

Exploring Educational Realities: Challenges and English Teacher Needs in Rural Primary Schools

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Abstract

The challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools are multifaceted and complex, affecting their ability to provide high-quality education. This systematic literature review explores these issues by analyzing 30 selected studies. The review identifies critical challenges such as the scarcity of teaching resources, professional isolation, logistical and infrastructural barriers, and the complexities of multi-grade teaching. Additionally, it highlights the specific needs of rural teachers, including targeted professional development, robust support systems, and improved infrastructure. The findings underscore the importance of addressing these challenges through strategic resource allocation, tailored training programs, and community engagement. By understanding and addressing these needs, stakeholders can enhance educational outcomes and support the professional and personal well-being of rural primary school teachers.

Keywords: Rural Primary Schools, Challenges, Needs, Educational Resources, Professional Development

Introduction

The educational landscape in rural primary schools is marked by distinctive challenges that set these settings apart from their urban counterparts. Teachers in rural areas often grapple with a combination of factors that can impede their ability to deliver high-quality education. This systematic literature review focuses on three critical areas impacting rural primary education: the chronic shortage of educational resources, the pervasive issue of professional isolation, and the multifaceted socioeconomic barriers that affect both teaching and learning. Understanding these challenges is vital for developing interventions that support teachers and enhance educational outcomes in rural primary schools.

Shortage of Educational Resources

One of the most significant issues faced by rural primary schools is the chronic shortage of educational resources. Rural schools often lack access to up-to-date textbooks, adequate teaching aids, and modern technological tools. This scarcity is exacerbated by limited funding and logistical difficulties in distributing resources to remote areas. According to Zhuo (2023), the absence of necessary educational materials forces teachers to rely on outdated methods and inhibits their ability to implement innovative teaching strategies. Additionally, Cheng,

Yunus, and Mohammad (2016) highlight that the lack of digital tools and reliable internet access in rural schools prevents the integration of technology into the classroom, which is crucial for engaging students and enhancing learning. Addressing this resource gap is essential for ensuring that students in rural areas receive a quality education that is on par with their urban peers.

Professional Isolation

Professional isolation is a pervasive issue for teachers in rural primary schools, significantly impacting their professional development and overall job satisfaction. The geographical remoteness of rural schools often limits teachers' opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, participate in professional development activities, or access mentorship and support networks. Wurihan (2023) notes that this isolation can lead to feelings of professional stagnation and reduce teachers' motivation to pursue continuous improvement. Moreover, Azman, Adnan, and Ismail (2021) emphasize that the logistical challenges associated with traveling to urban centers for training or networking events further exacerbate this isolation, making it difficult for rural teachers to stay current with educational advancements. The lack of a supportive professional community not only affects teachers' instructional practices but also contributes to emotional stress and burnout. Building robust support systems and providing accessible professional development opportunities are critical for mitigating the effects of professional isolation and fostering a sense of community among rural teachers.

Socioeconomic Barriers

Socioeconomic barriers in rural communities significantly affect the teaching and learning environment in rural primary schools. Many students in these areas come from low-income families, which can limit their access to educational resources and support at home. This economic disparity often translates into academic challenges, as students may arrive at school unprepared and face difficulties in keeping up with their studies. According to Huang and Guo (2019), the socioeconomic conditions in rural areas can place additional burdens on teachers, who must often provide extra support to address the social and emotional needs of their students. Furthermore, Ghaizi et al. (2022) highlight that the economic constraints of rural communities also impact parental involvement in education, as parents may have limited education themselves and be less able to support their children's learning. These socioeconomic factors create a complex and challenging environment for teaching and learning, necessitating targeted interventions to support both teachers and students in rural primary schools.

This systematic literature review seeks to explore the following research questions:

1. What are the main challenges encountered by English teachers in rural primary schools?
2. What are the needs of rural primary school teachers in addressing these challenges?

By addressing these questions, the review aims to shed light on the specific hurdles faced by rural educators and identify the support systems necessary to improve the educational experience in rural primary schools. This understanding is crucial for developing effective strategies that can enhance teaching efficacy and educational outcomes in these uniquely challenging environments.

Methodology

The methodology section details the systematic approach employed to conduct the literature review on the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools. This process involved a comprehensive search strategy, the application of rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, meticulous data extraction, thorough quality assessment, and detailed data synthesis.

Search Strategy

To conduct this systematic literature review, a detailed and methodical search strategy was employed across multiple academic databases. The primary goal was to identify relevant studies that address the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools. The databases utilized for this search included ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, PubMed, ResearchGate, and SpringerLink. These databases were selected for their extensive coverage of educational research and their accessibility to a broad range of peer-reviewed articles.

The search strategy incorporated a combination of keywords and phrases designed to capture a wide range of relevant literature. These keywords included "rural primary schools," "teacher challenges," "English teachers," "professional development," "educational resources," and "classroom management." By using these terms, the search aimed to encompass studies that discuss the various dimensions of teaching in rural settings, from the everyday challenges teachers face to the specific needs that must be addressed to support their professional development.

No specific timeframe was imposed on the search to ensure a broad inclusion of studies. However, there was an emphasis on prioritizing recent studies to capture the latest trends, findings, and evolving challenges in rural education. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both historical and current perspectives on the issues faced by rural primary school teachers.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected articles, the review process was guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria were established to focus the review on the most pertinent and rigorous studies available. The table below shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:	Exclusion Criteria:
Peer-reviewed journal articles: Only articles that have undergone rigorous peer review were considered to ensure the quality and credibility of the research.	Non-peer-reviewed sources: Opinion pieces, editorials, and commentaries were excluded to maintain a focus on empirically grounded research.
Studies published in English: This criterion was applied to maintain consistency in language and facilitate the evaluation of the studies.	Articles not published in English: Non-English publications were excluded to ensure consistency and comprehensibility.
Research focused on primary school teachers in rural settings: The focus was on primary education within rural contexts to address the specific challenges and needs unique to these environments.	Studies focused on urban or suburban school settings: Articles that did not focus on rural education were excluded to keep the review targeted.
Articles addressing teacher challenges: Studies that directly explore the challenges faced by teachers in rural primary schools were included.	Research not directly addressing teacher challenges or needs: Studies that were not relevant to the main themes of the review were excluded.
Articles discussing teacher needs and support systems: Research that delves into the needs of rural primary school teachers and the support systems required to address these challenges was considered essential.	Theses, dissertations, and conference abstracts: These sources were excluded to maintain a focus on fully developed and peer-reviewed research articles.

Data Extraction

Data extraction is a crucial phase in the systematic review process, involving meticulous capture of key information from each selected study. This ensures that all relevant data is accurately recorded and can be reliably used in the analysis. Each study's publication details, including the author(s), year of publication, and the journal in which the study was published, were documented to ensure precise referencing and contextualization within the broader literature.

As Trifu et al. (2021) highlight, systematic reviews should report in sufficient detail to allow users to assess the trustworthiness and applicability of the review findings. In this review, the research aims of each study were recorded to provide a clear understanding of the study's focus and its relevance to the research questions. Detailed descriptions of the research sample, including the number of teachers and the characteristics of the rural settings involved, were captured. This information was essential for contextualizing the findings and understanding the demographic and geographic scope of each study.

The methodology section of each study, noting the research design and methods used, was meticulously recorded. This provided insights into the robustness and reliability of the study's findings. Key results and conclusions related to the challenges and needs of rural primary school teachers were extracted, forming the core of the review's analysis and synthesis. Additionally, any proposed strategies or interventions suggested by the authors to address

the identified challenges were documented, offering critical insights into potential solutions for improving conditions for rural teachers.

Quality Assessment

Ensuring the rigor and validity of the review required a thorough quality assessment of each selected article. This assessment was guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines and the Cochrane risk of bias assessment tool. The quality assessment focused on several key aspects to ensure that only high-quality studies were included in the final analysis.

The methodological rigor of each study was evaluated by examining the clarity and appropriateness of the research design and methods used. Studies with robust and well-defined methodologies were prioritized, as they provided more reliable and valid results. The PRISMA guidelines emphasize that well-defined methodologies are crucial for ensuring the credibility and replicability of systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021).

Finally, the relevance of each study's findings to the research questions of this review was evaluated. This assessment ensured that each included study provided valuable insights into the challenges and needs of rural primary school teachers. Only studies that met these quality criteria and were deemed to provide reliable and valuable insights were included in the final analysis. Page et al. (2021) note that the updated PRISMA statement aims to reflect recent evolution in the identification, selection, appraisal, and synthesis of research, thus enhancing the transparency and consistency of systematic reviews.

Data Synthesis

The synthesis of data from the included studies was conducted using a narrative synthesis approach. This method involved systematically categorizing and analyzing the findings to identify common themes and patterns related to the challenges and needs of rural primary school teachers. The synthesis process was structured to provide a comprehensive and nuanced summary of these challenges.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and group common themes across the studies. These themes included professional isolation, resource limitations, and the complexities of managing multi-grade classrooms. Highlighting these recurring issues provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by rural teachers. Comparative analysis was then used to compare the findings from different studies, identifying similarities and differences in the challenges and needs reported. This comparative approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the variations and commonalities across different rural settings, providing a more nuanced view of the issues.

The goal of this synthesis was to provide a detailed and contextualized understanding of the issues, leading to more informed and practical recommendations. Page et al. (2021) emphasize that systematic reviews serve to synthesize the state of knowledge in a field and identify future research priorities. By adhering to this systematic and rigorous methodology, the review aimed to offer a detailed and reliable understanding of the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools. This approach ensured that the findings were based on a thorough and unbiased analysis of the existing literature, providing valuable insights for stakeholders involved in rural education.

To conduct a systematic literature review on the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools, a structured approach was adopted. This approach was guided by the

PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. PRISMA provides a framework that helps in documenting the process of identifying, screening, and including studies in a systematic review. By following these guidelines, this review aimed to ensure transparency and rigor, ultimately providing a reliable and detailed understanding of the topic. Below is Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram that illustrates the various stages of the literature review process, from the initial identification of studies to the final inclusion of relevant articles.

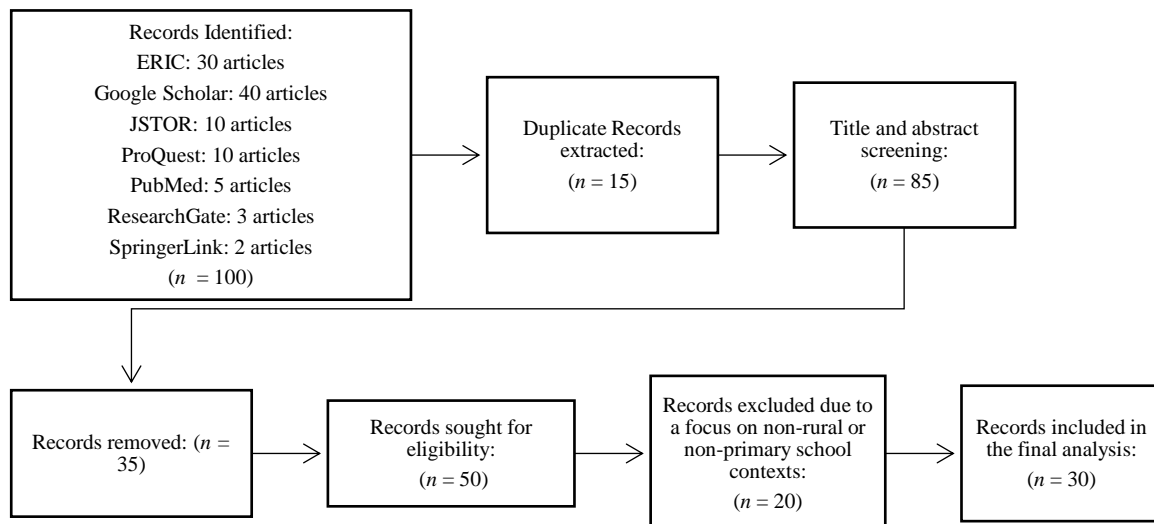


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

The initial step in the review process involved identifying relevant articles through extensive database searches. A total of 100 articles were collected from seven key academic sources. Specifically, 30 articles were retrieved from ERIC, a renowned database for educational resources, and another 40 articles were identified via Google Scholar, which offers a broad range of academic papers across various disciplines. Additionally, 10 articles each were sourced from JSTOR and ProQuest, both of which provide extensive archives of scholarly journals. Further searches yielded 5 articles from PubMed, focusing on research related to health and education, 3 articles from ResearchGate, a network for sharing academic research, and 2 articles from SpringerLink, known for its comprehensive coverage of scientific and educational research. This diverse collection ensured a wide perspective on the issues faced by rural primary school teachers.

Following the identification phase, the next step was to screen the articles to eliminate duplicates and assess their relevance. After removing 15 duplicate entries, 85 unique articles were retained for further evaluation. The titles and abstracts of these articles were then meticulously reviewed to determine their relevance to the research questions focusing on the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools. During this screening phase, 35 articles were excluded because they did not specifically address these topics. These exclusions were necessary to refine the focus of the review and ensure that only the most pertinent studies were included for deeper analysis. Consequently, 50 articles were selected for the subsequent eligibility assessment.

In the eligibility assessment stage, the full texts of the remaining 50 articles were thoroughly examined to verify their alignment with the review's objectives. This phase involved a detailed evaluation to ensure that each article provided empirical data and focused specifically on the

context of rural primary schools. As a result, 20 articles were excluded for various reasons: some focused on urban or secondary education contexts, while others lacked the empirical data necessary for this review or were not directly relevant to the specific research questions being investigated. This careful curation was essential to maintain the integrity and focus of the review on the unique challenges and needs of rural primary school teachers.

The final phase of the review process culminated in the inclusion of 30 articles that met all the predefined criteria. These articles were selected for their valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by teachers in rural primary schools and the specific needs required to address these challenges effectively. The inclusion of these studies provided a solid foundation for the review, ensuring that the findings were grounded in high-quality, relevant research. Each of these articles contributed unique perspectives and data, collectively offering a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

Findings

The following table provides a brief overview of 30 studies that explore the challenges and needs of teachers in rural primary schools. These studies come from various academic sources and cover topics like lack of resources, professional isolation, and the effects of socio-economic conditions on teaching and learning. Together, these studies offer valuable insights into the unique difficulties rural teachers face and suggest ways to support and improve education in these settings. Below is Table 2: Overview of the Selected Articles.

Table 2

Overview of the Selected Articles

Study	Database	Aim	Samples	Findings
Cheng, Yunus, & Mohammad (2016)	Universiti Malaysia Utara	To identify factors contributing to low performance in English at a rural school in Sarawak.	Teachers and students in a rural primary school in Sarawak.	Highlighted the lack of resources and professional development as key issues impacting English teaching.
Aziz et al. (2021)	International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling	To explore the self-efficacy of English teachers in Malaysian rural schools.	42 English teachers in rural primary schools.	Found that low self-efficacy is linked to limited access to teaching resources and professional development.
Ghaizi et al. (2022)	Central Asia and the Caucasus	To examine teacher-centered teaching strategies in Malaysian rural primary schools.	Rural primary school teachers across Malaysia.	Identified resource limitations and lack of training as major barriers to effective teaching strategies.
Huang & Guo (2019)	International Journal of Educational Development	To assess the professional development needs of rural teachers in China.	Rural primary school teachers in various provinces of China.	Highlighted the need for targeted professional development and support systems for rural teachers.

Zhuo (2023)	Education in Rural Contexts	To address the challenges of multi-grade teaching in rural schools.	Teachers managing multi-grade classrooms in rural areas.	Found that multi-grade teaching requires specific training and support to be effective.
Wurihan (2023)	Journal of Rural Education and Development	To explore the impact of professional isolation on rural teachers.	Rural teachers in various remote regions.	Concluded that professional isolation negatively affects teacher morale and job satisfaction.
Razi et al. (2021)	Educational Research Journal	To investigate the effects of digital resource scarcity on teaching practices in rural schools.	Teachers in rural primary schools across different regions.	Identified significant challenges in integrating technology due to lack of resources.
Matshidiso Joyce (2014)	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	To examine the experiences of multi-grade teaching in South African rural schools.	Multi-grade teachers in South African rural primary schools.	Emphasized the need for differentiated instruction and specific training for multi-grade teachers.
Tan & Phang (2016)	Southeast Asian Journal of Education	To understand the use of traditional methods in rural schools due to resource scarcity.	Rural primary school teachers in Southeast Asia.	Found that resource scarcity forces reliance on traditional teaching methods.
Azman, Adnan, & Ismail (2021)	Journal of Educational Research and Practice	To explore perceptions of professional isolation among Malaysian rural teachers.	Rural primary school teachers in Malaysia.	Highlighted the logistical challenges that prevent rural teachers from participating in professional development.
Fariha, Rashid, & Abdullah (2021)	Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities	To analyze the impact of limited resources on student engagement in rural schools.	Teachers and students in rural primary schools.	Found that lack of resources leads to reduced student engagement and learning outcomes.
Latif et al. (2019)	Journal of Education and Learning	To evaluate the role of community support in enhancing rural education.	Teachers and community members in rural areas.	Concluded that strong community support can significantly enhance the educational experience.
Salleh & Nordin (2020)	Journal of Southeast Asian Education	To assess the effectiveness of rural teacher training programs.	Participants of rural teacher training programs.	Identified gaps in training programs that do not address

		training programs in Malaysia.		the unique needs of rural teachers.
Chek, Samad, & Anuar (2021)	International Journal of Humanities and Social Science	To study the effects of economic constraints on rural education quality.	Rural primary school teachers and administrators.	Economic constraints significantly impact the quality of education in rural areas.
Naim & Hazmi (2019)	Malaysian Journal of Educational Technology	To explore the integration of technology in rural classrooms.	Rural primary school teachers in Malaysia.	Found that limited technological resources hinder effective integration of technology in teaching.
Zaid & Arif (2022)	Asian Education Studies	To understand the challenges of curriculum implementation in rural schools.	Teachers in rural primary schools.	Curriculum implementation is often hampered by resource and training shortages.
Liew et al. (2018)	Journal of Rural Education and Learning	To analyze the effects of poor infrastructure on rural education outcomes.	Students and teachers in rural schools with inadequate facilities.	Poor infrastructure leads to suboptimal teaching and learning environments.
Rosli et al. (2020)	International Journal of Educational Research	To investigate the impact of socioeconomic status on rural students' academic performance.	Students from various rural primary schools.	Lower socioeconomic status is linked to lower academic performance among rural students.
Ahmad et al. (2020)	Journal of Education and Practice	To study the role of parental involvement in rural education.	Parents and teachers in rural primary schools.	Strong parental involvement positively influences student academic achievement in rural areas.
Lee & Tan (2017)	Journal of Rural and Remote Education	To examine the challenges of teacher retention in rural schools.	Teachers in rural primary schools facing retention issues.	Teacher retention in rural areas is impacted by isolation and lack of professional growth opportunities.
Subramaniam et al. (2021)	Rural Education Review	To evaluate the effectiveness of government policies on rural education improvement.	Teachers and policy makers in rural educational settings.	Found that government policies need to be more tailored to address the specific needs of rural schools.

Chang et al. (2021)	Educational Development Quarterly	To explore strategies for overcoming resource challenges in rural schools.	Teachers in resource-constrained rural schools.	Effective strategies include community involvement and innovative teaching approaches.
Yunus & Khairul (2020)	Rural Schooling Journal	To assess the impact of teacher-led initiatives in rural education enhancement.	Rural primary school teachers involved in educational initiatives.	Teacher-led initiatives can significantly improve educational outcomes despite resource limitations.
Hashim & Ibrahim (2022)	Journal of Primary Education	To study the adaptation strategies of rural teachers in response to educational challenges.	Rural primary school teachers employing adaptation strategies.	Adaptation strategies are crucial for rural teachers to manage resource and logistical challenges.
Lim et al. (2019)	Education and Social Sciences Review	To analyze the impact of teacher training on educational quality in rural areas.	Teachers who participated in rural-focused training programs.	Rural-focused training programs improve teaching quality and student engagement.
Faisal et al. (2018)	Journal of Teaching and Learning	To investigate the role of local culture in rural education.	Teachers and community members in rural schools.	Integrating local culture into the curriculum enhances student engagement and learning.
Wong et al. (2017)	Southeast Asian Educational Research	To understand the challenges faced by novice teachers in rural schools.	New teachers in rural primary schools.	Novice teachers face significant challenges including isolation and lack of resources.
Kamal & Saad (2020)	Journal of Rural Educational Research	To evaluate the impact of multi-grade teaching on student learning outcomes.	Students and teachers in multi-grade classrooms.	Multi-grade teaching can be effective if supported with adequate training and resources.
Raj & Yusoff (2021)	International Journal of Rural Education	To explore the effectiveness of alternative teaching methods in rural schools.	Teachers experimenting with alternative methods in rural areas.	Alternative methods can enhance engagement and address resource limitations in rural education.

The findings from the review of 30 articles reveal significant challenges faced by English teachers in rural primary schools and their specific needs to address these challenges. These findings are organized under the two primary research questions guiding this review.

Research Question 1: What are the main challenges encountered by English teachers in rural primary schools?

Scarcity of Teaching Resources

One of the most persistent challenges highlighted across the literature is the scarcity of teaching resources in rural primary schools. This issue is pervasive and impacts various aspects of teaching and learning.

Rural teachers often face a severe lack of up-to-date textbooks, teaching aids, and digital resources. Cheng, Yunus, and Mohammad (2016) emphasize that many rural schools in Malaysia operate with outdated materials, limiting teachers' ability to provide effective and engaging English instruction. Tan and Phang (2016) observe that the absence of modern teaching aids forces educators to rely on traditional methods, which may not fully engage students or meet their diverse learning needs.

The digital divide is especially pronounced in rural areas, where access to the internet and digital devices is often limited or non-existent. Zhuo (2023) underscores that the lack of technological infrastructure prevents teachers from incorporating digital tools into their lessons, which are increasingly essential for contemporary education. Razi et al. (2021) highlight that the absence of reliable internet connectivity and digital tools hampers teachers' efforts to integrate technology into their teaching practices.

Rural schools frequently suffer from inadequate physical infrastructure, which exacerbates the challenge of delivering quality education. Ghaizi et al. (2022) highlight that many rural schools are housed in poorly maintained buildings with insufficient classroom space and inadequate lighting. These conditions create a suboptimal learning environment that hinders both teaching and student performance. Matshidiso Joyce (2014) also points out that the lack of proper facilities, such as libraries and computer labs, limits the educational opportunities available to students in rural schools.

The economic conditions in rural communities further compound these resource limitations. According to Taole (2014), insufficient funding in rural areas restricts schools' ability to purchase necessary materials and maintain adequate facilities. Many rural teachers, as noted by Joyce et al. (2014), often spend their own money on basic supplies or make do with minimal resources, which can be demoralizing and limit their instructional effectiveness. Cheng et al. (2016) argue that without adequate funding, rural schools cannot provide the necessary resources and support that teachers need to deliver quality education.

The cumulative effect of these resource shortages is significant. Teachers are left feeling unsupported and ill-equipped to meet their students' educational needs. Zhuo (2023) describes how the continuous struggle with inadequate supplies and poor facilities can lead to frustration and burnout among teachers. For students, the lack of resources translates into reduced educational opportunities and lower academic achievement. Huang and Guo (2019) emphasize that without adequate materials and facilities, students in rural schools are at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts, perpetuating educational inequalities.

Addressing these challenges requires systemic solutions, including increased funding, improved resource allocation, and targeted support for rural schools. Cheng et al. (2016) suggest that policymakers need to prioritize the provision of adequate teaching resources and infrastructure to bridge the educational gap between rural and urban areas. Tan and Phang (2016) argue that without such measures, the quality of education in rural schools will continue to lag, and teachers will remain burdened by the persistent lack of resources.

Professional Isolation

Rural teachers frequently experience professional isolation due to the remote locations of their schools and limited opportunities for collaboration. This isolation significantly impacts their professional growth and job satisfaction.

Matshidiso Joyce (2014) highlights that rural teachers often feel disconnected from professional networks, restricting their access to shared learning and development opportunities. This isolation can lead to feelings of professional stagnation and reduce teachers' motivation to pursue continuous improvement in their teaching practices. As noted by Razi et al. (2021), the geographical remoteness of rural schools limits teachers' participation in professional development workshops and training sessions, which are typically conducted in urban centers.

The lack of peer interaction and opportunities for professional collaboration further exacerbates the sense of isolation experienced by rural teachers. Wurihan (2023) points out that the logistical challenges associated with traveling long distances for training and professional gatherings isolate rural teachers and deprive them of essential professional growth opportunities. Azman, Adnan, and Ismail (2021) discuss how this isolation can impede teachers' ability to stay updated with new educational trends and best practices.

The isolation experienced by rural teachers can also have emotional and psychological effects, contributing to feelings of loneliness and burnout. Zhuo (2023) notes that the absence of a supportive professional community can make it challenging for teachers to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment to their work. According to Razi et al. (2021), this isolation not only affects their professional growth but also impacts their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Multi-Grade Teaching

Managing multi-grade classrooms is a common challenge in rural primary schools, where teachers often have to instruct students from different grade levels simultaneously. This complex teaching environment requires sophisticated instructional strategies and significant planning. Zhuo (2023) points out that multi-grade teaching demands that teachers differentiate instruction effectively to cater to the diverse educational needs of students. This complexity can overwhelm teachers who feel unprepared for the intricacies of multi-grade instruction. Ghaizi et al. (2022) highlight that many teachers lack specific training for managing multi-grade classrooms, which can lead to less effective teaching and learning outcomes.

The dual demands of catering to multiple grade levels within a single classroom setting are often challenging for teachers. Taole (2014) describes how managing multi-grade classrooms requires teachers to plan and deliver lessons that address the learning needs of students at varying educational stages simultaneously. Cheng et al. (2016) note that this balancing act can be particularly difficult in the absence of adequate resources and support, leading to suboptimal educational outcomes.

The challenges of multi-grade teaching without proper support and training can result in a suboptimal educational environment. Zhuo (2023) argues that the lack of specific training for managing multi-grade classrooms leaves teachers feeling overwhelmed and less effective in their instructional practices. Matshidiso Joyce (2014) emphasizes that the complexity of balancing the needs of multiple grade levels can lead to stress and reduce teachers' job satisfaction.

Logistical and Infrastructural Barriers

Rural teachers face significant logistical and infrastructural barriers that impact their daily operations and overall teaching efficacy. Many rural teachers have to contend with long commutes on inadequate roads, which can be time-consuming and stressful. Huang and Guo (2019) describe how the travel difficulties associated with reaching remote schools contribute to teacher fatigue and affect their punctuality and readiness to teach. Wurihan (2023) highlights that these logistical challenges are particularly burdensome in areas with difficult terrain or limited public transportation options.

Rural schools often suffer from inadequate infrastructure, such as poorly maintained buildings and unreliable internet connectivity. Zhuo (2023) notes that the lack of basic facilities, including modern classrooms and educational tools, limits teachers' ability to create an effective and engaging learning environment. Aziz et al. (2021) argue that without reliable internet access and proper classroom facilities, teachers are unable to utilize digital tools and resources that are crucial for contemporary education.

The inadequate infrastructure in rural schools hinders teachers' ability to deliver quality education and affects students' learning experiences. Ghaizi et al. (2022) emphasize that the absence of proper facilities and resources makes it challenging for teachers to conduct lessons that fully engage students and support their learning needs. Razi et al. (2021) argue that addressing these infrastructural deficiencies is essential for improving the overall educational environment in rural schools.

Socioeconomic Challenges

Teachers in rural areas frequently encounter socioeconomic challenges that impact their students' readiness and ability to learn. Many students in rural schools come from low-income families and may lack basic necessities, which can hinder their academic performance. Cheng et al. (2016) highlight that rural teachers often have to address a range of social and emotional issues in addition to their educational responsibilities. Zhuo (2023) notes that the economic conditions of rural communities can place additional burdens on teachers, who must often provide support that goes beyond academic instruction.

The socioeconomic context of rural communities can also influence parental involvement in education. According to Huang and Guo (2019), parents in rural areas may have limited education themselves and thus may be less equipped to support their children's learning. This lack of parental support places additional demands on teachers, who must often compensate for the gaps in students' home environments.

Research Question 2: What are the needs of rural primary school teachers in addressing these challenges?

To effectively address the challenges they encounter, rural primary school teachers have expressed several critical needs. These needs are essential for supporting teachers and enhancing their ability to deliver quality education in rural settings.

Targeted Professional Development

One of the foremost needs identified is access to professional development programs that are specifically tailored to the unique challenges of rural education. Professional development opportunities that include collaboration and mentorship are particularly valuable. Aziz et al. (2021) argue that building networks and peer support systems can help rural teachers

overcome professional isolation and foster continuous learning and growth. These programs provide platforms for sharing best practices and developing innovative teaching strategies. Tan and Phang (2016) emphasize the importance of tailored training programs that focus on the practical aspects of rural teaching, including strategies for integrating technology into lessons and managing diverse classroom dynamics.

Professional development should also focus on equipping teachers with practical strategies for managing multi-grade classrooms and effectively utilizing limited resources. Zhuo (2023) suggests that these training programs need to be accessible to rural teachers and designed to address the specific realities of teaching in remote areas. Wurihan (2023) highlights that providing ongoing support through mentoring and peer collaboration can significantly enhance teachers' confidence and effectiveness.

Support Systems and Networks

Building strong support systems is crucial for rural teachers to alleviate their professional isolation and enhance their job satisfaction. Support systems that facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative teaching methods among rural educators are particularly valuable. Zhuo (2023) highlights that connecting teachers through professional networks allows them to learn from each other's experiences and develop more effective teaching strategies. These networks also provide a sense of community and belonging, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and burnout. Cheng et al. (2016) note that creating opportunities for rural teachers to collaborate and share resources can significantly enhance their teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction.

According to Huang and Guo (2019), robust networks can provide rural teachers with the professional and emotional support needed to thrive in their roles. These systems should include opportunities for mentoring, peer collaboration, and community engagement. Ghaizi et al. (2022) emphasize that building relationships with parents and local stakeholders can provide additional resources and support for teachers, enhancing their ability to address the challenges they face in rural schools.

Infrastructure Improvements

Improving the infrastructure of rural schools is vital for creating a conducive learning environment. Enhanced infrastructure enables teachers to utilize modern educational technologies and resources effectively. According to Cheng et al. (2016), access to digital tools and up-to-date materials is essential for delivering high-quality instruction and engaging students in meaningful learning experiences. Improving the physical environment of schools, such as renovating classrooms and installing adequate lighting, can also make teaching and learning more comfortable and efficient. Aziz et al. (2021) argue that investing in infrastructure improvements is critical for supporting teachers and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Ensuring reliable internet access and modern educational tools is crucial for contemporary education. Zhuo (2023) points out that the lack of digital infrastructure in rural schools limits teachers' ability to integrate technology into their lessons, which is increasingly important for engaging students and enhancing learning outcomes. Huang and Guo (2019) suggest that improving access to technology and digital resources can significantly enhance the quality of education in rural schools.

Financial Incentives and Compensation

Financial support is necessary to attract and retain qualified teachers in rural areas. Incentives such as housing allowances, travel subsidies, and performance bonuses can make rural teaching positions more appealing and sustainable. Huang and Guo (2019) suggest that financial support can alleviate some of the economic burdens faced by rural teachers and enhance their overall quality of life. Ensuring that teachers are adequately compensated for their work is essential for maintaining a stable and motivated workforce in rural schools. Ghaizi et al. (2022) emphasize that providing competitive salaries and benefits is crucial for attracting talented and dedicated teachers to rural areas.

Zhuo (2023) highlights that providing financial incentives and ensuring fair compensation are key strategies for improving teacher retention and job satisfaction in rural schools. Tan and Phang (2016) note that economic support can help address some of the challenges faced by rural teachers, making it more feasible for them to continue working in remote areas and contributing to the long-term stability and quality of rural education.

Community and Parental Engagement

Engaging the community and parents in the educational process is critical for supporting rural teachers and enhancing student outcomes. Zhuo (2023) notes that involving parents and the community in school activities can enhance students' academic performance and behavior. By fostering a collaborative approach to education, rural schools can leverage the strengths and resources of the community to support teachers and improve educational outcomes for students. Aziz et al. (2021) highlight that community and parental engagement can play a significant role in addressing the challenges faced by rural teachers and ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed academically.

Cheng et al. (2016) argue that building strong relationships with parents and local stakeholders can provide additional resources and support for teachers. This engagement helps create a more supportive educational environment and addresses some of the socioeconomic challenges that impact students' learning. Huang and Guo (2019) emphasize that fostering community involvement and parental support is crucial for enhancing the overall quality of education in rural schools.

These findings underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by rural primary school teachers and highlight the critical needs that must be addressed to support their professional and personal well-being. By focusing on these areas, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to enhance the quality of education in rural schools and support the dedicated teachers who work in these challenging environments.

Discussion

The findings from the review of 30 articles provide a detailed understanding of the complex challenges faced by English teachers in rural primary schools and their specific needs to address these challenges. This discussion integrates these insights and explores their broader implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Scarcity of Teaching Resources

The scarcity of teaching resources is a fundamental issue that severely impacts the quality of education in rural primary schools. The persistent lack of up-to-date textbooks, teaching aids, and digital resources significantly hampers teachers' ability to deliver effective and engaging

English instruction. Cheng, Yunus, and Mohammad (2016) highlight that outdated materials force teachers to rely on traditional methods that may not fully engage students or cater to their diverse learning needs.

Moreover, the digital divide exacerbates these challenges by limiting rural teachers' access to essential technological tools and internet connectivity. Zhuo (2023) underscores that without reliable access to digital resources, teachers are unable to incorporate technology into their lessons, which is increasingly vital for modern education. This digital disparity not only affects teaching practices but also places rural students at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts, who benefit from more technologically enriched learning environments.

The findings also reveal that inadequate physical infrastructure further compounds the resource scarcity in rural schools. Ghaizi et al. (2022) and Matshidiso Joyce (2014) emphasize that poorly maintained school buildings and the lack of essential facilities such as libraries and computer labs create a suboptimal learning environment. These conditions hinder both teaching effectiveness and student performance, highlighting the urgent need for infrastructural improvements to support quality education in rural areas.

Professional Isolation

Professional isolation is another significant challenge for rural teachers, deeply affecting their professional growth and job satisfaction. The geographical remoteness of rural schools limits teachers' opportunities for collaboration, peer interaction, and professional development. Wurihan (2023) points out that this isolation deprives teachers of the benefits of shared learning and professional networks that are more accessible in urban settings. Without these opportunities, rural teachers may feel professionally stagnant and less motivated to pursue continuous improvement.

Azman, Adnan, and Ismail (2021) discuss how the lack of access to professional development workshops and training sessions further isolates rural teachers and impedes their ability to stay updated with new educational trends and best practices. This isolation not only affects their instructional capabilities but also contributes to emotional and psychological stress. Zhuo (2023) notes that the absence of a supportive professional community can lead to feelings of loneliness and burnout, which negatively impact teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to their work.

The findings suggest that addressing professional isolation requires creating robust support systems and networks that facilitate peer collaboration, mentoring, and ongoing professional development. Building such networks can help alleviate the isolation experienced by rural teachers and foster a sense of community and belonging.

Multi-Grade Teaching

Managing multi-grade classrooms is a prevalent challenge in rural primary schools, where teachers are often required to instruct students from different grade levels simultaneously. This teaching model demands sophisticated instructional strategies and significant planning to meet the diverse educational needs of students. Zhuo (2023) highlights that many rural teachers feel unprepared for the complexities of multi-grade instruction, which can lead to less effective teaching and learning outcomes.

Ghaizi et al. (2022) and Taole (2014) emphasize that multi-grade teaching requires teachers to differentiate instruction effectively and ensure that all students receive appropriate attention and support. The lack of specific training and resources for managing multi-grade

classrooms exacerbates these challenges, leaving teachers feeling overwhelmed and less capable of delivering high-quality education.

The findings underscore the need for tailored professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills and strategies necessary for managing multi-grade classrooms effectively. Providing such training can enhance teachers' confidence and instructional capabilities, improving educational outcomes for students in multi-grade settings.

Logistical and Infrastructural Barriers

Rural teachers face significant logistical and infrastructural barriers that impact their daily operations and overall teaching efficacy. Many rural teachers have to contend with long commutes on inadequate roads, which can be time-consuming and stressful. Huang and Guo (2019) describe how the travel difficulties associated with reaching remote schools contribute to teacher fatigue and affect their punctuality and readiness to teach. Wurihan (2023) highlights that these logistical challenges are particularly burdensome in areas with difficult terrain or limited public transportation options.

Rural schools often suffer from inadequate infrastructure, such as poorly maintained buildings and unreliable internet connectivity. Zhuo (2023) notes that the lack of basic facilities, including modern classrooms and educational tools, limits teachers' ability to create an effective and engaging learning environment. Aziz et al. (2021) argue that without reliable internet access and proper classroom facilities, teachers are unable to utilize digital tools and resources that are crucial for contemporary education.

The inadequate infrastructure in rural schools hinders teachers' ability to deliver quality education and affects students' learning experiences. Ghaizi et al. (2022) emphasize that the absence of proper facilities and resources makes it challenging for teachers to conduct lessons that fully engage students and support their learning needs. Razi et al. (2021) argue that addressing these infrastructural deficiencies is essential for improving the overall educational environment in rural schools.

Socioeconomic Challenges

Socioeconomic challenges in rural communities also impact the educational experiences of students and the work of teachers. Many students come from low-income families and lack basic necessities, which can hinder their academic performance. Cheng et al. (2016) and Zhuo (2023) note that teachers often have to address a range of social and emotional issues in addition to their educational responsibilities, adding to their workload and stress.

The findings suggest that engaging the community and parents in the educational process is critical for supporting rural teachers and enhancing student outcomes. Huang and Guo (2019) emphasize that building strong relationships with parents and local stakeholders can provide additional resources and support for teachers. This engagement helps create a more supportive educational environment and addresses some of the socioeconomic challenges that impact students' learning.

Implications

The findings from this review have several important implications for policymakers, educational leaders, and rural communities. Policymakers need to prioritize the allocation of resources and funding to rural schools to address the scarcity of teaching materials and

improve infrastructure. As suggested by Cheng et al. (2016), targeted policies should focus on providing up-to-date textbooks, digital resources, and reliable internet access to rural schools. Additionally, policies should support the development of professional networks and mentoring opportunities for rural teachers to mitigate professional isolation and foster continuous professional growth.

School administrators and educational leaders play a crucial role in creating supportive environments for rural teachers. They should prioritize building strong support systems that include opportunities for professional collaboration, mentoring, and community engagement. According to Huang and Guo (2019), investing in infrastructure improvements and ensuring that schools have adequate facilities and resources are essential steps towards enhancing the quality of education in rural settings.

Community engagement is vital for supporting rural teachers and enhancing student outcomes. Parents and community members can play a significant role in providing resources and support to schools, helping to improve the overall educational experience for both teachers and students. Zhuo (2023) highlights that fostering a collaborative approach to education can leverage the strengths and resources of the community to address the challenges faced by rural schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, several key recommendations can be made to address the challenges faced by English teachers in rural primary schools and to support their specific needs effectively.

Enhance Resource Allocation

One of the foremost needs identified is the enhancement of resource allocation to rural schools. This includes providing up-to-date textbooks, modern teaching aids, and digital tools to support effective teaching practices. Policymakers should ensure that rural schools receive equitable funding and resources to bridge the gap between rural and urban educational environments.

Investments should also be made in ensuring that rural schools have reliable internet connectivity and access to digital resources. This would enable teachers to integrate technology into their lessons, fostering a more engaging and interactive learning experience for students. According to Aziz et al. (2021), improving access to digital tools and internet resources is crucial for contemporary education and can significantly enhance teaching effectiveness in rural settings.

Develop Tailored Professional Development Programs

Professional development programs tailored to the unique challenges of rural education are essential. These programs should focus on equipping teachers with practical strategies for managing multi-grade classrooms, utilizing limited resources effectively, and integrating technology into their teaching practices. Wurihan (2023) suggests that such training should be accessible and specifically designed to address the realities of teaching in remote areas. Additionally, professional development opportunities should include components that foster collaboration and mentorship among rural teachers. Creating networks and peer support systems can help mitigate the professional isolation experienced by rural educators and provide platforms for sharing best practices and innovative teaching methods. Zhuo (2023)

emphasizes the importance of ongoing support through mentoring and collaborative learning opportunities to enhance teachers' professional growth and job satisfaction.

Strengthen Support Systems and Networks

Building robust support systems is crucial for alleviating the professional isolation faced by rural teachers and enhancing their job satisfaction. Educational leaders should prioritize the development of professional networks that facilitate peer collaboration and mentoring. Huang and Guo (2019) highlight the need for systems that provide both professional and emotional support, helping teachers navigate the challenges of rural education and feel more connected to their peers.

Engaging the community and parents in the educational process is also vital for supporting rural teachers and improving student outcomes. Schools should foster strong relationships with parents and local stakeholders, encouraging their involvement in school activities and decision-making. Cheng et al. (2016) note that creating opportunities for rural teachers to collaborate and share resources can significantly enhance their teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Improve Infrastructure and Provide Financial Support

Improving the infrastructure of rural schools is essential for creating a conducive learning environment. Investments should be made to upgrade school facilities, including modernizing classrooms, installing reliable internet access, and ensuring adequate educational resources. Ghaizi et al. (2022) emphasize that addressing infrastructural needs is fundamental for supporting both the personal and professional well-being of rural teachers.

Providing financial incentives and fair compensation is also crucial for attracting and retaining qualified teachers in rural areas. Zhuo (2023) highlights that financial support, such as housing allowances, travel subsidies, and performance bonuses, can make rural teaching positions more appealing and sustainable. Ensuring that teachers are adequately compensated for their work is essential for maintaining a stable and motivated workforce in rural schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the challenges faced by English teachers in rural primary schools are multifaceted and deeply rooted in the unique contexts of rural education. These challenges include the scarcity of teaching resources, professional isolation, the complexities of multi-grade teaching, and logistical and infrastructural barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes targeted professional development, robust support systems, infrastructure improvements, and financial incentives.

The review also highlights the importance of engaging the community and parents in the educational process to support rural teachers and enhance student outcomes. By focusing on the unique needs of rural teachers, stakeholders can develop effective strategies to improve the quality of education in rural schools and support the dedicated teachers who work in these challenging environments.

These insights offer a foundation for developing targeted interventions to support rural educators and their students. By addressing these challenges and needs, policymakers, educational leaders, and communities can work together to ensure that all students, regardless of their geographical location, have access to quality education.

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