

Accessibility of Entitled Discount Privileges of Persons with Disabilities in Panabo City, Philippines: An Explanatory Sequential Analysis

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Abstract

The Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, or Republic Act No. 7277, aims to uphold the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities, ensuring protection, social fairness, and equal treatment against discrimination. This study examined the utilization of persons with disabilities' discount privilege in Panabo City, Philippines, to determine the extent of accessibility and the challenges encountered in implementing the law. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings. A total of 150 respondents were recruited for the quantitative phase via a self-administered questionnaire, and five were selected for the qualitative phase via a semi-structured interview guide. Findings revealed low to moderate utilization of discount privileges across the following categories: establishments, medical services, drugstores and pharmacies, transportation, and basic and prime commodities. It was also found that environmental constraints, procedural, and compliance challenges exist. Hence, there is a gap between the law and implementation mechanisms. Additionally, it is recommended to focus on adopting policies grounded in the practical application and the timely need.

Keywords: Discount privilege, Persons with disabilities, Explanatory sequential mixed-methods, Public administration, Panabo city, Philippines

Introduction

Globally, persons with disabilities are estimated to be around 1.3 billion, which represents approximately 16% of the global population (World Health Organization, 2023). In the Philippines, there are 2,692,605 registered persons with disabilities as of April 30, 2026 (National Council on Disability Affairs, 2026). Persons with disabilities faced persistent health inequities that is more evident for those living in low- and middle-income countries (Smythe et al., 2024; World Health Organization, 2023). Given this, assistance lessens the burden that persons with disabilities carry and improves their overall well-being by making daily needs and essential services more accessible. The government supports them through programs and policies that provide these benefits.

In Indonesia, persons with disabilities continue to face significant challenges when claiming their rights and privileges (Paikah, 2024; Ndhlovu & Mudzingwa, 2022). Similarly, rural areas of Sri Lanka reported that access to auxiliary services for persons with disabilities is inefficient due to discriminatory practices in health and transport services (Liyanage, 2022). In Nigeria, Animashaun & Chitimira (2022) revealed that persons with disabilities experience societal attitudes and systemic discrimination that continue to impede their rights.

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability is a landmark legislation of disability laws. Its enactment opened the window to empower and strengthen social protection, welfare, and the rights of persons with disabilities—to participate in education, employment, public services, and access to social services. As years passed, the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability has undergone three major amendments: Republic Acts No. 9442, 10754, and 10747 to continually improve and expand social protection, accessibility to services, and adapt to timely challenges. Notably, under Republic Act No. 9442 and 10754, persons with disabilities are entitled to discount privilege of at least 20% to basic services, including discounts from all establishments recognized by the government to operate, purchase medicine, medical and dental privileges in government and private facilities, and land, air, and sea transportation privileges. These services can be availed by presenting Person with Disability Identification Card or PWD ID issued by the Local Government Unit.

Despite the reforms, the country is still far from becoming inclusive as policies for persons with disabilities are not effectively enforced (Basa et al., 2020). According to studies, the major problems lie in the implementation of policy as persons with disabilities are unaware of the 20% discount they are entitled to due to the poor information dissemination efforts (Respicio & Co., 2024). Moreover, some areas in Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Samar, and Masbate do not fully comply with the 20% and only offered 10% or applied it only to large establishments and pharmacies (Plan International, 2022). Meanwhile, persons with disabilities of Talaingod, Davao del Norte, reported that they face barriers to governmental services, health care, and general accessibility (Olivar, 2024). Even though there have been multiple laws already in existence, the lack of effective program evaluation and generally inclusive planning further excludes persons with disabilities from enjoying the full benefit of what already exists (Cruz et al., 2021).

This study is anchored in the Human Rights-Based Approach (2003). This framework establishes international human rights as the foundation in planning and implementing policies or programs and focuses on key principles, including participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and legality (PANEL). In the context of disability rights, the approach underscores the role of persons with disabilities as right-holders. At the same time, government institutions and service providers are the duty-bearers responsible for ensuring their rights are fulfilled.

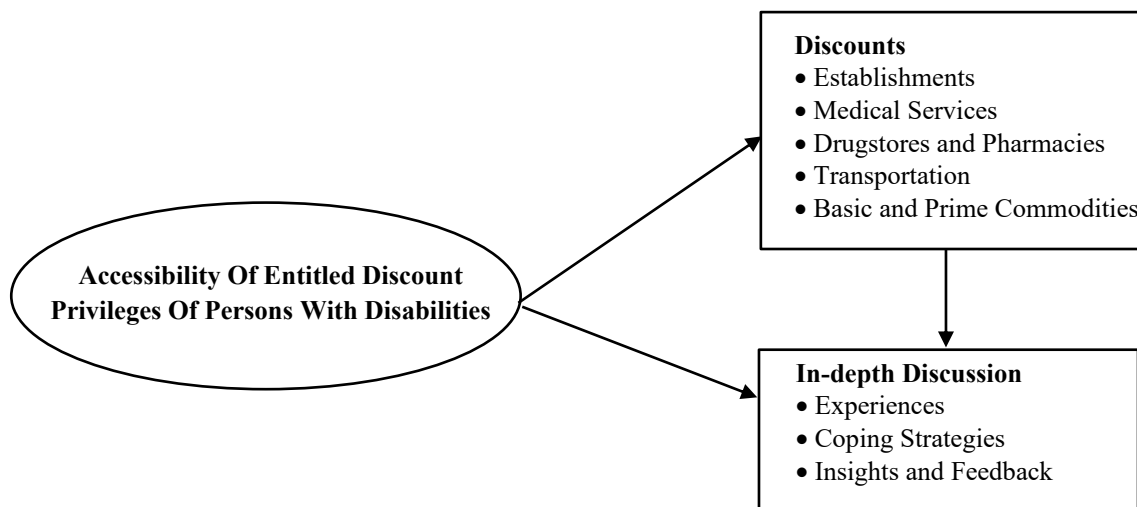


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 demonstrates the concept of the study. The quadrant in the upper-right indicates the discount privileges available to persons with disabilities under the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability. Moreover, the lower-right quadrant represents three indicators: experiences, coping strategies, and insights and feedback. The oval shape integrates both analyses to generate a more comprehensive discussion of the study.

Despite diverse studies in disability policies globally, the practical implementation of policies, especially the discount privilege in the Philippines and how it influences the lives of persons with disabilities remained understudied. There is still limited evidence on disability laws' effectivity, particularly how it is put into practice in low- and middle-income countries; as a result, persons with disabilities who live in these countries continue to face ongoing health and social inequities (World Health Organization, 2022). Additionally, Cruz et al. (2021) noted that these coverage gaps are evident in limited resources, poor targeting of beneficiaries, and unequal access between rural and urban communities. Hence, these gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive analysis that captures the extent of implementation, including the underlying factors influencing accessibility and utilization of discount privileges.

Accordingly, the study aimed to answer the following questions: 1) What is the range of persons with disabilities' discount privileges availment? 2) What are the challenges of persons with disabilities in accessing their discount privileges? 3) What alternatives or other means do persons with disabilities use in availing their discount privileges? and 4) What are the lapses in the implementation of discount privileges and how can it be improved?

In addition, the objective of this study is to: 1) Determine the numbers of persons with disabilities exercising the right to discount privilege across different categories; 2) Examine the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, particularly in exercising their rights to discount privilege; 3) Identify their coping strategies in availing their discount privileges; and lastly, 4) Gather practical insights and feedback from persons with disabilities that affects the implementation of discount privileges. The current study evaluates the policy and implementation of the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities. The results, by explaining the strengths and limitations, inform specific reforms to promote fairer access to the benefits.

Methodology

Study Participants

This study was limited to registered and bona fide persons with disabilities residing in Panabo City aged 18 to 59. In cases where a person with disabilities was unable to respond due to their condition, a legal guardian responsible for using their discount privileges and custody completed the survey on their behalf to ensure data integrity and validity. Moreover, individuals who were not registered or bona fide residents of Panabo City, aged below 18, or aged 60 and above were excluded from the study.

In determining sample sizes in the quantitative phase, the researchers also established a total of 150 respondents, which is more meaningful than an unthinkingly selected large sample (Golzar et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2020). Moreover, in quantitative phase, the researchers employed a mixed sampling technique, random purposive sampling. The technique involves taking a random sample of units in the purposefully selected target population (Kemper et al., 2003), which is characterized as gathering of highly policy-relevant data (Puma et al., 1997) as cited by (Kemper et al., 2003). Initially, the researchers purposively established the criteria for respondents and requested the assistance of local health officials to narrow the list of persons with disabilities in their jurisdiction. Afterwards, the researchers randomly selected anyone on the list.

Moreover, in the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select informants recognized as persons with disabilities leaders purposefully to gather a broader perspective, including the perspective of their respective persons with disabilities members. Polkinghorne (1989), as cited in Alase (2017), recommended that interview-based research include 5-10 participants with similar life experiences. Purposive sampling was highly effective in exploring lived experiences related to an intuitive approach (Dudovskiy, 2017). There were five selected key informants in this phase, they represented different barangays and held leadership roles in the city.

Materials and Instruments

The researchers employed separate instruments for quantitative and qualitative phases to gather comprehensive data. In the quantitative phase, a survey questionnaire was used to gather statistical information about people's attributes, attitudes, or actions by administering standardized questions to a subset or to all members (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004). The survey questionnaire was self-administered, in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9442, to directly determine the status of the discount privilege.

The questionnaires were pilot-tested and assessed for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha; the results indicated an overall score of 0.639. It indicates strong reliability; however, some items were inconsistent due to differences in coding schemes. According to Pallant (2001), as cited in Daud et al. (2018), an Alpha Cronbach value above 0.6 indicates acceptable reliability. Thus, the instrument was found to be acceptable, provided the researchers implemented it with caution.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire was established based on the findings from the quantitative analysis. The questionnaire aimed to unravel and elaborate on the experience, overcoming challenges, and insights of persons with disabilities. Key informant interviews were used to select individuals likely to provide the necessary information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Design and Procedure

The researchers employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a single study (Clark, 2017). This is to provide statistical evidence on the status of person with disabilities discount privileges and to explore the underlying factors related to the implementation and utilization of discount privileges. This design applied the first phase of quantitative data collection, followed by the second phase of qualitative data collection. It concluded with the third phase, which integrated data obtained from the two separate methods (Toyon, 2021).

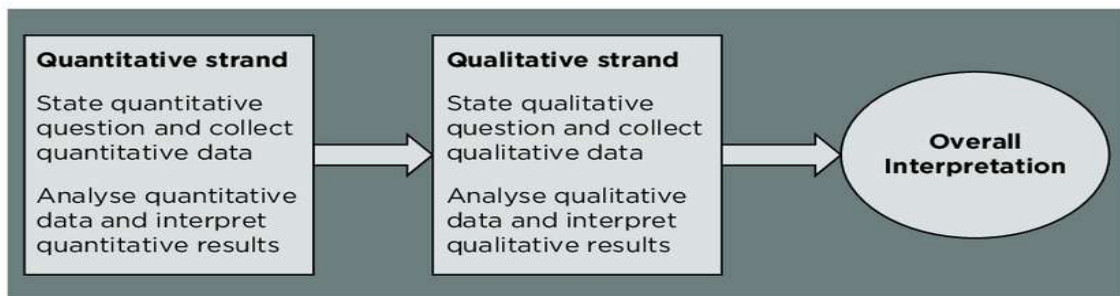


Figure 2 Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Research Design (Okafor, 2018)

Figure 2 presents a visual representation of the study's sequential process model. This design was used to gather quantitative data based on availment of discount privileges to empirical evidence and discover new findings and serve as basis in establishing in-depth questions on qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, the study assessed respondents' demographics and their varying use of discount privileges. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted descriptively to determine the sample's central tendencies. Descriptive analysis presents current circumstances, behavior, or attributes through a systematic, objective description (Jansen, 2024). After the quantitative phase, the researchers assimilated the quantitative findings to establish qualitative questions.

In the qualitative phase, interview guides are provided to informants before the interview. The data were then analyzed and transcribed to identify similarities and uncover recurring themes in their responses regarding the accessibility of the discount privileges (Jansen, 2024). Afterward, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated and interpreted to yield empirical, conclusive results that informed discussions, remarks, and recommendations. In addition, the study ensured trustworthiness using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four-factor framework: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, as cited in Stahl & King (2020).

Ethical Consideration

As standard protocol, participants were informed of the study's purpose and their role, including the right to withdraw at any stage of the study and the responsibilities of researchers in protecting and securing their personal information. Afterwards, the researchers asked the participants if they were still willing to participate in the study. Moreover, in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, participants' identities and information are concealed to ensure safety and confidentiality. Consent agreement forms were primarily issued to confirm voluntary participation and to ensure that all collected data is used solely for the study and that personal information is securely stored to prevent breaches of confidentiality.

Furthermore, the participants' preferences regarding interview locations were given serious consideration. To ensure their safety and comfort, they were given the prerogative to choose an area that was comfortable and accessible. Making them comfortable demonstrated

the researchers' sensitivity to their individual needs and provided them with a stress-free environment.

In consideration of the feelings and conditions of persons with disabilities, the researchers switched to different modalities to conduct the interview and ensure that persons with disabilities participated by meeting their capabilities. Also, virtual interviews were considered based on the preferences, availability, and condition of persons with disabilities. Additionally, instruments were translated into the native language to ensure respondents and informants could understand the questions clearly. Lastly, after the data is used for their specific purpose, all traces of data from the persons with disabilities survey or interviewed are erased.

Results

Quantitative Findings on Persons with Disabilities Discount Availment Availment of Discount Privilege on Establishments

Table 1 shows a near-equal distribution between respondents who availed and those who did not for the 20% discount privilege on establishments. Out of 150 responses, 78 or 52% of respondents affirmed that they availed the discount privilege, while 72 or 48% did not avail the discount privilege.

Table 1 Availment of Discount Privilege on Establishments
(Recreation Centers, Restaurants, Resorts, and Lodging Establishments)

Establishments			Respondents		Percentage	
Yes			78		52%	
No			72		48%	
Total			150		100%	
Yes - Frequency			No - Reasons			
Frequency	Respondents	%	Reasons	Respondents	%	
Always	21	27%	Lack of awareness	21	29%	
Often	6	8%	Physical difficulties	18	25%	
Sometimes	32	41%	Tediousness	14	19%	
Rarely	19	24%	Do not need the discount	7	10%	
Never	0	0%	No PWD ID and/or booklet	7	10%	
Total	78	100%	Service remains unaffordable	5	7%	
			Total	72	100%	

The distribution showed that out of 78 respondents who availed the discount, sometimes scored the largest with 41%, relatively followed by always with 27% and rarely at 24%. The lowest frequency score is often with 7%. On the other hand, out of 72 respondents who did not avail the discount, lack of awareness scored the highest with 29% closely followed by physical difficulties and tediousness with 25% and 19%, respectively. Moreover, respondents who do not need the discount and no PWD ID and/or booklet are tied at 10%, and the lowest score is due to the service remaining unaffordable at 7%.

Availment of Discount Privilege on Medical Services

Table 2 demonstrates a near-equal distribution of responses to availment of 20% discount on medical services. Medical services refer to services provided for a medically related disability to address the medical needs of a patient, including a physical examination, evaluation, management, and monitoring in public and private facilities. Out of 150 responses, 74 or 49% of respondents expressed that they availed the discount privilege, while 76 or 51% did not avail.

Table 2 Availment of Discount Privilege on Medical Services
(Dental, Diagnostic, and Laboratory Services)

Medical Services			Respondents		Percentage
Yes			74		49%
No			76		51%
Total			150		100%
Yes - Frequency			No - Reasons		
Frequency	Respondents	%	Reasons	Respondents	%
Always	22	30%	Lack of awareness	19	25%
Often	4	5%	Physical difficulties	17	22%
Sometimes	20	27%	Tediousness	15	20%
Rarely	28	38%	No PWD ID and/or booklet	10	13%
Never	0	0%	Do not need the discount	9	12%
Total	74	100%	Service remains unaffordable	6	8%
			Total	76	100%

The distribution revealed that out of 74 respondents who availed the discount, rarely scored the largest with 38%, followed by always and sometimes with 30% and 27%, respectively, while often scored the lowest at 5%. In contrast, out of 76 respondents, lack of awareness scored the highest with 25%, relatively followed by physical difficulties with 22%, and tediousness with 20%. At the same time, no PWD ID and/or booklet and do not need the discount scored almost equal, accounting for 13% and 12% of responses. Notably, service remains unaffordable is the lowest at 8%.

Availment of Discount Privilege on Drugstores and Pharmacies

Table 3 reveals a more positive trend to availment of 20% discount on drugstores and pharmacies. Out of 150 respondents, 85 or 57% asserted to avail the discount privilege, and 65 or 43% answered not availing the discount privilege.

Table 3 Availment of Discount Privilege on Drugstores and Pharmacies

Drugstores and Pharmacies			Respondents		Percentage
Yes			85		57%
No			65		43%
Total			150		100%
Yes - Frequency			No - Reasons		
Frequency	Respondents	%	Reasons	Respondents	%
Always	43	51%	Physical difficulties	14	22%
Often	2	2%	Tediousness	13	20%
Sometimes	24	28%	Do not need the discount	11	17%
Rarely	16	19%	Denied of discount	8	12%
Never	0	0%	Service remains unaffordable	7	11%
Total	85	100%	Lack of awareness	7	11%
			No PWD ID and/or booklet	5	8%
			Total	65	100%

The results indicate that out of 85 respondents who availed the discount, respondents always availed the discount at large with 51%, followed by sometimes at 28% and rarely at 19%, while often scored the lowest at 2%. Furthermore, for 65 respondents who did not avail the discount, physical difficulties, tediousness, and do not need the discount relatively scored 22%, 20%, and 17%, respectively. This is followed by denied of discount at 12%; while service remains unaffordable and lack of awareness scored equally with 11%. Most importantly, the no PWD ID and/or booklet scored the lowest at 8%.

Availment of Discount Privilege on Transportation

Table 4 illustrates a negative trend to availment of 20% discount on transportation. Out of 150 respondents, 66 or 43% affirmed to avail the discount privilege, and 84 or 57% responded to not availing the discount privilege.

Table 4 Availment of Discount Privilege on Transportation
(Bus, Taxis, Ferries, and Airplanes)

Transportation			Respondents		Percentage
Yes			66		43%
No			84		57%
Total			150		100%
Yes - Frequency			No - Reasons		
Frequency	Respondents	%	Reasons	Respondents	%
Always	24	36%	Physical difficulties	27	32%
Often	4	6%	Do not need the discount	17	20%
Sometimes	22	34%	Personal vehicle	15	18%
Rarely	16	24%	Lack of awareness	12	14%
Never	0	0%	Denied of discount	9	11%
Total	66	100%	No PWD ID and/or booklet	4	5%
			Total	84	100%

The survey revealed that among the 66 respondents who availed the discount, always and sometimes almost scored equally at 36% and 34%, respectively, followed by rarely with 24%, while often scored the lowest at 6%. In comparison, out of 84 respondents who did not avail the discount, physical difficulties scored the largest at 32%, followed by do not need the discount for 20%, and personal vehicle at 18%. Moreover, lack of awareness scored 14% and denied of discount with 11%. Notably, no PWD ID and/or booklet scored the lowest at 5%.

Availment of Discount Privilege on Basic and Prime Commodities

Table 5 shows a total downslope to availment of 5% discount on basic and prime commodities. Basic necessities refer to everyday essential goods, including, but not limited to, rice, bread, cooking oil, and other food items needed for daily living. Prime commodities, on the other hand, include goods such as coffee, milk, sugar, flour, and construction materials that are needed but not as frequently as basic necessities. Out of 150 respondents, 47 or 31% claimed to avail the discount privilege, and 103 or 69% responded to not availing the discount privilege.

Table 5 Availment of Discount Privilege on Basic and Prime Commodities
(Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Goods)

Basic and Prime Commodities			Respondents		Percentage
Yes			47		31%
No			103		69%
Total			150		100%
Yes - Frequency			No - Reasons		
Frequency	Respondents	%	Reasons	Respondents	%
Always	12	26%	Physical difficulties	25	24%
Often	13	27%	Lack of awareness	21	20%
Sometimes	17	36%	Tediousness	18	17%
Rarely	5	11%	No PWD ID and/or booklet	14	14%
Never	0	0%	Service remains unaffordable	9	9%
Total	47	100%	Socially Anxious	7	7%
			Do not need the discount	6	6%
			Denied of discount	3	3%
			Total	103	100%

The survey observed that out of 47 respondents who availed the discount on basic and prime commodities, sometimes scored the highest with 36%, followed by always and often, which almost tied with 26% and 27%, while rarely scored the lowest with 11%. On the contrary, out of 103 respondents who chose not to avail the discount, physical difficulties and lack of awareness scored relatively high at 24% and 20%, followed by tediousness with 17, and no PWD ID and/or booklet with 14%. At the same time, service remains unaffordable, socially anxious, and do not need the discount relatively scored low with ranges of 6-9%, followed by the denied of discount with the lowest score of 3%.

Qualitative Findings on the Experiences, Coping Mechanisms, and Insights of Persons with Disabilities Discount Availment

Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Availing Discount Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Table 7 indicates the experience of persons with disabilities regarding the implementation of Republic Act No. 9442. The interviews resulted in five themes as discussed: improper compliance, tedious procedures, weak compliance of priority/reserved lanes and seats, communication challenges, and inaccessible physical establishments and facilities.

Table 6 Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Availing Discount Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Major Themes	Descriptions	Significant statements
Denial of full enjoyment to discount privileges	This refers to the failure of establishments or service providers to implement the discount privilege as mandated by the law.	Some establishments/service providers do not fully implement the mandated 20% discount privilege. Some establishment/service providers deceive the persons with disabilities that discount privilege is already applied Some establishment/service providers do not apply discount on discounted items Only half of entitled discount amount are applied Some establishment/ service providers completely refuse to give discount
Tedious Procedures	This refers to the lengthy, inconvenient, and time-consuming steps required to access services or benefits.	Service providers or establishments require numerous documents or letter to avail discount Manual recording of availed items in the PWD booklet Manual recording is time-consuming and physically taxing Availing benefits requires multiple documents and verification, if availed by a guardian.
Weak Compliance of Accessibility Features	This refers to the inadequate enforcement of designated areas for persons with disabilities, such as reserved seats, lanes, or parking spaces.	Reserved seats for persons with disabilities are not properly observed Reserved parking spaces are sometimes occupied by abled people. Some establishments/ service providers do not properly observe the priority lane
Communication Challenges	This refers to barriers hindering information dissemination	Some persons with disabilities are reluctant to participate in assemblies or orientations Some persons with disabilities are living in remote area or no longer residing at their address to attend assemblies or orientations. Some persons with disabilities do not have access to updates made virtually. Some service providers or establishment do not primarily ask the persons with disabilities if they will avail their discount privilege.
Inaccessible Establishments and Features	This refers to establishment and spaces that fail to accommodate basic accessibility features for persons with disabilities.	Some establishments lack basic accessibility features for persons with disabilities. Some establishments are hard to navigate for persons with disabilities due to tightness or close-space design. Some establishments only have stairs without ramps or railings. Some establishments or service providers do not have priority lanes.

Denial of full enjoyment to discount privileges

Improper compliance is among the common problems faced by persons with disabilities today in exercising their privileges; findings reveal that several establishments apply the mandated discount privilege in partially or lesser than what is stipulated in the law. This creates uncertainty during transactions and may result in unintentional denial of benefits. Such practices undermine the purpose of discount privileges, which are intended to reduce the financial burdens of persons with disabilities. According to House Speaker Romualdez, the privileges given to seniors and persons with disabilities should be strictly followed in order to avoid the normalization of poor conduct (Cervantes, 2024). Informants attested to experience instances in which discounts are way below the mandated 20% discount for certain items.

“Dili sila motuman sa 20% discount. 3% ang ihatag.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Hindi nila sinusunod ang 20% diskwento. 3% lang ang binibigay.

English Translation:

They do not follow the 20% discount; only 3% is given.

As such, the denial of rights, even with a partial discount, is evident. The inconsistent application of discount privileges, based on the experience of informants, demonstrates not only a lack of compliance but also a normalization of neglect that is contrary to the intent of the government. This implies that proper recognition of persons with disabilities' identities thus lacks the public service. Other informants have also experienced indirect denial of discount fare in public transport.

“Kung musakay ka sa bus, ingnon ra ka nga tanan naa discount.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Kung sasakay ka ng bus, sasabihan ka lang na lahat ay may diskwento.

English Translation:

When you ride the bus, they say everyone gets a discount.

Tedious Procedures

Procedures in discount availment serve as a challenge due to the numerous and strenuous processes needed to be accomplished. Under the Republic Act No. 9442 and Administrative Order No. 8, series of 2017, explicitly indicate the requirement of presenting the PWD ID and the booklet as a prerequisite to avail in purchasing of medicine and basic and prime commodities. However, informants implied that the requirements and procedures further burden their already difficult position, thereby discouraging them from availing. Although the verification process is much needed, it leads to excessive red tape that burdens the ultimate users. Informants affirmed that this is commonly experienced by them and the members.

“Naa na kay reseta ug ID. Ang kulang na lang ang booklet, pero dili gihapon ka tagaan og discount.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Meron ka ng reseta at ID. Ang kulang lang ay booklet, pero hindi ka pa rin bibigyan ng diskwento.

English Translation:

You already have the prescription and ID. The only missing requirement is the booklet, yet they still refuse to give the discount.

“Ingon sila nga isulat pa sa booklet. It takes time para isulat.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Sabi nila isusulat pa raw sa booklet. Matagal bago ito maisulat.

English Translation:

They said it still needs to be written down in the booklet. It takes time to write it.

In addition, persons with disabilities who are incapable of availing their discount usually request their guardians to transact it on their behalf, with several conditions required to complete the availment successfully. The informants reported that there are a lot of requirements needed to prepare before guardians can successfully avail the discount privilege, which serves as a burden. The process is rendered even more inaccessible by geographic barriers, as journeys back and forth only increase the costs in terms of financial implications and time. Informants expressed that these processes and procedures are financially and physically burden.

“Kapoy ang proseso. Kinahanglan ko mohimo og authorization letter, kuhaon ang barangay certification, ipakita ang akong valid ID, pirmahan ang tulo ka kopya sa ako ID photocopy, ug apilan og photocopy sa valid ID sa akong igsoon.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Nakakapagod ang proseso. Kailangan ko pa gumawa ng authorization letter, kunin ang barangay certification, ipakita ang aking valid ID, pirmahan ang tatlong kopya ng aking ID photocopy, at isama ang photocopy ng valid ID ng aking kapatid.

English Translation:

The process is tiring. I had to prepare an authorization letter, get a barangay certification, present my valid ID, sign three photocopies of my ID, and include a photocopy of the valid ID of my sibling.

“Ang nagpuyo sa bukid kinahanglan pa mo-uli aron maghimo og authorization letter, ug mahal ang pamasahi.” (KII 4)

Filipino Translation:

Ang nakatira sa bukid kailangan pang umuwi para gumawa ng authorization letter, at ang mahal pa ng pamasah.

English Translation:

Those living in the mountains are required to return home to prepare an authorization letter, and the fare is expensive.

Administrative problems deter persons with disabilities from receiving benefits and often prevent them from claiming their entitlements due to inconvenience (Schweitzer et al., 2022). Slow and inefficient processes continue to discourage persons with disabilities from fully accessing their mandated benefits, which forces them to undergo lengthy documentation. These tedious procedures impose emotional and financial strain that is made worse by overdependence on documentation and location difficulties.

Weak Compliance of Accessibility Features

Access to priority and reserved spaces remains difficult for persons with disabilities due to rules that are not strictly followed. Informants unveiled that the weak compliance is rampant and not strictly observed. At the same time, some groceries and supermarkets do not have reserved lanes, while some do not strictly observe the reservation of the lane. Informants added that even when signs for priority lanes or spaces exist, people largely ignore them, and service provider staff do not monitor their proper use. The Department of Justice strongly denounced businesses that resist setting up priority lanes even for limited-quantity sales, but some establishments ignore or refuse to introduce the concept of priority lanes (Bautista, 2024). In such situations, social exclusion becomes apparent as persons with disabilities are unable to fully benefit from accommodation that is intended to support them in public spaces. Informant revealed occurrence in which reserved space were nonexistent.

“Walay special lane ang ibang grocery ug mall para sa mga persons with disabilities.” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Walang special lane ang ibang grocery at mall para sa mga taong may kapansanan.

English Translation:

Some groceries and malls do not have special lanes for persons with disabilities.

Moreover, the problem of transportation accessibility for persons with disabilities is serious. According to informants, persons with disabilities had no opportunity to use the seats dedicated to them. This non-compliance sets an issue in the confidence of the system. Statutory rights are practically unavailable when there is a lack of strict application of the law. Informant addressed that the reality is different from what is supposed to be implemented.

“Sa bus, adunay mga lingkoranan nga para sa mga persons with disabilities, pero pag-abot nimo, gisakyan na sa abled nga pasahero.” (KII 5)

Filipino Translation:

Sa bus, may mga upuan na nakalaan para sa mga taong may kapansanan, pero pagdating mo, inuupuan na ng mga abled na pasahero.

English Translation:

Buses have seats reserved for persons with disabilities, but when you arrive, an able-bodied passenger is already occupying the seat.

Poor enforcement and implementation continue to undermine the intended protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Ineffective administrative control and public disregard leave persons with disabilities vulnerable to systemic neglect. These findings further strengthen the explanation and provide additional evidence for the difficulties persons with disabilities experience in discount availment in the quantitative phase of this study. Therefore, authorities must improve the monitoring systems and enforce greater accountability among the service providers to ensure the most effective use of available resources (Fiene, 2024).

Communication Challenges

Persons with disabilities face persistent issues in communication that have affected their awareness, understanding, and availment of discount privileges. According to informant, some members are reluctant to attend meetings, and some are residing in remote area, which make it difficult to reach. In the absence of proper communication channels, some persons with disabilities are expected to be unaware of the activities and benefits available to them. Informant described these instances highlighting challenges due to limited means of communication among members.

“Unsaon pagpahibalo sa ilaha? Daghan sa akong mga miyembro ang kapoyan muattend sa among mga meeting.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Paano ipapaalam sa kanila? Karamihan sa mga miyembro ko ay tinamid pumunta sa mga meeting.

English Translation:

How do will we inform them? Many of my members are reluctant to attend our meeting.

In other realities, accessibility to important announcements and crucial information remains difficult due to availability of communication channels. In this regard, virtual announcements serve as a convenient avenue for easy access. However, for those that do not possess devices to navigate online communication platforms or live far from persons with disabilities' leaders, they cannot effectively utilize their mandated privileges due to the lack of

awareness. As emphasized by KII 5, persons with disabilities that do not have any devices or anyone credible to ask queries remain underserved.

“Sama sa uban walay cellphone or anything para ma-contact, lisod jud sila i-communicate. Labi na tong lagyo ang balay nga halos walay silingan.”
(KII 5)

Filipino Translation:

Kagaya sa iba na walang cellphone or kahit ano para ma-contact, mahirap talaga sila i-communicate. Lalo na yung malalayo ang bahay ni halos wala ng kapitbahay

English Translation:

Others that do not possess cellphones or anything to contact them, it is really hard to communicate with them, especially those that lived far with almost no neighbor.

Inaccessible Establishments and Features

The non-compliance with accessibility standards continues to limit the mobility of persons with disabilities and their access to essential facilities. Both the government and privately owned establishments are yet to fully adhere to Batas Pambansa Blg. 344, or the Accessibility Law, compelling structures to have facilities that accommodate the mobility of the persons with disabilities (Binghay, 2020). As supported by informants, several establishments lack ramps, accessible comfort rooms, or PWD-friendly features. Hence, persons with disabilities cannot fully navigate most of the buildings and structures in Panabo City. According to KII 1,

“Ang accessibility sa mga building kabahin na sa privilege, pero dili accessible sa mga persons with disabilities.” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Ang madaling pag-access sa mga gusali ay parte ng pribilehiyo, pero hindi ito ganap na naa-access para sa mga taong may kapansanan.

English Translation:

Building accessibility is a privilege, but the buildings are not accessible to persons with disabilities.

That said, poor infrastructure planning is a flaw that results in the exclusion of persons with disabilities in society. There are frustrations with constant problems in the infrastructures, particularly for individuals that have physical mobility issues. Although the majority of facilities satisfy the interests of ordinary citizens, barrier-free access for persons with disabilities is usually ignored and rejected (Bognot et al., 2023). As noted by KII 5,

“Ang mga ramp para sa persons with disabilities among gireklamo. Apil pod ang mga comfort room nga dili PWD-friendly.” (KII 5)

Filipino Translation:

Ang mga rampa para sa mga taong may kapansanan aming inireklamo. Pati na rin ang mga comfort room na hindi PWD-friendly.

English Translation:

We filed complaints about the persons with disabilities ramps. We also raised concerns about comfort rooms that are not PWD-friendly.

More so, the overall implication is that individuals with mobility issues face significant limitations in accessing establishments. People with physical disabilities are unable to explore the surroundings of the built environment. The inaccessibility of buildings becomes a direct path towards social isolation. KII 3 further shared,

“Ingon akong mga physically disabled nga miyembro nga kapoy mosulod tungod sa mga building nga dili accessible.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Sinabi ng aking mga miyembrong may pisikal na kapansanan na nakakapagod pumasok dahil sa mga gusaling hindi naa-access.

English Translation:

My physically disabled members said it is tiring to enter buildings that are not accessible.

Beyond the most apparent and evident difficulty of persons with disabilities is physical inaccessibility, which is yet to be solved. Despite existing laws, weak enforcement and poor infrastructure planning continue to limit the mobility of persons with disabilities and participation in society. Universal design principles, which consider the physical abilities of all individuals, must be consistently applied to create equitable and inclusive spaces (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 2025). Without proactive adoption of these approaches, persons with disabilities remain excluded, and accessibility remains theoretical rather than practical. Authorities and service providers must take immediate action to ensure that built environments genuinely accommodate all users.

Coping Strategies of Persons with Disabilities in Overcoming the Challenges of Availing Discount Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Table 8 shows the data on mechanisms to overcome challenges of persons with disabilities in the implementation of Republic Act No. 9442. Three themes were derived from the interviews: information dissemination efforts, alternative means of discount privilege availment, and access to institutional support.

Table 8 Coping Strategies to Overcome Challenges of Persons with Disabilities in Availing Discount Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Major themes	Descriptions	Significant statements
Information Dissemination Efforts	This refers to the organized activities and channels used to inform persons with disabilities about their rights and privileges.	Barangay federation leaders help disseminate information using social media platforms. Information campaigns are conducted in barangays to increase persons with disabilities awareness of their benefits and privileges. Persons with disability leaders conduct house-to-house visit to orient of their rights and privileges, including discount Meetings serve as an alternative method for disseminating information.
Alternative Means in Discount Privilege Availment	This refers to the practices persons with disabilities adopt to cope with challenges in availing discounts.	Authorized representatives may avail of the discount on behalf of persons with disabilities Alternative requirements allow representatives to access benefits for persons with disabilities. Other supporting documents are accepted for discount availment when the booklet is unavailable. Temporary alternatives may be used while official documents are pending release. The use of discount privilege is also available through online stores.
Access to Institutional Support	This refers to the access of persons with disabilities to assistance and intervention from official offices and staff when facing issues with benefits, discrimination, or non-compliant establishments.	Concerns regarding discount implementation can be reported to appropriate government offices. Assistance from establishment personnel helps address concerns during transactions. Complaints regarding denied benefits may be elevated to management for resolution. Incidents of discrimination are reported to responsible authorities or management. Persons with disabilities are able to seek clarification from relevant offices regarding their rights and benefits.

Information Dissemination Efforts

One of the major problems in exercising the entitled discount privileges of persons with disabilities is awareness. The federation presidents and barangay leaders-initiated strategies on information dissemination efforts to reach and combat the lack of awareness and misinformation regarding persons with disabilities rights and privileges. The use of digital platforms enhances the efficiency of information dissemination, which helps address the gap where a significant number of persons with disabilities remain unaware of their discount privileges. According to Lagura (2025) in the digital age, the utilization of e-government websites is crucial to the improvement of public service delivery. Informants shared that updates are shared through social media platforms, group chats, and official disability websites,

“Barangay man gud naa tay mga gitawag nga federation president, and then gina post napud na sya sa mga social media, mga ingana then ma source napud na nila..” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Sa mga barangay, meron tayong tinatawag na federation president, and then nagpopost sila sa mga social media, tapos yan na ang magiging source nila.

English Translation:

In the barangay, we have what we call federation presidents, and then things get posted on social media, and from there, they can use it as a source.

“Naa pud miy groupchat kauban ang mga PWD president sa 40 barangays. Naa pd miy groupchat sa mga federation presidents of each barangay para mag initiate ug meetings..” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Meron din kaming groupchat kasama ang mga PWD president ng 40 barangays. Meron rin kasama nag mga federation presidents of each barangay para mag initiate ng meetings

English Translation:

We have groupchat together with the PWD presidents of 40 barangays. We also have a groupchat with the federation presidents of each barangay to initiate meetings.

Furthermore, to enhance service delivery, the City Social Welfare and Development Office, in collaboration with the person with disability presidents, conducts the same campaign by visiting barangays and house-to-house directly. The local government has acknowledged the fact that persons with disabilities are limited and having difficulties navigating through online platforms and require special assistance, which leads to conduct of face-to-face meetings. Informants shared an experience organizing one of persons with disabilities' assembly meetings.

“Ang City Social Welfare and Development Office nagdumala ug mga assembly meeting. Sa General Assembly, among ipahibalo sa ila ang ilang katungod isip usa ka persons with disability aron maka-avail sa mga diskwento.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Ang City Social Welfare and Development Office ang nagsasagawa ng mga assembly miting. Sa General Assembly, ipinapaalam namin sa kanila ang kanilang karapatan bilang isang taong may kapansanan nang sa ganon makapakinabang sila sa mga diskwento

English Translation:

The City Social Welfare and Development Office conducts assembly meetings. During the General Assembly, we inform them of their rights as a person with disability to avail of discount privileges.

“Ang mga federation president maoy mobisita ug mosusi sa matag purok ug sa kahintang sa mga persons with disabilities aron makareport sila kanamo ug among ma-follow up ug mabisita.” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Ang mga presidente ng pederasyon ang bumibisita at sumusuri sa bawat purok at sa kalagayan ng mga taong may kapansanan para e-report sa amin para ma follow-up at ma bisita.

English Translation:

The federation presidents visit each purok and assess the condition of persons with disabilities so they can report to us, allowing us to follow up and visit them.

The consistent involvement of persons with disabilities leaders shows that active coordination is crucial for effective information dissemination. The Plan International (2022) recommends an information dissemination campaign through LGUs to enhance awareness of persons with disabilities of their rights and entitlements. The local government unit must enforce proactive measures to institutionalize these practices and guarantee that no PWD is excluded from critical information and services.

Alternative Means in Discount Privilege Availment

It has been revealed that persons with disabilities often resort to alternative means to avail their discounts when the required PWD ID or booklet is not available. Informants have identified practices that enabled them to overcome issues in their discount availment. This demonstrates their resilience and resourcefulness in navigating procedural barriers. KII 2 shared that a guardian avails the privilege instead of persons with disabilities themselves.

“Ang guardian makakuha sa benepisyo basta magdala sila og authorization letter.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Ang guardian ay makakakuha ng benepisyo basta’t may dala silang authorization letter.

English Translation:

The guardian can avail of the benefit as long as they bring an authorization letter.

On the other hand, some persons with disabilities manage to claim their discount even when they forget to bring their ID or booklet. They present alternative documents that service providers sometimes accept in place of the booklet. This flexibility allows persons with disabilities to access essential services without unnecessary delays or additional travel, which reduces frustration and maintains the practical value of the benefit granted. KII 2 mentioned,

“Kung makalimot ko og dala sa akong booklet, ipakita ra nako ang reseta sa tambal ug ID.” (KII 5)

Filipino Translation:

Kung malilimutan kong dalhin ang booklet ko, ipinapakita ko lang ang reseta nang gamot at ID.

English Translation:

If I forgot to bring my booklet, I just show the medical prescription and ID.

In addition, online alternatives also exist as certain online stores accept proof of having the PWD ID to avail discounts. This improvement enables persons with disabilities to purchase necessities or avail services at the convenience of their personal space. KII 3 stated that,

“Ang mga persons with disabilities mahimong makapahimulos sa susamang mga serbisyo sa online stores pinaagi sa paghatag sa parehas nga mga kinahanglanon nga gikinahanglan sa mga pisikal nga tindahan.” KII 3

Filipino Translation:

Maaaring makapag-avail ang mga taong may kapansanan ng katulad na mga serbisyo sa mga online na tindahan sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng kaparehong mga kinakailangan na hinihingi sa mga pisikal na tindahan.

English Translation:

Persons with disabilities can avail similar services in online stores, providing the same requisites as physical stores.

Access to Institutional Support

The role of the public institutions is to provide services that sufficiently meet the demands, as well as expectations, of the populations they cater (Levara & Gamale, 2025). To combat discrimination and mistreatment, persons with disabilities actively report incidents and seek assistance from authorities or establishment staff. According to Gulla (2024), approximately 2,000 complaints on denied discounts and benefits for persons with disabilities were filed before government agencies. Informants confirmed that they have reported non-compliant establishments and requested guidance from service providers. This shows that persons with disabilities are willing to take action to ensure that their rights are respected. KII 5 addressed that,

“Naay ubang establisyemento nga wala nagsunod sa mandated discount. Ako silang gireklamo sa City Social Welfare and Development Office.” (KII 5)

Filipino Translation:

May ibang establisyementong hindi sumusunod sa mga mandatong diskwento. Akin silang inireklamo sa City Social Welfare and Development Office.

English Translation:

Some establishments do not follow the mandated discount. I filed a complaint with the City Social Welfare and Development Office.

Although the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability explicitly forbids the practice of denial of service to people with disabilities, they still happen to persons with disabilities. The situations are often made worse when the subject of the experience is not only refusal of the services that persons with disabilities are privileged to avail of, but they are also forced to take certain actions themselves to claim or protect their rights due to problems encountered in availment. In that sense, institutional recognition gives back a sense of dignity. KII 1 shared,

“Nakasinati ko nga wala ko gihatagan og discount sa grocery store, maong gireklamo nako sila sa management.” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Naranasan kong hindi mabigyan ng diskwento sa grocery store, kaya inireklamo ko sa kanilang tagapamahala.

English Translation:

I was not given a discount at the grocery store, so I filed a complaint with the management.

Additionally, KII 4 stated that persons with disabilities are aware of the discounts available to them, but not everyone knows how to take advantage of them. This level of unawareness often leads to confusion and indecisiveness when attempting to avail oneself of the benefit. Still, others are willing to be informed and take the initiative to seek clarification.

“Kabalo ta nga naa tay diskwento, pero dili pasabot nga kabalo ta sa tanan. Kung naay kalibugan, moadto ko sa among opisina sa Persons with Disability Affairs Office aron maklaro.” (KII 4)

Filipino Translation:

Alam natin na meron tayong diskwento, pero hindi ibig sabihin na alam natin lahat. Kung merong kalituhan, pupunta ako sa aming tanggapan sa Persons with Disability Affairs Office para linawin.

English Translation:

We know we are entitled to discounts, but that does not mean we know everything. When there is confusion, I go to our Persons with Disability Affairs Office for clarification.

Formal support is essential to ensure the legal rights of persons with disabilities lead to dignity and widespread daily engagement. Through strengthening complaint mechanisms and providing clear guidelines, persons with disabilities are empowered to assert their rights and hold establishments accountable. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) clearly notes that a person with a disability has inherent dignity (United Nations, 2026). Therefore, effective complaint mechanisms and the detailed education of persons with disabilities about their lawful rights are the essential means to protect their rights and ensure their full involvement in the life of society.

Insights and Feedback of Persons with Disabilities in Exercising their Rights and Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Table 9 shows the data on insights and feedback of persons with disabilities on the implementation of Republic Act No. 9442. Three themes were derived from the interviews: posting of discount privilege signage, enforcement of penalties, and policymaking.

Table 9 Insights and Feedback of Persons with Disabilities in Exercising their Rights and Privileges Stipulated in Republic Act No. 9442

Major themes	Descriptions	Significant statements
Posting of Discount Privilege Signage	This refers to the clear display of persons with disabilities discounts in stores to inform them about eligible products and guidelines.	Clear guidelines on discount privileges should be made readily available in establishments. Information materials increase awareness of discount privileges among persons with disabilities. Visible informational displays improve access to relevant information and avoid confusion. Providing information in local dialects enhances understanding. Reminders on eligible discounted items facilitate proper implementation of discount privileges.
Enforcement of Penalties	This refers to the strict imposition of fines or sanctions on establishments that do not follow the discount privilege policy to prevent mistreatment and ensure compliance.	Appropriate penalties promote adherence to disability-related laws and regulations. Stronger enforcement measures prevent the mistreatment of persons with disabilities. Sanctions serve as a deterrent against non-compliance with existing policies. Continuous monitoring ensures the effective enforcement of penalties and compliance with disability-related policies.
Policymaking	This refers to revision of policies to improve accessibility, simplify processes, and better address persons with disabilities needs.	New policies should be developed to strengthen support services. Existing provisions should be reviewed and updated to improve their effectiveness. Expanding discount privileges may enhance the benefits available to persons with disabilities. Simplifying documentary requirements makes discount privilege availment more convenient.

Posting of Discount Privilege Signage

Establishments fail to provide clear information or signage of persons with disabilities' discount privilege, which creates confusion and misuse in availing privileges. According to Senator Pangilinan, persons with disabilities remain unaware of their benefits due to non-compliance of businesses with the law, specifically Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 10754, Rule 4 Section 6, which requires the visible presentation of the 20-percent PWD discount in conspicuous areas of the establishments (Manalo, 2025). Informants emphasized the need for visible tarpaulins or reminders in stores, translated into the local dialect, to properly guide persons with disabilities on eligible discounted products. KII3 underscored that,

“Unta adunay guidelines ang gobyerno nga ipabutang sa mga store aron makita kung unsang mga produkto ang ma-avail sa mga persons with disabilities.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

Sana ay magkaroon ng mga panuntunan ang gobyerno na mag-aatas sa mga tindahan na maglagay ng mga palatandaan upang makita kung aling mga produkto ang maaaring ma-avail ng mga taong may kapansanan.

English Translation:

There should be government guidelines posted in stores showing which products persons with disabilities can avail themselves of.

According to the report of the City Special Concerns and Coordinating Office in Kalinga, a significant lack of knowledge about Republic Act No. 10754 is observed, indicating that business establishments have disregarded the law and denied people their rights (Serion, 2024). As a result, persons with disabilities are not aware of the certain products or services they are eligible to avail discounts, signage can be strategically displayed in establishments to provide them with clear information on the products. This can increase their awareness, reduce confusion and misuse. KII 2 suggested that,

“Magbutang unta og tarpaulin ang mga establishment. Ibutang sa gawas aron makita dayon nga naay diskwento ang persons with disabilities.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Maglagay sana ng tarpaulin ang mga establisyemento. Ilagay sa labas para makita agad na mayroong diskwento ang mga taong may kapansanan.

English Translation:

All establishments should put up tarpaulin. Put it outside to show that persons with disabilities can avail themselves of their discount privilege.

Institutionalization of a strong formal discount program for persons with disabilities in the Philippines has been a great challenge, which can be primarily explained by the fact that insufficient businesses have clear regulatory guidelines and inconsistent enforcement habits (Cruz et al., 2021). Testimonies of the persons with disabilities' leaders show a remarkable consensus that there should be better coordination between the local government units and service providers to fill the existing gaps. Therefore, the display of proper signage and adoption of standard rules are essential for the full enjoyment of the rights of the persons with disabilities and should be regularly monitored by responsible agency.

Enforcement of Penalties

Establishments or service providers that fail to comply with disability laws often go unpunished, leaving persons with disabilities vulnerable to continued mistreatment and denial of their rights. Under the Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 9442, any person who violates any provisions of this act shall suffer the penalties, including the denial of discount privileges. Informants emphasized the need for stricter and higher penalties or

sanctions, including fines imposed by the City Social Welfare and Development Office or local authorities, to deter non-compliance and protect persons with disabilities who are already in a difficult position. Protection of the rights of persons with disabilities requires clear policies, as well as firm, unwavering enforcement. KII 3 assertive stated that,

“Dapat tagaan og aksyon ug patagmon. Labina sa among opisina sa City Social Welfare and Development Office, kinahanglan tinud-on gyud. Naa may silot o multa.” (KII 1)

Filipino Translation:

Dapat itong aksyonan at ayusin. Lalo na sa aming tanggapan sa City Social Welfare and Development Office, kailangan itong seryosohin dahil may kaukulang parusa o multa.

English Translation:

There must be action and proper enforcement. Our office at the City Social Welfare and Development Office should take it seriously, especially since penalties are in place.

The informants expressed that authorities must realize that if they do not make any concrete efforts, persons with disabilities are left at risk of even further neglect and abuse. Excessive leniency ensues in a permissive environment, where a lack of responsibility creates frequent violations due to little or no punishment. Hence, implementation of the policy is not to exploit or undermine the businesses or establishments from penalties but to simply maintain order and compliance to protect the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities from being limited by society. KII 1 and KII 4 frustratedly express that,

“Dapat nila aksyonan kay luoy mi nga mga persons with disabilities, pirmi lang balewalaon.” (KII 3)

Filipino Translation:

“Dapat nilang aksyonan, kasi kawawa kaming mga taong may kapansanan, lagi lang binabalewala.

English Translation:

They should take action because we persons with disabilities are vulnerable and often disregarded.

“Angay gyud nga silotan ang mga establisyemento nga wala mosunod.” (KII 4)

Filipino Translation:

Dapat talagang parusahan ang mga establisimyentong hindi sumusunod.

English Translation:

Establishments that do not comply should be penalized.

The consistent enforcement of penalties is essential to safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring that legal provisions are not merely symbolic. As has been witnessed in both local and international settings, weak enforcement enables the perpetuation of violations and negates the impacts of protective laws. Informants considered that there is a need to make authorities responsible by imposing suitable punishment on the establishments that do not follow the policy to strengthen the gravity of adherence. Mechanisms to enforce this are already available in laws such as Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, but it is very crucial to implement them in full. Rigorous enforcement conveys the message that discrimination and the neglect of the rights of persons with disabilities are unacceptable.

Polymaking

One of the reasons persons with disabilities are unable to exercise their discount privileges is said to be caused by bureaucratic procedures and requirements. Under the Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 9442 and Republic Act No. 10754, and Department of Health Administrative Order No. 8 series of 2017, the persons with disabilities are to present both PWD ID and booklet to avail discounts on purchasing of medicines in drugstores and pharmacies and basic and prime commodities in groceries and supermarkets. Informants expressed their complaint in this regard, suggesting removing these requirements, which will ease the process of availing the discount privilege.

“Tanggala ang mga taong may mga disabilities booklet requirement.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Tanggalin ang mga taong may disabilities booklet bilang isang requirement.

English Translation:

Removal of the persons with disabilities booklet requirement.

Moreover, informants expressed their dissatisfaction due to lack of participation, suggesting crafting an ordinance for a dedicated technical committee for persons with disabilities to be represented in policymaking. Effective integration of disability rights in policy formulation, planning, and programming requires political will, well-established and funded institutions, and effective implementation of state and non-state organizations (Tigere & Moyo, 2019). Also, creating a hotline for inquiries and receiving complaints, removal of the PWD booklet, and expansion of the discount privileges. According to them, establishing a dedicated committee or office for persons with disabilities will help them, including the persons with disabilities nationwide, to be more included.

“Craft an ordinance for technical committee, and creation of hotline number nga pwede matawagan ng mga taong may disabilities.” (KII 2)

Filipino Translation:

Bumuo ng isang ordinansa para sa teknikal na komite at magtatag ng hotline number na maaaring tawagan ng mga taong may kapansanan.

English Translation:

Craft an ordinance for the technical committee and create a hotline number that persons with disabilities can call.

Given that persons with disabilities have reported significant gaps in accessing their benefits and provided concrete recommendations, there is a clear necessity to amend the current policies. In the Philippines, the central issue is the lack of a holistic national disability policy that will help overcome the barriers that hinder the growth and development of individuals with disabilities (Maboloc, 2020). The evidence from informants highlights procedural barriers, unclear regulations, and the burdensome PWD booklet requirement, all of which hinder the full exercise of their rights. Evidence gained through lived experience must be seen as another tool in the general evidence and be given equal weight to any other element (Williams, 2024). Therefore, policy reform is an urgent need to provide equitable, efficient, and inclusive access for the benefit of all persons with disabilities.

Discussions

The findings revealed that persons with disabilities can significantly access discount privileges; however, the level of availment remains fairly low or far from desirable scale. Despite the initiatives utilized in order to make accessibility to rights and privileges more inclusive, persons with disabilities remain predominantly unable to access their discount privileges. Table 1 shows that the availment of discount privilege on establishments, including but not limited to recreational, restaurant, fast-food chains, hotels and lodgings, “sometimes”

recorded the largest, and relatively followed by “always” and “rarely”, this indicates that persons with disabilities are only occasionally availing their discount privilege.

In tables 2 and 3, higher scores were observed in moderate and occasional availment. For table 2, “rarely” scored the highest, which indicated that persons with disabilities only avail medical services on public and private facilities based on urgency rather than necessity. While in Table 3, “sometimes” and “rarely” scored significantly, suggesting that some persons with disabilities limit their purchase to medicines in drugstores and pharmacies since they have less complicated conditions and they only limit their medication only when it is urgently required. This implies that many persons with disabilities do not participate in preventive care due to barriers and they are less likely able to get routine preventive medical care compared to able-bodied individuals (Kim & Ho, 2023; U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2020).

At the same time, table 2 and 3 also reflected substantial scores on consistent availment of discount privileges. In table 2, the relatively high frequencies on “always” and “sometimes” in medical services, both public and private facilities, highlights the chronic and complex healthcare needs of persons with disabilities, particularly those who undergo medical sessions or procedures that needed careful medical attention and persons with disabilities with chronic disease or conditions. While, in the availment of medicines in drugstores and pharmacies, “always” obtained the largest response. This positively indicates that persons with disabilities highly utilized the discount, meaning most drugstores and pharmacies complied with the law due to its accessibility. In addition, it reflected the necessity for addressing the conditions and complex health needs of persons with disabilities, which in principle make them reliant on medicines. Jairoun et al. (2022) stressed that unmet clinical requirements and insufficient access to quality health care and preventative services contributes to health disparities; thus, it is significant that their access to medical services is properly enforced.

In Table 4, discount on transportation, the result shows that most persons with disabilities are unable to avail the discount privilege. Although “always” and “sometimes” scored the highest relatively. This demonstrates that transportation discounts are highly utilized, which reflects that public transportation serves as the primary mode of transportation for persons with disabilities. In Table 5, discounts on basic and prime commodities obtained the lowest number of utilizations, which reflects that this discount privilege is the most inaccessible for persons with disabilities. Despite that, “always,” “often,” and “sometimes” scored relatively demonstrating a consistent level of availment.

On the contrary, persons with disabilities continue to experience barriers in accessing their discount privileges. Accessibility is a privilege, but establishments are not accessible for persons with disabilities; across tables 1-5, it is highly observed that physical difficulties is the leading reason for persons with disabilities being unable to avail their discount privileges, relatively followed by tediousness, and lack of awareness. Physical difficulty and tediousness are similar in effect—the lack of basic accessibility features proves to be a major problem in accessing their rights and privileges. According to studies, most persons with disabilities find it hard to reach objects such as supermarkets because of height restrictions in large stores and queue up in one area, especially in wheelchairs (Bird & Vogelmann, 2021; Return on Disability, 2023).

At the same time, according to informants, these problems experienced by persons with disabilities are attributed to 1) establishments do not have priority lanes, and if they are not followed properly, 2) some establishments do not have ramps or accessible comfort rooms for persons with disabilities, 3) travelling individually with physiological disability poses to be the most challenging, 4) bureaucratic processes, and 5) entering establishment without accessibility features is tiring. As a result, persons with disabilities are already limited by their condition but also limited by service providers or duty-bearers. This tends to discourage the

persons with disabilities from exercising their privilege due to the cycle of struggles, which is not proportional to the amount of benefit they would receive.

Moreover, the lack of awareness is one of the critical barriers to accessing discount privileges. According to Clemente et al. (2022) underscored that information inaccessibility and unavailability serve as a potential challenge for persons with disabilities with access to health care. This is evidently shown in table 2, this reflects the weaknesses in terms of information dissemination by the local government units; at this rate, if healthcare and security is not accessible to persons with disabilities, it is tantamount to depriving them of their rights and privileges. According to informants, among the reasons why persons with disabilities remained uninformed of their privilege is 1) limited information dissemination efforts about their benefits and privileges, 2) persons with disability members are reluctant to participate, 3) communication barriers, especially those with speech disabilities, and 4) lack of discount signages in all kinds of store.

Moreover, the no PWD ID/booklet, no discount policy is one of the most complained bureaucratic problems faced by persons with disabilities today. As discussed above, persons with disabilities are required to present both PWD ID and booklets in availing discounts on medical services, purchasing medicines, basic and prime commodities. According to informants, manual recording of items is tiring and inconvenient because it causes unnecessary delay, especially if it affects the condition of persons with disabilities, enduring the physical burden while waiting to finish the process. It is important to note that some persons with disabilities lost or damaged their IDs and booklets, making them unrecognizable as proof of identification; some emphasized that their IDs/booklets have not arrived at them. According to informants, there is a shortage of IDs for persons with disabilities due to the rapid increase in membership applications.

Furthermore, establishments or service providers denied the persons with disabilities with full enjoyment of their discount privileges. According to informants, the establishments or service providers have tendencies on why they are denied of their privileges by 1) giving half or less of discount than what is stipulated in the law, 2) refused to provide discount on certain products, particularly, items that is branded, including medicines and other basic necessities, and 3) establishments and service providers do not want to give discounts, arguing that there are too many persons with disabilities availing, which will result to profit loss. This unfair treatment is also the result of why persons with disabilities are discouraged from exercising their rights and privileges. Additionally, persons with disabilities have experienced discrimination and stigma in exercising their discount privileges due to negative attitude or outlook towards them. On the contrary, some establishments or service providers do not provide discounts due to existence of fake PWD IDs. There is rampant use of fixers to obtain a PWD ID, which results in abuse in disability benefits (Tan et al., 2025).

Conclusion and suggestions

The key findings revealed that most persons with disabilities remain unable to fully utilize their discount privileges, and they are facing barriers that continuously affect them from exercising. The surveys revealed that purchasing medicines at drugstores and pharmacies is the highest utilized discount privilege, and establishments such as hotels, restaurants, lodging, and recreational and medical services in public and private facilities indicated near-equal utilization, while transportation and basic and prime commodities scored the lowest utilization. Concurrently, the surveys revealed that lack of awareness, physical difficulty and tediousness are the primary barriers to the exercise of their discount privileges. These were compounded by systemic and environmental barriers that include bureaucratic processes, lack of compliance with accessibility law resulting in a lack of basic accessibility features, and weak

implementation by service providers. In addition, PWD ID and Booklet, denial of discount, and services remain unaffordable, indicated to be more complex factors that limit their capacity to utilize the discount privileges. Hence, disability is not a problem, but it is the design of the policy and society that continuously disable persons with disabilities.

Moreover, the interviews uncovered the underlying problems as to the level of discount utilization. The main problem lies in the implementation of policy, some establishments and service providers do not comply with basic accessibility features or observe proper implementation of accessibility features if existing, some do not fully give full discount on items and services, some denies the mandated discount, and lack of accessibility features, which constitute a violation to the compliance to the mandated 20% discount privilege. The bureaucratic process and requirements such as presenting both PWD ID and booklet, manual listing of items availed, authorization letter and other IDs are among the systemic issues that constraints the persons with disabilities to avail their discount privilege, especially in healthcare. At the same time, information and communication challenges constrain persons with disabilities from equal and full enjoyment of their privileges as recognized members.

As a result, the overall findings suggest adoption of practical and policy changes as it is the role of the government to design and implement policies and programs anchored on international human rights for the benefit of persons with disabilities. It is also their responsibility to protect, empower and take accountability for persons with disabilities from any forms of discrimination, stereotypes, abuse or deprivation of their rights. The local government should start from strictly observing the compliance of basic accessibility features in public and private establishments as required by the law before handling building permits, strengthening information campaigns of local persons with disability leaders and officials by providing more resources, and strict enforcement of penalties to violators that do not comply with the law and denies the persons with disabilities of their rights and privileges.

The national government should strengthen and fast-track the development of digital identification systems to counter fake PWD IDs and to effectively inform persons with disabilities regarding this measure to ensure coordinated utilization, adapt changes in bureaucratic requirements, specifically by removing the booklet and listing of availed items that physically burdens their conditions, adapt a stricter punishment on establishments and service providers by suspending business operation based on the unresolved complaints and degree of violations towards the persons with disabilities, and adaption of technical committee dedicated for persons with disabilities, including hotlines to encourage and ease the process of filing complaints against the violators.

Lastly, for future researchers, due to constraints and existing gaps in this area of study, the study has its limitations, which may not be generalized to all persons with disabilities in all localities in the Philippines. Further investigation and exploration may be done in a different setting having the same purpose, to also find out their experience and insights from a different perspective.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the actual level of utilization of discount privileges entitled to persons with disabilities in the City of Panabo, Philippines, and explored the realities and experiences of persons with disabilities. The findings illustrate that accessibility is not just influenced by what is stipulated in the law, but also the external factors that continue to impede full and equal availment. It was also revealed that challenges encountered by persons with disabilities extend beyond common belief that is due to financial concerns as they also involve practical barriers that have affected their ability to fully enjoy the benefit.

Moreover, the study highlights the important role of the local government unit, persons with disabilities' leaders and officials, and service providers in ensuring that discount privileges are effectively available and accessible to the intended beneficiaries. The overall findings may serve as a basis to strengthen local policies, improvement of monitoring systems, and enhancement of public awareness campaigns with regards to their entitled benefits and privileges. For establishments, the results may serve as a ground to improve compliance with discount regulations. While the government can identify areas where additional enforcement and policy revisions are needed.

For society and communities, the study promotes a deeper understanding of the realities faced by persons with disabilities, specifically in their ability to access their discount privileges. Greater awareness of the challenges they experience encourage community members, service providers, local government officials, and policymakers to adopt inclusive measures and responsive practices. In doing so, accessibility to discount privileges effectively supports persons with disabilities financially, as well as reinforces inclusion and protect their dignity in society.

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