RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis on the implementation of inclusive classroom: perception on compliances and obstructions of selected public-school teachers

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive explanatory study determined the compliances and obstructions based on the perception of selected public schools. The analysis of the implementation of inclusive classrooms involves a comprehensive examination of the extent to which educational institutions adhere to inclusive practices and the challenges they face in achieving inclusivity. Inclusive classrooms aim to provide a learning environment that accommodates diverse students, including those with disabilities, different learning styles, and varied backgrounds. With 20 samples taken through non-probability sampling method via purposive sampling, the result showed that there are teachers who have limited knowledge about the implementation of inclusive education in their classroom, and the respondents have varied perceptions about classroom inclusivity such as customize approach, warm space, and equal opportunities. It also showed that there are obstructions in the implementation of inclusive education in their classroom setup to include denying a chance, lack of resources, and lack of awareness.

Keywords: inclusive education; teacher preparedness; professional development; student diversity

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, a student spends about 18 years in education in order to gain a bachelor's degree. This includes a couple of years of kindergarten, 6 years in elementary education, 4 years in junior high school, another 2 years in senior high school, and at least 4 years of tertiary education. The thirteen-year education is mandatory by law, which runs from kindergarten up to grade 12, also known as the K-12 program. After which, students have the option to pursue higher education or not. This only means that a student also spends around 18 years inside a classroom. Although learning is not limited to the four corners of the classroom, the inclusivity and conduciveness of these classrooms play a vital role in the holistic

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development of a student.

Inclusive education is where different and diverse students learn side by side in the same classroom. They enjoy field trips and after-school activities together. They participate in student government together, and they attend the same sports meets and plays. Inclusive education values diversity and the unique contributions each student brings to the classroom. In a truly inclusive setting, every child feels safe and has a sense of belonging. Students and their parents participate in setting learning goals and take part in decisions that affect them. And school staff have the training, support, flexibility, and resources to nurture, encourage, and respond to the needs of all students.

Acedo et al.^[1] explains that the implementation of inclusive policies should include an understanding that inclusive classrooms are an on-going process that requires daily monitoring. As for the author, to maintain an inclusive learning environment, it is not a one-time process that ends as the school year closes. It involves constant identification and removal of barriers that create a strong foundation for an inclusive environment.

According to Ainscow^[2], there are various methods that can be used to have an inclusive education. To begin, (1) differentiated instruction is used to meet the diverse learning needs of students within the same classroom. This tailor-fit approach involves adapting content, process, and product to accommodate various learning styles and abilities. Another method is (2) collaborative teaching, where inclusive classrooms often have multiple teachers or specialists working collaboratively to support all students. This could include co-teaching models where a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together. On the other hand, (3) Behavioral Interventions and Supports which aims to implement positive behavior interventions and supports helps create a positive and inclusive school culture. This approach focuses on teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors rather than solely reacting to negative behaviors. As for educators, (4) Professional Development for Educators provides ongoing training and professional development for teachers ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to implement inclusive practices effectively. These methods are not mutually exclusive and are often implemented in combination to create a holistic and inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of all students. Successful inclusive education requires a collaborative and flexible approach that considers the unique strengths and challenges of each learner.

By exploring the effectiveness of these methods, the researchers seek to reveal the complexity of creating an inclusive learning environment through teaching strategies and preparing teachers for school policies and its students, and at the same time identifying obstruction and proposing solutions that benefit the stakeholders of this study. For these reasons, the researcher is committed to conducting a qualitative study that delves into the implementation of inclusive classrooms in selected Mindanao public schools. Recognizing the transformative potential of inclusive education, this study aims to benefit not only the dedicated teachers navigating this evolving landscape but also the diverse student population under their care. The primary goal of this research is to provide a comprehensive discourse analysis that sheds light on the compliances and obstructions faced by public school teachers as they navigate the complexities of inclusive classroom practices.

2. Research objectives

Analysis of the implementation of inclusive classrooms was an important aspect to be considered in determining the knowledge of the teachers in implementing inclusive education. It is essential to provide indepth analysis on the experiences of the teachers in inclusive education. Below are the objectives of this study:

- a) To determine the perceived compliances of the inclusive classroom implementation
- b) To determine the obstructions on the implementation of inclusive classrooms

3. Literature

3.1. Inclusive education (IE)

Inclusive Education (IE) is an approach considered to be anchored on the idea that 'Education is for All'. It is an educational framework that operates on the philosophy of acceptance. In this educational framework, disadvantaged learners, especially those of special needs who are identified to be the most marginalized across all groups, are allowed to learn in regular schools alongside their typically developing peers.

Current research suggests a variety of definitions for the term inclusion. Halvorsen and Neary^[3] explained the differences in definitions. They claim some think of it as attending the same school as peers without disabilities, some believe inclusion is being in the general education classroom for a portion of the day, and others believe in full inclusion. Full inclusion is thought of as all individuals with disabilities belonging in the general education classroom without exception. To unravel the complexities of inclusion, the first goal was to develop a consistent definition or reference point of the term.

Others insist inclusion must be more than an effort to abide by the law and move students into a single room. Some define inclusion based on principles of how to practice inclusion. Ryndak et al.^[4] suggest not only access to the classroom, but also the collaboration of the education team to design and evaluate effective instruction. This implies that there is more to inclusion than placement. It takes more than moving students with disabilities into the general education classroom to define inclusion. Rief and Heimburge^[5] emphasize differentiated instruction when defining inclusive education and pedagogical choices that meet the needs of all students. The authors claim inclusion should be changing the pace, level, or kind of instruction. Inclusion is providing challenging instruction to motivate students. Inclusion is relevant, flexible, and varied, meaning it is essential learning but is adapted for students' particular needs. Students with disabilities need to be actively engaged in the content with their thinking and ideas being challenged and pushed to new limits. Closely aligned to defining inclusion as a process, is defining inclusion as a philosophy, as our actions are closely tied to our beliefs.

Rose and Howley^[6] state that it is not enough to simply place students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Crockett, Billingsley, and Boscardin^[7] believe that it can be problematic to think changing the location makes individuals with disabilities a member of the classroom community. The idea of location and philosophy are combined by McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, and Algozzine^[8], which states inclusion is "places where students with disabilities are valued and active participants and where they are provided supports needed to succeed in academic, social, and extracurricular activities of the school" (p. 4). Inclusion is a philosophy and social justice perspective. It is valuing diverse learning and a core belief system that guides professional thinking. They claim inclusion is the removal of barriers while providing accommodations in shared environments.

Pessimistic mindsets of teachers, parents, and students are barriers to inclusive education. Crockett, Billingsley, and Boscardin^[7] recognize the negativity some teachers hold regarding inclusion. Some may feel students with disabilities are not their responsibility. Similarly, teachers may feel students with disabilities need a specialized setting to benefit, and that not all students should be held to the same academic standards^[9]. Teachers, administrators, and parents may also quickly think of exceptions, or cases in which it would not work, rather than cases in which it would^[10].

3.2. Structure of inclusive education (IE)

Landbrook^[11] and Mukhopadhyay^[12] define an inclusive learning environment as one in which all students are respected, regardless of gender, race, ability, professional background, or education. This fosters an environment good for the mind and body of the students. It is also a place where classrooms, classroom infrastructure, furniture arrangement, large classrooms, dining areas and resources are provided appropriately both for student and faculty use. Both the physical structure and the emotional aspect is considered to build an inclusive learning.

Scherman et al.^[13] added that the curriculum must be responsive to changes in content, methods, models, and ownership. Schermann et al.^[13] suggest that for inclusive education to be successful, all participants must be involved at different levels. This demand is supported by UNESCO^[14], which recognizes that inclusive education is a process that helps students overcome barriers that limit their educational success and achievement. Supporting a similar interpretation of inclusive education, Starczewska, Hodkinson, and Adams^[15] assert that inclusive education involves the inclusion of diverse learners, including those with disabilities and other special needs, and the need to re-evaluate the culture.

3.3. Inclusive education (IE) in the philippines

In order to promote inclusive education, Philippines has been putting numerous programs and initiatives into action. The "Inclusive Education for All" program is one such effort that teaches educators, parents, and school administrators how to effectively fulfill the requirements of every student.

According to Llego^[16], Philippines is promoting inclusive education through teacher training and policies. The Department of Education (DepEd) is collaborating with UNESCO to train teachers to include students with disabilities in classrooms. These training covers topics like adapting instruction, creating a supportive learning environment, and working collaboratively with parents. Special Education (SPED) schools are designed for students with special needs, offering services and accommodations like smaller class sizes and adaptive technology. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) provides non-traditional learning opportunities for students who drop out or cannot attend regular classes due to health or other reasons. In 2019, DepEd Order No. 21 introduced a policy framework promoting the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education.

In addition, former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed into law Republic Act No. 11650, dated March 11, 2022, titled Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act. This policy will identify the rights of people with disabilities, outline strategies for improving access to education and other services and identify areas where additional support is needed.

In Zamboanga City, young Muslim learners enrolled in public schools are taught Islamic values two days a week and learn the Arabic language in classes held three days a week, where each class session is 40 minutes long. That's on top of the regular curricular subjects for kindergarten up to Grade 6, which is prescribed by the Department of Education (DepEd). This means the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) program is inculcated in them throughout their long years of schooling. Hadja Sarah Handang, who started as head of the DepEd's Madrasah Education School Program (MEP) in the city division of schools in 2015, stressed the importance of "educating the heart, not just the mind." For an inclusive environment. There are more than 50,000 Muslim learners enrolled in public elementary schools in the city and all of them are required to take up ALIVE subjects, she said.

4. Methods

4.1. Research design

This study employed an exploratory research design to investigate the analysis of implementation of inclusive education. Exploratory designs are especially useful in the early phases of inquiries when researchers seek to obtain greater understanding of a complex subject or investigate innovative or underexplored research concerns.

By adopting an exploratory design, the study developed a comprehensive understanding on how teachers implement inclusive education in their own classroom. It also answered the questions about the obstruction and compliances of the teachers in inclusive education. This design facilitated an in-depth exploration of both the positive and negative aspects of Inclusive Education.

4.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 20 public school teachers selected from different schools in Zamboanga Peninsula. Selection criteria are based on willingness to participate and experience with blended learning. Initial interview was conducted to determine whether the teachers were committed to inclusive education. Researchers "use purposive sampling to learn a lot from a small sample and understand the topic well enough to know what details are important to the task." Specifically, the participants in this study are all Female: 16 participants were Teacher I, 2 participants were Teacher II, and another 2 participants were Teacher III. The all came from public schools.

The sample size was determined through data saturation, ensuring that sufficient information was gathered to address the research questions adequately. Efforts were made to include participants from diverse backgrounds to capture a range of experiences and perspectives.

4.3. Instrument

This study developed a research instrument that captured the responses of the participants based on the study objectives. Interview questions provided relevant experiences of public-school teachers in the analysis of the implementation of inclusive education. The interview questions were specifically designed to allow participants to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns about inclusive education. **Table 1** presents the guide questions used during the interview process.

Objectives		Interview question	Participants	Ν
1. To determine the	a.	What is your understanding of inclusive classrooms?	Public School Teachers	20
perceived compliances	b.	Do you think you have complied with the implementation		
of the inclusive		of inclusive classrooms? Elaborate?		
classroom implementation.	c.	What are the things that you need to improve in		
		complying with the implementation of inclusive		
		classrooms?		
2.To determine the obstructions on the implementation of	a.	What are the main challenges faced by teachers in	Public School Teachers	20
		implementing inclusive education practices in the		
		classroom?		
inclusive classrooms.	b.	What support services are available to teachers for the		
		implementation of the inclusive classrooms? How are		
		they trained and supported in meeting the needs of all		
		students?		
	c.	What kind of support and resources do teachers need to		
		effectively implement inclusive education practices?		

Table 1. Instrument of the st	udy.
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4.4. Research procedure

Before conducting an interview, this study secured a letter of consent for data collection. The researcher wrote consent with a voluntary participation clause, research objectives, data use, confidentiality, and distribution of results to be given to the participants. Upon signing, the researcher scheduled time for an interview conducted through face-to-face and chats. The interviews were through chats and field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual details.

Qualitative data collection methods were utilized to capture the participants' experiences in inclusive education. The primary data collection technique involved semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the participants. The interviews provided an opportunity to delve deeply into the participants' personal relief experiences in inclusive education in terms of compliances and obstruction.

4.5. Data analysis

A qualitative research technique was utilized to find repetitive themes and patterns in the data that had been gathered. This approach attempted to extract concepts and underlying meaning from the dataset in order to facilitate a thorough comprehension of the analysis of the implementation of inclusive classroom: Compliances and obstruction. This study applied the principle of thematic analysis described by Lochmiller^[17] where the narrative responses were broken into smaller and comprehensible ideas. In analyzing, the researchers break down, or conceptually described as "to fracture", the statements into smaller bits of information useful for developing themes^[18].

5. Results

Objective 1: To determine the perceived compliances of the inclusive classroom implementation.

Question 1: What is your understanding of inclusive classrooms?

5.1. Customize approach

Sixteen (16) respondents state that as teachers they go the extra mile to adapt their teaching approaches and materials to cater to the diverse needs of their students. They essentially customize their teaching to suit each student's learning style, abilities, and requirements. Moreover, inclusion is not just confined to the classroom walls; it's a whole-school approach. It's about creating a culture of acceptance and appreciation for diversity within the entire school community. The ultimate aim of an inclusive classroom is to provide a nurturing environment where every student can not only excel academically but also grow socially and emotionally. It's all about preparing students for a world that values and celebrates differences, which is a critical life lesson in today's society.

5.2. Warm space

Four (4) of the respondents said that an inclusive classroom is like a warm and inviting educational space where every student, regardless of their unique characteristics or backgrounds, is not just welcomed, but actively encouraged to participate in the learning process. It embodies the idea that everyone has the fundamental right to receive a high-quality education, regardless of any differences or challenges they may face.

Question 2: Do you think you have complied with the implementation of inclusive classrooms? Elaborate?

5.3. Implement equal opportunities

Sixteen (16) respondents state they have implemented an inclusive classroom, ensuring equal opportunities for all students regardless of their level of understanding. They provide differentiated

instruction to cater to their needs, but not all the time due to time constraints and voluminous workload. Students are given free will in terms of language, race, religion, gender, and disabilities, regardless of their minority group. In some cases, homework is required to better understand and apply techniques. The author acknowledged the importance of learning activities based on learners' different learning styles, cultures, religions, and dialects.

5.4. Denying a chance

Four (4) respondents said that not all teachers are trained and ready for the implementation since the training is not provided which can hinder progress towards an equitable education system. It denies students their right to an equal opportunity to learn alongside their peers regardless of ability or disability. Inclusive classrooms foster empathy among students while enhancing academic outcomes for all learners involved. To overcome the challenges, schools must invest in teacher training and allocate sufficient resources. Parents must also actively advocate for inclusive education practices. Only by working together can we create a society where every student has the chance to thrive and contribute their unique talents.

Question 3: What are the things that you need to improve in complying with the implementation of inclusive classrooms?

5.5. Positive classroom culture

Four (4) respondents state that they are improving compliance with the implementation of inclusive classrooms creating a positive classroom culture that fosters acceptance and belonging among students, providing individualized instruction tailored to each student's needs, as well as maintaining open lines of communication between all stakeholders involved in the education process.

5.6. Ways of teaching

Sixteen (16) respondents state that they must improve their teaching and receive training on how to effectively implement inclusive practices in their classrooms. This includes understanding different learning styles, adapting curriculum materials, and employing various teaching strategies. Individualized instruction is vital in an inclusive classroom setting. Teachers should strive to meet the diverse needs of their students by providing differentiated instruction and accommodations when necessary.

Objective 2: To determine the obstructions on the implementation of inclusive classrooms.

Question 1: What are the main challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education practices in the classroom?

5.7. Lack of resources

Sixteen (16) respondents state that the main challenges faced by both teachers in implementing inclusive education practices include: Lack of learning resources (such as textbooks), Insufficient learning facilities may lead to uncomfortable learning environments. Being untrained and lacking knowledge about inclusive education practices both teachers mention that the Department of Education provides support to teachers through training, workshops, and seminars. They highlight the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) as a systematic support for newly hired teachers, followed by ongoing training and seminars related to the grade levels they are handling. These programs aim to help teachers understand their students' needs and effective teaching techniques. Teachers express the need for additional support and resources to effectively implement inclusive education practices, including: More specialized training and seminars related to the specific classroom settings they work in, Adequate learning resources and facilities to create an inclusive learning environment, Access to relevant readings to enhance their understanding and implementation of inclusive education.

5.8. Lack of awareness

Four (4) respondents said that the main challenge is the lack of training and awareness among teachers about inclusive education practices. Teachers may not have received proper training on how to adapt their teaching methods or modify curriculum to accommodate students with different learning styles or disabilities. This can lead to frustration and difficulties in effectively engaging all students in the learning process. Additionally, managing a diverse classroom with students at different academic levels can be overwhelming for teachers. They must find ways to differentiate instruction and provide individualized support while also maintaining a cohesive learning environment.

Question 2: What support services are available to teachers for the implementation of the inclusive classrooms? How are they trained and supported in meeting the needs of all students?

5.9. Teachers training

Sixteen (16) respondents said that the Department of Education in the Philippines offers a Teacher Induction Program (TIP) to new teachers, followed by ongoing training and seminars for each grade level. This helps teachers understand their teaching level and effectively meet learners' needs. The Department plays a crucial role in providing teachers with training and professional development opportunities to create inclusive classrooms and cater to all students' needs. Also, assistive technology plays a vital role in supporting teachers in meeting the needs of all students. Assistive devices such as text-to-speech software or adaptive equipment enable students with disabilities to access curriculum materials and participate actively in classroom activities.

5.10. Teaching techniques

Four (4) respondents said that to effectively implement inclusive education, teachers require support services that cater to the unique requirements of their students. These support services encompass a range of resources, including specialized personnel, assistive technology, and professional development programs. To ensure that teachers are adequately trained and supported in implementing inclusive classrooms, ongoing professional development programs are essential. These programs equip educators with knowledge about different learning styles, instructional strategies for diverse learners, behavior management techniques, and ways to create an inclusive classroom environment.

Question 3: What kind of support and resources do teachers need to effectively implement inclusiveness?

5.11. Seminars

Ten (10) respondents state that Teachers are in need of knowledge about inclusive education that's why they need a type of training that is appropriate in the implementation of inclusive education. The support system in the workplace often leaves teachers with limited training, limiting their ability to cater to diverse learning needs. Professional development programs are crucial for equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to create inclusive classroom environments. These programs should focus on understanding different learning needs, adapting teaching strategies, and creating inclusive environments. Ongoing training sessions and workshops can help teachers stay updated with the latest research and best practices in inclusive education.

5.12. Instructional materials

Ten (10) respondents said that Teachers need access to a wide range of instructional materials that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities. This includes adapted textbooks, assertive technologies, visual aids, and specialized equipment. Teachers need opportunities for regular communication and collaboration with

other professionals such as special educators or therapists. This enables them to share experiences, seek advice, and develop effective strategies together.

6. Discussion

Objective 1: To determine the perceived compliances of the inclusive classroom implementation.

In certain classrooms, teachers go the extra mile to adapt their teaching approaches and materials to cater to the diverse needs of their students. It's about creating a culture of acceptance and appreciation for diversity within the entire school community. This idea is aligned with the findings of Chavez^[19] For learners to be encouraged in continuing a productive academic experience, the degree of personal connection, competence, autonomy, or independence should be included in humanized teaching. The ultimate aim of an inclusive classroom is to provide a nurturing environment where every student can not only excel academically but also grow socially and emotionally. This idea is also aligned with the findings of Delos Reyes, Tongkoh and Chavez^[20], that by understanding these challenges and factors, educators and language instructors can design effective strategies and interventions to facilitate a smoother transition for English-speaking learners into learning the Filipino language. It is all about preparing students for a world that values and celebrates differences, which is a critical life lesson in today's society.

There are different responses that the teachers impose in answering the different questions in this study. However, they bind into one thought which tells that inclusive education is not just catering to the special needs of learners but treating them fairly in terms of cultural needs and even emotional needs.

The original idea of inclusive education focuses on the education of a particular group of students with special needs (SEN) to overcome practices of special education that have traditionally segregated students based on a medical model of disability. A greater understanding of diversity, tolerance, acceptance of others and the use of prosocial behaviors in inclusive classrooms seems to promote ToM (Theory of Mind) development. For the teacher to implement the inclusive classroom the support also need to increase the benefits of the teacher. This idea is aligned with the finding of Chavez et al.^[21] that there should be more emphasis on women in the lowest income bracket with this being said in order to fully implement the inclusive classroom they also need to increase the support of the teacher.

Aline with the implementation of inclusive education, they have different responses on how they implement inclusive education in their classroom. Some of the teachers are not trained in this type of classroom but they were able to implement it in a suitable manner for their learner.

Objective 2: To determine the obstructions on the implementation of inclusive classrooms.

Teachers face several substantial challenges when it comes to implementing inclusive education practices in their classrooms. One of the most significant hurdles is the remarkable diversity in student needs and abilities. This idea is aligned with the findings of Chavez, Del Prado and Estoque^[22]. The economic effects through adaptive strategies using diversifying and analyzing trends, using digital technology resources, data-driven, acquiring new alternative skills, pricing strategy, and becoming an expert with this they can adapt on how teachers need to tailor their approach to accommodate a wide array of learning styles, abilities, and disabilities. This means crafting individualized strategies for each student, which can be incredibly time-consuming and mentally taxing. Additionally, some teachers may find themselves lacking the necessary training and resources to effectively meet these diverse needs, leading to feelings of frustration and self-doubt.

Another critical challenge lies in classroom management. In an inclusive classroom, there is often a higher student-to-teacher ratio, making it more complex to maintain a well-structured, focused learning environment. Students with varying needs may require more attention and support, potentially leading to disruptions and behavioral issues. Teachers must deftly employ effective behavior management strategies while ensuring that every student feels included and valued, striking a delicate balance. Moreover, instilling a culture of acceptance and respect among students requires on-going effort, as promoting understanding and empathy can be complex, especially when addressing issues related to diversity and differences.

For teachers to successfully put inclusive education practices into action, they require a range of vital support and resources. Professional development is a top priority – teachers benefit greatly from on-going training in inclusive teaching methods, curriculum adjustments, and effective assessment techniques and also an open communication with the guardian of students according to the finding of Murro et al.^[23] teacher roles were another difficulty where parents were clueless on addressing learners' needs. According to Chavez^[24], in spite of these challenges, the teachers are pressured on the idea that they must be highly competent as expected in their credentials and trainings. This training can take the form of workshops, peer mentor-ship programs, and access to online resources and courses to ensure they stay up-to-date with the latest best practices.

7. Conclusion

Inclusive Education (IE) is a way to effectively benefit Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the classroom that we believe creates equity. As a result, many teachers in the region are unable to identify the differences to offer their students with disabilities because they do not have the necessary training. Sometimes teachers are placed in inclusive classrooms but do not have the experience to teach special learners and have issues with the special learners' needs.

Teachers need a variety of support and important resources to implement instructional practices. Professional development is essential. Teachers received on-going training in inclusive pedagogy, information-based teaching and effective assessment methods. This training uses workshops, peer mentoring, and access to online resources and courses to ensure you stay up to date with best practices.

Teachers also need a variety of teaching materials and tools to make their classrooms inclusive. These resources may include adapted textbooks, digital learning tools, and special equipment designed to support students with disabilities. Schools must ensure that teachers have the necessary equipment and facilities for all students. Having access to support staff, such as special education specialists, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists, is essential to teachers' ability to address the unique needs of their students and adjust their teaching accordingly. Finally, supportive administration and a school culture that advocates and supports practice are essential to creating an environment in which teachers feel empowered to act and achieve a good education.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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