

Cultivating Inclusive Leadership in Schools: Strategies, Challenges, and Outcomes in Promoting Diversity and Equity

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the cultivation of inclusive leadership in public secondary schools in Basud, Camarines Norte, focusing on the strategies, challenges faced, and outcomes in promoting diversity and equity. It also determined the relationship between inclusive leadership strategies and challenges and proposed an intervention based on the study's outcomes. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed involving 239 educational leaders composed of school heads, teachers, and School Parents and Teachers Association (SPTA) presidents. Data was gathered using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed through weighted mean and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings showed that inclusive leadership strategies were generally employed across policy and program implementation, professional development, community engagement, accessibility, well-being, and monitoring mechanisms. Policy implementation was the most practiced, while student and teacher well-being was the least. Challenges were assessed as moderately challenging with poor internet connectivity identified as the most significant concern. Relationships between strategies and challenges were generally weak and not statistically significant although significant positive relationships were found between resource constraints and professional development, and between policy alignment and well-being. Outcomes related to diversity and equity were moderately complied, indicating positive but developing results, with flexible teaching strategies showing the strongest outcome and equitable policies the weakest. The study concludes that while inclusive leadership practices are evident, gaps in consistency and sustainability remain. Thus, the study proposes the LEAD-IN INSET cum Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session: Strengthening Inclusive Leadership for Diversity and Equity in the School Community as a school-based professional development intervention to enhance inclusive leadership practices in secondary schools.

Keywords: Inclusive leadership; diversity; equity; leadership strategies; challenges; outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Inclusivity and equity are widely recognized as essential elements of quality education. Inclusive education emphasizes the right of all learners to access meaningful, relevant, and quality learning experiences regardless of differences in ability, gender, culture, or socioeconomic background, and underscores the responsibility of schools to remove barriers that limit participation and learning, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups (UNESCO, 2023). As such, inclusivity and equity have become core principles guiding educational policy, leadership practices, and school improvement efforts worldwide.

Studies have shown that leadership plays a critical role in advancing inclusive education. International research highlights the importance of inclusive and transformational leadership in fostering collaboration, motivating stakeholders, and ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students (Farahnak et al., 2020; Lambrecht et al., 2020). Inclusive leadership has been linked to positive outcomes at both individual and organizational levels, contributing to improved instructional practices, collaboration, and innovation within schools (Li and Tang, 2022). However, research also indicates that despite strong policy frameworks, challenges persist in translating inclusive principles into sustained school-level practices, particularly in developing contexts (Sijuola and Davidova, 2022).

In the Philippines, the commitment to inclusive and equitable education is anchored in key policies such as the K–12 Program under Republic Act No. 10533 and further strengthened by Republic Act No. 11650, which institutionalizes inclusive education for learners with disabilities. These are supported by various Department of Education (DepEd) policies that promote learner-centered instruction, teacher accountability, well-being, and inclusive school governance. Collectively, these frameworks emphasize the role of school leaders in ensuring that inclusive policies are effectively implemented within diverse school contexts. Despite these national initiatives, the implementation of inclusive education varies across schools due to differences in resources, leadership capacity, and local conditions. In Basud, Camarines Norte, a public secondary school, serve learners with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and needs, placing significant responsibility on school leaders to enact inclusive policies amid constraints such as limited resources, inadequate facilities, and insufficient training. Given these conditions, there is a need to examine how inclusive leadership is practiced in secondary schools in Basud, the challenges faced by school leaders, and the outcomes of these practices in promoting diversity and equity. This study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can inform school-level leadership practices and support more consistent and sustainable implementation of inclusive education in the local school community.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the strategies, challenges, and outcomes of inclusive leadership in public secondary schools in Basud, Camarines Norte. The descriptive component determined the level of inclusive leadership strategies, challenges encountered, and outcomes in promoting diversity and equity, while the correlational component examined the relationships among these variables using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation.

The respondents consisted of 239 educational stakeholders from four public secondary schools, including 231 teachers, four school heads, and four School Parents and Teachers Association (SPTA) presidents, selected through total enumeration to ensure full representation. Data were collected using a researcher-made survey questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale, designed to measure inclusive leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and outcomes. The instrument was content-validated by five educational experts and pilot-tested among 20 teachers outside the study area, with reliability established using Cronbach’s alpha. The questionnaires were administered personally and collected after completion. Data were encoded and analyzed using SPSS version 21, employing weighted mean to summarize the variables and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to determine significant relationships among them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies Employed by School Leaders in Basud, Camarines Norte’s Secondary Schools to Promote Inclusive Leadership. Promoting inclusive leadership in secondary schools involves deliberate strategies that ensure learners and stakeholders are valued and supported. In the secondary schools of Basud, Camarines Norte, school leaders implement approaches that integrate diversity, equity, and collaboration into school practices, including policy implementation, professional development, community engagement, and accessible learning environments.

Table 1 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive

Leadership along Policy and Program Implementation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Establishment of a structured and clearly defined inclusive education program.	3.34	VME
b. Regular review and revision of school policies to ensure inclusivity.	2.84	E
c. Integration of gender and cultural sensitivity in institutional policies.	3.29	VME

d. Systemic monitoring and enforcement of inclusive policies	3.29	VME
e. Transparent and accessible communication of inclusion-related policies.	3.26	VME
Overall Weighted Mean	3.20	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)

2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)

1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

Policy and Program Implementation. Table 1 presents the strategies employed by school leaders in promoting inclusive leadership along policy and program implementation. The establishment of a structured and clearly defined inclusive education program ranked highest, with a weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as Very Much Employed. This indicates that school leaders strongly prioritize formalizing inclusive education through clear programs and frameworks, reflecting alignment with DepEd policies and institutional mandates that support inclusivity. In contrast, regular review and revision of school policies to ensure inclusivity obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.84, interpreted as Employed, suggesting that while policy review is practiced, it is not consistently sustained, possibly due to administrative workload and competing school responsibilities. Overall, the weighted mean of 3.20, interpreted as Employed, indicates that school leaders generally implement inclusive leadership strategies through policy and program initiatives, with stronger engagement in structured and institutionally supported strategies than in those requiring continuous review and reflective practice. This underscores the need for more systematic and sustainable mechanisms for policy monitoring and revision to further strengthen inclusive leadership practices in secondary schools.

Professional Development. Table 2 presents the strategies employed by school leaders along professional development. The provision of resources on global best practices for inclusive education ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.04, interpreted as Employed. This indicates that school leaders actively expose teachers to international frameworks and research-based inclusive strategies, largely through accessible and cost-efficient platforms such as DepEd-supported webinars, online modules, and in-service trainings. These resources are easily integrated into existing professional development activities, making them a practical means of enhancing inclusive instructional practices.

Table 2 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive Leadership along Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Regular training sessions on inclusive pedagogical approaches	2.96	E
b. Implementation of cultural competence workshops for educators.	3.00	E
c. Mentoring and leadership development programs for inclusive leadership.	2.84	E
d. Integration of stakeholder feedback into teacher training.	2.97	E
e. Provision of resources on global best practices for inclusive education.	3.04	E
Overall Weighted Mean	2.96	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)
- 2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)
- 1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

In contrast, mentoring and leadership development programs for inclusive leadership obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.84, although still interpreted as Employed. This suggests that mentoring initiatives are present but not consistently implemented. Limited time, heavy workloads, and the absence of structured mentoring systems may hinder sustained engagement, resulting in mentoring being treated as an occasional activity rather than continuous professional practice. The overall weighted mean of 2.96 indicates a moderate level of implementation of professional development strategies. The findings show stronger engagement in institutionally supported activities, such as training and access to global resources, and weaker engagement in strategies that require sustained collaboration and long-term commitment, such as mentoring. This highlights the need for more structured, accessible, and continuous professional development mechanisms to strengthen inclusive leadership and support the sustained implementation of inclusive practices.

Community Engagement and Collaboration. Table 3 presents the strategies employed by school leaders along community engagement and collaboration. Partnerships with local stakeholders for inclusive programs ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.01, interpreted as Employed. This indicates that school leaders actively collaborate with local government units, civic groups, and community organizations to support inclusive initiatives. Such partnerships are practical and accessible, allowing schools to share resources and expertise with minimal financial burden, making collaboration a feasible strategy for addressing learner needs.

Table 3 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive Leadership along Community Engagement and Collaboration

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Active parent-teacher collaboration on inclusion initiatives.	2.92	E
b. Community forums on inclusivity.	2.62	E
c. Organization of school-community dialogues on inclusivity.	2.79	E
d. Partnerships with local stakeholders for inclusive programs.	3.01	E
e. Targeted engagement with marginalized groups.	2.68	E
Overall Weighted Mean	2.80	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)
- 2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)
- 1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

In contrast, community forums on inclusivity obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.62, although still interpreted as Employed. This suggests that forums are conducted but not consistently sustained. Distance of

communities, scheduling constraints, and limited participation may affect regular engagement, resulting in forums being held more for compliance or consultation rather than continuous collaboration. The overall weighted mean of 2.80 indicates a moderate level of implementation of community engagement strategies. Engagement is stronger in partnership-based activities that are easier to organize and support, and weaker in initiatives that require sustained participation from a wider range of community members. These findings highlight the need for more accessible, flexible, and inclusive approaches to strengthen community involvement and support the long-term sustainability of inclusive leadership practices.

Accessibility and Accommodations. Table 4 presents the strategies employed by school leaders along accessibility and accommodations. The implementation of structural improvements for physical accessibility ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.94, interpreted as Employed. This indicates that school leaders give priority to improving school facilities such as ramps, walkways, and accessible entrances, largely due to institutional requirements and regular monitoring under DepEd guidelines. These improvements are tangible and allow schools to demonstrate compliance within available resources.

Table 4 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive Leadership along Accessibility and Accommodations

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Implementation of structural improvements for physical accessibility.	2.94	E
b. Use of assistive technologies in teaching	2.66	E
c. Creation of alternative learning formats.	2.81	E
d. Equitable access to resources for diverse learners.	2.78	E
e. Flexible classroom arrangements for inclusion.	2.76	E
Overall Weighted Mean	2.79	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)

2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)

1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

In contrast, the use of assistive technologies in teaching obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.66, although still interpreted as Employed. This suggests that assistive technologies are used but not consistently sustained. Limited availability of devices, high costs, and insufficient teacher training may hinder wider and regular use, resulting in reliance on individual initiative rather than systematized support.

The overall weighted mean of 2.79 indicates a moderate level of implementation of accessibility and accommodation strategies. Engagement is stronger in structurally oriented and monitored practices, such as physical accessibility, and weaker in strategies requiring continuous investment and technical expertise. These findings highlight the need to strengthen instructional accommodation through increased access to assistive tools, targeted teacher training, and dedicated resource allocation to ensure meaningful participation of all learners.

Student and Teacher Well-Being. Table 5 presents the strategies employed by school leaders along student and teacher well-being. Promoting work–life balance for teachers ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.60, interpreted as Employed. This indicates that school leaders place greater emphasis on managing teachers’ workload through task distribution, scheduling adjustments, and administrative support, as these measures are more practical and easier to integrate into daily school operations.

Table 5 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive Leadership along Student and Teacher Well-Being

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Provision of mental health counseling services.	2.54	E
b. Implementation of stress management.	2.54	E
c. Promoting work-life balance for teachers.	2.60	E
d. Conducting wellness and self-care workshops.	2.52	E
e. Establishing peer support networks for students.	2.58	E
Overall Weighted Mean	2.56	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)

2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)

1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

In contrast, conducting wellness and self-care workshops obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.52, although still interpreted as Employed. This suggests that wellness activities are implemented but not consistently sustained. Limited access to trained facilitators, funding constraints, and competing academic priorities may hinder regular implementation, resulting in wellness initiatives being conducted only occasionally.

The overall weighted mean of 2.56 indicates a moderate level of implementation of well-being-related strategies. Engagement is stronger in practices that are institutionally supported and easily managed within existing structures, and weaker in strategies requiring specialized expertise and sustained resources.

These findings highlight the need to strengthen mental health services and regular wellness programs to further support inclusive leadership and promote a healthier school environment.

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism. Table 6 presents the strategies employed by school leaders along monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Adaptation of strategies based on evaluation results ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.82, interpreted as Employed. This indicates that school leaders commonly use evaluation findings to adjust programs and interventions, particularly through discussions during school meetings, learning action cells, and performance reviews.

In contrast, stakeholder feedback integration into evaluations obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.61, although still interpreted as Employed. This suggests that while feedback from parents and learners is gathered, it is not systematically integrated into formal evaluation processes.

Time constraints, coordination challenges, and the absence of structured feedback tools may limit consistent stakeholder participation. The overall weighted mean of 2.71 indicates a moderate level of implementation of monitoring and evaluation strategies. Engagement is stronger in internally managed practices and weaker in activities requiring broader participation and structured documentation.

These findings highlight the need to strengthen participatory evaluation mechanisms and standardize feedback processes to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of inclusive leadership practices.

Table 6 Strategies Employed by School Leaders to Promote Inclusive Leadership along Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Data Collection on inclusive metrics.	2.70	E
b. Regular assessment of inclusive practices.	2.64	E
c. Stakeholders feedback integration into evaluations.	2.61	E
d. Reporting mechanisms for inclusive issues.	2.79	E
e. Adaptation of strategies based on evaluation results.	2.82	E
Overall Weighted Mean	2.71	E

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Very Much Employed (VME)

2.50-3.24 - Employed (E)

1.75-2.49 - Partially Employed (PE)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Employed (NAE)

Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership. Implementing inclusive leadership in schools involves various challenges that may limit the effective delivery of inclusive practices. School leaders often face constraints related to resources, training, and facilities, making it essential to recognize these difficulties to develop targeted solutions and strengthen support for inclusive education.

Table 7 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Resource Constraints

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Limited financial support for inclusive programs.	3.08	MC
b. Insufficient funding for assistive technologies.	3.05	MC
c. Lack of resources for teacher training.	2.78	MC
d. Inadequate facilities for accessibility.	2.84	MC
e. Limited instructional materials for diverse learners.	3.00	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.95	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)

2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)

1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

Resource Constraints. Table 7 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along resource constraints. Limited financial support for inclusive programs ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.08, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This indicates that insufficient funding significantly hinders the implementation of inclusive initiatives, particularly those requiring specialized services, assistive technologies, and instructional materials. Financial limitations often restrict schools to basic operational needs, affecting the sustainability of inclusive programs. In contrast, lack of resources for teacher training obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.78, although still interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This suggests that while professional development opportunities exist, limited funding, logistical constraints, and accessibility issues prevent continuous and comprehensive training for teachers. The overall weighted mean of 2.95 indicates that resource constraints are a consistent and meaningful barrier to inclusive leadership. Challenges are more pronounced in areas requiring direct financial investment, highlighting the need for stronger funding support, prioritized budget allocation, and expanded external assistance to strengthen inclusive leadership practices in schools.

Teacher Preparedness. Table 8 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along teacher preparedness. Lack of training in inclusive education ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.84, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This indicates that limited access to specialized training in inclusive pedagogy and differentiated instruction remains a major barrier to effective implementation, constraining teachers’ ability to apply evidence-based inclusive strategies.

Table 8 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Teacher Preparedness

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Lack of training in inclusive education.	2.84	MC
b. Resistance to adopting inclusive teaching methods.	2.49	SC
c. Overburdened teaching workloads.	2.61	MC
d. Limited exposure to diverse student needs.	2.51	MC
e. Absence of mentorship on inclusivity.	2.54	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.60	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

In contrast, resistance to adopting inclusive teaching methods obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.49, interpreted as Somewhat Challenging. This suggests that teachers are generally open to inclusive practices, especially when provided with guidance and leadership support, and that resistance is not a significant obstacle. The overall weighted mean of 2.60 indicates a moderate level of challenge related to teacher preparedness. Challenges are more pronounced in areas requiring sustained training and mentoring and less evident in teachers’ willingness to adopt inclusive practices. These findings highlight the need to strengthen professional development and mentoring systems to enhance teacher competence and support effective inclusive leadership.

Policy Alignment. Table 9 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along policy alignment. Difficulty in monitoring policy compliance ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.74, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This indicates that while inclusive policies are in place, school leaders face challenges in ensuring

consistent implementation due to limited monitoring tools, clear indicators, and structured feedback mechanisms.

Table 9 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Policy Alignment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Delays in implementing inclusive policies.	2.56	MC
b. Lack of communication about new policies.	2.61	MC
c. Bureaucratic hurdles in policy integration.	2.56	MC
d. Resistance from stakeholders to policy changes.	2.60	MC
e. Difficulty monitoring policy compliance.	2.74	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.61	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

In contrast, delays in implementing inclusive policies and bureaucratic hurdles in policy integration both obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.56, although still interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This suggests that administrative processes slow implementation but are not the most significant barriers, as schools are generally able to initiate inclusive policies once issued. The overall weighted mean of 2.61 indicates a moderate level of challenge in aligning policies with inclusive leadership goals. Challenges are more evident in monitoring and sustaining policy implementation than in policy formulation, highlighting the need to strengthen accountability systems and regular policy review to ensure consistent inclusive practices across schools.

Infrastructure Issues. Table 10 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along infrastructure issues. Poor internet connectivity ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.29, interpreted as Extremely Challenging. This indicates that unreliable and limited internet access is the most serious infrastructure concern, constraining the use of digital resources, communication tools, and technology-based inclusive strategies, particularly in classrooms where connectivity is weak or unavailable. In contrast, overcrowded classrooms obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.54, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This suggests that while class size remains a concern, it is relatively manageable due to learner distribution and teacher deployment and does not pose as significant a barrier as digital infrastructure limitations.

Table 10 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Infrastructure Issues

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Overcrowded classrooms.	2.54	MC
b. Poor internet connectivity.	3.29	EC
c. Lack of adaptive learning spaces.	2.80	MC
d. Inadequate maintenance of facilities.	2.78	MC

e. Absence of inclusive transportation options.	2.68	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.82	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

The overall weighted mean of 2.82 indicates that infrastructure issues present a moderate challenge to inclusive leadership. Challenges are more pronounced in areas requiring digital access than in physical space concerns, highlighting the need to improve internet connectivity while maintaining adequate physical facilities to support inclusive education.

Resistance to Change. Table 11 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along resistance to change. Opposition from parents ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.66, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This indicates that parental hesitation is the most common source of resistance, often linked to limited understanding of inclusive education and concerns about its impact on learners’ academic performance.

Table 11 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Resistance to Change

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Opposition from parents.	2.66	MC
b. Reluctance among teaching staff.	2.50	MC
c. Misunderstanding of inclusive goals.	2.62	MC
d. Fear of additional responsibilities.	2.56	MC
e. Cultural biases among stakeholders.	2.36	SC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.54	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

In contrast, cultural biases among stakeholders obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.36, interpreted as Somewhat Challenging. This suggests that cultural resistance exists but is not a major barrier, as awareness of diversity and inclusive values has gradually improved through school initiatives and leadership modeling. The overall weighted mean of 2.54 indicates a moderate level of resistance to change. Resistance is more evident among external stakeholders, particularly parents, and less pronounced in internal attitudes and cultural acceptance. These findings highlight the importance of sustained communication, stakeholder engagement, and inclusive dialogue to strengthen understanding and support for inclusive leadership practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation Practices. Table 12 presents the challenges faced by school leaders along monitoring and evaluation practices. The lack of standardized metrics for inclusivity ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.66, interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This indicates that while schools conduct monitoring activities, the absence of common indicators makes it difficult to measure progress consistently and compare outcomes across schools.

Table 12 Challenges Faced by the School Leaders in Implementing Inclusive Leadership along Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Lack of standardized metrics for inclusivity.	2.66	MC
b. Irregular assessments of inclusive practices.	2.63	MC
c. Limited stakeholder feedback in evaluations.	2.61	MC
d. Inadequate tools for data collection and analysis.	2.57	MC
e. Poor integration of evaluation results into planning.	2.60	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.61	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Extremely Challenging (EC)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Challenging (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Somewhat Challenging (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Challenging (NAC)

In contrast, inadequate tools for data collection and analysis obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.57, although still interpreted as Moderately Challenging. This suggests that schools are able to gather data but face limitations in analyzing and using the information effectively due to limited technical capacity and time constraints. The overall weighted mean of 2.61 indicates a moderate level of challenge in monitoring and evaluation practices. Challenges are more evident in standardizing metrics and integrating evaluation results into planning than in basic data collection. These findings highlight the need for clearer evaluation frameworks, standardized tools, and capacity-building support to strengthen evidence-based inclusive leadership practices.

Association between Strategies Employed by the School Leaders and the Challenges Faced in Implementing Inclusive Leadership. The association between the strategies employed by school leaders and the challenges they face provides insight into how effectively inclusive leadership is implemented in schools. Examining this relationship helps determine whether existing strategies are sufficient to address barriers and sustain inclusive practices despite resource, structural, and organizational constraints.

Table 13 Test for Significant Relationship between the Strategies Employed by the School Heads and the Challenges Faced in Implementing Inclusive Leadership

Challenges	Strategies for Inclusive Leadership					
	Policy and Program Implementation	Professional Development	Community Engagement and Collaboration	Accessibility and Accommodation	Student and Teacher Well-Being	Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> - <i>value</i>
Resource Constraints	.004	.957	.128*	.048	.061	.350	.051	.432	-.055	.400	-.092	.157
Teacher Preparedness	.082	.205	.018	.783	.061	.352	.103	.115	.101	.120	.045	.494
Policy Alignment	.037	.566	-.040	.544	.045	.487	.030	.644	.130*	.045	.007	.909
Infrastructure Issues	.105	.106	-.021	.742	.041	.528	.101	.120	.054	.407	.055	.395
Resistance to Change	.039	.548	-.049	.452	.015	.813	.019	.766	.048	.460	.001	.982
Monitoring and Evaluation Practices	-.032	.619	-.093	.153	-.057	.381	-.075	.250	.039	.546	.020	.764

****Correlation is Significant @ 0.01**

***Correlation is Significant @ 0.05**

Association between Strategies Employed and Challenges Faced in Implementing Inclusive Leadership.

Table 13 presents the test of significant relationships between the strategies employed by school leaders and the challenges faced in implementing inclusive leadership using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Results show that most relationships between strategies and challenges were weak and not statistically significant ($p > .05$), indicating that inclusive leadership strategies are generally implemented despite the presence of various challenges. However, two relationships were found to be statistically significant. A significant positive relationship was observed between resource constraints and professional development ($r = .128, p < .05$), suggesting that limitations in financial and material resources are associated with professional development efforts. This implies that the availability of resources influences the extent to which training and capacity-building activities can be sustained in support of inclusive leadership.

Another significant positive relationship was found between policy alignment and student and teacher well-being ($r = .130, p < .05$), indicating that well-aligned school policies contribute to improved well-being of both teachers and learners. This suggests that coherent and supportive policies, when properly implemented, help promote work–life balance and a more supportive school environment. All other correlations, including those related to teacher preparedness, infrastructure issues, resistance to change, and monitoring and evaluation practices, were not significant. This indicates that school leaders continue to implement inclusive leadership strategies even when these challenges are present, reflecting commitment and resilience in promoting inclusive practices despite existing constraints.

Outcomes of Inclusive Leadership on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings of the Secondary Schools. The outcomes of inclusive leadership reflect how leadership practices promote diversity and equity in secondary schools. Through fair policies, cultural responsiveness, and inclusive teaching approaches, inclusive leadership supports a school environment where all learners are valued and provided equitable opportunities.

Diverse Leadership Representation. Table 14 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along diverse leadership representation. Gender equity in leadership positions ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.12, interpreted as Moderately Complied. This indicates that schools demonstrate stronger compliance in

promoting balanced representation of men and women in leadership roles, supported by gender-responsive policies and institutional guidelines.

Table 14 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Diverse Leadership Representation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Leadership development program.	2.97	MC
b. Gender equity in leadership positions.	3.12	MC
c. Student involvement in decision-making.	2.89	MC
d. Representation of marginalized communities.	2.92	MC
e. Transparency in leadership appointments.	3.07	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.00	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

In contrast, student involvement in decision-making obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.89, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while student participation exists, it remains limited and is often confined to consultations rather than sustained involvement in leadership and decision-making processes. The overall weighted mean of 3.00 indicates a moderate level of compliance in diverse leadership representation. Compliance is stronger in areas guided by clear policies, such as gender equity, and weaker in practices requiring broader participation, such as student leadership involvement. These findings highlight the need to expand leadership development opportunities and create structured avenues for wider stakeholder participation to strengthen inclusive leadership outcomes.

Equitable Policies. Table 15 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along equitable policies. Greater respect for diverse cultural practices ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.01, interpreted as Moderately Complied. This indicates that schools demonstrate stronger compliance in fostering respect for cultural diversity, supported by inclusive and gender-responsive policies and integrated into daily classroom interactions and school activities.

Table 15 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Equitable Policies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Regular review of school policies for inclusiveness.	2.76	MC
b. Development of non-discriminatory policies.	2.82	MC
c. Regular training on cultural and gender sensitivity.	2.73	MC
d. Positive behavioral changes among educators.	2.95	MC
e. Greater respect for diverse cultural practices.	3.01	MC

Overall Weighted Mean	2.86	MC
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Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

In contrast, regular training on cultural and gender sensitivity obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.73, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while the importance of equity-focused training is recognized, such activities are not yet conducted regularly or systematically, often due to limited resources and competing school priorities. The overall weighted mean of 2.86 indicates moderate compliance in implementing equitable policies. Compliance is stronger in attitudinal and behavioral outcomes and weaker in practices requiring sustained institutional support, such as continuous training and systematic policy review. These findings highlight the need to strengthen regular capacity-building activities to further institutionalize equitable and inclusive practices in schools.

Cultural Competence Training. Table 16 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along cultural competence training. Integration of cultural competence in the curriculum ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.08, interpreted as Moderately Complied. This indicates that schools actively embed cultural competence concepts into classroom instruction, supported by curriculum guidelines that encourage the integration of local culture and inclusive values.

In contrast, regular training on cultural sensitivity obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.66, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while cultural sensitivity is recognized as important, training opportunities are not yet consistent or systematic, often due to limited resources and competing professional development priorities. The overall weighted mean of 2.94 indicates moderate compliance in cultural competence training. Compliance is stronger in daily instructional practices and weaker in structured professional development activities. These findings highlight the need to strengthen regular and sustained training to further institutionalize cultural competence and support inclusive leadership outcomes.

Table 16 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Cultural Competence Training

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Integration of cultural competence in curriculum.	3.08	MC
b. Increased awareness of cultural diversity.	2.98	MC
c. Regular training on cultural sensitivity.	2.66	MC
d. Positive behavioral changes among educators.	2.95	MC
e. Greater respect for diverse cultural practices.	3.02	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.94	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)

1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

Inclusive Curriculum. Table 17 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along inclusive curriculum. Inclusive assessment practices for all learners ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.03, interpreted as Moderately Complied. This indicates that teachers actively apply flexible and fair assessment strategies aligned with learner-centered and performance-based approaches, allowing students multiple ways to demonstrate learning.

Table 17 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Inclusive Curriculum

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Representation of diverse cultures in learning materials	2.73	MC
b. Use of inclusive teaching methods.	2.92	MC
c. Feedback mechanisms for curriculum improvement.	2.79	MC
d. Customization of lessons to accommodate diverse needs.	2.90	MC
e. Inclusive assessment practices for all learners.	3.03	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.88	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)

2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)

1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

In contrast, representation of diverse cultures in learning materials obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.73, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while cultural diversity is acknowledged in instruction, it is not yet strongly embedded in prescribed learning materials, often relying on individual teacher initiative rather than systematic curriculum support. The overall weighted mean of 2.88 indicates moderate compliance in implementing an inclusive curriculum. Compliance is stronger in teacher-controlled practices such as assessment and lesson customization and weaker in areas requiring institutional support, such as culturally responsive learning resources. These findings highlight the need to strengthen curriculum support mechanisms to sustain inclusive teaching and learning practices.

Flexible Teaching Strategies. Table 18 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along flexible teaching strategies. The use of differentiated instruction techniques ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 3.29, interpreted as Complied. This indicates that teachers actively modify content, activities, and pacing to address learner differences, reflecting strong alignment with learner-centered and inclusive teaching practices.

Table 18 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Flexible Teaching Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Use of differentiated instruction techniques.	3.29	C

b. Collaboration among teachers for inclusive planning.	3.09	MC
c. Incorporation of technology to address diverse needs.	3.07	MC
d. Flexibility in instructional delivery methods.	3.07	MC
e. Adoption of feedback-driven teaching improvements.	3.05	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.11	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)
- 1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)
- 1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

In contrast, adoption of feedback-driven teaching improvements obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.05, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while instructional flexibility is evident, the systematic use of learner feedback to improve teaching practices is less consistently applied, often due to time constraints and limited opportunities for reflection. The overall weighted mean of 3.11 indicates moderate compliance in implementing flexible teaching strategies. Engagement is stronger in classroom-based practices directly controlled by teachers and weaker in strategies requiring structured reflection and feedback mechanisms. These findings highlight the need for institutional support to strengthen reflective practices and sustain flexible and inclusive instruction.

Parent and Community Engagement. Table 19 presents the outcomes of inclusive leadership along parent and community engagement. Integration of community input in decision-making ranked the highest, with a weighted mean of 2.97, interpreted as Moderately Complied. This indicates that schools consider stakeholder perspectives in planning and decision-making, largely through institutionally supported mechanisms such as school councils and improvement planning processes. In contrast, regular community consultations on inclusivity obtained the lowest weighted mean of 2.76, although still interpreted as Moderately Complied. This suggests that while consultations are conducted, they are not yet consistent or sustained, often limited by scheduling constraints and reliance on general assemblies rather than focused inclusion dialogues.

Table 19 Outcomes of Inclusive Education on Diversity and Equity in the Educational Settings along Parent and Community Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
a. Organization of cultural awareness programs.	2.92	MC
b. Regular community consultations on inclusivity.	2.76	MC
c. Active parent participation in school initiatives.	2.92	MC
d. Collaboration with community organizations.	2.83	MC
e. Integration of community input in decision-making.	2.97	MC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.88	MC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

- 3.25-4.00 - Complied (C)
- 2.50-3.24 - Moderately Complied (MC)

1.75-2.49 - Slightly Complied (SC)

1.00-1.74 - Not at All Complied (NAC)

The overall weighted mean of 2.88 reflects moderate compliance in engaging parents and communities. Engagement is stronger in formal, school-initiated structures and weaker in practices requiring continuous communication and dialogue. These findings highlight the need for more regular and intentional consultation mechanisms to strengthen long-term school–community partnerships in support of inclusive education.

Proposed Intervention to Foster Inclusivity in the School Community. The findings of the study revealed that inclusive leadership practices in the secondary schools of Basud, Camarines Norte have produced positive outcomes in promoting diversity and equity; however, these outcomes were implemented at a moderate level, indicating gaps in consistency and sustainability. Areas such as parent and community engagement, equitable policy implementation, shared leadership, and monitoring mechanisms showed Moderately Complied results, suggesting that inclusive practices are present but not yet fully institutionalized. These findings highlight the need for a structured professional development intervention that reinforces existing practices and strengthens their sustained application across schools. In response, this study proposes a school-based INSET cum Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session entitled “LEAD-IN: Strengthening Inclusive Leadership for Diversity and Equity in the School Community.” The intervention is designed to strengthen inclusive leadership through data-informed reflection, expert-guided discussions, and collaborative action planning among school heads, teachers, and non-teaching personnel. It focuses on sustaining inclusive classroom practices through shared leadership and mentoring, strengthening monitoring and accountability mechanisms, enhancing equitable and culturally responsive policies, and improving parent and community engagement. Anchored on national education policies and aligned with the study’s findings, the LEAD-IN INSET cum LAC Session aims to promote more consistent, coordinated, and sustainable inclusive leadership practices, ultimately fostering a school culture where diversity and equity are embedded in everyday school operations.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that school leaders in the Basud District actively employ inclusive leadership strategies across policy implementation, professional development, community engagement, accessibility, well-being support, and monitoring mechanisms; however, these strategies are implemented at a moderate level, indicating that inclusive practices are present but not yet fully institutionalized. School leaders face moderate and manageable challenges related to resources, infrastructure, policy monitoring, and evaluation systems, which affect the consistency and sustainability of initiatives but do not prevent their implementation. Most leadership strategies show no significant relationship with the challenges encountered, except in areas involving resource constraints and professional development, and policy alignment and well-being, suggesting that school leaders continue to practice inclusion despite constraints. Inclusive leadership has resulted in positive but moderate outcomes in promoting diversity and equity, particularly in shared leadership and parent and community engagement, although structured and sustained mechanisms remain limited. These findings indicate the need for a structured intervention to strengthen professional development, policy implementation, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement, making the proposed LEAD-IN INSET cum LAC Session: Strengthening Inclusive Leadership for Diversity and Equity in the School Community appropriate to support more consistent and sustainable inclusive leadership practices across secondary schools in Basud.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Schools Division Office and the Department of Education strengthen inclusive leadership through focused capacity-building programs, improved policy implementation, and clearer monitoring and evaluation guidelines, with priority given to funding assistive tools, basic facility improvements, and teacher well-being initiatives. School leaders may regularly review inclusion-related policies, integrate inclusive practices into School Improvement Plans, and establish mentoring and peer-support systems to sustain collaboration and shared leadership. Policymakers and educational institutions may further support inclusive education by improving infrastructure and learning resources, particularly in schools with limited connectivity

and facilities. To address the identified gaps, school leaders may adopt the proposed LEAD-IN INSET cum LAC Session: Strengthening Inclusive Leadership for Diversity and Equity in the School Community as a school-based professional development intervention to reinforce leadership capacity, policy implementation, monitoring mechanisms, and sustained parent and community engagement. Future researchers may expand this work through qualitative and context-specific studies, particularly in rural and resource-limited settings, to inform more localized and practical inclusive leadership models.

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