

**Operationalizing DepEd core values in elementary education:
Teacher's experiencing and policy framework for value-driven pedagogy**

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ABSTRACT

Values-driven education remains central to Philippine basic education, reflecting global efforts to strengthen character formation, ethical citizenship, and holistic learning through value-oriented pedagogies and national frameworks such as the DepEd Core Values. Despite existing studies on values education and character-based instruction, limited research has examined how elementary teachers operationalize value-driven pedagogy within institutional policies and classroom realities in localized Philippine contexts. This study explored the implementation of value-driven pedagogies in elementary education and developed an evidence-based policy framework aligned with national education reforms. Using a descriptive-qualitative design, data were collected from education supervisors, district coordinators, and elementary teachers through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that values integration supports holistic learner development through real-life contextualization, daily classroom routines, and teacher modeling, while challenges such as limited monitoring systems, resource constraints, and inconsistent policy enforcement affect sustainability. The results provide insights for refining educational policy, enhancing teacher professional development, and strengthening institutional leadership practices to support values-based teaching. This study contributes by proposing a localized policy framework that bridges classroom practices with DepEd mandates, offering a systematic model for sustaining value-driven pedagogy in Philippine elementary education.

Keywords: Constructivism, elementary education, moral development, policy framework, value-driven pedagogy.

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INTRODUCTION

Values-driven education remains a foundational pillar of the Philippine basic education system, reflecting the Department of Education's (DepEd) commitment to holistic learner development through the core values of Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa. These values are not merely symbolic ideals but are embedded within national education frameworks, including the K–12 curriculum and the MATATAG agenda, which emphasize character formation alongside academic competence (Department of Education, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). Contemporary scholarship highlights that values education supports

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socio-emotional learning, civic engagement, and ethical decision-making among young learners, particularly in the early school years, when moral identity begins to develop (Johnson et al., 2022; Berbegal Vázquez, 2024). Globally, value-oriented pedagogies are increasingly associated with inclusive education, sustainability awareness, and 21st-century citizenship competencies (OECD, 2019; Panigrahy, 2025). In the Philippine context, where learners' character formation is strongly shaped by teacher modeling and classroom culture, effective implementation of values-driven pedagogy becomes both an educational priority and a national development strategy (Diez et al., 2025; Mansibang, 2025).

Education in the Philippines is regarded as a vehicle for nurturing ethical citizenship and strengthening national identity (Nagahama et al., 2023). The DepEd mission explicitly positions values formation as central to producing responsible Filipinos capable of contributing to sustainable communities and democratic governance (DepEd, 2022). Scholars emphasize that integrating moral and civic values into everyday instruction enhances learners' empathy, resilience, and social responsibility, which are crucial competencies in contemporary education systems (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; OECD, 2021). However, despite strong policy mandates, studies have revealed disparities between policy expectations and classroom practices, particularly in elementary education, where teachers must balance academic competencies with values formation (Quijano, 2023; Olaya, 2024). This gap underscores the need for empirical investigations into how policy directives translate into lived classroom experiences.

Recent empirical studies highlight the continuing challenges teachers encounter when embedding values education into everyday pedagogical practice. International research shows that educators often struggle to translate moral and inclusive values into concrete classroom strategies due to competing curricular demands, limited preparation, and contextual constraints (Akram et al., 2023; Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2020). Studies on curriculum integration further reveal that flexible learning environments require teachers to redesign instructional approaches, yet many feel inadequately supported by teacher education and professional development systems (McPhail, 2022). In both global and Philippine-related contexts, scholars emphasize that values pedagogy is shaped by pedagogical discourse, coping mechanisms, and culturally grounded models that strengthen teachers' competence and responsiveness to learners' needs (Tolentino, 2024; Simanjuntak, 2025). These findings collectively suggest that effective values integration depends not only on teacher awareness but also on sustained institutional support, structured pedagogical frameworks, and continuous capacity-building initiatives.

Despite growing scholarship on values education, significant gaps remain in Philippine elementary research. Much of the existing literature focuses on secondary education or subject-specific contexts (Schneider & Wolff, 2023; Hardy, 2018), leaving limited exploration of how elementary teachers operationalize value-driven pedagogy across disciplines. Moreover, current studies tend to examine teacher practices in isolation without considering the broader institutional structures, such as leadership support, curriculum alignment, and professional development systems, that shape pedagogical implementation (Karim & Harwood, 2026; Kim, 2025; Ralebese et al., 2025). This fragmented understanding restricts the development of comprehensive frameworks that integrate classroom realities with policy reforms. As scholars argue, effective values education requires systemic approaches that address both micro-level instructional practices and macro-level governance structures (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

Another critical research gap concerns teachers' coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies in navigating values integration within complex classroom contexts. While existing literature documents challenges such as limited resources, heavy workload, and evolving instructional demands, empirical studies indicate that teachers often respond through pedagogical resilience, collaboration, and contextual innovation rather than passive compliance (Zara et al., 2022; Edulan & Fajardo, 2024). Qualitative investigations in the Philippine setting

further reveal that educators sustain values-based teaching through culturally responsive practices, peer collaboration, and localized instructional adjustments despite structural constraints (Bahia et al., 2025; Tolentino, 2024). However, most studies focus on barriers rather than on how teachers turn challenges into adaptive pedagogical strategies. Understanding these coping mechanisms is essential for developing responsive professional development programs and policies that better align DepEd's core values and initiatives with authentic classroom practice.

Guided by these gaps, the present study aims to empirically examine value-driven pedagogies in Philippine elementary basic education by exploring teacher practices, institutional support systems, and policy alignment. It analyzes how educators integrate core values into instruction and how administrative structures facilitate or constrain implementation. Through this process, the study seeks to develop an evidence-based framework that bridges policy and classroom practice. The findings are expected to support DepEd's ongoing curriculum reforms by providing data-driven recommendations for teacher training, instructional design, and school leadership strategies.

Statement of the problem

This study explored the challenges and key factors influencing the implementation of Value Driven Pedagogy in elementary education, with a focus on how the DepEd Core Values are integrated into teaching practices and how institutional policies support this integration.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, rank or position, years of experience, and relevant training on values integration?
2. How do participants describe the extent and quality of integrating the DepEd Core Values in classroom teaching?
3. How prepared and competent are teachers in applying the DepEd Core Values?
4. How do participants view the adequacy of institutional policies and administrative support for sustaining value driven teaching?
5. What challenges do participants encounter in integrating the DepEd Core Values in teaching and learning?
6. What coping mechanisms or interventions do participants use to address these challenges?
7. What are the recommendations to enhance value driven pedagogy in elementary basic education?
8. Based on the findings, what policy framework can be proposed to strengthen institutional alignment and improve the implementation of Value Driven Pedagogy?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design to explore and describe the implementation of Value-Driven Pedagogy (VDP) in Philippine elementary basic education. Descriptive qualitative research is appropriate for understanding participants' experiences, perceptions, and real-life practices in natural settings, enabling rich, contextualized interpretations of educational phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design allowed the study to examine how teachers, district coordinators, and education supervisors

integrate the DepEd Core Values, and it further shaped the selection of the research locale, participants, instruments, and analytic procedures described below.

This study was conducted in the Division of Danao City, Province of Cebu, Philippines, across several elementary schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) Danao City Division Office, where the promotion of DepEd Core Values (Maka Diyos, Maka tao, Makakalikasan, Makabansa) supports the implementation of Value Driven Pedagogy. The respondents were ten (10) Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) District Coordinators and eight (8) elementary EsP teachers, selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in teaching, supervising, and integrating values education. This selection allowed for an in-depth examination of institutional support, policy implementation, and teacher preparedness in real classroom contexts.

The primary research instruments used in this qualitative study were a semi structured interview guide and a focus group discussion (FGD) protocol, designed to generate rich, in-depth data on the implementation of Value Driven Pedagogy at the elementary level. Semi structured interviews and FGDs are widely recognized as qualitative tools because they offer flexibility for probing participants' experiences while aligning with the research objectives and theoretical framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kallio et al., 2016). The instruments were developed by the researcher based on the statement of the problem, relevant literature, and the theoretical foundations of Social Learning Theory, Constructivist Theory, and Moral Development Theory to ensure methodological rigor and content validity. Before data collection, the instruments underwent expert validation and refinement to enhance clarity, credibility, and alignment with the DepEd Core Values. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions aimed at eliciting detailed narratives regarding the extent of integration of the DepEd Core Values (Maka Diyos, Maka tao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa), teacher preparedness and competence, institutional support, and challenges encountered in value driven instruction. Questions were framed to encourage reflective dialogue, enabling participants to share authentic classroom practices, coping mechanisms, and contextualized experiences. The FGD protocol complemented individual interviews by fostering collaborative discussions among participants, allowing the validation of shared practices and collective perspectives on values integration. Together, these instruments ensured comprehensive qualitative data collection, capturing both individual insights and group level dynamics relevant to the study.

The data analysis procedure comprised three main phases, namely pre data gathering, actual data gathering, and post data gathering, followed by a systematic thematic analysis. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Danao City Division, coordinated with the Education Program Supervisor in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP), and obtained informed consent from all participants. During actual data gathering, the researcher conducted individual interviews with ten EsP District Coordinators and focus group discussions with eight elementary EsP teachers over four weeks, either in person or online, focusing on teacher competence, integration of DepEd Core Values, policy support, challenges, and coping mechanisms. After data collection, all sessions were transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase thematic analysis, which involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. The findings were triangulated and validated through member checking, serving as the basis for conclusions and the proposed policy framework for implementing Value Driven Pedagogy in Philippine elementary education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion derived from data gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions involving 18 elementary teacher participants, referred to as P1 through P18, situated within the Division of Danao City, Province of Cebu, Philippines. Employing a descriptive qualitative research design and purposive sampling, the study utilized a semi-structured interview guide and a focus group discussion protocol as the primary instruments for data collection, with responses analyzed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The discussion that follows is grounded entirely in the data gathered from these participants, and the results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to examine the extent and quality of integration of the DepEd Core Values, the preparedness and competence of teachers, the adequacy of institutional policies and administrative support, the challenges encountered, the coping mechanisms employed, and the recommendations offered to enhance Value-Driven Pedagogy in Philippine elementary basic education.

The 18 elementary teacher participants were predominantly female (94.4%), aged 28 to 59 (mean 38.5 years), with an average of 14.4 years of teaching experience, representing a mature and professionally experienced group. Their high educational attainment (66.7% with master's units, 11.1% with master's degrees, 22.2% with doctoral units) and diverse ranks (55.6% Teacher III, 33.3% Master Teacher I) indicate strong professional engagement and instructional leadership. Additionally, most had attended values-focused trainings (61.1% in Values Restoration Program, 22.2% in Moral Values Training, plus Positive Discipline, GMRC, and K–12 implementation), reinforcing their credibility and capacity to provide rich, contextually grounded insights for the proposed policy framework on Value-Driven Pedagogy.

Extent and quality of integrating the DepEd Core Values in classroom teaching

The first theme that emerged, Holistic and Meaningful Values Integration, highlights that integrating DepEd Core Values supports holistic and meaningful learning by promoting learners' overall development, including character formation and responsible citizenship. Within this theme, the subtheme of whole-child development emphasizes that integration nurtures learners' academic, social, and moral growth simultaneously rather than emphasizing academic performance alone. Participants explained that integration is embedded across all lessons and activities, with implementation ranging from basic awareness to deep, regular practice connected to real-life situations, and that this generally high extent and quality of integration produced positive student manifestations such as respect and discipline (P1, P8, P12). These narratives suggest that educators recognize the importance of values integration in developing well-rounded learners who demonstrate ethical behavior inside and outside the classroom. Recent studies support this claim: a large meta-analysis by Cipriano et al. (2023) found that school-based social-emotional learning significantly improved students' behavior, relationships, school functioning, and academic achievement, reinforcing that values-based practices nurture holistic growth beyond academics. Likewise, Jia (2021) found that values education was significantly related to holistic child development in certain Philippine school contexts, although results varied across institutional settings. However, mixed findings from Wawan and Wasliman (2026) suggest that the effectiveness of character education depends heavily on systematic management and strong institutional support, indicating that positive outcomes are not always automatic without structured implementation.

The second subtheme under this theme, real-life relevance, emphasizes how integration becomes meaningful when teachers connect lessons to learners' real-life experiences and

everyday situations. Participants described making lessons engaging and relatable by integrating values into different subject areas and reminding learners to apply them beyond the classroom (P3, P4, P13). These responses indicate that teachers prioritize contextualized learning experiences in which DepEd Core Values serve as practical guides for behavior. OECD (2021) emphasized that real-world learning contexts enhance students' social-emotional competencies and help translate classroom values into practical life skills, while Zimmerman (2018) found that values-based instruction becomes more effective when linked to authentic experiences and reflective dialogue. However, Reimers (2020) argued that inconsistent teacher training and curriculum constraints may limit the sustained application of values in everyday life, suggesting that institutional support remains essential for long-term impact.

The second theme, *Embedded Pedagogical Practices and Teacher Modeling*, highlights that integration is sustained through everyday classroom practices in which teachers embed values in routines, interactions, and instructional strategies. The subtheme of daily routines and classroom culture reveals that values are embedded in classroom rules, daily practices, teacher modeling, and learning activities, and are highly evident and consistently practiced (P5, P7). Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasized that supportive learning environments and consistent classroom practices promote social, emotional, and ethical development, while Ullah et al. (2025) found that structured social-emotional practices within classroom routines improved student behavior, cooperation, and academic engagement. However, the OECD (2021) suggests that the effectiveness of routine-based integration depends on sustained teacher support and school climate, indicating that consistent institutional structures are necessary for long-term impact.

The subtheme of teacher as role model shows that teachers influence learners by demonstrating DepEd Core Values through their own attitudes, behaviors, and interactions, reinforcing positive behavior among learners through daily routines, modeling, and lesson examples (P2, P16). Bandura's social learning perspective, supported by empirical research from Babatunde et al. (2015), emphasizes that learners internalize ethical principles when teachers consistently demonstrate them through authentic classroom interactions, while Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that teacher modeling and positive relationships significantly influence students' social-emotional development and classroom behavior. However, Reimers (2020) suggests that teacher modeling alone may not sustain values formation without supportive institutional policies and structured professional development.

The third theme, *Implementation Gaps and Structural Challenges*, captures barriers affecting the depth and consistency of integration. The subtheme of implicit or superficial integration reflects participants' concerns that values integration sometimes lacks depth due to limited time, competing academic demands, or insufficient instructional focus, with values discussed superficially rather than deeply connected to learning outcomes (P14, P16). Guerrero and Esera (2025) found that heavy content requirements and time constraints often lead to symbolic inclusion of values rather than deep instructional practice, and Rosero (2024) found that values are frequently embedded in lesson plans but are not always translated into experiential or reflective activities. In contrast, Datu and Mateo (2020) showed that when teachers intentionally design structured character-focused tasks, values integration significantly improves learner engagement and moral reasoning, suggesting that superficial implementation may be more related to pedagogical design than to the concept itself.

The subtheme of limited monitoring and assessment highlights how insufficient monitoring, evaluation tools, and administrative follow-up affect the sustainability of value-driven teaching, with participants noting that implementation depends on individual teacher initiative because there are few structured activities or assessments to measure learners' internalization of values, and it is not really strengthened or monitored by school heads (P6, P17). Semacio et al. (2024) found that teachers often rely on individual initiative because

structured monitoring systems and administrative evaluation remain inconsistent, while Sholawati and Khilmiyah (2023) found that character education initiatives often lack clear assessment indicators. In contrast, Asrial et al. (2024) showed that structured e-assessment tools strengthen monitoring and provide measurable outcomes, suggesting that stronger institutional assessment frameworks can address the gaps identified by participants.

Taken together, these findings imply that integrating DepEd Core Values in classroom teaching requires a balanced approach that combines meaningful pedagogical practices with strong institutional support systems. While holistic learning, real-life contextualization, daily routines, and teacher modeling demonstrate that value-driven pedagogy can effectively nurture learners' character and socio-emotional development, the presence of implicit integration and weak monitoring mechanisms suggests the need for clearer assessment tools, structured guidelines, and sustained professional development.

Preparation and competence of teachers in applying the DepEd Core Values

The first theme, Professional Preparedness and Values Competence, highlights that teachers' ability to apply DepEd Core Values is influenced by their professional knowledge, training, and confidence developed over years of experience. The subtheme of knowledge and training orientation reflects that participants are knowledgeable about Maka-Diyos, Maka-tao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa, having undergone training and development programs that equip them with skills to integrate values effectively (P3, P12). Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that sustained professional learning enhances teachers' ability to embed ethical and social values through meaningful instructional practices, while Syafika and Marwa (2024) reported that character-education training improves teachers' readiness to translate value frameworks into daily lessons.

The subtheme of confidence built through experience emphasizes that years of teaching allow teachers to refine strategies, model values consistently, and address varied learner needs, with one participant noting competence strengthened through 30 years of service and consistent modeling ensuring values are internalized in both classroom behavior and daily life (P5, P6). Datu and Mateo (2020) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) show that experienced educators develop stronger professional judgment and classroom management strategies that support consistent modeling and integration of values.

The second theme, Pedagogical Application through Modeling and Instructional Integration, highlights how teachers operationalize competence by embedding values into classroom interactions, lesson design, and contextualized learning. The subtheme of teacher modeling and classroom interaction shows that teachers apply core values through daily lessons, classroom routines, and positive modeling, using age-appropriate strategies to help learners understand and practice values (P7, P9). Albrecht (2018) and Babatunde et al. (2025) show that students internalize ethical principles more effectively when teachers consistently demonstrate respect, empathy, and fairness through daily interactions.

The subtheme of lesson planning and real-life contextualization shows that teachers intentionally integrate values into lesson objectives, aligning them with learning competencies and demonstrating them through interaction with learners, ensuring learners understand and apply them in real-life situations (P8, P10). Johnson et al. (2022) and Reimers (2020) show that embedding ethical principles into learning objectives, real-life scenarios, and collaborative activities promotes deeper learner engagement and supports internalization of moral concepts.

The third theme, Collaborative and Contextual Challenges in Implementation, captures challenges despite teacher preparedness and competence. The subtheme of need for parental

and systemic support reflects that competence alone is insufficient without help from parents to fully develop the DepEd Core Values, and that teachers vary in competence due to lack of contextual materials or skills despite basic preparation via DepEd trainings (P13, P14). Epstein (2018) and Kim (2022) show that parental involvement and administrative support reinforce moral development by creating consistent expectations and shared responsibility between home and school contexts.

The subtheme of inconsistent or limited application explains that contextual factors such as limited time, competing academic priorities, and resource constraints lead to variations in application, with values sometimes treated as an "add-on" rather than fully integrated (P17, P14). Attruk et al. (2024) and Datu and Mateo (2020) show that without structured institutional support and deliberate instructional planning, teachers may prioritize academic content over character formation, leading to superficial integration of values.

These findings imply that strengthening teachers' preparation and competence requires a balanced integration of professional development, pedagogical practice, and systemic collaboration, with continuous professional learning, leadership support, and active family-school partnerships needed to sustain implementation and prevent values education from becoming an "add-on."

Adequacy of institutional policies and administrative support for sustaining value-driven teaching

The first theme, Supportive Policy Frameworks and Administrative Encouragement, shows that participants recognize institutional policies as enabling mechanisms. The subtheme of clear guidelines and school programs reveals that DepEd-aligned guidelines, classroom rules, and school programs provide a strong, solid framework for integrating values into instruction, school programs, and daily operations (P1, P5). Epstein (2018) shows that clear school policies and structured programs strengthen the consistent implementation of values education by providing teachers with a shared framework.

The subtheme of leadership support and professional development highlights that administrative encouragement, monitoring, and recognition of good practices motivate teachers to consistently model and reinforce values, with training and encouragement helping sustain value-driven teaching (P5, P7). Hallinger (2018) shows that school leaders who provide monitoring, recognition, and structured training cultivate a supportive school culture that reinforces ethical teaching practices.

The second theme, Gaps in Implementation, Resources, and Monitoring, captures concerns that policies exist but their impact is reduced by weak enforcement, limited resources, and inconsistent monitoring. The subtheme of inconsistent enforcement and limited resources reflects that support is described as "not that focused and strengthened" and adequacy is seen as "mixed," inadequate regarding resources and administrative focus (P2, P8). Oakes et al. (2018) show that policy frameworks alone do not guarantee effective implementation when schools face limited resources, weak monitoring systems, and inconsistent leadership support.

The subtheme of need for strengthened training and stakeholder collaboration highlights participants' calls for clearer implementation guidance, noting institutional policies are "well-framed but often lack clear implementation guidelines and consistent enforcement," with gaps in funding, time allocation, and monitoring, and calls for institutions to educate parents as the number one partner (P13, P14). Epstein (2018) emphasizes that effective character and values education require coordinated partnerships among teachers, parents, and the broader school system.

These findings imply that institutional policies and administrative support play a critical role in sustaining value-driven teaching, yet their effectiveness depends on consistent

implementation, adequate resources, and collaborative leadership practices, requiring stronger governance and professional development systems that shift values integration from individual teacher initiative toward a coordinated, system-wide approach.

Challenges participants encounter in integrating the DepEd Core Values in teaching and learning

The first theme, Instructional and Structural Constraints, highlights that teachers face constraints limiting the depth and consistency of integration. The subtheme of limited instructional time and heavy workload reveals that heavy teaching loads and administrative tasks reduce space for values-focused discussion, with teachers more focused on finishing learning competencies, so that integrating core values is sometimes not touched (P3, P6). OECD (2021) shows that heavy teaching workloads, curriculum demands, and limited instructional time often constrain teachers' ability to implement values-based pedagogy in a deep and consistent way.

The subtheme of large class size and packed curriculum emphasizes that limited time and large class sizes, along with an already packed curriculum, make individualized guidance difficult, requiring administrative support to prioritize values (P1, P8). Blatchford et al. (2019) show that large class sizes and overloaded curricula reduce teachers' capacity to provide individualized guidance and consistently reinforce values-based learning.

The second theme, Learner Diversity and Socio-Cultural Influences, highlights how learner diversity and socio-cultural factors shape understanding and practice of values. The subtheme of diverse learner attitudes and backgrounds reflects that learners' differences and varying backgrounds and attitudes influence how they understand and practice the core values (P2, P10). Roberts and Inman (2023) show that differentiated instruction helps teachers respond to varied levels of engagement and cultural contexts, ensuring that values education is meaningful and inclusive.

The subtheme of family and community influence on behavior reflects concerns that the culture of each family affects students' behaviors, and that learners with broken families experience insufficiently strong discipline at home (P4, P15). Anazia et al. (2025) show that family culture, parental involvement, and community environments strongly influence learners' behavior and the development of values.

The third theme, Resource and Professional Support Gaps, highlights gaps limiting consistent and effective integration. The subtheme of lack of materials, tools, and clear guidelines reveals a lack of age-appropriate and localized materials, and limited support materials and unclear assessment methods making reinforcement harder (P14, P18). Elliot (2022) shows that the absence of clear instructional resources, localized materials, and structured assessment tools weakens the consistent implementation of values-based pedagogy.

The subtheme of need for professional development and monitoring highlights calls for continuous effective professional development like LAC and administrative support to prioritize values, as well as concerns that a lack of clear guidelines and training leads to inconsistent application (P8, P17). Alharbi (2025) shows that continuous training combined with administrative follow-up enhances instructional quality, reinforces accountability, and supports long-term integration of ethical and character education practices.

These findings imply that addressing challenges in integrating DepEd Core Values requires systemic and instructional reforms responsive to structural constraints, learner diversity, and gaps in professional support, with flexible curriculum planning, differentiated instruction, stronger family-school partnerships, and continuous professional development

with active monitoring needed to transform values integration into a sustained, institutionally supported approach.

Coping mechanisms and interventions used to address challenges

The first theme, Instructional Adaptation and Values-Based Pedagogy, highlights strategies teachers use to meaningfully integrate values. The subtheme of integrating values into lessons and routines shows that teachers cope by integrating values across subjects and embedding the DepEd Core Values into lessons and classroom activities (P1, P9). Reimers (2020) emphasized that cross-curricular integration of values through real-life learning activities enables schools to sustain character education without adding extra instructional time.

The subtheme of interactive and contextualized learning strategies shows that teachers use interactive activities and real-life scenarios, stories, and group activities to make the DepEd Core Values more relatable and part of learning rather than separate topics (P18, P16). Cipriano et al. (2023) found that participatory and experiential learning approaches significantly improve students' social-emotional skills and ethical behavior.

The second theme, Positive Classroom Management and Relationship Building, highlights modeling, positive reinforcement, and feedback as coping strategies, with participants describing strengthened positive discipline, routinary practice modeling, and consistent modeling of values with positive reinforcement (P6, P5). Grazia and Molinari (2021) found that teachers who use positive discipline, encouragement, and modeling strategies foster stronger student engagement, prosocial behavior, and internalization of classroom values.

The subtheme of building strong teacher–learner relationships emphasize building relationships with students and maintaining open communication and collaboration with colleagues and parents (P4, P7). Roorda et al. (2023) found that positive teacher–student relationships significantly improve learners' engagement, social-emotional development, and behavioral outcomes.

The third theme, Collaboration and Professional Support Systems, highlights parent–teacher partnerships and peer collaboration, with participants calling parents' attention early, describing partnership in molding learners' futures, and collaborating with peers to develop shared materials while engaging parents and community leaders (P12, P15). Epstein (2018) emphasizes that coordinated family–school partnerships enhance students' moral and social development.

The subtheme of professional development and resource sharing describes training, mentoring, and shared resources, with participants providing teachers with training and professional development opportunities and strengthening teacher training and support systems through sharing ideas with colleagues (P3, P8). Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that sustained professional learning communities, mentoring, and shared instructional resources significantly improve teachers' ability to apply complex teaching practices.

These findings imply that teachers' coping mechanisms highlight the importance of adaptive pedagogy, positive classroom management, and collaborative support systems in sustaining value-driven teaching despite structural challenges, suggesting that schools and policymakers may strengthen sustainability by institutionalizing professional learning communities, promoting collaborative leadership, and providing continuous training and resource-sharing platforms.

Recommendations to enhance value-driven pedagogy in elementary basic education

The first theme, Strengthening Teacher Professional Development and Instructional Capacity, emphasizes continuous training and workshops, with participants recommending professional development for teachers and more interactive training that can be applied by teachers at school (P1, P4). Epstein (2018) notes that interactive, hands-on training helps teachers translate theory into practical classroom strategies, while Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that sustained, practice-focused professional development significantly improves teachers' instructional strategies.

The subtheme of provision of contextualized materials and resources shows that participants recommended providing teachers with resources and materials that support value-driven pedagogy and developing kid-friendly materials like storybooks, games, and worksheets (P3, P16). Reimers (2020) emphasized that localized learning resources help translate ethical concepts into meaningful experiences.

The second theme, Institutional Support, Curriculum Alignment, and Policy Enhancement, highlights the subtheme of explicit curriculum integration and administrative support, with participants recommending that time be allocated in the curriculum for explicit value integration, and enhanced administrative support to integrate values explicitly in lesson plans and assessment (P18, P10). Hallinger (2018) found that instructional leadership through structured guidance, monitoring, and alignment of curriculum priorities enhances teachers' ability to implement school-wide initiatives.

The subtheme of centralized programs and recognition systems shows that participants suggested designing centralized activities and programs for teachers, recognizing good practice, and giving small rewards or praise to students who show values in action (P13, P16). Grazia and Molinari (2021) found that school-wide recognition practices and supportive climate initiatives promote student engagement, prosocial behavior, and consistent adherence to shared values.

The third theme, Collaborative and Culture-Centered Approaches, highlights the subtheme of home-school-community partnership, with participants recommending strong home-school collaboration and strengthened home-school-community partnership (P5, P10). Epstein (2018) found that coordinated collaboration among teachers, parents, and community stakeholders significantly improves students' social behavior, responsibility, and character formation.

The subtheme of modeling discipline and positive school culture shows that participants recommended consistency in implementing and applying values and promoting strict discipline, and getting back traditional practices and disciplines so that core values are not just taught theoretically but practically (P2, P14). Grazia and Molinari (2021) indicate that supportive school climates with shared routines and clear expectations enhance learners' social-emotional development and reinforce values through daily practice rather than theoretical instruction.

These findings imply that enhancing value-driven pedagogy in elementary basic education requires coordinated reforms that strengthen teacher capacity, institutional structures, and collaborative school culture, with sustainable implementation depending not only on individual teacher competence but also on aligned leadership, supportive policies, and a shared culture that embeds ethical practices into everyday educational experiences.

Taken as a whole, the findings drawn from the 18 participants demonstrate that Value-Driven Pedagogy in the Division of Danao City is anchored in a professionally experienced and values-oriented teaching corps that integrates DepEd Core Values through holistic, contextualized, and modeling-based practices, even as this integration is constrained by implementation gaps, resource limitations, and inconsistent institutional monitoring. The

results directly address the study's objectives by revealing that teacher preparedness and competence, while strong, remain uneven across contexts due to variability in training access and systemic support, and that institutional policies, though generally perceived as supportive, require stronger enforcement, resourcing, and stakeholder collaboration to sustain implementation over time. The challenges identified, ranging from instructional and structural constraints to learner diversity and resource gaps, are met by teachers' adaptive coping mechanisms, including instructional adaptation, positive classroom management, and collaborative support systems, which collectively illustrate both the resilience of practitioners and the systemic reforms still required. These findings contribute to the field by offering an empirically grounded, contextually specific account of how values-based instruction operates within Philippine elementary education, extending existing literature on social-emotional learning, character education, and instructional leadership into a localized policy context. Collectively, these results provide the empirical foundation for the proposed policy framework aimed at institutionalizing Value-Driven Pedagogy, a framework that is elaborated in the subsequent chapter, where the study's conclusions, implications, and recommendations for practice and policy are presented in greater detail.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that value-driven pedagogy in Philippine elementary basic education is strongly grounded in teachers' professional competence, experiential knowledge, and commitment to DepEd Core Values. Teachers demonstrate readiness and capability to integrate values into classroom instruction through contextualized strategies, reflective practices, and role modeling; however, the effectiveness of these efforts is shaped by the degree of institutional support, policy alignment, and resource availability. While existing policies provide a strong framework for implementation, gaps in monitoring, training, and collaboration limit the consistency and sustainability of values integration. Thus, value-driven pedagogy requires not only individual teacher initiative but also systemic structures that ensure coherent alignment among curriculum, leadership practices, and professional development initiatives.

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