



Teachers' Preparation and Support in the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Exceptionalities

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Abstract: This research determined the teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. A descriptive correlational research approach was employed, involving 156 teachers as participants from Lahug Elementary School, Don Sergio Osmeña Memorial National High School, and Zapatera Elementary School for A.Y. 2022-2023. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical measures such as frequency, simple percentage, weighted mean, multiple regression analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient, and p-value to assess the relationship. The findings revealed that most respondents (17 percent) were between 40- 44 years old, predominantly female (89.74 percent), and married (67.95 percent). In terms of educational background, most of the teachers were at the master's level (57.69 percent) and were still in the process of completing their master's degree. Additionally, a significant portion of the respondents had 5 years or below of teaching experience (54.49 percent). Furthermore, it was observed that the teachers attended more than 6 relevant training courses (42.95 percent) which suggests a commitment to staying updated with the latest research, best practices, and strategies in the field. The study also highlighted that variables such as educational attainment, teaching experience, and participation in relevant training and seminars had an impact on teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. The impact has implications for designing targeted support, fostering diversity and inclusion in addressing the specific needs of different age groups by promoting ongoing professional development and creating a collaborative environment that maximizes the expertise and experiences of teachers in the field of education. The implementation of action plans based on the study's recommendations is strongly advised.

Key words: Inclusive Education, Special Education, Learners with exceptionalities, Regular and Inclusive Education Teachers, Descriptive Correlational, Cebu City, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities. Teachers have a crucial role in creating an inclusive classroom environment and supporting the diverse needs of students. However, inadequate teacher preparation and support can perpetuate inequalities and hinder the success of inclusive education. The implementation of inclusive education poses challenges for unprepared teachers and may result in ineffective teaching practices and lower academic achievement for students with exceptionalities.

Effective preparation and support are crucial for teachers to build confidence and improve outcomes for students with exceptionalities. Inclusive education is often a legal requirement in many countries, and teachers who are not adequately prepared may face legal consequences. Attitudes and stereotypes held by teachers towards inclusive education and learners with exceptionalities can be barriers to its successful implementation.

Understanding teachers' instructional strategies, collaboration, and evaluation is vital for the integration of students with exceptionalities in regular classrooms. Teachers' perspectives greatly impact the success of inclusive education, as they interact with students with disabilities daily. Conducting research on teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education is essential for effective teaching, teacher confidence, meeting legal requirements, equity, and professional development.

The concept of inclusive education is relatively new in many countries, including the Philippines, and there is a lack of research on teachers' preparation and support in this area. Investigating their experiences and perspectives will provide valuable insights into the challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions in implementing inclusive education policies. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards inclusive education influence their teaching practices and the education of learners with exceptionalities.

Studying teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education will shed light on the necessary training and support they require to effectively integrate students with exceptionalities. It will allow teachers to voice their concerns and suggest improvements to current policies and practices. Additionally, the research will serve as a baseline for future studies and contribute to evidence-based policies and practices for inclusive education. The data and information gathered will enable the development of appropriate action plans beneficial to all stakeholders.

Research Questions:

1. What are the experiences encountered by the respondents in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities?
3. Based on the findings, what action plans can be designed to improve the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities?

Theoretical Background

The theoretical background of this research is based on three main theories: Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning, and Gordon Allport's Contact Theory. These theories provide a framework for understanding teachers' preparation and support in implementing inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities.

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory suggests that individuals learn by observing and imitating others in their social environment. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices towards inclusive education are influenced by their interactions with others, such as teachers, administrators,

parents, and students. If teachers believe that students with exceptionalities are capable of learning and achieving the same outcomes as their peers, they are more likely to use inclusive teaching strategies. On the other hand, negative beliefs may hinder teachers from accommodating these students.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions and cultural context in learning. It posits that individuals learn through interactions with others and the cultural artifacts in their environment. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating learning by establishing relationships with students and creating opportunities for social engagement and active involvement in learning tasks.

Contact Theory by Gordon Allport suggests that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice and improve attitudes towards members of different social groups. Contact between individuals from different groups can challenge stereotypes and foster empathy and understanding. In the context of inclusive education, interactions between students with and without exceptionalities can help reduce stereotypes and improve attitudes towards diversity.

These theoretical perspectives have been supported by various studies. For example, research has shown that teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs in teaching students with diverse needs are more likely to employ inclusive practices. Observational learning of effective inclusive teaching practices can enhance special education teachers' knowledge and skills. Teachers' self-regulation, such as goal-setting and adjusting instructional strategies, positively impacts their implementation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory has been applied to explore the challenges and opportunities of inclusive education, the impact of intergroup contact on attitudes towards students with disabilities, and the role of sociocultural perspectives in teacher education programs. It emphasizes the significance of social interaction, scaffolding, and the zone of proximal development in promoting cognitive development and academic achievement in inclusive settings.

The legal basis for inclusive education in the Philippines is grounded in principles of social justice, human rights, and equality. Laws such as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, the Inclusive Education Act, and the Enhanced Basic Education Act recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education and mandate the development of inclusive education systems. DepEd Order Number 044 provides policy guidelines on education programs and services for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 basic education program.

These theoretical perspectives and legal provisions provide a foundation for understanding and implementing inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. They highlight the importance of teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices, social interactions, cultural context, and intergroup contact in creating inclusive learning environments that promote positive attitudes, equal opportunities, and quality education for all learners.

The Philippines' Department of Education has prioritized inclusive education through the implementation of Republic Act No. 11650, which ensures equitable access to quality education for learners with disabilities in both public and private schools. Some regular schools have been selected as demonstration projects, tasked with accepting students with disabilities and supported by qualified teachers.

Inclusive education has gained attention in recent years, emphasizing the importance of teacher preparation and support. Teachers play a crucial role in the success of inclusive education, and their attitudes and beliefs greatly impact the experiences of students with disabilities.

The concept of inclusive education involves reorganizing the curriculum and allocating resources to meet the needs of individual students, regardless of their abilities. Regular classroom teachers and special education teachers often collaborate to plan and teach lessons tailored to

students' needs. However, many teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively teach and support students with disabilities.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are influenced by factors such as the nature and severity of disabilities. While some teachers are supportive of inclusion, others may resist it due to concerns about time allocation, perceived inability to effectively teach students without disabilities, and lack of necessary services.

Research indicates that positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion and experience working with students with disabilities contribute to successful implementation of inclusive practices. Professional development opportunities, support from colleagues and administrators, and access to resources are crucial for teachers to effectively implement inclusive education.

Challenges still exist in providing quality education for students with disabilities, including lack of training and resources, leading to frustration and burnout among teachers. Ongoing professional development, support, and resources are essential to ensure effective implementation of inclusive practices and provide quality education for all students.

The success of inclusion depends on various criteria that teachers use to form their perspectives. Inclusive education emphasizes that every child, regardless of disability, is a valuable member of society capable of contributing. Teachers are instrumental in putting inclusion into practice, although their preferences for certain types of disabilities may influence their implementation. Factors such as teacher age, experience, and support from the school and district also play a role.

Overall, this theoretical background underscores the importance of inclusive education, the role of teachers, and the need for ongoing support and resources to ensure the success of inclusive practices and provide quality education for students with disabilities.

Research Methodology

Design

This study determined the teachers' preparation and administration support in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in Zapatera Elementary School, Don Sergio Osmena Sr. Memorial National High School, and Lahug Elementary School.

This research used a descriptive approach which allows for an in-depth exploration of teachers' attitudes and practices towards inclusive education in a specific context, providing rich and detailed data on the factors that influence teachers' implementation of inclusive education practices. The study of teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities utilized the qualitative and quantitative method through identifying the basic background of respondents, determining their preparation and support using the checklist, and identifying the demographic profile.

The mixed method was based on teachers' preparation, support and challenges encountered as reflected in the adaptive survey questionnaires focusing on determining on the implementation of inclusive education with learners with exceptionalities.

The mixed method was the most effective and appropriate method which involves integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions in finding out the significant factors on teachers' preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities.

Environment

The study was specifically conducted in three schools: Zapatera Elementary School, Don Sergio Osmeña Sr. Memorial National High School, and Lahug Elementary School. Figure 3 shows the map of these three schools.

Zapatera Elementary School is a public elementary school with a diverse student population. The school has a total of 24 teachers and caters to students from kindergarten to Grade 6. Don Sergio Osmeña Sr. Memorial National High School is a public high school that provides education to students in Grades 7 to 12. The school has a total of 80 teachers and caters to a diverse student population. Lahug Elementary School is a public elementary school with a diverse student population. The school has a total of 150 teachers and caters to a diverse student population.

The research study took place within the classrooms of these three schools and the participants were purposely selected from the teachers who have experience teaching in inclusive classrooms and have had students with exceptionalities in their classrooms. Also, it was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and guidelines to ensure the safety, confidentiality, and well-being of the participants.

Respondents

The respondents included both special education and regular education/receiving teachers who have experience teaching students with exceptionalities and special education teachers who have expertise in teaching students with diverse needs. The respondents may also come from different subject areas and grade levels, providing a diverse range of perspectives on inclusive education.

Table 1 displays the distribution of respondents. This distribution of respondents suggests that the study will be able to capture a diverse range of perspectives on inclusive education, including those of both regular education and special education teachers, as well as teachers from different subject areas and grade levels.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

Name of School	n	Percentage
Lahug Elementary School	92	58.97
Zapatera Elementary School	16	10.26
Don Sergio Osmena Memorial NHS	48	30.77
TOTAL	156	100

Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire. On the other hand, the researchers have pre-determined that the second part of the questionnaires will be on the Likert-type scale including the four rating options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The survey consisted of six (8) questions about the demographics regarding (a) age (b) gender (c) civil status (d) highest level of education (e) amount of experience with teaching learners with exceptionalities (f) total number of teaching experience (g) relevant trainings and seminars attended; and (h) the types of learners with exceptionalities handled in class.

Data Gathering Procedures

Gathering of Data. The researchers wrote transmittal letters asking for approval to conduct the study to the identified respondents of the study. Once approved, the researchers administered the survey questionnaires to selected teachers in the identified public schools in Cebu City.

Since physical classes were resumed in the country, administration and collection of data were done face-to-face. When the data were submitted back to the researchers, they checked the individual questionnaires for completeness of data entries. With the help of a Data Matrix file, they encoded each data using the said file. After which, they conducted data hygiene to ensure all entries are consistent and complete. Statistical software was then used to tabulate and analyze. Based on the results, statistical interpretation was now supported with professional recognition when representing significant results, conclusion, and actions.

Pilot Testing. The researcher conducted a pilot testing to ensure the effectiveness and feasibility of the data collection methods and instruments. It serves as a valuable opportunity to identify and address any potential issues or challenges before proceeding with the actual data collection.

The pilot testing phase involved selecting a small sample of participants, representative of the target population, to test the data collection procedures. This sample consisted of teachers, administrators, or other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities.

Credibility and Reliability. The type of research instrument used was a survey questionnaire made by the researcher. The main objective of the survey questionnaire in research was to obtain relevant information in the most reliable and valid manner (Taherdoost, 2016). The reliability of this research referred to consistency. This research would be consistent in that the data were measured over the time specified and that the data measured what we wanted it to. This research had different sources of data which ensured reliability.

Data Privacy. To ensure the confidentiality of collected data from the respondents, formal consent will be obtained from the school heads and the respondents. The respondents were guaranteed the confidentiality of the information gathered regarding the Teachers' Preparation and Support in the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Exceptionalities. In this manner, the teacher's responses were used for research purposes only.

Ethical Considerations. The researchers ensured that the respondents' confidentiality is respected and maintained in the conduct of the study. The researchers advised the respondents to fill out the consent form before they began answering the survey questionnaires. The consent form's concept was that the researchers provided the respondents with enough information regarding the study that allowed the respondents to be informed about their benefits when participating in the study. Also, this assures the respondents that only authorized personnel have access to all the information acquired and retrieved from the respondents.

This research had ethical implications for addressing and promoting the search for knowledge and truth by preventing data fabrication or falsification. To avoid such hazards, the participants in this study were informed of everything they needed to know about the study's purpose, duration, and process. It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to participate in this study. The respondents were not forced to participate in the study if they did not want to. If, for any reason, the respondents had withdrawn from the investigation. There would be no pressure on the respondents to continue. There would be no negative consequences if respondents declined or withdrew from the study.

Throughout the survey procedures, the researchers complied with the ethical research considerations. The researchers kept all respondents' sensitive information and identities protected.

Statistical Treatment

This study used the following statistical tools to analyze and interpret the data gathered:

Cronbach's alpha. Used to measure the internal consistency, or reliability, of a set of survey questions. This is used in the pilot testing of the questionnaire.

Collaizzi. A qualitative method that ensures the credibility and reliability of its results.

Frequency. Used to determine or count the number of times that each variable in this study occurs, such as the number of males and females within the sample.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r). Used measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. It has a value between -1 to 1, with a value of -1 meaning a total negative linear correlation, 0 being no correlation, and + 1 meaning a total positive correlation.

Percentage. Most commonly used to represent the statistics of a data. Percent simply means “per hundred”. This will be used alongside a frequency count that corresponds to the part of a variable against the total number of variables.

Multiple Regression. A statistical technique that can be used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables.

Weighted Mean. Used to get the average of all of the respondents in a particular part of the research questionnaire. The overall weighted mean is the data needed to compute the correlation of the preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education.

Scoring Procedure

The four-point Likert scale as shown below is employed to determine the teacher’s preparation and support in the implementation of inclusive education.

Rating	Mean Range	Descriptive Rating	Verbal Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High level of agreement
3	2.51 – 3.25	Agree	High level of agreement
2	1.76 – 2.50	Disagree	Low level of agreement
1	1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very low level of agreement

Results and Discussion:

EXPERIENCES

Table 2

Experiences and Challenges of the Teacher-Respondents in the implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Exceptionalities

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	FORMULATED MEANING	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGING THEME
<i>“Encourage and assess learners on their skills and capabilities. Communication is the key for the betterment of</i>	Teachers bring out the outstanding abilities of the learners	Empowering Learners with Exceptionalities through	Promoting Inclusive Education and Supportive

<i>the learners.”</i>	constantly assessing, encouraging and communicating them.	Individualized Support.	Learning Environments
<i>“We need to prepare for the differences.”</i>	Teachers should formulate varied activities for the different types of learners.		
<i>“Based on my experience. I do my research on how to implement education that would best for them or be easy for them to manipulate. If given a chance, learners with exceptionalities should be given more importance with regards to their learning such that they would feel important.”</i>	Learners with exceptionalities should be given attention and let them feel that they are important.		
<i>“Sa pamamagitan nga pagkilala nag mag mag-aaral na may kakaibang kakayahan at ihahanay ito ayon sa istruktura ng sili-aralan bago simulant ang talakayan. Sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng mag estratehiya na naayon sa kanilang kakayahan at nalilintang ito ayon sa mag pag sasanay sa mga guro na inilahad ng paaralan.”</i> (In a way that I will identify first the strength of the learner and align it with the structure of the classroom before starting the lesson. Also, by using different strategies that is alignment with the skills develop by the learner)	Teachers identify the type of learner he or she has and formulate different methods that will be in alignment with the learner.		
<i>“Conduct monthly programs and activities to promote</i>	Training to boost		

LWDs in the society and help them boost their self-esteem. Immersion of our LWDs in the world of work”

the confidence and self-esteem of the learners with exceptionalities.

“LSEN needs shadow teachers but it’s impossible because of the budget. Place these learners in between behave girls”

Learners with exceptionalities should have a teacher who will assist them.

“More workshops or training in handling them are needed. Be patient and mindful of her disability. More training/workshops in handling them. Inclusive planning for the SPED programs.”

There are few workshops or training in teaching learners with exceptionalities. Strengthening Support and Resources for Inclusive Education

“The department and the government are not giving enough support to teachers, especially relevant training, materials and genuine support. “

More support from the department and government are needed.

“Give teachers relative training that they can use to enhance and broaden their learning in teaching the type or learners. Receiving teacher must undergo SPED training. Should address the disabilities of the learner.”

Training should be provided to teachers to broaden their ideas about the learners.

“To have teachers trained and equipped with the right approach. Train teachers to handle those kinds of learners in an inclusion set up.”

Provide teachers with the right approach on how to deal with learners with exceptionalities.

“Lack of support from the

Lacking

department, lack of knowledge on Le's and lack of infrastructure intended for the LE's Training of SPED teachers and infrastructure"

"More classroom budget for IMs. Cooperation and promoting a positive and conducive learning environment. Lack of materials They provide the materials needed like internet, bond paper etc. There should be a room inclusive for them Facility that are suitable for the learners Give necessary equipments that could enhance their learning Provide necessary equipments/books/gadgets to these students with exceptionalities to enhance their learning."

significance from the administration and different infrastructures intended for the learners with exceptionalities.

Plenty of materials should be given to the teachers and provide the necessary equipment that are needed in the lesson.

Administration

"Mabigyan nga mga telebisyon ang mga silid-aralan na mas lalong mahasa ang ibat ibang intelektwal na kasanayan Maibigay ang mga kagamitan na naka tutulong sap ag hahasa ng kasanayan ng mga mag -aaral" (Provide television in the classroom to enhance the skills of the learners and different materials to develop more their abilities)

should provide television and materials to enhance the skills of the learners.

"Also, lesser number of students in a classroom."

There should be enough students in the classroom.

Optimal Classroom Size and Adequate Teacher Allocation

"Class sizes should be reduced (at most 30 students

Maximum of 30 students per class.

per class) More teachers should be hired and more classrooms should be built.” Should provide more teachers.

“Construct monitoring and talking to the learners. Constant talking to teachers involved. By giving feedback with the guardian and parent. Feedbacks should always be heard. Have a talk during classes and free time By giving feedback with the guardian and parent. Find time to communicate to feel comfortable with you. Keep track of them.” Provide constant communication to the learners and parents, then provide feedback on the progress of the learner. Enhancing Communication and Connectivity with the learners.

“Provide internet connection and gadgets to teachers. I talk to them before and after class. I also follow up on them on facebook or through email. Technical assistance Scheduled classes from Monday to Fridays and through FB messenger and video calls.” Administration should provide internet and gadgets to teachers for them to communicate with the learners through social media.

Table 2 shows the different challenges and experiences of the teacher-respondents in teaching and implementing inclusive education. It presents empowering learners with exceptionalities through individualized support, strengthening support and resources for inclusive education, optimal classroom size and adequate teacher allocation, and enhancing communication and connectivity with the learners are different challenges and experiences of the teachers. It also shows that overall, it promotes inclusive education and supportive learning environments. This verifies that there are positive experiences in relation to the learners the respondents went through. It includes the constant monitoring of the learners, learning different strategies, encouraging learners to excel in their academic performances, etc.

According to (Majoko, et al., 2019), his study found that participants perceived screening and assessment, differentiation of instruction, classroom and behavior management, and collaboration to be key competencies required of teachers for inclusive education. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers in these key competencies could facilitate successful and effective implementation of inclusive education through equipping them to respond to child diversity. This study could serve as a baseline for future research on key competencies of teachers for inclusive education

Moreover, according to (Mieghem et al., 2019), their study concluded that for the implementation of inclusive education (IE), it is vital that there is professional development for teachers regarding evidence-informed IE practices which would lead to successful teacher

experiences. In addition, suggestions for research into the attitudes of all students, with and without special educational needs, and school leaders are made, as well as some suggestions regarding students' academic participation in IE.

RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF AGREEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES

In this section, we explore the level of agreement among the respondents regarding the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities, specifically focusing on teacher preparation and administrative support. We assess the extent to which teachers perceive the effectiveness of their preparation in meeting the needs of these learners, as well as the support provided by the school administration in promoting inclusive practices. By examining the perspectives of the respondents on these critical aspects, we gain valuable insights into the agreement levels and identify areas that may require additional attention and enhancements in the implementation of inclusive education.

Table 2 shows the level of agreement of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms of Teacher preparation in instructional strategies used. "Teachers provide differentiated instruction" with a mean of 3.88, "Teachers provide multi-sensory instruction" with a mean of 3.75, "Teachers provide assistive technology" with a mean of 3.75, "Teachers provide positive reinforcement", with a mean of 3.81, "Teachers provide peer support and clear classroom expectations" with a mean of 3.75, "Teachers provide regular feedback" with a mean of 3.81, and "Teachers provide safe learning and conducive environment" with a mean of 3.81.

Table 3

Level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Teacher Preparation
(Instructional Strategies used)

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
A. Instructional strategies used.		
1. Teachers provide differentiated instruction.	3.88	Very High Level of Agreement
2. Teachers provide multi-sensory instruction.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
3. Teachers provide assistive technology.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
4. Teachers provide positive reinforcement.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
5. Teachers provide peer support and clear classroom expectations.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement

6. Teachers provide regular feedback.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
7. Teachers provide Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).	3.56	Very High Level of Agreement
8. Teachers provide consistent routine and visual schedule.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
9. Teachers provide safe learning and conducive environment.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
10. Teachers provide universal design principles to create accessible classrooms.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
Aggregate Mean:	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement

Range: 1.00-1.75 Very Low Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level

as Very High Level of Agreement as shown by the mean ranging from 3.81 to 3.88; and “Teachers provide Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)” with a mean of 3.56, “Teachers provide consistent routine and visual schedule” with a mean of 3.69, and “Teachers provide universal design principles to create accessible classrooms” with a mean of 3.69, as High Level of Agreement as shown by the mean ranging from 3.69 to 3.88.

The aggregate mean of 3.75 with an interpretation of Very High Level of Agreement, implies that Instructional strategies have a very high level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. In preparing for inclusive education, teachers should highly consider the strategies being used, and they must be appropriate to the different types of learners. For instance, identifying the type of learner and presenting an Individualized Educational Plan that is in line with learners’ learning styles before starting the teaching and learning process.

The researchers agree with the result of the level of agreement for teachers handling learners with exceptionalities in Zapatera Elementary School in terms of Instructional Strategies Used. Teachers, despite the lack of resources, were still able to maximize their potential, especially by using varied approaches and strategies toward learners with exceptionalities.

Table 4

Level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Teacher Preparation (Collaboration among Learners)

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
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B. Promote collaboration among Learners with Exceptionalities and their peers.

1. Teachers assign group work and consider giving each group a different task.	3.63	Very High Level of Agreement
2. Teachers use cooperative learning strategies.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
3. Teachers provide peer support.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
4. Teachers create a positive classroom environment.	3.88	Very High Level of Agreement
5. Teachers use assistive technology and other learning materials.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
6. Teachers provide clear instructions.	3.88	Very High Level of Agreement
7. Teachers celebrate success.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
8. Teachers set the rules of language and collaboration.	3.88	Very High Level of Agreement
9. Teachers encourage learners to value diversity	3.88	Very High Level of Agreement
10. Teachers build trust and establish group interactions.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
Aggregate Mean:	3.79	Very High Level of Agreement

Range: 1.00-1.75 Very Low Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level

Table 4 shows the level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms of Teacher preparation in promoting collaborations. All indicators stated have an interpretation of a very high level of agreement with a mean ranging from 3.63 to 3.88. The indicator “Teachers create a positive classroom environment”, “Teachers provide clear instructions”, “Teachers set the rules of language and collaboration”, and “Teachers encourage learners to value diversity”, have the highest mean (3.88) respectively, and “Teachers assign group work and consider giving each group a different task”, has the lowest mean (3.63) as shown.

The aggregate mean of 3.79 with an interpretation of Very High Level of Agreement, implies that promoting collaboration among learners has a very high level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. This clearly shows that collaboration is a must in implementing inclusive education. The teacher makes use of the different collaborative techniques that aid learners in their learning process.

The researchers agree with the result of the level of agreement for teachers handling learners with exceptionalities in Zapatera Elementary School in terms of promoting collaboration among

learners with exceptionalities and their peers. In addition, maintaining harmonious relationships between and among teachers is clearly prioritized in the locale of the study.

Table 5

Level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Teacher Preparation
(Evaluation of Learners' Success)

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
C. Evaluation of learners' success in inclusion.		
1. Teachers evaluate academic achievement with the application of modification and accommodation.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
2. Teachers assess the learners' social and emotional development.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
3. Teachers review the Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.	3.56	High Level of Agreement
4. Teachers record the attendance and participation.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
5. Teachers consider the feedback from parents and learners.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
6. Teachers provide appropriate feedback to learners.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
7. Teachers provide a performance oriented, holistic, interactive and multi perspective assessment.	3.81	Very High Level of Agreement
8. Teachers use formative and summative assessments.	3.56	Very High Level of Agreement
9. Teachers allow for learners' self-assessment.	3.75	Very High Level of Agreement
10. Teachers provide multiple test formats.	3.56	Very High Level of Agreement
Aggregate Mean:	3.73	Very High Level of Agreement

Range: 1.00-1.75 Very Low Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level

Table 5 shows the level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Teacher preparation in evaluating learners in inclusion as “Teachers evaluate academic achievement with the application of modification and accommodation” with a mean of 3.75, “Teachers assess the learners social and emotional development” with a mean of 3.69, “Teachers record the attendance and participation” with a mean of 3.81, “Teachers consider the feedback from parents and learners” with a mean of 3.81, “Teachers provide appropriate feedback to learners”, with a mean of 3.81, “Teachers provide a performance oriented, holistic, interactive and multi perspective assessment” with a mean of 3.81, “Teachers use formative and summative assessments” with a mean of 3.41, “Teachers allow for learners’ self-assessment” with a mean of 3.56, and “Teachers provide multiple test formats” with a mean of 3.56, as Very High Level of Agreement as shown by the mean ranging from 3.56 to 3.81; and “Teachers review the Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals” with a mean of 3.56 as a High Level of Agreement.

The aggregate mean of 3.73 with an interpretation of Very High Level of Agreement, implies that evaluating learners’ success in inclusion has a very high level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education.

The researchers agree with the result of the level of agreement for teachers handling learners with exceptionalities in Zapatera Elementary School in terms of evaluating learners’ success in inclusion. Teachers prepared differentiated evaluation approaches in terms of assessing the learners with exceptionalities.

Table 6

Level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Administration Support

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Administrative Support		
1. The school’s physical environment is conducive and healthy.	3.38	Very High Level of Agreement
2. A cooperation and solidarity culture are prevalent in school.	3.56	Very High Level of Agreement
3. Open communication is prevalent in school.	3.56	Very High Level of Agreement
4. The teacher receives adequate training and resources from the school administration.	3.44	Very High Level of Agreement
5. The school administration provides support to teachers in addressing the individual needs of learners.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
6. The teacher is supported by the school administration when challenges arise.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
7. Mutual respect, sensibility and tolerance are	3.69	Very High Level

prevalent in school.		of Agreement
8. The learning environment is more cooperative than competition.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
9. The school administration exhibits a fair attitude.	3.63	Very High Level of Agreement
10. The school administration exhibits democratic attitude.	3.69	Very High Level of Agreement
Aggregate Mean:	3.60	Very High Level of Agreement

Range: 1.00-1.75 Very Low Level, 1.76 – 2.50 Low Level, 2.51 – 3.25 High Level, 3.26 – 4.00 Very High Level

Table 6 shows the level of agreement in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities in terms with Administration Support as, “The school’s physical environment is conducive and healthy” with a mean of 3.38, “A cooperation and solidarity culture are prevalent in school”, with a mean of 3.56, “Mutual respect, sensibility and tolerance are prevalent in school” with a mean of 3.69, and “The learning environment is more cooperative than competition” with a mean of 3.69, as Very High Level of Agreement as show by the mean ranging from 3.38 to 3.69; and “Open communication is prevalent in school” with a mean of 3.23, “The teacher receives adequate training and resources from the school administration” with a mean of 3.56, “The school administration provides support to teachers in addressing the individual needs of learners” with a mean of 3.69, “The teacher is supported by the school administration when challenges arise” with a mean of 3.69, “The school administration exhibits a fair attitude” with a mean of 3.63, and “The school administration exhibits democratic attitude” with a mean of 3.69 as Very High Level of Agreement.

The aggregate mean of 3.60 has an interpretation of Very High Level of Agreement. This implies that administrative support has a high level of agreement with the implementation of inclusive education

The researchers agree with the result of the level of agreement for teachers handling learners with exceptionalities in Lahug Elementary School in terms of administrative support. The support of the administration is clearly intensified especially to teachers handling learners with exceptionalities. Furthermore, the continued support of the administration should be maximized by all teachers handling learners with exceptionalities in order to foster a more collaborative learning environment.

Table 7

ANOVA Table of the Multiple Regression Analysis on the Profile of Teacher Respondents and Teacher Preparation

	DF	SS	MS	F-value	P-value
Regression	7	0.5535	0.0791	0.66	0.704
Residual Error	8	0.9642	0.1205		

Total 15 1.5177

Independent Variables (Predictor Variables): Profile of the teacher-respondents (age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, number of years teaching learners with exceptionalities, total number of teaching experience, and relevant trainings and seminars). Dependent Variable: Teacher Preparation

Table 7 presents the relationship between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their teaching preparation. The results from the ANOVA table of the multiple regression analysis indicate a significant relationship between the independent variables (profile of the teacher-respondents) and their teaching preparation, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.704. This finding suggests that the profile characteristics of the teachers are associated with variations in their level of teaching preparation.

The significance of the analysis of the variance model is established at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This is supported by the calculated p-value of 0.704, which is higher than the predefined significance level of 0.05 ($0.704 > 0.05$). Thus, the observed relationship between the teacher-respondents' profile and their teaching preparation is not statistically meaningful and likely to occur by chance.

This finding implies that factors such as age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, or other variables captured in the teacher respondents' profile may not necessarily influence the level of preparation they have undertaken for teaching. These results have practical implications for educational institutions and policymakers, highlighting the importance of not fully considering teachers' profiles when designing targeted professional development programs and supporting initiatives to enhance their teaching skills and effectiveness. By tailoring interventions based on specific profile characteristics, educators can be better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students and foster improved educational outcomes.

Table 8
 Multiple Regression Analysis on the Profile of Teacher Respondents and Teacher Preparation

	Coef	SE Coefficients	T-stat	P-value	Significance	Result
Constant	4.2016	0.6930	6.06	0.000		
Age	0.0988	0.3100	0.32	0.758	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Gender	-0.0068	0.4322	-0.02	0.988	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Civil Status	0.2105	0.1777	1.18	0.270	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Educational Attainment	-0.0155	0.1596	-0.10	0.925	Not Significant	Accept Ho
TLEs	-0.07020	0.05706	-1.23	0.254	Not Significant	Accept Ho

Teaching Experience	-0.01840	0.08059	-0.23	0.825	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Relevant Trainings and Seminars	-0.1963	0.1289	-1.52	0.166	Not Significant	Accept Ho

a) Independent Variables (Predictor Variables): Profile of the teacher-respondents (age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, number of years teaching learners with exceptionalities, total number of teaching experience, and relevant trainings and seminars)

b) Dependent Variable: Teacher Preparation: Table 8 presents the results of the Multiple Regression Analysis, examining the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, which is the teacher preparation of the teacher-respondents. The analysis indicates that none of the independent variables, including age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, number of years teaching learners with exceptionalities, total number of teaching experience and relevant training and seminars, significantly predict teacher preparation.

Table 9
 Correlation between Administration Support and Teacher Preparation

VARIABLES	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	DF	PPM C (r)	P-value	Interpretation	Result
Administration Support Teacher Preparation	0.05 (one-tailed)	14	0.702	0.002	High positive correlation	Reject Ho/ Significant

Table 9 presents the results of the test examining the significant correlation between administration support and teacher preparation at a significance level of 0.05 using a one-tailed test with degrees of freedom (df) = 14. The computed correlation coefficient (r) of 0.702 indicates a strong positive correlation between administration support and teacher preparation. Furthermore, the computed p-value of 0.000 is smaller than the predetermined significance level (0.000 < 0.05), leading us to reject the null hypothesis. These findings suggest a significant correlation between administration support and teacher preparation.

The implication of these results is that administration support has a meaningful and influential effect on the teacher preparation of the teacher-respondents. Adequate support from school administrators, such as resources, guidance, professional development opportunities, and effective communication, can contribute to enhancing teachers' overall preparedness in their instructional roles. Educational institutions and administrators should recognize the importance of providing ongoing support to teachers and fostering a collaborative environment that promotes effective teaching practices and positive student outcomes.

EXPERIENCES

Table 10

Experiences and Challenges of the Teacher-Respondents in the implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Exceptionalities

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	FORMULATED MEANING	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGING THEME
<i>“Maintain and encourage a positive outlook. Hearing impaired learners had difficulty in understanding the lessons in a regular classroom set up. “</i>	The learners with exceptionalities are having a hard time understanding the lessons in the regular set up.	Teacher should provide inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities	Advancing Inclusive Education on Supporting Teachers and Learners
<i>“They need modified and simplified lessons.”</i>	A Simplified Plan should be implanted during the teaching and learning process.		
<i>“By making a concrete plan in promoting disability awareness and by monitoring the progress of inclusive education.”</i>	Formulating progress reports for the learners with exceptionalities.		
<i>“Training for the teachers in regular session. Regular teachers are hesitant to accept learners with exceptionalities.”</i>	Regular teachers must have training in teaching learners with exceptionalities.	Enhancing Support and Training provided to teachers for Inclusive Education.	
<i>“Work with collaboration and sharing their opinions and ideas to have good outcomes. By giving time and support for the SPED teachers to be with the receiving teachers during their regular classes workshops that are congruent to their role and</i>	Teachers share their ideas and opinions to come up with interesting ideas for the learners and also to support the receiving teachers.		

responsibilities.”

“No clear guidelines on how to implement it.” There are no clear guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education.

“More instructional materials, learning resources, funds to be used.” There are limited materials provided for learners with exceptionalities. Improving Resources and Support for learners and teachers in

“By providing us more assistive technology to be used in teaching. Face to face, official GC. Technical assistance is a great help for effective learning to happen.” Limited technical assistance is provided. implementing Inclusive Education

“Accommodating these learners in the regular class setting, our school administration provides technical assistance.” School administration should offer more technical assistance.

“More teachers needed in handling children with exceptionalities.” There are few teachers teaching children with exceptionalities.

“By giving support and providing the needs of the teachers. Give or provide professional development. There should be regular professional development sessions.” Providing support to the teachers in order for teachers to develop professionally.

Table 10 shows the different challenges and experiences of the teacher-respondents in teaching and implementing inclusive education. It reveals that teachers should provide inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities, enhancing support and training provided to teachers for inclusive education, and improving resources and support for learners and teachers in implementing inclusive education are the different challenges and experiences of the teachers. These can be generalized as advancing inclusive education by supporting teachers and learners. It means that teachers have problems on support given and as in improving themselves and the sources used. Some instances include limited materials provided, few skilled teachers, lack of training regarding handling learners with exceptionalities and many others.

OVERALL EXPERIENCES

Table 11

Overall Summary of the Experiences and Challenges of the Teacher-Respondents in the implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Exceptionalities

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	FORMULATED MEANING	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGIN G THEME
<i>“Use monitoring to collect data of student’s performance both behavioral and academic across time. Information drive for both teachers and students in the regular school or class. Maintain and encourage a positive outlook.</i>	Monitor students and maintain positive behavior towards learners.	Knowledge and Awareness	Promoting Equality and Support for Inclusive Education
<i>“We need to prepare for the differences. They work on their capabilities and with my initiative I make sure that students are given their needs. Sometimes they have their own hearsay word. They want to do with their own likes just by myself as a teacher trying to find a strategy that can keep calm to the learner by giving more attention, love and care. Giving an activity that is suited for him or her”</i>	Formulate different strategies that will be in line with the learning style of the learner.		
<i>“Creating activities that include all students. School administrators should undergo training so that they can help the teachers in teaching these pupils. Regular check-up of the health of the said learners. Always monitor the learner.”</i>	Teachers teaching learners with exceptionalities should have the proper knowledge on how to deal with them.		
<i>“By giving support and provide the needs of the teachers. Give or provide professional development. There should be</i>	Supply sufficient support to the learners and the teachers.	Collaboration and Support	

regular professional development sessions or workshops that are congruent to their role and responsibilities. To provide the necessary materials needed to teacher, students with exceptionalities and also their full support and understanding.”

“During PTA meetings, administrators should discuss to parents the importance of collaborative work in promoting the welfare of learners with disabilities not relying solely to the teachers. Regular conference with the receiving teachers and Sped teachers, discovering the progress of the child being included and if possible, parents are invited for the said consultation or conference. Be the Beaconhouse/tower that always look after the child’s progress”

Promote and collaborate with other stakeholders to keep track of the learner’s progress.

“The administrator work with teachers to better support learners by listening to te teacher, support their decision and encourage growth. Support system through parents, teachers, and administrators every now and then. They should work together in teaching these learners. SA should be open minded and support the needs of these group of learners.”

Administrator should work together with the teachers in supporting the learners.

“School admin should provide resources, materials and instructional supports that accommodates diverse learning needs. Provide learning

Instructional Classroom support and Environment materials should and Resources be provided to assist the diversity

resources for our learners in of the learners. inclusion.”

“Some strategies doesn’t work on every lesson done. The strategies should change from time to time in order to tailor fit the students’ needs. Educational materials provisions and teaching practically motivated lessons.”

Strategies and materials should be varied to accommodate learners.

“Provide instructional materials helpful for the teaching process. I think ICT equipment’s such as projector, laptop, television, speakers are some of the resources that could help to effectively implement inclusive education learners with exceptionalities”

Make use of other resources or ICT Equipment that could help in implanting the inclusive education.

“Communicate with their parents regarding with their class performance. Through their parents and in school keep communicating with them. Provide more teaching devices fit for the kind of learners.”

Constant communication with the learners regarding the performance of the learner. Communication and Recognition

“ Feedbacks should always be heard. Have a talk during classes and free time By giving feedback with guardian and parent. Find time to communicate to feel them comfortable with you. Keep track with them. Good communication with parents. Minor problems, open communication in school Ask the teachers for comments, then make decisions based on their feedback. Ask feedback to the teachers and work our from that feedback.”

Appropriate feedback should be given to learners and also inform their parents with the feedback.

“Give recognition. Good communication with parents and make sure classroom rules and consequences are clear and visible within the class.”

Providing recognition and incorporate proper channeling with the rules in the classroom.

“By providing us more assistive technology to be used in teaching. Face to face, official GC. Technical assistance is a much help for effective learning to happen. Accommodating these learners in the regular class setting, our school administration provides technical assistance.”

Giving assistive Use of technology to the teachers that can be used in the teaching learning process.

“Provide internet connection and gadgets to teachers. I talk to them before and after class. I also follow up on them on facebook or through email. Technical assistance Scheduled classes from Monday to Fridays and through FB messenger and video calls. Assistive technology that could aid with our LENS learning”

Providing follow up to the learners through social media and asking the administrators to provide teachers with the internet connection.

Table 11 shows the different challenges and experiences of the teacher-respondents in teaching and implementing inclusive education. It reveals that knowledge and awareness, collaboration and support, communication and recognition, classroom environment and resources and use of technology and social media were the different themes and the various challenges and problems encountered by the respondents. It presents that over all teachers promote equity and support for inclusive education. It means that there are a lot of important considerations to look into from learners to administrators including the parents before, during and after implementing inclusive education.

Byrd D.R., et al. (2020) stated that including students with special needs in the general education classroom requires that teachers adapt their approaches to teaching to meet all students' needs. However, general education teachers are not always fully aware of how best to serve special populations. This study examines what skills and knowledge special education educators feel that general education teachers and teacher candidates need in order to work with students with special needs in an inclusive environment.

Meanwhile, a study by Cooc (2019) also emphasized that although educational opportunities have improved worldwide for children with disabilities, there are concerns about the preparation of teachers working with this student population. Results show that teachers in classrooms with a high percentage of learners with exceptionalities are likely to have the least qualifications and greatest professional development need. The shortage of teachers with special education competency and current professional development needs of teachers have policy implications for educating children with disabilities.

Furthermore, McKenzie, J. et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of partnerships. This study explores families' and teachers' co-operative experiences of supporting learners with disabilities in special and full-service schools in South Africa. The findings show both positive and negative interactive experiences regarding communication, extending learning from school to home, power dynamics and advocacy, and commitment. Consideration of these aspects will contribute to improving education for learners with disabilities.

In conclusion, educating learners with exceptionalities requires in-depth understanding in order to facilitate their individual needs. Empowering teachers in utilizing various assistive technology is a great help in assisting learners with exceptionalities. Human connection partnered with technological innovations, is a great partnership towards the attainment of the goal of inclusive education.

Conclusion:

This study utilized a descriptive correlational research design to investigate the implementation of inclusive education for learners with exceptionalities. The findings highlighted the significance of teachers' preparation and administration support in promoting inclusive practices. The study involved 156 teacher-respondents from three different schools, and quantitative data analysis techniques were employed.

The profile of the teacher-respondents revealed that age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, teaching experience, and relevant training attendance had an impact on teacher preparation for inclusive education. The respondents generally demonstrated a high level of agreement in terms of instructional strategies, collaboration among learners, and evaluation of learners' success. They also reported a high level of agreement in administration support, particularly in creating a cooperative learning environment.

The study found a significant relationship between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their teaching preparation. Additionally, a strong positive correlation was observed between administration support and teacher preparation. These findings highlight the importance of supportive administration in fostering an inclusive environment.

The experiences and challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents in implementing inclusive education encompassed various aspects such as knowledge and awareness, collaboration and support, communication and recognition, classroom environment and resources, and the use of technology and social media. These findings underscore the need for targeted professional development programs, adequate resource allocation, and effective collaboration and communication among stakeholders.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, several recommendations are proposed. First, the implementation of the proposed action plan is recommended to promote equity and support for inclusive education. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct in-depth studies on the relationships between teacher profiles and preparation, as well as administration support for teachers' preparation.

For teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Develop targeted professional development programs to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for inclusive education.
2. Enhance administrative support by providing resources, mentorship, and training opportunities for teachers.
3. Prioritize continuous professional growth through attending relevant training and engaging in peer learning.
4. Allocate resources effectively to support inclusive education, including materials, technologies, and support services.
5. Foster collaboration and communication among teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to share experiences and resources.
6. Utilize the action plans created by the researchers to address the challenges faced in implementing inclusive education.

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can improve the practice and policy of inclusive education, ultimately creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for learners with exceptionalities.

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