

The Implementation of the Region 2 Development Empowering Learners' Character (RDELIC): Basis for Enhancement

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of the Region 2 Development: Empowering Learners' Character (RDELIC) program in selected elementary schools in Rizal District, Rizal, Cagayan during School Year 2025–2026. It assessed teachers' integration of RDELIC principles in instructional design, teaching approaches, and classroom practices, identified challenges encountered, and determined differences in implementation across grade levels. A mixed-method research design using descriptive and inferential approaches was employed. The study was conducted in selected elementary schools in Rizal District, Rizal, Cagayan during School Year 2025–2026. The respondents were 20 Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers. Data were gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire based on DepEd RDELIC guidelines and supported by open-ended responses. Weighted mean and standard deviation measured the extent of implementation, while One-Way ANOVA tested differences across grade levels. Findings showed that teachers highly implemented RDELIC principles, particularly in classroom practices. Common challenges included learner engagement, behavioral adjustment, assessment alignment, and limited instructional materials. No significant differences in implementation were found across grade levels. RDELIC was effectively implemented in promoting values-based instruction and character development. However, continued teacher support, adequate instructional resources, and stronger school-home collaboration are needed to strengthen its implementation and development among learners. However, continuous teacher support, sufficient instructional resources, and stronger school-home collaboration are necessary to further strengthen the implementation of RDELIC in elementary schools.

Keywords: RDELIC; Moral Education; Values Formation; Character Development; Elementary Education

1. Introduction

The importance of moral values in learners' lives lies in their role in shaping ability to relate with peers, contribute positively to the community, and make responsible decisions [1]. Children who grow up without proper moral guidance may struggle to distinguish right from wrong, which can later manifest as behavioral problems in school and in adulthood [2]. Moral education also promotes self-discipline, resilience, and emotional regulation among learners.

At an early stage of schooling, children begin to develop values such as patience, diligence, honesty, and respect, which significantly influence their academic behavior and social interactions [3]. When schools deliberately integrate moral values into instruction, learners are more likely to demonstrate positive behavior, improved academic performance, and ethical decision-making [4]. Thus, moral education plays a vital role in shaping learners not only as academically competent individuals but also as morally upright members of society.

Moral education, as a comprehensive educational practice, aims to develop moral awareness, social responsibility, and ethical behavior [5,6]. Studies indicate that moral education contributes to learners' psychological well-being by

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strengthening resilience, emotional control, and a sense of belonging [7,8]. It nurtures virtues such as kindness, discipline, perseverance, and empathy, enabling learners to face challenges responsibly and contribute meaningfully to society [9]. In this sense, moral education supports both the emotional and psychological development of pupils.

The Region 2 Development: Empowering Learners' Character (RDELc) project is a DepEd Region II initiative designed to strengthen values formation and holistic development among learners back in the year 2019. Through this program, educators are encouraged to incorporate values such as respect, integrity, and social responsibility into their teaching practices to cultivate ethically grounded pupils [10, 11, 12]. The project emphasizes the integration of character education into daily classroom instruction rather than treating it as a separate learning area [13,14]. Core Filipino values such as Makadiyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa are embedded into regular lessons to promote ethical awareness and responsible citizenship [15,16].

As a teacher in Rizal District, Rizal, Cagayan, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study after observing the need to strengthen learners' values formation and character development. Despite teachers' efforts to implement RDELc, challenges such as limited instructional materials and inconsistent practice of values remain evident. These observations inspired the researcher to examine the implementation of RDELc and identify areas for improvement.

Despite this recognition, limited empirical studies focus on the actual classroom implementation of RDELc, particularly in elementary schools, as noted by Ponhagban R. (2025), who emphasized the need for more classroom-based evaluations of values formation programs. This gap underscores the need to examine how teachers implement RDELc values into lesson planning and instruction and the challenges encountered by teachers. Moreover, Department of Education Region II (2019; 2022) highlighted that while RDELc is actively promoted, its effective integration in daily teaching practices still requires further support and monitoring. Similarly, Reynanti S. (2022) pointed out that moral education programs must be consistently applied in classroom settings to achieve meaningful learner development.

Hence, this study sought to determine the extent of implementation of (RDELc) in the selected schools in Rizal District, Rizal, Cagayan. Specifically, it seeks to assess how teachers implement RDELc-Based Instruction. The findings of this study aim to serve as a basis for strengthening the implementation of RDELc and supporting DepEd's goal of producing learners who are academically competent and morally grounded.

This study aimed to determine the extent of implementation of Region 2 Development: Empowering Learners' Character (RDELc) instruction in selected schools in Rizal District during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to assess the extent of RDELc implementation in terms of instructional design, teaching approaches, and classroom practices. It also aimed to identify the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing RDELc-based instruction in terms of learning engagement, comprehension and application, and behavioral adjustment. Furthermore, the study determined whether there was a significant difference in the implementation of RDELc across the three instructional dimensions when grouped according to grade level. Finally, the study proposed measures to enhance the implementation of RDELc in teaching and learning activities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method research design. The quantitative descriptive method determined how teachers implement RDELc values into instruction and identified the challenges encountered. The quantitative inferential approach examined whether significant differences exist in the assessment of RDELc implementation across instructional dimensions, while the qualitative approach provided additional insights through interviews and open-ended responses.

2.2. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected schools in Rizal District, Rizal, Cagayan which actively implements RDELc and serves learners in a geographically remote area where values formation plays a critical role in learner development.

2.3. Respondents of the study

The primary respondents of this study were Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers in the selected schools in Rizal District for the School Year 2025–2026. A total enumeration sampling technique was employed, wherein all teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 3 were included as participants in the study. The total number of respondents was twenty (20) teachers. This approach ensures complete representation of the target population and eliminates sampling bias.

2.4. Research Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data gathering in this study. The researcher-developed questionnaire, based on the DepEd RDEL C manual or primer, was intended for teachers and utilized a five-point Likert scale. It included items that assessed the implementation of RDEL C in terms of instructional design, teaching approaches, and classroom practices, as well as the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing RDEL C-based instruction. Guided by the DepEd module on ethical values, the instrument was designed to determine how teachers integrate these values into their instructional practices.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

Frequency and Percentage Distribution were used to describe the profile of the respondents. Weighted Mean was utilized to determine the extent of implementation of RDEL C and the challenges encountered by teachers using the 5-point Likert scale. Standard Deviation was employed to measure the variability of responses. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant differences in the implementation of RDEL C across grade levels.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1 Extent of Implementation of RDEL C in terms of Instructional Design

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1	RDEL C objectives are clearly defined and aligned with the curriculum standards.	4.75	0.44	Always Evident	Very Highly Implemented
2	Learning activities are designed to develop learners' character and values.	4.20	0.41	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
3	Lesson plans reflect the integration of RDEL C principles across all subject areas.	4.00	0.00	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
4	Assessment tools are aligned with RDEL C goals and expected learning outcomes.	2.90	0.31	Moderately Evident	Moderately Implemented
5	Differentiated instruction strategies are incorporated to address diverse learners.	3.50	0.51	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
Overall Mean		3.87	0.73	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented

Table 1 shows an overall mean of 3.87, described as Highly Implemented, indicating that teachers in Rizal District generally integrate RDEL C principles in instructional design. Item 1 obtained the highest mean of 4.75 (SD=0.44), showing that teachers clearly align RDEL C objectives with curriculum standards, while Item 4 received the lowest mean of 2.90 (SD=0.31), suggesting challenges in aligning assessment tools with character-based learning outcomes. These findings support the studies of Reynanti (2022), Milkova (2024), Ponghagban (2025), and McLeod (2025), which emphasized the importance of intentional values integration and the difficulty of assessing moral and behavioral development through conventional assessments.

Table 2 Extent of Implementation of RDEL C in terms of Teaching Approaches

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
6	Teachers use culturally responsive teaching strategies consistent with RDEL C.	4.95	0.22	Always Evident	Very Highly Implemented
7	Collaborative and cooperative learning approaches are used to develop character.	4.30	0.47	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
8	Teachers model positive values and behaviors expected of RDEL C learners.	5.00	0.00	Always Evident	Very Highly Implemented

9	Inquiry-based and reflective activities are employed to develop critical thinking.	3.10	0.31	Moderately Evident	Moderately Implemented
10	Teachers provide meaningful feedback that supports character formation.	3.65	0.49	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
Overall Mean		4.20	0.81	Most of the Time Evident	Highly implemented

Table 2 shows an overall mean of 4.20 (SD=0.81), described as Highly Implemented, indicating that teachers' instructional approaches are strongly aligned with RDEL C expectations. Item 8 obtained the highest mean of 5.00 (SD=0.00), showing that teachers consistently model positive values and behaviors, while Item 9 received the lowest mean of 3.10 (SD=0.31), suggesting that inquiry-based and reflective activities are less frequently utilized in instruction.

Table 3 Extent of Implementation of RDEL C in terms of Classroom Practices

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
11	The classroom environment promotes positive values and discipline.	4.70	0.47	Always Evident	Very Highly Implemented
12	Classroom routines and rules reflect RDEL C principles and values.	4.80	0.41	Always Evident	Very Highly Implemented
13	Teachers consistently reinforce learners' desirable behaviors and character traits.	3.35	0.49	Moderately Evident	Moderately Implemented
14	Learner participation in discussions and activities reflects RDEL C engagement.	3.15	0.37	Moderately Evident	Moderately Implemented
15	Learners are given opportunities to demonstrate values in real-life situations.	4.10	0.31	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented
Overall Mean		4.02	0.79	Most of the Time Evident	Highly Implemented

Table 3 shows an overall mean of 4.02 (SD=0.79), described as Highly Implemented, indicating that RDEL C principles are generally evident in classroom practices and routines. Item 12 obtained the highest mean of 4.80 (SD=0.41), showing that classroom rules and routines strongly reflect RDEL C values, while Item 14 received the lowest mean of 3.15, suggesting that learner participation in RDEL C-related discussions and activities still needs improvement.

Table 4 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Challenges in Learning Engagement

Indicators	5 - HA		4 - MoA		3 - SA		2 - LA		1 - NA		Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1. Learners show limited interest or motivation during RDEL C-based activities.	6	30.0%	14	70.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4
2. Some pupils are unable to sustain attention during character-based discussions.	14	70.0%	6	30.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2
3. Teachers find it difficult to engage all learners in value-oriented activities.	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
4. Large class sizes hinder active participation in RDEL C activities.	0	0.0%	5	25.0%	15	75.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5
5. Varied learning styles make it challenging to deliver RDEL C instruction effectively.	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1

Legend: HA = Highly Agree; MoA = Moderately Agree; SA = Sometimes Agree; LA = Less Agree; NA = Not Agree; Rank = Item Rank within dimension

Table 4 shows that the most common challenge in the learning engagement dimension was addressing varied learning styles during RDELc instruction, with 80% of respondents highly agreeing. Sustaining learners' attention during character-based discussions ranked second, followed by difficulty in engaging all learners in value-oriented activities. Limited learner motivation in RDELc activities was also identified as a challenge, although with lesser intensity. Meanwhile, large class size ranked lowest, indicating that while it affects participation, it is not considered a major obstacle compared to other engagement-related challenges.

Table 5 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Challenges in Comprehension and Application (n = 20)

Indicators	5 - HA		4 - MoA		3 - SA		2 - LA		1 - NA		Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1. Learners have difficulty understanding abstract character concepts taught.	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2
2. Pupils struggle to apply RDELc values in concrete, real-world situations.	6	30.0%	14	70.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4
3. Teachers face challenges in making RDELc content relevant to learners' daily lives.	10	50.0%	10	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
4. Language barriers affect the comprehension of RDELc-related content.	0	0.0%	9	45.0%	11	55.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5
5. Insufficient learning materials limit the effective delivery of RDELc lessons.	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1

Legend: HA = Highly Agree; MoA = Moderately Agree; SA = Sometimes Agree; LA = Less Agree; NA = Not Agree; Rank = Item Rank within dimension

Table 5 shows that the most significant challenge in the comprehension and application of RDELc content was the lack of sufficient learning materials, with all respondents highly agreeing. Learners' difficulty in understanding abstract character concepts ranked second, followed by challenges in making RDELc lessons relevant to daily life and applying values in real-world situations. Language barriers ranked lowest, suggesting that while they affect comprehension in some classrooms, they are not consistently experienced by all teachers.

Table 6 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Challenges in Behavioral Adjustment (n = 20)

Indicators	5 - HA	4 - MoA			3 - SA		2 - LA		1 - NA		Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1. Some learners exhibit behavioral issues that disrupt RDELc-based activities.	7	35.0%	13	65.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
2. Home environment influences conflict with the values taught under RDELc.	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.5
3. Inconsistent reinforcement of values at home and school poses a challenge.	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.5
4. Teachers face difficulties in monitoring behavioral changes in all learners.	0	0.0%	20	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5
5. Peer influence sometimes undermines the positive behaviours developed in class.	5	25.0%	15	75.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4

Legend: HA = Highly Agree; MoA = Moderately Agree; SA = Sometimes Agree; LA = Less Agree; NA = Not Agree; Rank = Item Rank within dimension

Table 6 shows that the greatest behavioral adjustment challenges in RDEL C implementation were conflicting home influences and inconsistent reinforcement of values between home and school, with all respondents highly agreeing on both issues. Behavioral disruptions in class and negative peer influence were also identified as challenges, while monitoring learners' behavioral changes was viewed as a moderate concern. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers face challenges related to learner diversity, limited instructional materials, and home-school value inconsistencies, which affect the effective implementation of RDEL C.

Table 7 Significant Difference in RDEL C Implementation by Grade Level

Dimension	Grade Level (n=5 per group)								F-value	p-value
	Kindergarten M	Kindergarten SD	Grade 1 M	Grade 1 SD	Grade 2 M	Grade 2 SD	Grade 3 M	Grade 3 SD		
Instructional Design	3.880	0.120	3.840	0.120	3.880	0.150	3.880	0.070	0.055 ns	0.9822
Teaching Approaches	4.120	0.120	4.280	0.100	4.280	0.190	4.120	0.090	0.667 ns	0.5847
Classroom Practices	3.960	0.100	4.040	0.120	4.040	0.140	4.040	0.060	0.068 ns	0.9760

Table 7 shows no significant difference in the implementation of RDEL C across grade levels in all three instructional dimensions, as all $P > .05$. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted, indicating that RDEL C implementation is relatively uniform among Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 teachers. The similarity in group means suggests consistent implementation across grade levels, possibly due to shared training and instructional practices, although the small sample size may have limited the detection of differences.

Table 8 Proposed Measures to Enhance the Implementation of RDEL C Instruction

No.	Proposed Measure	Mean	SD	Description
1	Conduct regular RDEL C-focused trainings and capability-building sessions for teachers.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
2	Develop and provide supplementary instructional materials aligned with RDEL C goals.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
3	Establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track RDEL C implementation progress.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
4	Strengthen school-home partnerships to reinforce character values outside school.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
5	Integrate RDEL C principles into all learning areas through interdisciplinary approaches.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
6	Organize school-wide character development programs and activities quarterly.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
7	Provide mentoring sessions for teachers to share best practices on RDEL C instruction.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
8	Adopt contextualized learning materials that reflect local culture and values.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
9	Recognize and reward learners who demonstrate consistent positive character traits.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
10	Conduct focus group discussions with teachers and parents to address RDEL C challenges.	5.00	0.00	Highly Useful
Overall Mean		5.00	0.00	Highly Useful

Table 8 shows that all proposed measures for improving RDEL implementation received a unanimous mean of 5.00 (SD=0.00), described as Highly Useful. This indicates that teachers strongly support comprehensive interventions such as capability-building trainings, instructional material development, monitoring systems, school-home partnerships, contextualized learning materials, and mentoring programs. The findings highlight the teachers' recognition of existing implementation gaps and their need for holistic and sustained support to strengthen RDEL delivery.4. Conclusion

The implementation of RDEL leveled at a satisfactory and consistent level across instructional design, teaching approaches, and classroom practices. Teachers effectively integrate RDEL principles, particularly in modeling values and establishing supportive classroom environments. However, the findings also emphasized the needs for improvements in assessment alignment, inquiry-based strategies, and learners' participation. The findings also show no statistically significant difference across grade levels. Overall, strengthening teacher support, resources, and school-home collaboration is essential to enhance RDEL implementation.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non- financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of Apayao State College and with due consideration for the privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation of the respondents. No formal ethical approval was required for this study.

Statement of informed consent

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

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