupled with the early assumption of responsibility for learning. Participants described schooling that unfolded within limited access to resources, instructional variety, and institutional opportunities. These conditions shaped not only what learners encountered in classrooms, but also how they understood learning, effort, and preparedness. Educational direction emerged through continuous adjustment rather than through stable support.

Delayed exposure to educational resources influenced how learners formed early expectations about schooling. Instructional practices shaped by limited materials normalized particular ways of learning, setting boundaries around what learners considered possible or sufficient. Within these conditions, learners began to internalize responsibility for understanding lessons, preparing for tasks, and persisting through difficulty. Accountability for learning developed early as a practical response to everyday schooling realities.

As learners moved across educational stages, earlier experiences gained new meaning. Transitions to higher levels of education revealed gaps in exposure, skills, and learning habits that had been less visible before. These moments of recognition influenced confidence, adjustment, and emotional response, shaping how learners navigated new academic demands. Educational direction was therefore influenced by both past conditions and present comparison.

Taken together, the subthemes show that educational journeys were formed through the interaction of constraint and early responsibility. Learning trajectories were neither static nor predetermined, but shaped through lived experience that directed effort, expectation, and adaptation. This understanding clarifies how residents' educational paths developed over time, answering Research Question 1 by showing how early schooling conditions shaped both learning experiences and future opportunities.

## **Superordinate Theme 2: Learning Through Adaptation, Resourcefulness, and Shared Support**

This section addresses Research Question 2 by advancing the superordinate theme *Learning Through Adaptation, Resourcefulness, and Shared Support*. While residents described persistent educational constraints, they also articulated ways of responding to these conditions through active adjustment rather than withdrawal. Learning was not experienced as a passive process shaped solely by limitation, but as one that required initiative, flexibility, and collaboration. Participants' accounts show that coping emerged from daily efforts to make learning possible within constrained environments.

Across narratives, adaptation took multiple forms, ranging from individual actions to collective practices. Residents described seeking resources beyond the immediate school setting, drawing on peers and teachers, and adjusting learning strategies to fit available tools. These responses were not framed as exceptional but as necessary parts of everyday schooling. Coping, in this sense, became embedded in how learning was carried out rather than something invoked only during moments of crisis.

The shared meaning across participants points to resourcefulness as a learned disposition shaped by context. When standard supports were unavailable, learners developed ways of compensating through creativity and persistence. These practices were often informal, relying on relationships and improvisation rather than formal programs. Such forms of support were sustained through social interaction and mutual assistance, highlighting the communal dimensions of coping in rural learning environments.

Participants' narratives also suggest that shared support played a critical role in sustaining engagement with schooling. Teachers, peers, and community members were described as accessible sources of help, guidance, and encouragement. These relationships provided continuity in learning even when material resources were scarce. Coping was therefore not only an individual effort but a collective process shaped by shared responsibility.

Taken together, *Learning Through Adaptation, Resourcefulness, and Shared Support* captures how residents navigated educational constraints through active response rather than resignation. The theme sets the foundation for examining the specific strategies and forms of support that enabled learners to continue engaging with education despite limited resources. The subthemes that follow unpack these practices by tracing how learners sought resources, relied on relationships, and adapted instruction to sustain learning.

### **Subtheme 2.1: Self Directed Search for Learning Resources Beyond the School**

This subtheme examines how learners actively extended their learning beyond the physical and institutional boundaries of the school to address gaps in resources. Participants described learning as requiring movement, initiative, and personal effort when school-based materials and facilities were insufficient. Seeking resources outside the school was not framed as optional enrichment but as a necessary part of completing academic tasks. These practices shaped learning as an activity embedded in everyday navigation of space and access.

Residents' narratives indicate that self-directed resource seeking became a routine aspect of schooling. Learners identified where resources were available and adjusted their study practices accordingly, even when this involved

travel, additional expenses, or time constraints. These actions reflect agency shaped by context, where responsibility for learning extended beyond formal instructional provision. The subtheme captures how learners compensated for institutional limits through deliberate effort.

“**Sandra**” described this practice by stating, “*Siduy din library sidi, am amey kami man bukbuklat sidi.*” (*We would go to the library and read there.*)

This statement reflects how the library functioned as an alternative learning space when classroom resources were limited. The participant’s phrasing suggests repeated visits, indicating that this was a sustained practice rather than a one-time response. Independent reading became a way to supplement lessons and address unmet academic needs.

The experience shows how learners took initiative in directing their own learning. By seeking out the library, the participant exercised autonomy in accessing information beyond what was provided in class. This practice shaped learning habits oriented toward self-study and persistence, reinforcing responsibility for one’s own academic progress.

Research supports the importance of alternative learning spaces in resource constrained contexts. Goodwin (2024) noted that rural learners often rely on libraries to compensate for limited school materials. Felongco et al. (2022) similarly observed that access to community learning spaces encourages self-directed learning when institutional support is insufficient.

“**Sandra**” described the need to leave the community to complete academic tasks by stating, “*Din ngay man print ka man research ka amey ka ed abatan.*” (*When you need to print or do research, you have to go to Abatan.*)

This statement highlights how basic academic activities required physical travel beyond the community. Printing and research, which are commonly school supported functions, became external processes dependent on distance and transportation. Learning was therefore shaped by geographic realities as much as by instructional demands.

The experience illustrates how learners had to plan academic work around logistical constraints. Time spent traveling reduced available study time and introduced additional effort into routine school tasks. This shaped learning as an activity integrated into daily movement and decision making rather than confined to school hours.

Studies on rural education emphasize that geographic distance often adds invisible burdens to academic engagement. Ast (2014) documented that learners in remote areas expend additional effort simply to access basic academic services. More recent work continues to highlight how distance affects learning continuity and persistence (Goodwin, 2024).

A similar strategy was described by “**Mica**” stated, “*Read books, libraries... dumayo kami sin bangir ay school.*” (*We read books, used libraries, and went to nearby schools.*)

This statement reflects how learners accessed resources across multiple sites. Nearby schools served as supplementary learning environments, allowing students to borrow materials or consult references unavailable in their own school. Learning thus occurred through informal networks rather than isolated institutions.

The experience demonstrates how learners navigated institutional boundaries to sustain academic work. Seeking resources from other schools required confidence and initiative, reinforcing adaptability. These practices broadened learners’ exposure while highlighting disparities in resource distribution.

Research on inter institutional resource sharing in rural contexts notes similar patterns. Hawes and Nelson (2021) found that learners often rely on neighboring schools to fill material gaps. Felongco et al. (2022) also emphasized that such practices reflect resilience and strategic problem solving.

“**Mica**” emphasized the role of personal effort in resource seeking by stating, “*Amey kami man bukbuklat... tapno waday basa-en mi.*” (*We went to read so that we would have something to study.*)

This statement underscores intentional effort to secure learning materials. The participant framed reading as something that required deliberate action rather than passive access. Learning depended on creating opportunities rather than waiting for provision.

The experience highlights how self-directed practices shaped learning identity. Learners came to see themselves as responsible for finding ways to learn despite limited support. This orientation influenced persistence and adaptability, qualities that later shaped educational transitions.

Research supports the link between self-directed learning and persistence in constrained environments. Escamilla (2015) found that learners who actively seek resources develop stronger coping strategies. Goodwin (2024) similarly emphasized that self-directed practices enhance resilience among rural students.

“**Vena**” described how resource seeking became a shared activity by stating, “*Dumayo kami tapno maka-inap si libro.*” (*We went out to look for books.*)

This statement reflects collective effort in accessing learning materials. Resource seeking was sometimes undertaken with peers, reinforcing cooperation alongside initiative. Learning was sustained through shared action, not individual effort alone.

The experience shows how self-directed resource seeking intersected with social support. Peers collaborated to locate materials, easing the burden of access. This practice strengthened both academic engagement and social bonds.

Research highlights that collaborative resource seeking supports learning persistence in low resource contexts. Felongco et al. (2022) observed that peer collaboration in accessing materials enhances motivation. Hawes and Nelson (2021) also noted that shared effort mitigates the effects of scarcity.

“**Jey-an**” described how independent effort became part of everyday learning by stating, “*Kasjay ladta di panagadal mi idi, isunga dakami metlang di mangala sin maaramid.*” (*That was how our studying was before, so we were the ones who did what needed to be done.*)

This statement reflects how self-directed learning was normalized rather than framed as an exceptional response to constraint. The participant described initiative as embedded in routine, suggesting that learners did not wait for formal provision when resources were lacking. Learning required identifying what was missing and finding ways to address it.

The experience shows how responsibility for resource access shifted toward learners. Self-direction emerged as an expected part of schooling, shaping learning as action oriented and problem focused. This orientation influenced how learners navigated academic tasks and sustained progress despite limited institutional support.

Research on learner agency in constrained environments highlights that repeated exposure to limited provision fosters self-initiated resource seeking (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account illustrates how such practices became habitual rather than reactive.

“**Ambhit**” described preparation beyond school by stating, “*Kailangan metlang ay isagana mi din adal mi.*” (*We also needed to prepare our studies ourselves.*)

This statement emphasizes personal preparation as a response to limited school-based resources. Preparation occurred outside formal instruction, indicating that learners anticipated gaps and addressed them independently. Learning extended into home and personal time.

The experience highlights how self-directed practices compensated for constrained instructional support. Learners organized their study routines to meet academic demands. This shaped learning as a continuous process rather than one confined to classroom hours.

Research supports the importance of self-preparation in contexts where institutional support is limited. Goodwin (2024) noted that learners in rural settings often rely on independent study to bridge resource gaps. Escamilla (2015) similarly emphasized that self-regulation supports learning persistence.

“Donna” reflected on searching for learning support during difficulty by stating, *“Nu marigatan ak sin adal, kasapulak metlang di makatulong.”* (When I struggled with my studies, I also looked for someone who could help.)

This statement situates self-directed search within moments of academic strain. Resource seeking was triggered by difficulty rather than routine, highlighting adaptability. The participant framed help seeking as an active response to challenge.

The experience shows how learners navigated learning networks beyond formal structures. Searching for assistance required initiative and awareness of available support. This practice reinforced learning as socially situated and self-managed.

Research on adaptive learning strategies notes that help seeking behavior is a critical component of self-regulated learning in low resource contexts (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account reflects this adaptive response.

The narratives presented here show that self-directed search for learning resources was a core coping strategy for residents. Learning extended beyond the school into libraries, neighboring institutions, and distant locations. These practices required initiative, planning, and persistence, shaping how learners experienced education in the rural environment.

Through these accounts, learning emerges as an active process sustained through movement and effort. Resource seeking became part of how learners constructed access to education, revealing adaptability shaped by context rather than convenience.

## **Subtheme 2.2: Reliance on Teachers as Primary Academic Anchors**

This subtheme examines how teachers served as the most stable and trusted academic reference point for learners navigating a resource constrained school environment. Participants consistently described teachers as the primary figures who mediated access to knowledge, clarification, and academic direction. When instructional materials, facilities, or external resources were limited, teachers became the central anchors that sustained learning continuity. This reliance was shaped not by formality alone but by proximity, availability, and established relationships of trust.

Residents’ narratives indicate that teacher support extended beyond routine classroom instruction. Learners approached teachers for explanations, references, and guidance when other sources were unavailable. Teachers were perceived as bridges between curricular demands and learners’ actual capacity to meet them. This subtheme captures how teaching presence compensated for institutional gaps and shaped how students navigated academic challenges.

“Ana” articulated this reliance clearly by stating, *“Through sin teachers ladta adi. Sin references ay ited da.”* (It was only through the teachers. They were the ones who gave the references.)

This statement emphasizes exclusivity in access to academic resources. The participant framed teachers as the sole channel through which references could be obtained, highlighting the absence of alternative institutional supports such as libraries or digital databases. Learning depended heavily on interpersonal access rather than system level provision.

The experience reflects how teachers functioned as custodians of academic materials. By sharing references, teachers extended learning beyond what was physically available in the classroom. This role shaped learners’

dependence on teacher initiative and generosity, reinforcing the importance of teacher student relationships in sustaining academic progress.

Research supports the centrality of teachers in low resource contexts. Felongco et al. (2022) noted that teachers in rural schools often act as primary distributors of learning materials. Goodwin (2024) similarly emphasized that strong teacher presence mitigates the effects of institutional scarcity by providing learners with consistent academic guidance.

**“Mica”** described how teachers guided learners toward additional sources of help by stating, **“*Man interview, mandamag sin higher ay graders.*”** (*We asked higher graders or older students.*)

Although this statement refers to peer assistance, it emerged within a context where teachers encouraged or normalized help seeking behavior. The participant’s account reflects an instructional culture where teachers facilitated learning indirectly by legitimizing peer support. Teachers thus extended their influence beyond direct instruction.

The experience shows how teachers helped structure informal learning networks. By allowing or encouraging consultation with higher graders, teachers enabled learners to access explanations suited to their level. This practice reinforced collaborative learning while maintaining teachers’ role as academic anchors who guided learning pathways.

Studies on teacher mediated peer learning highlight similar dynamics. Hawes and Nelson (2021) observed that teachers in constrained settings often foster informal support systems to sustain learning. Escamilla (2015) also noted that teacher endorsement of peer assistance strengthens comprehension and persistence.

**“Mica”** reflected on teacher involvement during instruction by stating, **“*Nu maga di man isuro, free time.*”** (*If there was no teaching, it became free time.*)

This statement indirectly highlights the centrality of teachers in structuring learning time. When teachers were unable to conduct lessons, learning activities often stopped altogether. The participant’s account suggests that instructional continuity depended strongly on teacher presence and capacity.

The experience underscores how teachers functioned as the organizing force of learning. Without their active engagement, learning lacked structure. This reliance reveals both the importance of teachers and the vulnerability of learning systems that depend heavily on individual effort rather than institutional backup.

Research on instructional continuity in rural schools emphasizes this dependence. Goodwin (2024) noted that when schools lack substitute systems or learning materials, teaching interruptions can halt learning entirely. Hawes and Nelson (2021) similarly highlighted the risks of over reliance on teacher availability in low resource environments.

**“Mica”** described a more collaborative dimension of teacher reliance by stating, **“*When it comes to PowerPoint presentation dakami or tulongan mi daida ay man amag.*”** (*When it comes to PowerPoint presentations, we help the teachers make them.*)

This statement illustrates a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students. While teachers remained academic anchors, students contributed their skills to support instructional preparation. Learning became a shared task shaped by cooperation rather than hierarchy alone.

The experience shows how teacher reliance evolved into mutual support. Students assisting teachers created opportunities for skill practice while sustaining instruction. This collaboration strengthened learning relationships and allowed limited technology to be used more effectively.

Research supports the value of such reciprocal instructional relationships. Goodwin (2024) found that collaborative teacher student practices enhance engagement in constrained contexts. Felongco et al. (2022) also observed that shared responsibility helps maintain instructional flow when resources are scarce.

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“Mica” emphasized the guidance role of teachers by stating, “*Sin teachers metlang iman di mangidalan sin adal mi.*” (*The teachers are also the ones who guide our learning.*)

This statement frames teachers as guides rather than mere transmitters of content. The participant’s wording suggests direction, monitoring, and support throughout the learning process. Teachers were seen as figures who helped learners navigate academic demands step by step.

The experience highlights how guidance shaped learners’ confidence and orientation toward schooling. Teachers provided reassurance and structure, helping learners make sense of expectations despite limited resources. This role reinforced teachers’ position as anchors in an uncertain learning environment.

Research on teacher guidance in rural education underscores similar findings. Escamilla (2015) noted that teacher mentorship strengthens learner confidence and persistence. More recent studies continue to highlight the importance of teacher guidance in sustaining engagement in low resource schools (Goodwin, 2024).

“Donna” described how teachers functioned as the main source of direction by stating, “*Nu adi mi ammo, din teachers metlang di pansubsubliyan mi.*” (*When we did not know something, the teachers were the ones we’d go back to.*)

This statement reflects how teachers were positioned as the most reliable point of academic reference. The participant’s wording suggests repeated return rather than one time consultation, indicating sustained dependence on teacher guidance. In contexts where learning materials and alternative supports were limited, teachers became the primary source of clarification.

The experience highlights how reliance on teachers shaped learning behavior. Learners oriented their questions and uncertainties toward teachers, reinforcing teacher centered learning patterns. This reliance provided stability while also limiting opportunities for autonomous exploration.

Research on rural education emphasizes that teachers often serve as the central academic anchors in low resource schools (Escamilla, 2015; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account illustrates how this dependence was lived in daily learning.

“Ambhit” described seeking reassurance from teachers by stating, “*Nu adda di duda mi, teachers di mangipaliwanag.*” (*When we had doubts, the teachers were the ones who explained.*)

This statement emphasizes explanation as a key form of teacher support. Teachers were relied upon to resolve uncertainty and restore confidence in understanding lessons. Learning progression depended on teacher availability and willingness to clarify.

The experience shows how explanation functioned as both cognitive and emotional support. Teachers helped learners regain footing when confusion arose, reinforcing trust in teacher guidance. This reliance shaped expectations that understanding would come through direct instruction.

Research highlights the importance of teacher explanation in sustaining learning where supplementary resources are scarce (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account provides experiential grounding for this role.

“Donna” reflected on emotional reliance on teachers by stating, “*Nu na pressure ak, teachers di pakasaritan ko.*” (*When I felt pressured, the teachers were the ones I talked to.*)

This statement expands teacher reliance beyond academic clarification to emotional support. Teachers were approached not only for content related concerns but also for reassurance during stress. The participant framed teachers as trusted figures within the learning environment.

The experience illustrates how teacher presence contributed to emotional regulation and persistence. Talking to teachers helped learners manage pressure and continue engaging with academic tasks. This role reinforced teachers as anchors within both academic and emotional dimensions of learning.

Research on teacher student relationships underscores that emotional support from teachers enhances learner resilience, particularly in constrained environments (Goodwin, 2024; Escamilla, 2015). The participant's reflection reflects this dual role.

**“Julie”** described reliance on teacher guidance during adjustment by stating, *“Nu narigat di adal, teachers di mangibaga no sinoy amagen.”* (When studies were difficult, teachers told us what to do.)

This statement reflects how teachers provided direction during periods of uncertainty. Guidance was procedural as well as instructional, helping learners navigate academic demands. Teachers served as reference points when learners were unsure how to proceed.

The experience shows how teacher guidance shaped learners' capacity to cope with difficulty. Direction reduced ambiguity and supported continued engagement. This reliance was especially significant during adjustment to new or challenging learning demands.

Research on instructional guidance emphasizes that clear teacher direction is crucial for learner persistence in low support contexts (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's account illustrates how such guidance was experienced.

The narratives presented here show that teachers occupied a central position in learners' educational experiences. They provided access to materials, structured learning time, facilitated peer support, and guided academic progress. Reliance on teachers emerged as a key coping strategy shaped by institutional scarcity.

Through these accounts, teachers appear not simply as instructors but as stabilizing figures who held learning together. Their presence and involvement shaped how learners navigated challenges, reinforcing the human dimension of education within constrained rural contexts.

### **Subtheme 2.3: Peer Based Assistance and Informal Remedial Practices**

This subtheme explores how learners relied on peer relationships as a practical and immediate form of academic support within a resource constrained learning environment. Participants described peers not merely as classmates, but as accessible sources of explanation, clarification, and encouragement when formal instructional support was limited. Peer based assistance emerged from everyday interaction and shared experience, rather than from structured academic programs. These practices shaped learning as a collective process grounded in cooperation.

Residents' narratives show that informal remedial practices developed naturally in response to academic difficulty. Learners identified classmates or higher graders who could help explain lessons, particularly in subjects perceived as challenging. This form of assistance did not replace teacher instruction but supplemented it, allowing learners to continue progressing despite gaps in formal support. The subtheme captures how peer interaction functioned as a stabilizing force in sustaining learning.

**“Mica”** described seeking help from peers by stating, *“Man interview mandamag sin higher ay graders.”* (We asked higher graders or older students.)

This statement reflects how learners actively sought assistance from more experienced students. Asking questions was framed as a normal and acceptable practice, indicating that help seeking was embedded in the learning culture. Higher graders served as approachable sources of explanation, especially when learners felt uncertain about lesson content.

The experience highlights how knowledge flowed across levels rather than remaining confined within a single class. Learners benefited from explanations grounded in shared school experience, often delivered in familiar language. This practice helped bridge understanding and reinforced confidence in asking for help.

Research supports the effectiveness of peer assisted learning in low resource contexts. Escamilla (2015) found that learners often rely on peer explanations to supplement limited instruction. Hawes and Nelson (2021) similarly noted that cross level peer support strengthens comprehension and persistence among students.

**“Jey-an”** pointed to organized peer support by stating, **“Math club... nag re remedial sila.”** (*Math club... they did remedial sessions.*)

This statement highlights the presence of informal yet organized remedial practices led by students. The math club provided a space where learners could revisit difficult concepts with peers who had stronger understanding. Although not institutionalized, these sessions addressed specific academic needs.

The experience illustrates how peer groups created focused opportunities for practice and clarification. Remedial sessions allowed learners to engage with content at a manageable pace, reducing anxiety around difficult subjects. These practices helped sustain engagement in areas that might otherwise hinder academic progress.

Studies emphasize the value of peer led remediation in resource limited schools. Felongco et al. (2022) observed that student organized academic groups improve understanding and reduce learning gaps. Goodwin (2024) also highlighted that peer remediation fosters shared responsibility for learning.

**“Jey-an”** described peer collaboration in daily learning by stating, **“Kada nu wada di adi mi maawatan, agtutulong kami.”** (*Whenever we did not understand something, we helped each other.*)

This statement reflects how peer assistance was embedded in routine classroom interaction. Help was not reserved for special sessions but occurred whenever difficulties arose. Learning was experienced as a shared effort rather than an individual struggle.

The experience shows how mutual support shaped classroom dynamics. Learners relied on one another to clarify concepts, reinforcing a sense of collective responsibility. This practice contributed to learning continuity even when formal explanation was limited.

Research on collaborative learning supports this pattern. Hawes and Nelson (2021) noted that peer collaboration enhances understanding and engagement in constrained classrooms. Escamilla (2015) similarly emphasized that shared problem solving strengthens persistence.

**“Donna”** highlighted the emotional dimension of peer support by stating, **“Mas kaya mi nu ada kakaduwa mi.”** (*We could manage better when we were together.*)

This statement points to how peer presence influenced learners’ confidence and motivation. Studying together reduced feelings of isolation and made academic tasks feel more manageable. Emotional reassurance complemented academic assistance.

The experience illustrates how peer support addressed both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. Being part of a group helped learners endure academic pressure and remain engaged. This dual function strengthened the overall learning experience.

Research emphasizes that peer support enhances emotional resilience in learning environments. Goodwin (2024) found that peer companionship reduces stress and improves persistence. Felongco et al. (2022) also noted that emotional support among peers reinforces academic engagement.

**“Julie”** described peer assistance in completing tasks by stating, **“Nu ada di project mi, agtutulong kami tapno makalpas.”** (*When we had projects, we helped each other to finish.*)

This statement reflects how peer cooperation extended to academic production. Projects were completed through shared effort, distributing workload and knowledge. This practice ensured task completion despite limited individual resources.

The experience highlights how peer collaboration functioned as a practical coping strategy. By pooling skills and effort, learners managed academic demands more effectively. This approach reinforced teamwork as a learning strategy shaped by context.

Research on cooperative learning supports this finding. Escamilla (2015) noted that group work enhances task completion in low resource settings. Hawes and Nelson (2021) also emphasized that cooperative practices mitigate the effects of material scarcity.

**“Vena”** described how peers became immediate sources of clarification by stating, *“Nu wada di adi mi maawatan, kakadua mi metlang di mangipaliwanag.”* (When there was something we did not understand, our classmates were the ones who explained.)

This statement reflects how peer explanation functioned as a routine learning practice. Assistance was sought within the immediate social circle, making clarification accessible and timely. The participant’s phrasing suggests that peer help was embedded in everyday classroom interaction.

The experience shows how informal remediation emerged organically. Learners relied on classmates who could explain concepts in familiar language. This practice reduced hesitation in asking questions and supported continuity of learning despite limited formal remediation.

Research on peer assisted learning highlights that informal explanation among classmates strengthens comprehension and engagement, especially in low resource contexts (Escamilla, 2015; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account illustrates how such practices were normalized.

**“Ambhit”** described peer support during academic difficulty by stating, *“Nu marigatan kami sin adal, agtutulong kami tapno makaawat.”* (When we struggled with our studies, we helped each other so we could understand.)

This statement emphasizes collective effort as a response to difficulty. Learning challenges were addressed through cooperation rather than individual struggle. The participant framed understanding as something achieved together.

The experience highlights how peer based assistance supported learning persistence. Working together allowed learners to manage difficulty without disengaging. This practice fostered a sense of shared responsibility and mutual support.

Research notes that cooperative learning strengthens persistence and reduces academic isolation (Goodwin, 2024; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant’s experience reflects how collaboration functioned as informal remediation.

**“Donna”** emphasized emotional reassurance through peer interaction by stating, *“Nu na pressure ak, kakadua mi di manpakalma.”* (When I felt pressured, my classmates were the ones who comforted me.)

This statement highlights the emotional dimension of peer support. Assistance extended beyond academic explanation to reassurance and encouragement. Peers provided relief during moments of pressure.

The experience shows how emotional support contributed to learning continuity. Comfort from peers helped learners manage stress and remain engaged with academic tasks. This emotional dimension strengthened the effectiveness of peer based remediation.

Research emphasizes that peer emotional support plays a critical role in sustaining engagement, particularly under academic stress (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account grounds this role in lived experience.

**“Julie”** described relying on peers for guidance by stating, *“Nu adak ammo, kakaduwa mi di mangisuro no kasano.”* (When I don’t know, my classmates were the ones who showed me how.)

This statement reflects how peers provided practical guidance in learning tasks. Assistance involved demonstration and shared practice rather than formal explanation. Learning occurred through observation and imitation.

The experience illustrates how peer guidance addressed gaps left by limited instructional time. Classmates became immediate mentors, helping learners complete tasks and build understanding. This practice reinforced collaborative learning norms.

Research on peer modeling highlights its effectiveness in supporting skill acquisition in constrained classrooms (Felongco et al., 2022; Escamilla, 2015). The participant's reflection shows how such practices operated informally.

The accounts in this subtheme show that peer based assistance played a significant role in sustaining learning. Informal remedial practices, shared problem solving, and emotional support allowed learners to navigate academic challenges collectively. These practices strengthened learning continuity in the absence of formal remediation systems.

Through these narratives, peer interaction emerges as a vital coping mechanism within the rural learning environment. Learning was carried forward through cooperation, shared effort, and mutual encouragement, reinforcing education as a communal process shaped by necessity and solidarity.

#### **Subtheme 2.4: Adaptive Instructional Practices in Low Resource Contexts**

This subtheme focuses on how instruction continued through adjustment and improvisation when standard teaching tools and facilities were limited. Participants described classrooms where learning was sustained through flexible practices rather than through access to complete instructional resources. Teaching was shaped by what could be prepared, shared, or improvised within existing conditions. These adaptations were not framed as innovations but as everyday responses to scarcity.

Residents' narratives indicate that adaptive instructional practices involved both teachers and students. Lessons relied on manual materials, shared preparation, and cooperative effort to maintain continuity. Instruction was shaped by available time, tools, and skills within the classroom. This subtheme captures how learning persisted through adjustment rather than through formal instructional design.

**“Vena”** described the materials used during instruction by stating, *“Visual aids... manila paper aside sin board, books.”* (Visual aids like manila paper, aside from the board and books.)

This statement reflects how teaching relied on handmade instructional materials. Manila paper and chalkboards served as primary tools for presenting lessons when printed or digital materials were unavailable. Instruction required teachers to simplify content and focus on essential information.

The experience shows how adaptation shaped lesson structure and pacing. Visual aids supported explanation but limited opportunities for interactive or multimedia engagement. Students engaged with content through copying and listening, shaping learning habits that emphasized repetition.

Research on low resource instruction notes that improvised materials help sustain teaching while constraining instructional variety (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Felongco et al., 2022). These findings align with the participant's account of manual instructional practice.

**“Mica”** described collaborative adaptation by stating, *“When it comes to PowerPoint presentation dakami or tulongan mi daida ay man amag.”* (When it comes to PowerPoint presentations, we help the teachers make them.)

This statement illustrates how students contributed to instructional preparation. Although technology was limited, learners with relevant skills assisted teachers in creating presentations. Instruction thus became a shared task shaped by cooperation.

The experience reflects how adaptive practices altered classroom roles. Students supported teachers while gaining opportunities to practice technical skills. This collaboration allowed limited technology to be used more effectively and reinforced shared responsibility for learning.

Research emphasizes that collaborative instructional practices enhance engagement in constrained contexts. Goodwin (2024) found that teacher student collaboration sustains instruction when resources are scarce. Escamilla (2015) similarly highlighted the value of shared instructional roles.

“**Sandra**” reflected on interruptions in instruction by stating, “*Nu maga di man isuro, free time.*” (*If there was no teaching, it became free time.*)

This statement points to moments when instruction could not proceed due to limited preparation or resources. Instead of alternative learning activities, class time became unstructured. The experience reflects the limits of adaptation when instructional support was insufficient.

Unstructured time affected learning continuity and routine. When lessons could not be delivered, students experienced gaps that influenced engagement. This highlights how adaptation had boundaries shaped by available support.

Research on instructional continuity in low resource schools notes that material and logistical constraints can interrupt learning flow (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s experience illustrates these challenges.

“**Vena**” situated instructional adaptation within temporal context by stating, “*Sin time me lang ed edi et kurang di gamit kaman dadin computers.*” (*In our time, there were lacking resources like computers.*)

This statement frames adaptive practices as responses to sustained scarcity rather than short term shortage. Teachers and students adjusted to what was available over extended periods. Instructional norms developed within these conditions.

The experience shows how long-term adaptation shaped expectations about teaching. Manual methods and shared effort became standard practice. Only later did learners recognize the limits of such instruction when encountering different educational environments.

Research on rural education highlights how prolonged resource limitation shapes instructional norms and learner expectations (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account reflects this normalization of adaptation.

“**Vena**” described how instructional effort was distributed by stating, “*Nu ada di project mi, agtutulong kami tapno makalpas.*” (*When we had projects, we helped each other to finish.*)

This statement reflects how instruction extended into collaborative task completion. Projects were managed through shared effort when individual access to resources was limited. Instruction was supported through cooperation.

The experience highlights how adaptive practices involved students taking active roles in sustaining learning. Cooperation compensated for limited materials and time. This approach reinforced collective responsibility for completing academic tasks.

Research supports the role of cooperative practices in sustaining instruction under constraint. Felongco et al. (2022) noted that shared effort helps maintain academic productivity in low resource contexts. Hawes and Nelson (2021) similarly emphasized cooperative adaptation.

“**Vena**” reflected on how instruction adapted to available conditions by stating, “*Kasjay ladta di panangisuro da idi, isu nga kasjay metlang di inaramid mi.*” (*That was just how they taught before, so that was also what we did.*)

This statement reflects how instructional practices shaped learner response through imitation and adjustment. Teaching methods were accepted as given, and learners aligned their study behaviors accordingly. Adaptation occurred through conformity to instructional norms rather than through innovation.

The experience shows how instructional adaptation functioned as alignment rather than change. Learners adjusted expectations and effort to match how lessons were delivered. This alignment supported continuity of learning while reinforcing limited instructional variation.

Research on instructional adaptation in constrained contexts highlights that learners often mirror teaching practices when alternatives are unavailable (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account illustrates how adaptation became a shared pattern.

**“Ambhit”** described how instruction proceeded within fixed limits by stating, *“Nu awan ti gamit, kasjay metlang di adal.”* (When there were no materials, learning was just like that.)

This statement emphasizes how instructional form was dictated by material availability. Teaching adapted to absence rather than presence, shaping lesson delivery and engagement. Instruction continued, but within narrow bounds.

The experience highlights how learners adjusted to instructional constraints without expecting substitution. Learning persisted through acceptance of limitation. This shaped how learners evaluated instructional adequacy and possibility.

Research notes that instructional practices in low resource classrooms often stabilize around minimal materials, shaping both teaching and learning expectations (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's reflection grounds this pattern in lived experience.

**“Donna”** described adaptive instruction during academic difficulty by stating, *“Nu narigat di lesson, teachers metlang di mangala sin simple ay paraan.”* (When the lesson was difficult, the teachers used simpler ways.)

This statement reflects how instructional adaptation involved simplification. Teachers adjusted explanation and delivery to accommodate learner understanding within existing constraints. Adaptation focused on accessibility rather than expansion.

The experience shows how simplification helped sustain engagement. While depth may have been limited, instruction remained understandable. This approach supported continuity of learning under constrained conditions.

Research on instructional simplification emphasizes its role in maintaining engagement where resources and time are limited (Goodwin, 2024; Escamilla, 2015). The participant's account illustrates how such adaptation was experienced.

**“Julie”** reflected on adaptive instruction during transition by stating, *“Kasjay di inaramid da tapno makasuroy kami metlang.”* (That's what they did so that we could also keep up.)

This statement frames instructional adaptation as a response to learner pacing. Teachers adjusted methods to help students continue progressing. Adaptation aimed at maintaining movement through lessons rather than achieving mastery.

The experience illustrates how instructional practices were oriented toward inclusion and continuity. Teachers adjusted delivery to prevent learners from falling behind. This supported progression within constrained instructional environments.

Research highlights that adaptive pacing and instructional adjustment are common strategies in low resource settings to sustain participation (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's reflection aligns with these findings.

The narratives in this subtheme show that adaptive instructional practices allowed learning to continue despite scarcity. Improvisation, collaboration, and flexibility shaped how lessons were delivered and completed. These practices sustained instruction while revealing the limits imposed by low resource conditions.

Through these accounts, adaptation emerges as a necessary condition for instruction rather than an optional strategy. Learning persisted through shared effort and adjustment, completing the analysis of coping strategies under Research Question 2.

The findings under Research Question 2 show that learning in the rural context was sustained through deliberate adaptation, initiative, and shared effort shaped by limited institutional provision. Learners did not experience adaptation as an abstract strategy but as a practical necessity embedded in everyday schooling. Responses to constraint emerged through routine actions such as searching for resources beyond the school, relying on teachers for guidance, and working with peers to manage academic demands. These practices formed the operational core of learning under constrained conditions.

Self-directed search for learning resources revealed how learners extended education beyond formal school boundaries. Preparation, help seeking, and independent study were carried out in response to anticipated or experienced gaps in instructional support. These practices required planning, effort, and persistence, shaping learning as an activity integrated into daily life rather than confined to classrooms. Resource seeking became a regular component of how learners sustained progress.

Reliance on teachers as primary academic anchors highlighted the centrality of human support in navigating constrained learning environments. Teachers provided explanation, direction, reassurance, and emotional grounding when material resources were limited. This reliance stabilized learning experiences, particularly during periods of uncertainty or difficulty. At the same time, peer based assistance complemented teacher support by offering immediate clarification, emotional reassurance, and shared problem solving, reinforcing learning as a collective endeavor.

Adaptive instructional practices completed this pattern by showing how teaching and learning continued through alignment, simplification, and pacing adjustments. Instruction adapted to available materials and learner capacity, prioritizing continuity and inclusion. These adaptations sustained participation while shaping the form and limits of learning. Together, the subthemes demonstrate that learning under Research Question 2 was carried forward through adaptation and shared responsibility, revealing how learners and educators navigated constraint through everyday practices rather than formal interventions.

### **Superordinate Theme 3: Learning Shaped by Interconnected Home, School, and Community Conditions**

This section addresses Research Question 3 through the superordinate theme *Learning Shaped by Interconnected Home, School, and Community Conditions*. Participants described learning as an experience influenced by multiple environments operating at the same time rather than by the school alone. Educational experiences were shaped through daily interactions within the household, the classroom, and the wider community, each contributing support or limitation in different ways. These contexts did not function independently but interacted to shape how learning was sustained, disrupted, or encouraged. The shared meaning across narratives highlights learning as situated within a network of relationships and conditions.

Residents' accounts reveal that support and constraint often coexisted within the same environments. The school provided structure and access to instruction, yet it was also a site where limitations in facilities and instructional continuity were felt. Families offered emotional and financial support that helped learners persist, even when school-based resources were insufficient. Community involvement, through barangay initiatives and parent participation, further shaped the learning atmosphere by reinforcing collective responsibility for education.

The narratives suggest that learning stability depended on how these contexts aligned with one another. When family encouragement, school effort, and community involvement worked in concert, learners were better able to cope with educational challenges. Conversely, gaps in one area placed greater pressure on others to

compensate. This interdependence meant that learning outcomes were shaped by balance rather than by any single source of support.

Participants also described how these interconnected conditions influenced motivation and persistence. Support from family and community often reinforced the value of schooling, even when academic conditions were difficult. At the same time, school-based barriers such as limited facilities or interrupted instruction shaped how learners engaged with lessons. These combined influences framed learning as a shared endeavor embedded in social and environmental contexts.

Through this theme, learning emerges as a process shaped by the interplay of home, school, and community rather than by isolated factors. The experiences described by residents point to education as a collective undertaking, influenced by relationships, resources, and shared expectations. The subthemes that follow explore how each context contributed to learning experiences, revealing both enabling and constraining conditions that shaped residents' educational journeys.

### **Subtheme 3.1: School Level Structural Constraints and Enabling Conditions**

This subtheme examines how school level structures simultaneously created opportunities for learning while also imposing limits that shaped students' daily educational experiences. Participants described the school as a space where learning was formally organized and supported, yet bounded by material availability, access rules, and instructional continuity. These conditions did not operate in isolation but interacted to influence how learning time was used, how resources were accessed, and how instruction was sustained. The school environment was therefore experienced as functional but uneven.

Residents' accounts reveal that school level structures influenced learning through both presence and absence. Facilities existed, instruction occurred, and efforts were made to provide learning spaces. At the same time, access was often restricted, delayed, or inconsistent, shaping how students engaged with academic tasks. This subtheme captures how structural conditions framed learning possibilities without attributing responsibility to individual teachers or learners.

One participant described how instructional continuity was affected by school conditions by stating, *“Nu maga di man isuro, free time.”* (If there was no teaching, it became free time.)

This statement reflects how learning time depended heavily on the school's ability to deliver instruction consistently. When teaching could not proceed, class periods were left unstructured rather than redirected toward guided alternatives. The participant's account suggests that instructional time was vulnerable to interruption, shaping how learning routines were experienced.

The experience highlights how structural conditions influence engagement even when students are present and willing to learn. Unstructured time reduced opportunities for guided academic interaction and weakened continuity in learning. Over time, such interruptions shaped expectations about classroom routines and the reliability of instructional support.

Research on rural school structures indicates that instructional disruptions often stem from material and logistical constraints rather than pedagogical intent (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). These findings align with the participant's experience, situating it within broader patterns of structural limitation in low resource schools.

*“Sandra”* reflected on the availability of facilities by stating, *“Din computer room ayduy...dakami di first batch ay nang usar.”* (There was a computer room, and we were the first batch to use it.)

This statement illustrates how school facilities existed but were not immediately or widely accessible. The emphasis on being the “first batch” suggests phased or limited access, affecting when and how students could benefit from available resources. Technology was introduced gradually rather than integrated consistently into instruction.

The delayed access influenced the timing of exposure to digital tools. Students encountered technology after foundational learning habits had already formed around non digital methods. This sequencing shaped confidence and familiarity with tools that later became expected in higher education environments.

Studies on ICT provision in rural schools note that restricted or delayed access can limit meaningful skill development even when facilities are present (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account demonstrates how enabling structures can simultaneously function as constraints.

A more restrictive condition was described by "**Sandra**" who stated, "**Adi dan ipaagem endakami... di ipaagem da et din typewriter.**" (*They would not let us use computers; they gave us typewriters.*)

This statement highlights how school level access rules shaped learning experiences. Even when digital tools were available in broader contexts, students were directed to use outdated alternatives. The participant's account reflects institutional decisions that controlled how resources were utilized within the school.

The reliance on typewriters limited students' exposure to digital interfaces, software, and research tools. While basic skills were practiced, learners were prevented from engaging with technologies aligned with contemporary academic expectations. This restriction shaped the range of competencies students could develop during schooling.

Research examining access policies in rural schools emphasizes that restrictive use of technology can reinforce skill gaps and delay readiness for higher education (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's experience illustrates how such policies are lived in everyday school practice.

"**Vena**" situated these conditions within a broader resource context by stating, "**Sin time me lang ed edi et kurang di gamit kaman dadin computers.**" (*In our time, there were lacking resources like computers.*)

This statement frames structural limitation as a sustained condition rather than a temporary problem. The participant described scarcity as characteristic of a particular period, suggesting that both teachers and students adjusted to what was available. Learning occurred within long standing constraints rather than short term shortages.

This temporal framing reveals how school structures shape norms and expectations over time. When limited resources persist, learners and educators come to treat them as standard conditions. Only later do the implications of such normalization become clear, particularly during transitions to other educational settings.

Research on rural education trajectories supports this pattern. Ast (2014) noted that prolonged exposure to low resource schooling shapes learning expectations and adaptability. More recent studies continue to highlight how sustained scarcity influences preparedness and confidence (Goodwin, 2024).

Instructional structure was also reflected in the materials used during lessons. "**Vena**" shared, "**Visual aids... manila paper aside sin board, books.**" (*Visual aids like manila paper, aside from the board and books.*)

This statement reflects how instruction relied on improvised materials provided within the school setting. Manila paper and chalkboards served as primary instructional tools, shaping lesson format and delivery. These materials enabled instruction to continue but limited exposure to varied learning modalities.

The use of handmade visual aids influenced how information was presented and processed. Lessons emphasized copying and repetition, shaping learning habits that persisted over time. The participant's account shows how school structures enabled learning while constraining instructional diversity.

Studies on instructional materials in rural classrooms note that improvised resources help sustain teaching but often restrict lesson depth and flexibility (Felongco et al., 2022; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The experience described here reflects this balance between enablement and limitation.

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“Vena” described how school conditions were experienced as routine rather than exceptional by stating, “**Kasjay ladta di way di panagadal mi idi.**” (*That was just how our way of studying was before.*)

This statement reflects how structural limitations at the school level were internalized as standard practice. The participant did not describe instructional conditions as inadequate or problematic during the time of schooling. Instead, learning methods and available resources were accepted as the normal form of education. This acceptance shaped how learners evaluated schooling, not through comparison, but through familiarity.

The experience shows how normalization of constrained conditions influenced learning expectations. When limited facilities, instructional methods, or materials were consistently encountered, learners adjusted their expectations accordingly. This normalization reduced immediate awareness of structural gaps and shaped how learners understood what schooling involved. Recognition of constraint emerged only later, when learners encountered different educational environments.

Scholarly work on institutional normalization in low resource schools emphasizes that repeated exposure to constrained conditions shapes learners’ perceptions of adequacy and quality (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). These studies suggest that when scarcity becomes routine, learners are less likely to question structural limitations until contrast is introduced.

“Ambhit” reflected on how school structures influenced adjustment by stating, “**Narigat di adjustment ko idi.**” (*My adjustment was difficult.*)

This statement situates school level structural conditions as influential beyond the immediate schooling context. The difficulty in adjustment suggests that earlier learning environments did not fully prepare the participant for subsequent educational demands. Structural features such as instructional pacing, resource availability, and learning expectations shaped how the learner navigated new environments.

The experience highlights how school structures can have delayed effects. While learning may have progressed within the original school setting, transition revealed mismatches between prior preparation and new expectations. Adjustment difficulty reflects the cumulative influence of school level conditions rather than isolated learning challenges.

Research on educational transitions notes that learners from constrained school environments often experience difficulty adapting to settings with different structural expectations (Goodwin, 2024; Felongco et al., 2022). These findings align with the participant’s reflection, situating adjustment difficulty as an outcome of earlier structural conditions.

“Alex” further described how instructional structure shaped learning routines by stating, “**Nu malpas di lesson ket agsardeng metlang.**” (*When the lesson was finished, it also stopped there.*)

This statement reflects how school level instructional structures defined the boundaries of learning. Lessons were experienced as discrete units with clear endpoints, without extended practice or reinforcement. Learning activity was closely tied to formal lesson delivery rather than ongoing engagement.

The experience illustrates how instructional design shaped learning habits. When lessons ended without follow up, learners did not expect additional guidance or independent extension. This structure influenced how learners understood responsibility for continued practice and shaped expectations about instructional support.

Studies on instructional pacing in resource constrained schools indicate that limited materials and time often lead to instruction focused on completion rather than mastery (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant’s account provides a lived example of how such structures were experienced.

The accounts presented in this subtheme show that school level structures shaped learning in complex ways. Facilities, instruction, and materials were present, yet access, continuity, and diversity were uneven. These

conditions influenced how learning time was used, how resources were experienced, and how students developed skills within the school environment.

Through these narratives, the school emerges as a space where learning was made possible under constraint. Structural conditions both supported and bounded educational experience, shaping engagement and preparedness within the broader network of home and community contexts.

### **Subtheme 3.2: Family Based Emotional and Financial Support**

This subtheme focuses on how families functioned as a steady source of emotional reassurance and material assistance that enabled learners to remain engaged in schooling despite institutional and structural constraints. Participants consistently positioned the family as the most immediate and dependable support system in their educational lives. While schools and communities provided varying forms of assistance, the family emerged as the constant presence that sustained learners through academic difficulty. Support was expressed not only through finances but also through encouragement, expectations, and shared responsibility for schooling.

Participants described family support as woven into everyday life rather than delivered through formal arrangements. Assistance was provided quietly and continuously, shaping how learners coped with resource limitations and academic pressure. Family involvement did not eliminate challenges but made them manageable. This subtheme captures how learning persistence was anchored in household support that addressed both emotional resilience and practical needs.

**“Mica”** explained this support by stating, **“Din family man idawat da sin financial... moral support.”** (*Family provided financial and moral support.*)

This statement reflects how family support operated on both material and emotional levels. Financial assistance addressed concrete needs related to schooling, while moral support helped learners endure academic difficulty. The pairing of these forms of support suggests that learning required more than resources alone. The participant framed family involvement as essential rather than optional.

The experience shows how family support helped stabilize learning when school-based resources were insufficient. Even when access to materials or facilities was limited, learners could rely on their families to sustain participation in schooling. This support shaped learners’ persistence and willingness to continue despite constraints.

Studies on rural education emphasize that family support often compensates for institutional gaps. Goodwin (2024) highlighted that emotional and financial backing from families strengthens student persistence in low resource contexts. Felongco et al. (2022) similarly found that family involvement plays a critical role in sustaining learning continuity.

**“Sandra”** reinforced this experience by stating, **“Siyempre family et financial, emotional, everything.”** (*Of course, family helps financially and emotionally, everything.*)

This statement conveys the breadth and certainty of family support. The emphasis on “everything” suggests that learners perceived family involvement as encompassing all aspects of their educational needs. The tone reflects assurance rather than dependence, indicating that support was expected and dependable.

The experience highlights how family presence influenced learners’ confidence and emotional security. Knowing that family members were invested in their education helped learners navigate academic stress. This sense of backing shaped how learners approached challenges and maintained motivation.

Research supports this interpretation. Escamilla (2015) found that consistent family encouragement strengthens learners’ resilience, especially in contexts where formal educational support is limited. Hawes and Nelson (2021) also noted that emotional stability provided by families buffers learners from academic disengagement.

“**Jey-an**” described family support in relation to personal discipline by stating, “**Kadakdakean ay karit siguro panag anus ay man skwela... no panggep sin financial ya emotional support kasjay wada met iman provide di pamilya.**” (*The biggest challenge is having patience to study... but when it comes to financial and emotional support, the family provides it.*)

This statement situates family support alongside internal challenges faced by learners. While the participant acknowledged struggles with motivation and patience, family support remained a stable presence. The distinction suggests that academic difficulty was viewed as personal, whereas support was external and reliable.

The experience shows how family support functioned as a counterbalance to internal challenges. When motivation waned, the presence of family encouragement and provision helped learners continue schooling. This dynamic reinforced learning as a shared responsibility rather than an individual struggle.

Literature on student persistence highlights similar patterns. Ast (2014) noted that family backing often sustains learners during periods of low motivation. Goodwin (2024) further emphasized that emotional reinforcement from families supports self regulation and persistence in rural schooling contexts.

“**Julie**” described specific actions taken by family members by stating, “**Nan provide da, through financial man tapos e-encourage da saken ay esesten din skwelak kasjay.**” (*They provided financial support and encouraged me to do my best in my studies.*)

This statement highlights encouragement as an active form of support. Beyond providing resources, family members expressed expectations and motivation that guided learners’ efforts. The encouragement was directed toward effort rather than outcome, shaping how learners approached schooling.

The experience reflects how emotional support influenced learning behavior. Encouragement reinforced commitment and responsibility, helping learners remain focused despite difficulties. This form of support shaped learners’ sense of purpose and accountability.

Research supports the importance of encouragement in academic persistence. Felongco et al. (2022) found that verbal support and expectation setting from families positively influence learner engagement. Hawes and Nelson (2021) also emphasized that encouragement fosters perseverance in constrained learning environments.

A more detailed account of family and community interaction was provided by “**Julie**” who stated, “**First et din family sin financial, sin spiritual... moral support da.**” (*First, the family helps financially, spiritually, and with moral support.*)

This statement expands the scope of family support to include spiritual guidance. Support extended beyond material needs to values and belief systems that shaped learners’ outlook toward education. The participant described family support as layered and foundational.

The experience shows how family support addressed learners’ holistic needs. Spiritual and moral guidance contributed to resilience and meaning making, particularly in challenging circumstances. This form of support strengthened learners’ capacity to endure academic hardship.

Studies on holistic support in education recognize the role of spiritual and moral grounding in sustaining learners. Escamilla (2015) highlighted that culturally rooted family values reinforce educational persistence. More recent work continues to emphasize the importance of holistic family involvement in rural education (Goodwin, 2024).

“**Donna**” described how family support was linked to personal preparation for schooling by stating, “**Kailangan metlang ay isagana mi din adal mi.**” (*We also needed to prepare our studies ourselves.*)

This statement reflects how family support operated alongside expectations of personal effort. Preparation for learning was not described as solely teacher directed, but as an activity encouraged and enabled within the home. The participant’s wording suggests that readiness for school was shaped by household routines and expectations rather than by formal academic supervision.

The experience highlights how family support contributed indirectly to learning by fostering responsibility and discipline. While families may not have provided direct academic instruction, they created conditions that encouraged learners to prepare independently. This form of support shaped learning habits that emphasized responsibility and self-management.

Research on family involvement in rural education emphasizes that households often contribute through expectation setting and routine building rather than direct academic tutoring (Escamilla, 2015; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account illustrates how such support influenced learning preparedness.

**“Donna”** reflected on the consistency of family involvement by stating, **“Kasjay ladta di support di pamilya mi idi.”** (*That was just how our family supported us before.*)

This statement frames family support as stable and habitual. The participant did not describe support as exceptional or conditional, but as a normal part of everyday life. Family involvement was embedded in routine rather than delivered as a response to crisis.

The experience shows how sustained family support contributed to learning stability. Because support was consistent, learners were able to rely on it as a background condition rather than an intermittent intervention. This stability shaped persistence and reduced uncertainty during schooling.

Research on learning stability highlights that predictable family support strengthens learners' capacity to endure academic difficulty (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's experience reflects how routine support influenced educational continuity.

**“Ambhit”** emphasized the emotional dimension of family support by stating, **“Nu marigatan ak et family di pangibatayan ko.”** (*When I was struggling, my family was what I leaned on.*)

This statement highlights family as a source of emotional grounding during academic difficulty. Support was experienced as reassurance rather than direct problem solving. The participant framed family presence as a stabilizing force during moments of strain.

The experience illustrates how emotional support shaped learning persistence. Knowing that family members provided reassurance helped learners manage pressure and continue schooling. This form of support influenced emotional regulation and motivation.

Research consistently notes that emotional backing from families plays a key role in sustaining learner engagement in challenging contexts (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's account grounds this finding in lived experience.

**“Julie”** described family support during adjustment by stating, **“Nu ada di problema ko sin adal, makisao ak metlang sin pamilya.”** (*When I had problems in my studies, I also talked to my family.*)

This statement reflects how family functioned as a space for reflection and reassurance rather than instruction. The participant turned to family members to process academic difficulty. Support was conversational and relational.

The experience shows how family support influenced coping during educational challenges. Talking with family members helped learners manage stress and maintain focus. This relational support shaped learning stability during demanding periods.

Research on family communication highlights its importance in helping learners navigate academic stress (Escamilla, 2015; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's reflection illustrates how dialogue within the family contributed to learning continuity.

The narratives in this subtheme show that family based emotional and financial support played a central role in shaping learning experiences. Families provided stability, encouragement, and resources that enabled learners to

remain engaged despite school level and community constraints. These forms of support worked together to sustain educational participation.

Through these accounts, family emerges as a foundational context for learning. Emotional reassurance and financial provision shaped how learners coped with difficulty and maintained commitment to schooling. This understanding clarifies how home-based support influenced learning within the broader network of school and community conditions.

### **Subtheme 3.3: Community Based Support and Collective Educational Efforts**

This subtheme examines how community involvement complemented home and school support by contributing labor, organization, and shared responsibility for educational development. Participants described the community not as a distant backdrop but as an active presence that shaped schooling through collective actions. Support often took practical forms, centered on improving school facilities, organizing activities, and encouraging student participation in community related initiatives. These efforts reflected a shared understanding that education was tied to communal growth.

Residents' narratives show that community support was mobilized through participation rather than formal programs. Assistance emerged through barangay initiatives, parent involvement, and collaborative school projects. Learners experienced these efforts directly, often through physical participation and visible changes in school spaces. This subtheme captures how collective effort functioned as a source of support that extended learning beyond the classroom.

“**Sandra**” acknowledged this community role by stating, “**Din barangay met iman yan tulungan daka.**” (*The barangay also helps.*)

This statement reflects recognition of barangay involvement as part of the educational environment. Although brief, the participant's account situates the barangay as a supportive presence rather than a separate entity. The phrasing suggests familiarity, indicating that assistance from the barangay was known and expected.

The experience highlights how community support did not need to be elaborate to be meaningful. Even general assistance reinforced the idea that education was a shared concern. This awareness shaped learners' sense of belonging and reinforced the value placed on schooling within the community.

Research on community engagement in rural education emphasizes that local government units often contribute indirectly to educational support through coordination and basic assistance (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). Such involvement strengthens the social environment surrounding learning.

“**Sandra**” described concrete community participation by stating, “**Parents din PTA... naki tulong.**” (*Parents and the PTA also helped.*)

This statement points to organized parental involvement through the PTA. Parents were not passive supporters but active contributors to school initiatives. Their participation linked family and community roles, reinforcing collaboration around educational needs.

The experience illustrates how parental involvement extended into collective action. PTA participation enabled parents to contribute resources and labor, shaping school development. This involvement strengthened ties between households and the school, supporting a cooperative learning environment.

Studies note that parent and PTA engagement is particularly significant in rural contexts, where formal funding may be limited (Felongco et al., 2022; Escamilla, 2015). Such collaboration helps sustain school operations and reinforces shared accountability.

A more detailed account of community effort was provided by “**Jey-an**” who stated, “**Din ground, kasi noon hindi sementado yung ground... per batch project yun.**” (*The ground was not cemented before... it was a project per batch.*)

This statement describes a school development project carried out collectively over time. Each batch contributed to improving the school ground, reflecting sustained communal effort. The project symbolized gradual progress achieved through shared labor rather than external provision.

The experience shows how community support materialized through visible change in school infrastructure. Students directly participated in development work, linking learning with responsibility. This involvement shaped learners' understanding of education as something built through effort and cooperation.

Research on participatory school development highlights that community driven projects foster ownership and commitment among learners (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). Such experiences integrate civic responsibility into educational life.

**“Jey-an”** emphasized student involvement by stating, **“Enkami man bunag si bato... tagfi fifty di esa ay estudyante.”** (*We carried rocks... fifty rocks per student.*)

This statement reflects the physical contribution required from students during community school projects. Participation was structured and collective, with each student assigned a role. The activity required effort and cooperation, reinforcing shared responsibility.

The experience illustrates how learning and community work intersected. Students learned through participation, developing discipline and appreciation for collective effort. These activities shaped attitudes toward school development and community engagement.

Scholarly work recognizes that student participation in community projects strengthens social cohesion and reinforces the relevance of education to communal life (Escamilla, 2015; Felongco et al., 2022). Such involvement supports holistic educational development.

Community support was also described through service-oriented activities. **“Jey-an”** shared, **“Ayagan da iman en dakami ay en man clean up drive.”** (*They invited us to join clean up drives.*)

This statement highlights community initiatives that involved students beyond academic settings. Participation in clean up drives linked schooling with civic responsibility. These activities reinforced values of cooperation and contribution.

The experience shows how community support extended learning into social engagement. Students gained recognition through participation, often requiring certificates to document involvement. This practice connected education with service and accountability.

Research on community service-learning notes that such activities strengthen students' sense of purpose and connection to their community (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). These experiences complement formal education by reinforcing social responsibility.

**“Sandra”** noted community involvement through informational activities by stating, **“Mga PNP nag lecture sila.”** (*The PNP came and gave lectures.*)

This statement reflects collaboration between schools and external community institutions. Lectures provided students with exposure to topics beyond the regular curriculum. Such interactions broadened learning experiences within the rural context.

The experience illustrates how community partnerships supplemented school instruction. External speakers contributed knowledge and perspective, enriching the educational environment. These efforts demonstrated community investment in student development.

Research emphasizes that partnerships with local institutions enhance learning opportunities in resource constrained schools (Felongco et al., 2022; Escamilla, 2015). Such collaborations extend educational reach beyond school boundaries.

“**Jey-an**” reflected on how community involvement in schooling was experienced as routine rather than exceptional by stating, “**Kasjay metlang di komunidad mi, adi da met agkurang nu para sin eskwela.**” (*That’s also how our community was, they did not fall short when it came to school matters.*)

This statement frames community support as a standing expectation rather than a special initiative. The participant described communal involvement as consistent and reliable, suggesting that education was treated as a shared responsibility. Support did not need formal programs to be recognized as meaningful.

The experience shows how community engagement contributed to learning stability. When support was predictable, learners developed confidence that schooling mattered beyond the classroom. This expectation shaped how learners perceived the value of education within the broader social environment.

Research on rural education emphasizes that informal but consistent community involvement strengthens educational continuity (Escamilla, 2015; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account illustrates how communal norms supported learning.

“**Ambhit**” described community participation through shared activities by stating, “**Nu wada di aktibidad sin eskwela, komunidad metlang di mangtulong.**” (*When there were school activities, the community also helped.*)

This statement highlights how community support materialized through participation in school events. Assistance was action oriented and situational, often linked to specific needs. The community responded when called upon, reinforcing cooperation.

The experience illustrates how learning environments extended beyond school boundaries. Community participation helped sustain school programs and activities, allowing learners to experience education as supported by collective effort. This involvement reinforced the idea that schooling was embedded in communal life.

Studies note that community participation in school activities strengthens learners’ sense of belonging and shared purpose (Felongco et al., 2022; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account grounds this dynamic in lived experience.

“**Donna**” emphasized how community presence influenced motivation by stating, “**Nu makita mi ay adu di mangsuporta, ganayan mi metlang nga ag-adal.**” (*When we saw that many were supporting us, we were also encouraged to study.*)

This statement links community support to learner motivation. Seeing visible support from others reinforced commitment to schooling. The participant framed encouragement as emerging from observation rather than direct instruction.

The experience shows how collective support influenced internal motivation. Community presence validated learners’ efforts and strengthened engagement. Learning persistence was shaped not only by resources but by social affirmation.

Research highlights that perceived community investment enhances learner motivation and persistence (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s reflection illustrates this relationship clearly.

“**Julie**” described community involvement during school improvement efforts by stating, “**Nakikibahagi metlang di komunidad nu ada di proyek sin eskwela.**” (*The community also participates when there are school projects.*)

This statement reflects how community support extended to physical and developmental aspects of schooling. Participation in projects required time and effort, demonstrating tangible commitment. Such involvement made educational development visible to learners.

The experience illustrates how collective action reinforced the value placed on education. Seeing community members contribute to school improvement shaped learners' understanding of schooling as a shared investment. This visibility strengthened attachment to school and learning.

Research on community school partnerships notes that collective participation in school projects fosters ownership and educational commitment (Escamilla, 2015; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's account provides experiential grounding for this insight.

The narratives in this subtheme show that community-based support operated through collective action, participation, and shared responsibility. School development projects, service activities, and institutional partnerships shaped learners' experiences in tangible ways. These efforts reinforced education as a communal undertaking rather than an isolated school function.

Through these accounts, community involvement emerges as a vital context shaping learning. Collective efforts strengthened school environments, reinforced values, and connected education to everyday community life. This understanding completes the analysis of how home, school, and community contexts interacted to influence learning experiences under Research Question 3.

### **Subtheme 3.4: Learning Stability Shaped by Social and Environmental Context**

This subtheme focuses on how broader social and environmental conditions influenced the stability and continuity of learning experiences in the rural community. Participants described learning as situated within everyday realities that extended beyond school structures and organized support systems. Factors such as geographic location, daily routines, and social expectations shaped how consistently learners could engage with schooling. These conditions did not operate as isolated barriers but as background influences that framed educational experience over time.

Residents' narratives show that learning stability was shaped by the rhythm of rural life. School attendance, focus, and participation were influenced by environmental demands and social responsibilities that competed with academic tasks. These influences were not always framed as obstacles, but as part of the context in which learning occurred. This subtheme captures how education unfolded within broader living conditions that shaped persistence and engagement.

**“Julie”** described the challenge of sustaining learning focus by stating, **“Kadakdakean ay karit siguro panag anus ay man skwela.”** (*The biggest difficulty is having patience to continue studying.*)

This statement reflects how learning stability was influenced by internal endurance shaped by external conditions. The emphasis on patience suggests that sustaining engagement required ongoing effort rather than momentary motivation. The participant's experience points to how learning was affected by fatigue, routine demands, and the need for perseverance.

The experience highlights how social and environmental contexts influence learners' capacity to maintain focus. When learning occurs alongside daily responsibilities and limited resources, persistence becomes a central challenge. The participant's reflection shows how stability depended on personal endurance shaped by surrounding conditions.

Research on rural learning environments notes that sustained engagement often requires heightened self-regulation due to competing demands and limited institutional support (Goodwin, 2024; Ast, 2014). These findings align with the participant's emphasis on patience as a key factor in continuing education.

**“Mica”** described how environmental context influenced access to learning by stating, **“Din ngay man print ka man research ka amey ka ed abatan.”** (*When you need to print or do research, you have to go to Abatan.*)

This statement situates learning within geographic realities. Academic tasks required physical travel beyond the community, making learning dependent on distance and transportation. The participant's account reflects how environmental context shaped the feasibility and timing of academic work.

The experience illustrates how learning stability was affected by logistical challenges. Time spent traveling reduced time available for study and rest, influencing how learners organized their academic responsibilities. These conditions shaped learning as an effortful process integrated into daily life.

Studies on rural education emphasize that geographic isolation affects learning continuity by adding logistical burdens to academic tasks (Hawes & Nelson, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account reflects how environmental context directly shaped learning practices.

**“Sandra”** reflected on the social dimension of learning by stating, **“Nu man ad adal ka et kaman mai tulong mo metlang sin communitym.”** (*If you study, it feels like you can also help your community.*)

This statement links learning stability to social purpose. The participant framed education as meaningful because of its perceived contribution to the community. This sense of purpose influenced motivation and persistence, shaping how learners valued continued engagement with schooling.

The experience shows how social context reinforced learning stability. When education was connected to communal benefit, learners were more inclined to persist despite challenges. This connection provided meaning that sustained engagement over time.

Research on socially grounded motivation highlights that perceived relevance to community strengthens persistence among rural learners (Escamilla, 2015; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's reflection illustrates how social purpose can stabilize learning trajectories.

**“Donna”** emphasized the role of environment in shaping daily learning by stating, **“Sin time me lang ed edi et kasjay metlang di ay ayu di pasilidad.”** (*In our time, the facilities were also not good.*)

This statement situates learning within long standing environmental conditions. The participant framed limitations as characteristic of a particular period, indicating sustained exposure rather than temporary disruption. Learning stability was shaped by adjusting to these conditions over time.

The experience reflects how prolonged exposure to constrained environments shapes expectations and resilience. Learners adapted to what was available, creating stability through adjustment rather than improvement. This adaptation influenced how learning was sustained across years of schooling.

Research on long term exposure to low resource environments supports this pattern. Ast (2014) and Goodwin (2024) noted that learners often normalize environmental limitations, shaping how they persist and adapt within educational systems.

**“Vena”** reflected on how social expectations influenced learning by stating, **“Kadakdakean ay karit... panag anus ay man skwela.”** (*The biggest challenge is enduring and continuing to study.*)

The repetition of this idea reinforces how endurance was central to learning stability. The participant's emphasis suggests that persistence was shaped by ongoing social and environmental pressures. Learning required sustained effort rather than episodic motivation.

This reflection highlights how learning stability was negotiated daily. Social and environmental contexts required learners to balance responsibilities, expectations, and academic goals. Stability emerged through continued effort rather than through consistent ease.

Research emphasizes that endurance and persistence are critical in rural learning contexts where structural supports are limited (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant's account grounds this understanding in lived experience.

The narratives in this subtheme show that learning stability was shaped by a combination of social meaning, environmental conditions, and personal endurance. Geographic realities, community purpose, and daily routines influenced how consistently learners engaged with education. These conditions framed learning as an ongoing negotiation rather than a linear process.

**“Julie”** reflected on how learning stability was shaped by everyday conditions by stating, **“Kasjay ladta di biag mi idi, isu nga kasjay metlang di adal.”**

*(That was just how our life was before, so that was also how our learning was.)*

This statement situates learning stability within the broader rhythm of daily life. The participant linked schooling directly to lived conditions, suggesting that learning patterns mirrored social and environmental realities. Stability was not derived from structured support but from adaptation to routine.

The experience shows how learners aligned educational effort with surrounding conditions. When daily life involved constraint and repetition, learning followed similar patterns. This alignment reduced disruption but also limited exposure to alternative learning rhythms.

Research on contextual learning emphasizes that educational stability often reflects broader living conditions, particularly in rural settings where schooling is embedded in everyday routines (Ast, 2014; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s account illustrates this alignment clearly.

**“Ambhit”** described how social expectations influenced learning continuity by stating, **“Nu agadal ka ket agtalinaed ka pay lang ay aganus.”**

*(When you study, you just keep enduring.)*

This statement frames learning stability as sustained through endurance. The participant emphasized continuity through persistence rather than through external reinforcement. Stability was achieved by maintaining effort over time.

The experience highlights how social expectations shaped learning behavior. Endurance was normalized as part of studying, influencing how learners interpreted difficulty. Stability emerged through acceptance of sustained effort.

Research on endurance in learning contexts notes that persistence becomes a central stabilizing mechanism when institutional supports are limited (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account grounds this observation in lived experience.

**“Donna”** described how environmental pressures influenced learning focus by stating, **“Na pressure ak idi gapu sin ad adal.”** *(I felt pressured because of the studies.)*

This statement highlights how learning stability was affected by emotional strain. Pressure emerged as part of the learning environment, influencing focus and persistence. Stability was challenged by internal responses to external demands.

The experience shows how emotional context intersected with learning continuity. Pressure did not immediately disrupt learning, but it shaped how learners managed effort and motivation. Stability required emotional regulation alongside academic engagement.

Research emphasizes that emotional strain is a significant factor influencing learning stability, particularly during transitions or periods of increased demand (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s reflection illustrates this interaction.

**“Julie”** reflected on environmental mismatch during schooling by stating, **“Narigat metlang ta awan ti adu ay support idi.”** *(It was also difficult because there was not much support before.)*

This statement situates learning stability within the availability of social and environmental support. Difficulty was linked to absence rather than presence, shaping how learning was sustained. Stability required managing learning under conditions of limited backing.

The experience highlights how reduced support influenced learning continuity. Learners relied on personal adjustment to maintain engagement. Stability was fragile and dependent on individual coping rather than systemic reinforcement.

Research on learning environments underscores that limited social support increases vulnerability to instability in educational engagement (Escamilla, 2015; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's account provides experiential grounding for this finding.

Through these accounts, learning stability emerges as something actively maintained within broader social and environmental contexts. Persistence was shaped by adaptation, purpose, and adjustment to surrounding conditions. This understanding completes the examination of how interconnected contexts influenced learning experiences under Research Question 3.

The accounts examined under Research Question 3 show that learning experiences in the rural community were shaped through the constant interaction of home, school, and community conditions. These contexts did not function as separate spheres but operated together to influence how learners sustained engagement with education. Support from one context often compensated for limitations in another, creating a dynamic balance that shaped persistence, motivation, and access to learning opportunities. Education, in this sense, unfolded within a network of relationships and environments rather than within the school alone.

School level structures provided the formal setting for learning, yet access, continuity, and material conditions shaped how instruction was experienced on a daily basis. Families offered stability through emotional reassurance and financial assistance, enabling learners to continue schooling even when institutional resources were limited. Community involvement extended learning beyond the classroom through collective projects, service activities, and partnerships that reinforced shared responsibility for education. Together, these contexts formed the conditions under which learning was made possible and sustained.

The interaction of these environments influenced not only access to learning but also learners' attitudes toward education. Family encouragement reinforced the value of schooling, while community participation connected learning to social responsibility and collective development. At the same time, school level constraints required learners to adapt and rely on these external supports. Learning persistence emerged from this interplay, shaped by how well these contexts aligned to support educational goals.

In addressing the research question, the findings indicate that learning experiences were neither solely enabled nor constrained by any single context. Instead, educational stability and engagement were shaped by how home, school, and community conditions worked together over time. This interconnectedness highlights education as a shared endeavor embedded in social and environmental realities, offering a deeper understanding of how rural learners navigated their educational journeys.

#### **Superordinate Theme 4: Envisioned Improvements Rooted in Lived Educational Limitations and Collective Responsibility**

This superordinate theme captures how residents articulated improvements by drawing directly from what they had experienced as lacking, difficult, or limiting in their educational journeys. Recommendations were not framed as abstract ideals but as grounded responses to everyday schooling realities. Participants spoke from positions shaped by unfinished facilities, limited access to learning resources, and uneven preparation for academic transitions. Their recommendations reflect an effort to imagine learning conditions that would prevent future learners from facing similar constraints.

Across narratives, improvement was closely tied to material and structural conditions that had shaped earlier learning experiences. Residents emphasized the need for functional facilities, adequate classrooms, learning

tools, and access to technology. These recommendations did not emerge from comparison with ideal systems but from practical encounters with shortage and delay. Improvement was described as bringing schooling to a level that allows learners to keep pace and remain engaged.

Participants also linked educational growth to the quality and availability of instructional support. Recommendations highlighted the importance of clearer guidance, sustained explanation, and sufficient teacher presence to support learning continuity. These suggestions were informed by experiences where instruction was limited by time, resources, or capacity. Improvement was envisioned as strengthening instructional conditions so learners could better understand lessons and prepare for future academic demands.

Beyond school-based factors, residents framed improvement as a shared responsibility involving families and the wider community. Recommendations reflected a belief that educational growth depends on collective effort, whether through support for learners, participation in school activities, or creating safer and more accessible learning environments. Education was positioned as a communal concern rather than an isolated institutional task.

Together, these recommendations show how residents envisioned educational improvement as a process of strengthening foundations rather than introducing unfamiliar systems. Their perspectives connect past limitations to future possibilities, grounding proposed improvements in lived experience. The subthemes that follow examine the specific areas where residents believe change is most needed to support stronger learning conditions in the rural community.

#### **Subtheme 4.1: Calls for Improved Learning Resources and Basic Educational Infrastructure**

This subtheme captures how residents recommended strengthening educational growth through concrete improvements in physical facilities and learning resources. Their recommendations emerged from long term exposure to unfinished buildings, limited classrooms, and inadequate learning tools that shaped everyday schooling. Rather than imagining advanced or abstract reforms, participants focused on foundational conditions they believed must first be addressed for learning to improve. These calls reflect an understanding that educational growth begins with environments that can physically and materially support learners.

Across the narratives, improvement was framed as making schooling functional and sufficient. Residents spoke about roofs, classrooms, libraries, books, and technology not as enhancements but as necessities that were either incomplete or missing. The emphasis on basic infrastructure shows how earlier learning experiences were constrained by physical conditions, prompting residents to articulate improvements grounded in practicality. Educational growth, from their perspective, requires environments that allow teaching and learning to proceed without interruption or disadvantage.

**“Sandra”** emphasized the urgency of improving facilities by stating, **“Siguro din kuwa, better facilities, tapos ad addu met lata di estudyante-en di Guinaoang edwani. So basta din facilities yu din du oy iman adi ka kalpas ay bubong di gym.”** (*Maybe, better facilities, because there are more students in Guinaoang now. The facilities matter, especially since the gym roof is still unfinished.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation rooted in current conditions rather than future aspiration. The participant linked the increase in student population with the need for completed and functional facilities. The unfinished gym roof symbolized how infrastructure lagged behind actual educational needs, affecting how schools accommodated learners.

The experience highlights how physical incompleteness shaped perceptions of educational adequacy. Learning environments that are visibly unfinished signaled limits in institutional capacity. For the participant, improvement meant completing what already existed so that facilities could fully serve their purpose.

Scholarly work emphasizes that inadequate school infrastructure affects learning continuity and student engagement, particularly in rural settings where alternatives are limited (Barrett et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2024).

The participant's recommendation aligns with findings that functional facilities are foundational to educational effectiveness.

**“Sandra”** recommended expanding physical learning spaces by stating, **“More rooms, school buildings ayon met.”** (*More rooms and school buildings, that's all.*)

This concise statement reflects a clear and direct recommendation. The participant identified classroom space as a central concern, suggesting that existing structures were insufficient for current needs. Improvement was framed simply as having more places where learning could occur.

The experience shows how overcrowding or limited space influenced perceptions of educational growth. Without enough rooms, instructional quality and learner comfort were likely affected. The participant's recommendation points to expansion as a necessary step toward improving learning conditions.

Research consistently links adequate classroom space to improved learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Barrett et al., 2019; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's call for more rooms reflects an experiential understanding of this relationship.

**“Vena”** emphasized the need to strengthen learning resources through technology and financial support by stating, **“Ma Strengthen din learning resources specially sin panag enhance technology digital learning, ya waday financial assistance or scholarship kuma.”** (*Learning resources should be strengthened, especially by enhancing technology and digital learning, and there should be financial assistance or scholarships.*)

This statement broadens the idea of infrastructure beyond buildings to include digital learning and financial access. The participant connected resource improvement with both technological enhancement and economic support. Educational growth was envisioned as requiring tools that allow learners to keep pace academically.

The experience illustrates how limited access to technology and financial assistance constrained learning opportunities. The participant recommended improvements that would reduce these barriers and allow learners to engage more fully with lessons. Technology was framed as essential rather than optional.

Studies highlight that access to digital resources and financial support is critical for narrowing rural urban education gaps (Goodwin, 2024; UNESCO, 2021). The participant's recommendation reflects awareness of these disparities grounded in lived experience.

The same participant further elaborated by stating, **“Ta masigurado ay amin ay studyante yan way access da si quality learning resources ya technolohiya. Mai tap tapi din ay ehh books, digital devices, internet access, yah well-equipped ay classroom ta maka keep up sin lesson yah ta waday equal ay opportunities sin urban areas.”** (*To make sure all students have access to quality learning resources and technology, such as books, digital devices, internet access, and well equipped classrooms, so they can keep up with lessons and have opportunities equal to those in urban areas.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation grounded in equity. The participant explicitly linked resource improvement to equalizing opportunities between rural and urban learners. Access to books, devices, and internet was framed as necessary for keeping pace with academic demands.

The experience shows how perceived inequality shaped recommendations for improvement. Educational growth was envisioned as reducing gaps rather than achieving excess. The participant emphasized access as a condition for fairness and continuity in learning.

Research supports the role of equitable resource distribution in improving rural learning conditions and reducing achievement gaps (Barrett et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's articulation aligns with these findings while remaining rooted in local experience.

**“Leizle”** recommended improving access to school through transportation by stating, **“Sino ngata Kayman inya nemnemnek yan kann mayat no nok a yan didoy nok a ta kaman maymaymayat no man inok a**

**dakuma si ay school bus tapno kaspangarigan udan yan mayat ta adi Mabasa di skwela sidoy lang di ammok.”** (*I think it would be better to have a school bus, so that when it rains, students will not get wet on the way to school. That is what I can suggest.*)

This statement highlights infrastructure beyond school buildings. Transportation was framed as part of learning conditions, especially in relation to weather and physical hardship. The recommendation reflects concern for learner safety and attendance.

The experience illustrates how environmental conditions intersected with access to education. Without reliable transport, learners faced physical barriers that affected consistency and comfort. Improvement was envisioned as protecting learners so schooling could proceed without added strain.

Research notes that transportation access significantly influences attendance and participation in rural education (Felongco et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021). The participant’s recommendation reflects an experiential understanding of these challenges.

Collectively, these narratives show that residents envisioned educational improvement through strengthening foundational resources and infrastructure. Their recommendations focused on completing facilities, expanding learning spaces, ensuring access to books and technology, and supporting safe access to school. These calls reflect a shared belief that educational growth begins with environments that allow learning to occur consistently and equitably.

#### **Subtheme 4.2: Desire for Expanded Instructional Support and Teacher Guided Learning**

This subtheme captures how residents recommended improving educational growth by strengthening instructional support and guidance within the school setting. Their recommendations were shaped by experiences where learning depended heavily on limited explanation, minimal follow through, or narrow instructional approaches. Rather than calling for entirely new systems, participants emphasized the need for instruction that better supports understanding, thinking, and preparation for higher levels of learning. Improvement was envisioned as making teaching more supportive, deliberate, and responsive to learners’ needs.

Across the narratives, instructional improvement was framed as essential for helping learners keep pace academically and develop stronger learning habits. Residents highlighted the importance of guidance that goes beyond task completion and encourages deeper engagement. Their recommendations reflect an awareness that learning conditions are shaped not only by materials but by how instruction is delivered and supported. Educational growth, from their perspective, requires instruction that prepares learners cognitively and mentally for future demands.

**“Jey-an”** emphasized the need to strengthen learners’ academic and personal readiness by stating, **“Kailangan Talaga ay ano better knowledge tapno makasabay pa, computer skills tapos stronger mentality, kasi mapan ka college.”** (*Better knowledge is really needed so you can keep up, along with computer skills and stronger mentality, especially when you go to college.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation grounded in transition experience. The participant linked instructional improvement with the need for stronger knowledge foundations, digital competence, and mental readiness. Instruction was seen as central to preparing learners for the demands of higher education.

The experience highlights how earlier instructional limitations became visible during transition. The participant recommended improvement not only in content delivery but also in preparing learners to cope with academic pressure. Instructional support was envisioned as shaping both competence and confidence.

Research emphasizes that instructional quality and preparation significantly influence learners’ readiness for post secondary education, particularly in rural contexts (Goodwin, 2024; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant’s recommendation reflects this relationship from lived experience.

**“Jey-an”** critiqued current learning practices by stating, **“Itauli da adi din iiyat mid idi, magay ginogegelan ngem no maga abe et adi pay kaka asi kayo tan dakami et sus permi adi tan mausar di utek ay kanan da ed wani ket google come out kanam sisi et ya cici sidoy sino ngay sinon question mo aydoy.”** (*They should bring back what we had before, when there was no googling. Even if there was nothing, we still used our minds. Now it is like you search, copy, and paste the answer.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation focused on instructional approach rather than resource absence. The participant expressed concern about overreliance on search engines, suggesting that current practices weaken thinking and effort. Improvement was envisioned as restoring instructional practices that require reasoning and mental engagement.

The experience shows how instructional support was linked to how learners are guided to think and learn. The participant recommended approaches that challenge learners to use their understanding rather than depend on quick answers. Instructional improvement was framed as cultivating thinking rather than limiting access to technology.

Research on digital learning cautions that unstructured reliance on online search tools can reduce critical thinking when not guided by instructional frameworks (UNESCO, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s recommendation reflects this concern through lived experience.

The same participant further recommended restoring structured learning spaces and guided skill development by stating, **“Itauli dan din library ngem maga met tan wan selpon adi mabalin ay maitauli tan enggay wan selpon adi enggay ay din sinon kanan takos di din ay generation yod wani magay mabalin asi no mabalin kuma yan itauli da din doy short course aydoy ay sino di ay din man dadait kayo din stech din old aydoy maka adal kayos di si man dait ya dadin doy sinoy pang awag takos na aydoy ay dadoy metlang di nan an a mi metlang ed idi ya.”** (*They should bring back the library, but it seems hard now because of phones. If possible, they should also bring back short courses like sewing, like before.*)

This statement highlights a recommendation for instructional environments that support guided learning and practical skill development. The participant emphasized the role of libraries and short courses in fostering discipline, focus, and usable skills. Improvement was framed as restoring instructional structures that support both academic and practical learning.

The experience illustrates how residents valued instruction that extends beyond standard classroom lessons. Libraries and short courses were seen as spaces where learners could develop habits, skills, and focus under guided conditions. Instructional improvement was envisioned as broadening learning opportunities in structured ways.

Research supports the role of guided learning spaces and vocational oriented instruction in strengthening engagement and skill formation in rural education (Felongco et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021). The participant’s recommendation reflects an experiential understanding of these benefits.

Collectively, these narratives show that residents recommended instructional improvements that strengthen guidance, thinking, and preparation. Their calls focused on deeper explanation, stronger academic foundations, guided use of technology, and the restoration of structured learning spaces. These recommendations reflect a belief that educational growth depends on instruction that actively supports understanding and readiness for future learning.

### **Subtheme 4.3: Emphasis on Strengthening Community and Family Involvement in Education**

This subtheme reflects how residents recommended improving educational growth by reinforcing the role of families and the wider community in supporting learning. Their recommendations were shaped by experiences where schooling was sustained not only through formal instruction but through shared responsibility beyond the classroom. Improvement was envisioned as deepening collective participation so that learners are supported

academically, emotionally, and practically. Education was described as a concern that extends into homes and communal spaces.

Across the narratives, community and family involvement were framed as stabilizing forces in learning. Residents emphasized that when learners feel supported by people around them, engagement and persistence improve. Their recommendations were not framed as replacing schools but as complementing them through consistent presence, encouragement, and shared effort. Educational growth, from this perspective, depends on strengthening relationships that surround learners.

**“Ana”** highlighted the importance of family involvement by stating, **“Nu marigatan ak et family di pangibatayan ko.”** (*When I was struggling, my family was what I leaned on.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation grounded in emotional experience. The participant emphasized family as a primary source of reassurance during academic difficulty. Improvement was implied through strengthening this support so learners do not face challenges alone.

The experience shows how family involvement influenced learning persistence. Emotional backing helped learners manage pressure and continue studying. The participant’s recommendation suggests that educational growth is strengthened when families are actively present as sources of encouragement and stability.

Research underscores that emotional support from families contributes significantly to learner resilience and persistence, particularly in rural contexts (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s account illustrates this relationship through lived experience.

**“Julie”** described community support through participation by stating, **“Nu wada di aktibidad sin eskwela, komunidad metlang di mangtulong.”** (*When there were school activities, the community also helped.*)

This statement reflects how community involvement was experienced as practical and action oriented. Assistance was provided during school activities, reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility. Improvement was envisioned as sustaining and strengthening this pattern of involvement.

The experience illustrates how community participation enhanced learning environments. When community members contributed to school activities, learners experienced education as valued beyond the classroom. This involvement reinforced motivation and belonging.

Research highlights that community participation in school activities strengthens learners’ sense of support and shared purpose (Felongco et al., 2022; Goodwin, 2024). The participant’s recommendation reflects an understanding that educational growth benefits from active communal engagement.

**“Donna”** emphasized the motivational impact of collective support by stating, **“Nu makita mi ay adu di mangsuporta, ganayan kami metlang ay agadal.”** (*When we saw that many were supporting us, we were also encouraged to study.*)

This statement links community support to learner motivation. Seeing collective encouragement reinforced commitment to learning. Improvement was envisioned as making such support visible and consistent.

The experience shows how shared encouragement influenced learning behavior. Community presence validated learners’ efforts and strengthened engagement. This highlights how educational growth is shaped by social affirmation as much as by instruction.

Research notes that perceived community investment enhances learner motivation and academic persistence (Goodwin, 2024; Hawes & Nelson, 2021). The participant’s reflection grounds this insight in lived experience.

**“Julie”** described collective responsibility during school improvement efforts by stating, **“Nakikibahagi metlang di komunidad nu ada di proyek sin eskwela.”** (*The community also participates when there are school projects.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation for sustained community involvement in educational development. Participation in school projects demonstrated commitment to improving learning conditions. Improvement was envisioned as collective action rather than individual effort.

The experience illustrates how visible community participation reinforced the value of education. Learners witnessed adults investing time and effort in school improvement, shaping perceptions of schooling as a shared priority. This collective effort contributed to learning stability and motivation.

Research emphasizes that community involvement in school development fosters ownership and long-term educational commitment (Escamilla, 2015; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's account reflects this dynamic through lived experience.

Taken together, these narratives show that residents recommended strengthening education by deepening family and community involvement. Emotional support, participation in school activities, visible encouragement, and collective action were seen as essential for sustaining learning. These recommendations position educational growth as a shared endeavor rooted in relationships and communal responsibility.

#### **Subtheme 4.4: Aspirations for Better Preparation and Smoother Educational Transitions**

This subtheme captures how residents recommended improving educational growth by strengthening learners' preparation for future academic stages and easing transitions beyond the rural school context. These recommendations were shaped by experiences where movement to higher levels of education exposed gaps in skills, confidence, and readiness. Participants spoke not from abstract planning but from having encountered difficulty during transition. Improvement was envisioned as equipping learners earlier so future adjustments would be less disruptive.

Across narratives, preparation was framed as more than academic content. Residents emphasized the need for readiness that includes digital skills, mental resilience, and familiarity with expectations encountered outside the community. Transitions were remembered as moments when earlier limitations became visible, prompting recommendations aimed at reducing similar challenges for future learners. Educational growth was imagined as continuity rather than abrupt adjustment.

**“Jey-an”** emphasized the importance of preparation for higher education by stating, **“Kailangan Talaga ay ano better knowledge tapno makasabay pa, computer skills tapos stronger mentality, kasi mapan ka college.”** (*Better knowledge is really needed so you can keep up, along with computer skills and stronger mentality, especially when you go to college.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation grounded in lived transition experience. The participant identified gaps in academic knowledge, digital competence, and mental readiness as factors that made adjustment difficult. Improvement was envisioned as strengthening these areas before learners leave the rural school setting.

The experience shows how transition challenges reshaped understanding of what preparation should include. Academic readiness alone was seen as insufficient without digital skills and psychological resilience. The recommendation positions preparation as holistic, addressing both competence and mindset.

Research emphasizes that successful educational transitions depend on academic, technological, and psychosocial readiness, particularly for learners from rural backgrounds (Goodwin, 2024; Felongco et al., 2022). The participant's recommendation aligns with these findings while remaining rooted in personal experience.

**“Jey-an”** recommended reducing transition difficulty by improving access to learning tools earlier by stating, **“Ta masigurado ay amin ay studyante yan way access da si quality learning resources ya technolohiya.”** (*To make sure all students have access to quality learning resources and technology.*)

This statement reflects a forward looking recommendation aimed at minimizing future adjustment challenges. The participant emphasized early access to resources as a way to prevent skill gaps during transition. Preparation was linked to familiarity rather than acceleration.

The experience illustrates how delayed exposure contributed to later difficulty. By recommending earlier access, the participant envisioned smoother transitions where learners are not overwhelmed by unfamiliar tools. Educational growth was imagined as continuity of exposure.

Research shows that early access to learning resources and technology supports smoother transitions and reduces adjustment stress (UNESCO, 2021; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's recommendation reflects this relationship through lived insight.

**“Leizle”** described the need to address physical and environmental barriers that affect continuity by stating, **“Tapno adi Mabasa di skwela.”** (*So that students will not get wet on the way to school.*)

This brief statement, linked to the recommendation for school transportation, reflects concern for consistent school attendance and comfort. Preparation for learning was framed as ensuring learners can arrive at school safely and regularly. Improvement was envisioned as removing obstacles that interrupt learning routines.

The experience shows how environmental hardship influenced educational continuity. Physical strain affected readiness to learn and maintain attendance. The recommendation positions smoother transitions as beginning with stable and accessible schooling conditions.

Research highlights that environmental and transport barriers significantly affect school participation and continuity in rural settings (Felongco et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021). The participant's recommendation illustrates this connection from lived experience.

**“Ambhit”** emphasized the importance of restoring structured learning spaces to support preparation by stating, **“Itauli dan din library.”** (*They should bring back the library.*)

This statement reflects a recommendation aimed at strengthening preparation through structured learning environments. Libraries were remembered as spaces that supported focus, discipline, and independent learning. Improvement was envisioned as restoring environments that cultivate readiness for more demanding academic contexts.

The experience illustrates how loss of structured spaces affected learning habits. Without such environments, preparation for higher academic demands became more difficult. The recommendation positions preparation as dependent on access to focused learning spaces.

Research supports the role of libraries and structured study environments in developing academic readiness and independent learning skills (Barrett et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2024). The participant's recommendation aligns with this understanding.

Together, these narratives show that residents envisioned educational improvement through better preparation and smoother transitions. Their recommendations focused on strengthening knowledge, skills, resilience, access, and learning environments so future learners can move forward with confidence. Educational growth was imagined as a process that equips learners early, reducing disruption and widening opportunity beyond the rural community.

The findings under Research Question 4 show that residents' recommendations for improving educational growth were deeply shaped by what they had experienced as limiting, incomplete, or difficult in their own schooling. Improvements were articulated as responses to concrete conditions rather than abstract ideals. Participants drew attention to unfinished facilities, limited learning resources, instructional gaps, and uneven preparation as areas that required strengthening. Their recommendations reveal how past constraints informed forward looking visions for better learning environments.

Across the subthemes, improvement was consistently framed as strengthening foundations. Residents emphasized functional infrastructure, access to learning tools, and instructional support as prerequisites for meaningful educational growth. These recommendations reflect an understanding that learning cannot flourish without environments that are physically adequate, materially supported, and instructionally responsive. Growth was imagined as enabling learners to keep pace, remain engaged, and develop confidence in their abilities.

Participants also positioned educational improvement as a shared responsibility extending beyond schools. Families and communities were seen as essential partners in sustaining learning through emotional support, participation, and collective action. Recommendations highlighted the value of visible encouragement and communal involvement in reinforcing the importance of education. Learning conditions were envisioned as strongest when responsibility is distributed across social relationships rather than confined to classrooms.

Taken together, the recommendations under this theme show how residents connected lived educational limitations with aspirations for stronger learning conditions. Their visions focused on reducing barriers, strengthening preparation, and creating continuity across educational stages. By grounding improvement in everyday experience, residents articulated changes that aim to widen opportunity while remaining rooted in the realities of rural life.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the lived educational experiences of residents learning within a rural community, focusing on how challenges were encountered, navigated, shaped by context, and translated into recommendations for improvement. Using a phenomenological–thematic lens, the findings were organized according to four research questions, each addressed through a superordinate theme that captured shared meaning across participants.

For the first research question, the findings showed that residents' educational journeys were shaped by persistent limitations in resources, instructional conditions, and institutional exposure. Learning occurred within environments where access to educational tools and opportunities was delayed, and where instructional practices were constrained by material availability. These conditions influenced early learning expectations and led learners to assume responsibility for understanding lessons, preparing for tasks, and persisting through difficulty. Educational trajectories were formed through continuous adjustment rather than through stable institutional support, with earlier conditions becoming especially visible during later educational transitions.

In response to the second research question, the findings revealed that residents sustained learning through adaptation, resourcefulness, and shared support. Learners actively sought resources beyond the school, relied on teachers as primary academic anchors, and engaged in peer-based assistance and informal remedial practices. Instruction continued through adaptive strategies shaped by what was available rather than by ideal conditions. Learning was sustained not through abundance, but through initiative, cooperation, and flexibility embedded in everyday practice.

Findings related to the third research question highlighted that learning experiences were shaped by interconnected home, school, and community conditions. School level structures influenced instructional pacing and exposure, while families provided emotional encouragement and financial support that enabled continued schooling. Community involvement reinforced learning through collective effort, shared responsibility, and practical assistance. Social and environmental contexts contributed to learning stability, shaping how residents balanced education with daily realities.

For the fourth research question, residents articulated recommendations for strengthening educational growth that were directly informed by lived experience. Improvements were framed around strengthening foundational conditions such as facilities, learning resources, instructional support, and preparation for educational transitions. Participants emphasized continuity, access, and shared responsibility rather than abstract reform. Recommendations reflected a desire to reduce barriers that had shaped their own learning experiences and to support future learners more effectively.

From the findings related to the first research question, it can be concluded that educational trajectories in rural contexts are shaped through prolonged exposure to constrained learning environments. Limited resources and instructional conditions do not merely restrict access but actively influence how learners understand schooling, responsibility, and preparedness. Early experiences shape expectations and learning identities, which later affect adjustment and confidence during educational transitions.

Based on the findings addressing the second research question, it can be concluded that learners develop adaptive strategies to sustain education under constrained conditions. Coping strategies such as self directed resource seeking, reliance on teachers, peer based assistance, and instructional adaptation emerge as practical responses rather than optional choices. These strategies demonstrate learner agency while also revealing the extent to which learning depends on personal and relational effort in the absence of comprehensive institutional support.

The findings related to the third research question lead to the conclusion that learning in rural communities is deeply embedded within broader social contexts. Educational experiences are shaped by the interaction of school structures, family support, community involvement, and environmental conditions. Learning is not confined to the classroom but is sustained through relationships and shared responsibility across multiple contexts.

From the findings addressing the fourth research question, it can be concluded that residents' recommendations for educational improvement are grounded in lived limitation. Participants envisioned educational growth through strengthened foundations rather than through idealized change. Their recommendations reflect practical understanding of what supports learning continuity, preparedness, and opportunity within the rural setting.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that community stakeholders prioritize the strengthening of basic educational facilities and access to learning resources. Completing existing structures, improving access to books and technology, and ensuring functional learning spaces can support more consistent educational engagement.

For educators, it is recommended that instructional practices continue to emphasize guidance, clarity, and adaptability. Providing structured support while encouraging collaborative and self directed learning can help bridge resource gaps. Attention to preparation for educational transitions may also support learners' confidence and adjustment.

For future researchers, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in other rural communities to explore how contextual differences shape learning experiences. Further qualitative work may also examine teachers' lived experiences to complement resident perspectives.

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