

From Trauma-Informed Care to Classroom Practice: Reimagining Trust-Based Relational Intervention for Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Abstract

This conceptual paper reimagines Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) as a culturally responsive framework for inclusive and special education in the Philippines. While the growing number of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) underscores the urgency of trauma-informed, relationship-focused classroom practices, current applications of TBRI remain largely Western-centric and have rarely been adapted for Southeast Asian educational contexts. This paper addresses this gap by proposing the Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) model. CR-TBRI integrates the three core TBRI principles – empower, connect, and correct – with culturally aligned practices grounded in Filipino communal values, spirituality, and family orientation. Key elements include (1) classroom-ready regulation strategies rooted in nurturing care, (2) relational synchrony between caregivers and teachers, and (3) culturally sustaining routines that foster social harmony while supporting each learner’s sensory and emotional needs. This paper contributes to the literature by offering: (a) a classroom-ready CR-TBRI schematic for teacher use; (b) a set of culturally aligned, trauma-informed routines adaptable to Philippine classrooms; and (c) a research agenda for testing and refining CR-TBRI across diverse Southeast Asian settings. Practical implications include guiding teacher preparation, informing policy alignment, and encouraging educators to adopt compassionate, relationally grounded, and culturally relevant approaches for learners on the autism spectrum, while also fostering family-school partnerships and advancing structured research on the effectiveness of CR-TBRI.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Trust-Based Relational Intervention, trauma-informed education, culturally responsive pedagogy, relational-cultural theory, Philippine education, inclusive classrooms



Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (2023), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects about one in 100 children globally. Recent surveillance data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Shaw et al., 2025) also show a rising prevalence, with approximately one in 31 eight-year-olds identified with ASD in 2022 compared to one in 36 in 2020. In the Philippines, the Autism Society of the Philippines (2024) estimates a prevalence of about one in 100 individuals, amounting to roughly 1.2 million Filipinos living with autism and underscoring the significant and growing local population of learners with ASD. Yet, awareness and understanding of autism among parents and teachers remain uneven, as shown in the survey study by Dela Paz and Inocian (2023), which highlights persistent misconceptions and challenges in fostering inclusive practices. The Department of Education has established Inclusive Learning Resource Centers to support learners with special needs (Department of Education, 2025); however, persistent challenges remain, such as limited resources, insufficient locally adapted interventions, and gaps in trauma-informed practices for learners with ASD (UNESCO & Leonard Cheshire, 2022; Arias et al., 2023). In this paper, neurodiversity-affirming refers to a perspective that recognizes autism as a natural variation in neurodevelopment and prioritizes support and accommodations over normalization.

With these, teachers in the Philippines face challenges due to limited resources, few culturally attuned therapies, and the absence of trauma-informed practices (Bernardo et al., 2022). Learners with ASD often have trouble with communication, social interaction, and sensory regulation (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Thye et al., 2017). This is exacerbated by stressors in their relationships and environments at home and school (Gentil-Gutiérrez et al., 2021). To deal with these problems, caregivers and educators need not just specialized teaching methods but also trauma-sensitive, relationship-based interventions that are specific to each child's neurodevelopmental profile and cultural context (Kerns et al., 2015).

In trauma-informed care, particularly in foster care systems and clinical settings in Western countries, Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) has gained popularity among new relational frameworks (Purvis et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2023). Purvis, Cross, and their coworkers developed Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) in 2013. It is an attachment-based, trauma-informed strategy that aims to satisfy the complicated emotional and behavioral requirements of students who have been through adversity. Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting are its main ideas (Purvis et al., 2013). They prioritize safety, building relationships, and consistent, caring discipline. A significant amount of research has demonstrated that Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is effective in clinical and caregiving contexts (Borchers et al., 2021; Purvis et al., 2015). However, there has been limited research on its application in classrooms, particularly for learners with ASD.



More importantly, current applications of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) are primarily based on Western concepts of relational safety, attachment, and discipline, which may not fully align with the cultural norms and caregiving styles of Southeast Asian contexts but can be very helpful (Bernardo et al., 2022; de Leon & Carreon, 2020). For instance, in the Philippines, relationships are deeply rooted in communal care, family ties, and spiritual foundations. *Pakikipagkapwa-tao* (shared humanity), *bayanihan* (community support), and *pag-aaruga* (nurturing care) are concepts that originate from families and influence how relationships and discipline are managed in schools (Jocano, 2001; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Filipino students who have been through trauma often have to deal with family problems, poverty, natural disasters, and cultural expectations. This means that a culturally responsive trauma-informed framework needs to be made to fit these situations (Alampay & Jocson, 2011).

This conceptual paper introduces the Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) framework, which adapts TBRI to Filipino Cultural and classroom realities. It is guided by three central questions:

1. Which adaptations of TBRI align with Filipino caregiving norms and communal values?
2. How can CR-TBRI be operationalized into concrete classroom routines for learners with ASD?
3. What research agenda can evaluate CR-TBRI's cultural validity and classroom effectiveness?

Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

To create trauma-informed relational therapies for learners with ASD, institutions need to use a lot of different theories, including neurodevelopmental, relational, cultural, and pedagogical ones. This part places the current conceptual paper within four related theoretical frameworks: Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy (CRP/CSP), and Trauma-Informed Educational Practices. These points of view provide this conceptual research with a strong theoretical foundation for developing new approaches to relational interventions in Special Education (SPED) and general education classrooms that are both trauma-sensitive and culturally appropriate for the Philippines.

A. Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

Purvis, Cross, and their coworkers came up with Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) as an attachment-based, trauma-informed strategy to help people who have been through relationship trauma deal with their complicated emotional and behavioral needs (Purvis et al., 2013). Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is based on attachment theory



and developmental psychology. It emphasizes the importance of establishing safe, trusting connections before one can effectively manage one's behavior and emotional well-being (Purvis & Cross, 2006; TCU Institute, 2025). Three main ideas are at the heart of the model:

Empowering Principles: addressing the physical and environmental requirements of children, including ways to control their senses and provide structure.

Connecting Principles: Caregivers and children should have loving interactions, form attachments, and be in tune with each other.

Correcting Principles: discipline that is consistent and kind, to teach good conduct via connection instead of punishment.

TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention) has been shown to work in foster care, adoption, clinical, and residential settings with mostly Western populations. It improves behavioral outcomes, attachment security, and emotional regulation (Purvis et al., 2013; Purvis et al., 2015; Borchers et al., 2021; Lotty et al., 2021; Messer et al., 2018; Razuri et al., 2016; Nielsen, 2014; Borelli et al., 2024; Hunsley et al., 2022; Callaghan et al., 2019). Even though it has these relationship strengths, TBRI is still not widely used in schools. Only a few studies, including Purvis and Cross's (2007) case study in a residential charter school, have looked at TBRI in school settings. A recent systematic qualitative review further emphasized that effective use of TBRI in autism – inclusive classrooms requires personalized corrective techniques grounded in emotional safety, sensory empowerment regulation, and relational approaches aligned with autism communication styles (Manuguid, 2025). These insights highlight the need for contextualized adaptations, since the model's caregiving and discipline methods are rooted in Western cultural norms, which may not align with Southeast Asian schools where communal and spiritual values strongly shape caregiving, discipline, and relationships (Wu et al., 2019; Bernardo et al., 2022; She & Yao, 2011).

B. Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT)

Jean Baker Miller and her colleagues developed Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), which posits that interactions that foster growth are crucial for individuals' health and resilience (Jordan, 2008). RCT is different from typical individualistic psychology models since it focuses on empathy, authenticity, and connection as the main approaches to improve emotional health, especially for people who face systemic inequities and trauma. For example, Spencer et al. (2020) discussed how students often feel left out and misunderstood in social situations, and how classrooms based on RCT principles had helped learners with ASD feel safe in their relationships by being genuine, understanding, and culturally sensitive. RCT then gives trauma-informed information on how to fix broken relationships and how teachers can build relationships with learners with ASD that help them flourish (Spencer et al., 2020).



Further, Losh et al. (2022) found that positive relationships between students and teachers significantly increased social engagement among learners with ASD. Solis (2024) emphasized the importance of being culturally and linguistically sensitive to learners with ASD to enhance self-esteem and promote inclusion. Purgason et al. (2022) demonstrated that RCT is beneficial for maintaining connections in online learning settings. Finally, Hu et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis that demonstrated the effectiveness of culturally adapted interventions for learners with ASD and their families.

Spencer-Contreras et al. (2022) also indicated that RCT can facilitate collaboration between school counselors and Latinx caregivers, which suggests that it may be effective in multicultural classrooms. Heintz et al. (2023) emphasized that effective teacher practices foster relational safety and participation in inclusive environments. Wu et al. (2023) and Wang (2024) also demonstrated that culturally responsive and relationally attuned teaching methods facilitate better learning outcomes for learners with ASD across various settings. Finally, meta-analytic research (Lee et al., 2023) indicates that culturally responsive relational interventions yield similar or better outcomes. This shows that RCT has potential as a culturally grounded framework that fits with Filipino *pakikipagkapwa-tao* and *pag-aaruga* in Philippine Special Education (SPED) contexts.

C. Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy

According to Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) supports teaching methods that acknowledge, value, and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) builds on this idea by encouraging not just the incorporation of artistic practices but also the active preservation and reinforcement of learners' cultural identities in school settings (Paris & Alim, 2017). Recent studies have demonstrated that culturally responsive training is practical in developing relationships and fostering critical thinking (Caingcoy, 2023; Frontiers Education, 2024).

In the Philippines, culturally responsive interventions must respect the spiritual, relational, and familial values that are important to Filipino caring traditions. Studies in Indigenous and national Filipino classrooms demonstrate that culturally based teaching, particularly when it incorporates community rituals, language, and symbols, increases students' interest and helps them maintain their cultural identity (Hipolito, 2024; Ahmed & Tulips, 2024). Failing to consider these aspects could lead students to feel isolated and hinder their emotional and relational development. To make trust-based intervention effective for Filipino learners, it is essential to incorporate cultural symbols, linguistic practices, community rituals, and family caregiving norms into its core concepts (Bernardo et al., 2022; Jocano, 2001). Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) also encourages schools to preserve



these cultural practices as essential components of trauma-informed, inclusive education and further helps create spaces where learners with ASD feel a sense of belonging and their culture is respected (Paris, 2012; Hammond et al., 2023).

D. Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

Trauma-Informed Educational Practices (TIEP) stress that schools need to understand and deal with the complicated effects of trauma on learners' behavior, learning, and relationships. The primary goal is for schools to create emotionally safe environments, establish predictable routines, provide emotional regulation supports, and foster trusting, attuned relationships between teachers and students (Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016; Holmes et al., 2025). Learners with ASD are very sensitive to changes in relationships and sensory input (Crane et al., 2009; Robertson & Simmons, 2013; Baranek et al., 2006). They need trauma-informed classrooms that are carefully designed to support both neurodevelopmental differences and trauma responses (Smith & Booker, 2024; Johnson et al., 2025; Davis & Nguyen, 2024).

Overall, the suggested Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) framework is based on four theories: TBRI, Relational-Cultural Theory, Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy, and Trauma-Informed Educational Practices. This synthesis puts relational connection, cultural attunement, and trauma-informed care at the center of inclusive education for learners with ASD in the Philippines. The following sections discuss the challenges associated with current TBRI implementations and propose a new framework that integrates these diverse theoretical perspectives into practical, culturally relevant classroom teaching strategies.

Critique of Trauma-Informed Care's Current Application Limitations

This conceptual research tries to fill this vacuum by rethinking trauma-informed care as a culturally responsive framework for education in the Philippines, especially in Special Education (SPED) and inclusive classrooms for learners with ASD. This conceptual paper employs relational-cultural theory, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and trauma-informed educational practices to highlight the limitations of current trauma-informed care models when applied in settings that differ from those for which they were designed.

A. Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) has demonstrated effectiveness at meeting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children who have been through much trauma in foster care, adoption, and clinical settings, as evidenced in the study conducted by Razuri



et al. (2016). In the Southeast Asian context, such as the Philippines, where caregiving and educational practices are deeply rooted in cultural norms, communal values, and cultural obligations, it is also salient to consider addressing the notable challenges faced by learners with ASD (Alampay, 2014). TBRI employs direct verbal affirmations, eye contact, and tailored attention to foster secure relationships, grounded in Euro-American psychological traditions (Purvis et al., 2013). These behaviors may align with the relational scripts standard in collectivist cultures, where relational comfort is often mediated by communal caregiving and relational synchrony as a direct emotional expression (Bernardo et al., 2022; Jocano, 2001).

Although Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) may not explicitly address spiritual and communal caregiving structures, it remains adaptable in schools where religious rituals, group prayer, and family involvement are essential for managing emotions and relationships (Alampay & Jocson, 2011). Southeast Asian schools, particularly in the Philippines, are not just places to learn; they are also extensions of family and community. Therefore, healing from trauma frequently entails seeking help from others and engaging in spiritual activities (Bernardo et al., 2022). The efficiency of TBRI to these culturally entrenched regulatory rituals makes it efficient for intervention tactics to connect with what learners with ASD experience as a remarkable involvement.

B. Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT)

In the Philippines, schools and families use communal authority structures and familial care models to define rules for behavior and relationships (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). In Western trauma-informed frameworks, verbal affirmations are frequently used, as they are considered a core relational and therapeutic skill that helps reinforce positive behaviors and promote emotional growth (Collins, 2021). If this is also used appropriately with cultural sensitivity, verbal affirmations can be a valuable tool in supporting learners with ASD in regulating their emotions and social engagement (de Leon & Carreon, 2020). However, its operational techniques need to be adjusted to align with local values of *pag-aaruga* (nurturing care) and *pakikisama* (harmonious social integration) (Jocano, 2001).

C. Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy

Studies show that learners with ASD often have trouble understanding standard attachment and relationship signals (Kerns et al., 2015) however, Southeast Asian particularly Philippine learners with ASD can be developmentally or culturally prepared for Western relational expectations, such as active preservation and reinforcement of students' cultural identities in school settings, which are key components of trauma-based Connecting Principles (de Leon & Carreon, 2020). These examples demonstrate the importance of employing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy from a culturally sensitive and neurodiversity awareness perspective, incorporating principles from indigenous caring and



community relationship practices, as well as trauma-sensitive, sensory-informed classroom interventions that are distinctive to the Philippines.

D. Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

In the Philippines, trauma typically happens at the same time as poverty, natural catastrophes, armed conflict, and problems in relationships within extended family networks (Alampay & Jocson, 2011; Reyes & Santos, 2025). This makes culturally appropriate treatments very important. Pilot results from Cebu, Philippines, show that a mind-body intervention that takes trauma into account dramatically lowered stress levels in children who had been influenced by environmental trauma (de Leon & Carreon, 2020; Bautista & Reyes, 2025). Neurodiversity-affirmative frameworks have also shown great promise in reducing PTSD symptoms in people with ASD around the world (Allen et al., 2024; Brown & Chen, 2025). This makes it even more critical for Filipino classrooms to be both neurodiversity-affirming and culturally sensitive, using local caregiving norms, communal rituals, and spiritual practices as protective relational structures.

Overall, trauma-based care interventions can be very successful in helping learners with ASD in the Philippines and Southeast Asian countries, as long as it is carefully adapted. This is because schools and families follow strong traditions of community care, family-centered relationships, and spiritual practices, which can be in line with Western styles of trauma care. Therefore, combining the strengths of trauma-informed care with local caregiving practices, community involvement, and spiritual activities, schools can create a safer and more supportive environment for learners with ASD. It is therefore essential for teachers and caregivers to use relationship-based approaches that align with Filipino and Southeast Asian values, such as nurturing care and social harmony, while being mindful of each learner's unique emotional and sensory needs. In this way, trauma-informed care practices can become both practically and culturally meaningful to Southeast Asian and Philippine settings. This conceptual paper then gives rise to the idea of a culturally responsive, trust-based, relational intervention, informed by relational-cultural theory, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and trauma-informed practices.

Reimagining Trauma-based Care for Classrooms: The Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) Framework

The suggested Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) framework integrates the core concepts of TBRI with relational-cultural theory, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and trauma-informed educational practices. It focuses on Southeast Asian or Filipino relational values, communal caregiving structures, and spiritual traditions.

Relational connection, communal care, and culturally grounded discipline are at the heart of trauma-informed, neurodiversity-affirming classroom methods for learners with



ASD. This framework retains the principles of Trust-Based Relational Intervention but adapts them to fit the Southeast Asian Filipino social, cultural, and educational contexts.

A. Cultural Empowering Strategies

Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of learners with ASD by adjusting the environment and routines to those acceptable within their cultural context, thereby helping them regulate their bodies and emotions. Some ways to empower the learners on the spectrum are:

1. **Predictable, Ritualized Routines:** This approach aims to make transitions in the classroom more predictable and emotionally secure by incorporating communal rituals, such as group prayers and shared greetings (e.g., “*mano po*” or “*kumusta*”) (Bernardo et al., 2022).
2. **Environmental Structuring:** Changing the structure of the classroom to make it more comfortable for students with ASD who are sensitive to certain sounds and sights, while also adding imagery that is familiar to them, like nature scenes or spiritual icons (de Leon & Carreon, 2020).
3. **Spiritual Anchoring:** Adding times for reflection, appreciation, or guided meditation that are in line with the school’s religious or cultural customs to help learners with ASD control their emotions (Alampay & Jocson, 2011).

B. Relational-Connecting Classroom Practices

The Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) framework builds on TBRI's Connecting Principles by including Southeast Asian Filipino social norms and practices of communal caregiving:

1. **Relational Synchrony:** Instead of just talking to one another, teachers and peers use culturally appropriate nonverbal indicators, including gentle touch, soft eye contact, and courteous gestures (Jocano, 2001).
2. **Communal Caregiving:** Building relationships in the classroom by getting classmates, teaching aides, and family members involved in helping with peer-regulation systems and relational ties (Bernardo et al., 2022).
3. **Attachment-Safe Language:** Using language that is culturally appropriate and helps build relationships, such as Southeast Asian Filipino endearments and affirmations, as connection tools that are suitable for the learner’s developmental stage and comfort level in relationships (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

C. Corrective Discipline through Compassion and Communal Support

Unlike Western models that use individualized, corrective feedback strategies, Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) supports disciplining methods based on community peace and relational empathy:



1. Restorative Correction Strategies: Using culturally and relationally appropriate correction methods that focus on repairing emotional damage and reintegrating into society instead of isolating or punishing people (Alampay & Jocson, 2011).
2. Culturally Aligned Consequences: Making corrections that put a high value on keeping social harmony (*pakikisama*) and respect for others, focusing on fixing relationships and creating empathy (Jocano, 2001).
3. Family-School Partnership in Behavior Support: Getting family members involved in making plans for behavior correction and relationship support that are based on how they care for their children at home and their cultural values (de Leon & Carreon, 2020).

D. Visualizing the CR-TBRI Framework

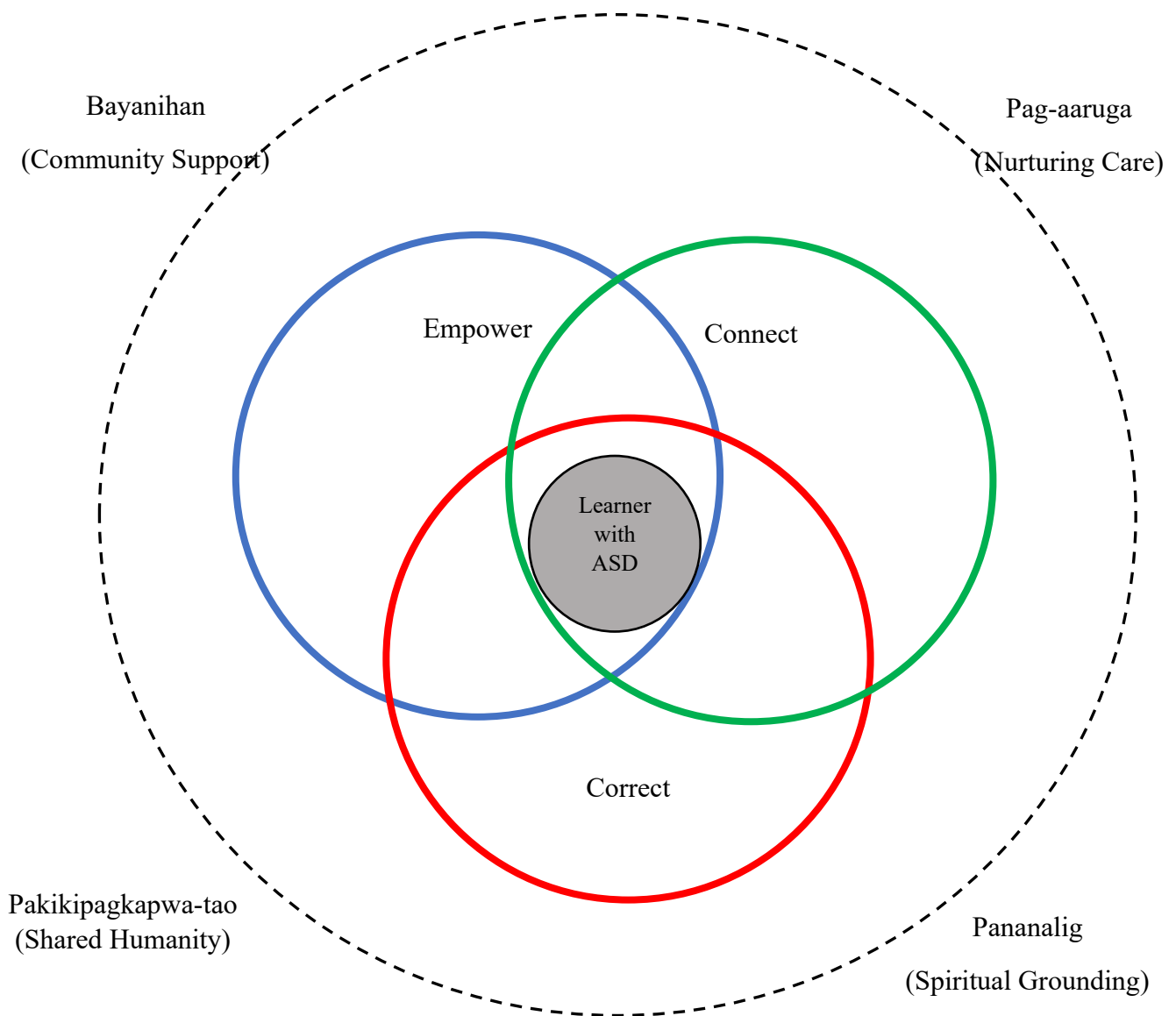
A layered, culturally symbolic framework model illustrates how the Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting techniques interact and influence one another, grounded in Southeast Asian Filipino spiritual and relational values.

1. Core Layer: The learner with ASD in the framework of the relational classroom.
2. Middle Layer: Three circles that fit together to show the principles of Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting.
3. Outer Layer: Southeast Asian Filipino cultural values, such as *pag-aaruga* (nurturing care), *bayanihan* (community support), *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (relational interconnection), and *pananalig* (spiritual grounding), shape and surround the classroom experience.
4. Directional Arrows: Bidirectional arrows illustrate how components interact with one another in real-time, from teacher preparation to policy frameworks to family involvement.

Figure 1 illustrates the CR-TBRI schematic. At the core is the learner with ASD. Surrounding this core are three interlocking rings representing the TBRI principles of Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting. Encompassing these rings is an outer circle of Filipino cultural values: *pag-aaruga* (nurturing care), *bayanihan* (community support), *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (shared-humanity), and *pananalig* (spiritual grounding). Bidirectional arrows connect the rings, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between regulation, relationships, and discipline.



Figure 1. Culturally Responsive TBRI Framework Integrating Filipino Caregiving Values



Legend and Classroom Examples

- Empowering: visual schedule, quiet sensory corner, reflective rituals.
- Connecting: caregiver-teacher synchrony, respectful greetings, culturally affirming affirmations.
- Correcting: restorative repair circles privileging communal harmony over exclusion.

- Cultural values: grounding practices such as group prayer (per policy), peer assistance, family check-ins

E. Operationalization of CR-TBRI for teachers – A Quick-Start CR-TBRI Toolkit

- Morning relational warm-up: predictable greeting ritual; optional reflective/spiritual anchor (per school policy).
- Sensory – safe cues: visual schedules, quiet space with familiar Filipino imagery (nature scenes, cultural symbols).
- Co-regulation scripts: simple Tagalog/English sentence frames using attachment – safe, respectful language.
- Restorative correction flow: steps emphasizing communal repair, reconciliation, and reintegration.
- Home-school synchrony: caregiver check-ins and co-created regulation plans bridging classroom and family care.

F. Limitations and Future Directions

This conceptual framework has several limitations. First, its scope is theoretical, so empirical validation in Filipino classrooms remains necessary. Second, Filipino culture is heterogeneous across regions, languages, and faith traditions; thus, CR-TBRI may avoid overgeneralization. Third, the integration of reflective and spiritual practices must respect policies on religious neutrality in schools. Finally, learners with ASD present diverse profiles; CR-TBRI requires flexibility to adapt to sensory and relational heterogeneity. These limitations underscore the need for pilot studies, regional adaptation, and collaborative refinement with Filipino educators and caregivers.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Conclusions

In conclusion, CR-TBRI integrates the three core TBRI principles of empower, connect, and correct with culturally aligned practices grounded in Filipino communal values, spirituality, and family orientation, offering a model of care that is both evidence-based and contextually responsive to learners with ASD. Through classroom-ready regulation strategies rooted in nurturing care, relational synchrony between caregivers and teachers, and culturally sustaining routines that foster social harmony while addressing each learner's sensory and emotional needs. This framework provides teachers with practical and compassionate tools for supporting learners with ASD. The contribution of this study lies not only in presenting a classroom-ready CR- TBRI schematic for teacher use but also in advancing a set of culturally aligned and trauma-informed routines that are adaptable to Philippine classrooms. More importantly, it sets forth a research agenda for testing and refining CR-TBRI across diverse



Southeast Asian settings, underscoring the need for continued exploration of culturally situated interventions that honor local values while addressing global concerns in inclusive and trauma-informed education.

Implications for SPED Practice

While TBRI's attachment-based, trauma-informed principles have proven effective in foster care, adoption, and clinical contexts, its emphasis on relational safety, attachment signaling, and behavioral correction is closely tied to Western cultural norms. Applying these approaches unmodified may risk overlooking the relational, spiritual, and caregiving practices that shape Filipino educational settings.

In response, this study introduced the Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) framework. CR-TBRI retains TBRI's core domains but situates them to fit Filipino values like *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (shared humanity), *pag-aaruga* (nurturing care), *bayanihan* (community support), and *pananalig* (spiritual grounding). By integrating these cultural anchors, CR-TBRI aims to foster safe, inclusive, trauma-informed classrooms for learners with ASD through culturally resonant routines, relationally attuned practices, restorative correction strategies, and faith-informed resilience.

Based on these ideas, some suggestions for SPED professionals, policymakers, and researchers are proposed:

1. *Curriculum Integration in SPED Teacher Training*: Incorporate CR-TBRI and other trauma-informed and culturally responsive caregiving frameworks into both preservice and in-service SPED teacher preparation programs. Embedding these practices equips teachers with relational strategies that are both trauma-sensitive and grounded in Filipino caregiving traditions.
2. *Policy Development for Inclusive, Trauma-Informed Classrooms*: Advocate for the Department of Education's education policies and SPED program standards to include culturally responsive trauma-informed care guidelines. This will make sure that learners with ASD have safe, relationally supportive learning environments.
3. *Creating Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI)-Based Classroom Toolkits*: Use Culturally Responsive Trust-Based Relational Intervention (CR-TBRI) principles to develop practical toolkits, behavior support plans, and relational intervention guidelines for use in everyday SPED and inclusive classrooms. These can serve as everyday resources for teachers in SPED and inclusive classrooms.
4. *Family-School Partnerships in Trauma-Informed Interventions*: Strengthen collaboration between schools and families by integrating traditional caregiving practices into classroom interventions. Joint initiatives can include parent



workshops, home-school reflection logs, and culturally meaningful rituals that reinforce trauma-informed care across settings.

Future Research and Agenda

Future research may follow a structured roadmap to test CR-TBRI in Philippine SPED and inclusive classrooms through a mixed-methods pilot studies that integrate classroom observations, interviews, and quantitative tracking. Teacher fidelity checklists can be developed to monitor the quality of implementation while gathering data on learner engagement, co-regulation, and classroom participation. Expanding this work across both urban and rural contexts, with attention to family-school synchrony and home-school partnerships, will ensure that CR-TBRI is empirically tested, scalable, and culturally aligned with Philippine SPED practice, particularly for learners with ASD.

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