

Mapping the Landscape of OT in Philippine Basic Education: A Cross-Sectional Survey



Guia Allyza D. Rabacca, MFLCD, OTRP
Assistant Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy
College of Allied Medical Professions
University of the Philippines Manila
E-mail: gdrabacca@up.edu.ph

BACKGROUND

RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act) is signed. *Is the workforce ready?*

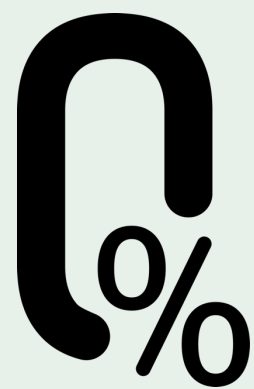
Inclusive education is a fundamental right mandated by the Salamanca Statement and solidified in the Philippines by Republic Act 11650 (The Inclusive Education Act). While the law recognizes Occupational Therapists (OTs) as vital members of the multidisciplinary team, school-based OT remains an "emerging practice" in the country.

Recent preliminary data from the IDinsight EdCom survey of eight Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) underscores the urgency of this workforce gap (IDinsight & EdCom 2, 2025).

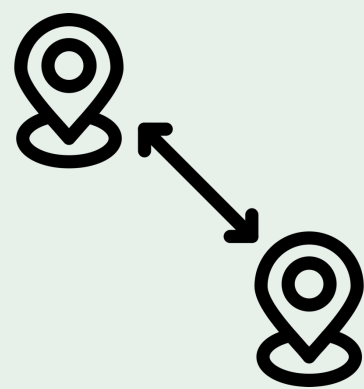
The study aims to:

1. Describe the demographic and professional profiles of OTs working with Philippine public and private schools;
2. Describe the services delivered by OTs in schools, and
3. Discuss the facilitators and barriers to school-based practice.

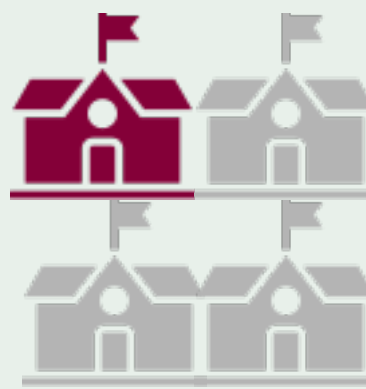
By the numbers:



0 of 8 surveyed ILRCs have an OT on staff



50%: Nearest OT is located over one hour away



25%: No existing referral pathways for OT services

There exists a **systemic disconnection** between the legislative mandate for multidisciplinary teams and the on-the-ground reality of service availability.

METHODS

Phase 1

Research Design

Cross Sectional Survey Design - first phase in an explanatory mixed-methods study with the aim of generating concrete data on factors contributing to school-based OT practice in the Philippines.

Instrumentation

Tool Development

A 3-part online survey was developed based on existing literature (Jeremy et al., 2024; Laverdure & Swinth, 2024; Medallon et al., 2025) to measure demographics, service delivery models, and perceived competencies.

Expert Validation

A panel of five experts in the field of school-based practice, inclusive education, and tool development independently assessed items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness using a 4-point Likert scale.



This presentation was made possible through the support of the University of the Philippines Manila Research Dissemination Grant with Reference No. RGAO-2026-0039.

Instrumentation

Content Validity Indices n=5	Demographics	Perceived Competencies	Attitudes on Inclusion
	Item-Level CVI		
Number of Items	30	23	10
*Items with I-CVI score below 100% <small>Polit & Beck (2006), Polit et al., (2007)</small>	5	6	10
Scale-Level CVI <small>Shi, Mo, & Sun (2012)</small>	0.94 Valid	0.94 Valid	0.64 Invalid

Action

Low-scoring items and tools were reviewed including comments from expert validators which led to:

1. Integration of similar items;
2. Removal of low-scoring items across evaluators;
3. Revision of vague statements for clarity;
4. Reframing of items to facilitate better alignment to research objectives; and
5. Further clarification of descriptions/instructions to facilitate more accurate responder input.

WORK IN PROGRESS

This study represents part of a more comprehensive effort to profile the school-based OT workforce in the Philippines following the passage of the Inclusive Education Act. The validated profiling tool serves as a foundational instrument to identify not just who is working in schools, but *how* they are delivering services and what competencies they possess or lack.

NEXT STEPS



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Curricular Reform

- Findings will inform undergraduate OT curricula to better prepare graduates for non-clinical, school-based roles.

Professional Development

- Data on competency gaps will guide the creation of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules for current practitioners.
- Development of an OT competency framework specific school-based practice.

Policy Implementation

- The generated profile will assist regulatory bodies and professional organizations in staffing and operationalizing the government-mandated Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs).

