Non- SPED Teachers' Readiness for Inclusive Education

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the Non-Special Education teachers' readiness for inclusive education. The researchers employed a descriptive correlational quantitative research design. The participants utilized the fifteen (15) non-SPED teacher-advisers of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) as tagged in the DepEd Learner Information System at the Division of Escalante City (S.Y. 2023-2024). The level of readiness of the Non-SPED Teachers for inclusive education was investigated in terms of Approaches / Strategies, Classroom Management, and Delivery of Lessons through teachers' self-evaluation and school heads' Evaluation. The researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient were used as statistical tools for data treatment and analyses. There was a significantly positive correlation between Teachers' self-evaluation and school heads evaluation regarding the readiness of Non-SPED teachers for inclusive education (r = 0.80). Both Non-SPED teachers and school heads perceived it to be ready in terms of Approaches / Strategies, Delivery of Lessons, and Classroom Management which has the highest overall mean score of (4.30).

Introduction

The Education for All (EFA) movement has progressively contributed to the attainment of human development through providing quality and accessible education and creating facilities that are gender sensitive and disability inclusive. As stated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "disability is one of the most serious barriers to education across the globe". Most children are being deprived to take part to their communities, in the workforce and societal decision-making. Inclusive education is the most essential and effective way to provide all children a fair chance to learn and go to school, improve awareness, enhance capabilities, and develop the skills they need in order to live productively. In the Philippine setting, the Department of Education took part in improving the Education for All through recognizing that education of every Filipino is a shared responsibility. The EFA goals have been gradually achieved by the local government units, Local School Boards, Adopt-A-School Program through working hand-in-hand. Teachers hold the direct position in delivering quality education to the learners. With tons of issues and mishaps in an educational system, learners with special education needs are one of the most affected. Education of learners with special needs has come an extensive and lengthy way; it can be in a method from Special Education (SPED) to integrated education and processing it from integrated education to inclusive education (Allam & Martin, 2021).

In the process of offering quality of education for all the learners, it presents concerns on the lack of resources in providing learners with special needs of education which are necessary for their development. In China, many children with disabilities remained out of school, and inclusive schooling is not widely realized (Horn et. al., 2018). In the Soviet state, many children with disabilities were treated differently, because they were not recognized as "educable" (Kalinnikova and Trygged 2014). In Samoa, the people historically supported the inclusion of disabled people in any cultural events and traditions, however, during the European colonization, this movement was disrupted. From then on, there were a lot of negative perceptions and impressions which were introduced. In this generation, in order to promote educational equity, one must be strong enough to develop and implement inclusive education policies which incorporate local knowledge and values (Duke et al. 2016). These significant historical challenges underscore the importance of understanding the legacies on the process of developing inclusive education. The Republic Act Nos. 3562 and 5250 reiterate that teachers, administrators, and supervisors of SPED should be trained by the Department of Education and impoverished (Allam & Martin, 2021). Certainly, the Department of Education extends support in the education of the learners with special needs through the SPED program and providing inclusive education in a regular classroom set-up. Specifically, in the implementation of the Learner's Information System (LIS), learners with special needs can enroll in a regular classroom set-up and be tagged as Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN). In this case, a non-SPED teacher will hold the responsibility of a Special Education teacher in a regular classroom set-up. However, the lack of knowledge concerning how to create inclusive classrooms involving all pupils has been pointed out (Nilholm et. al., 2014). Furthermore, several authors also pointed out that knowledge and awareness are still lacking regarding whether school systems are actually implementing inclusive education.

In foreign countries, like the United States, schools have never had enough special education teachers to serve all students with disabilities (Mason-Williams et al., 2020). It has been also stated

that despite the efforts made, the shortage continues to exist even in the Philippines. According to Schwerdt (2018), it is significant to understand the indicators and factors associated with teachers' ability and commitment to accommodate students with different needs in their classrooms as to facilitate and conduct inclusive practice. Though a lot of research have been developed in the suitability of the implementation of an inclusive education, it is seen that there is a sense of lack of progress which seems to necessitate a critical look at the field while not neglecting advancements made (Claes, 2021). In the situation presented, this study will look into the teaching practices and competence of the non-SPED teachers in the Division of Escalante City as the basis in identifying their readiness on taking responsibility in handling learners with special education needs in a regular classroom set-up.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the Readiness Level of Non-SPED teachers for inclusive education. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:
1.   What is the level of readiness of Non-SPED teachers for inclusive education in terms of:
1.1   Approaches / Strategies;
1.2   Classroom Management;
1.3   Delivery of Lessons;
2.   What is the level of readiness of the Non-SPED Teachers for inclusive education through self-evaluation?
3.   What is the level of readiness of the Non-SPED Teachers for inclusive education through School Head's evaluation?
4.   Is there a significant relationship in the level of readiness for inclusive education between teachers' self-evaluation and school heads' evaluation?

Materials and Methods

Research Design
This study utilized the descriptive quantitative research design. According to Siedlecki (2020), descriptive research in quantitative studies describes individuals, events, or conditions as they naturally occur. This method is deemed appropriate for this study in the sense that this research aims to determine the non-Sped teachers' readiness for the inclusive education.

Respondents of the Study
The respondents of this study were the fifteen (15) non-Sped teacher-advisers (both elementary and high school) of the Division of Escalante City school year 2023-2024. They were chosen as the respondents of the study because their point of view will be treated as the baseline data that this study necessitates.

Sampling Technique
The study employed the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010). The fifteen (15) Non-Sped teacher-advisers of the division of Escalante City of school year 2023-2024 were chosen as the subjects of this study since they have the characteristics which are needed in this study.

Research Instrument

To gather valid and reliable data of determining the non-SpED teachers' readiness for inclusive education, this study utilized a researcher-made instrument. Lawshhe's content validity ratio was applied in assuring the quality of the instrument, since it quantifies expert agreement on the essentiality of individual items in a test or scale (Ansari & Khan, 2023), the instrument's *validity* test resulted to *(4.80=excellent)* and has also gone through a reliability test with the result of *(8.78=Good) reliability*. The survey questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part I contained the profiles of the respondents: age, sex, and educational attainment. Part II contained three (3) scales which measures: 1.1Approaches / Strategies; 1.2 Classroom Management; 1.3 Delivery of Lessons. The scale contains 15 items and is measured using a five-point Likert scale extending from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data Gathering Procedure

In the conduct of the research, the survey questionnaire was provided to the respondents who are the non-Sped teachers of the Division of Escalante City, of school year 2023-2024. The researcher secured a written permit asking for the permission of the Schools Division Superintendent to distribute the online google forms: survey questionnaires. Upon the approval, the questionnaires were sent through the school heads or principals then forwarded to the teacher respondents. Through the online survey questionnaire, the respondents were given with a consent form, attached at the beginning part of the google form. The researchers ensured that protocols are highly observed in the distribution of the instrument and guarantees that their responses and identities are kept confidential and anonymous. When all the respondents successfully answered the questionnaire, the researchers will tally and tabulate the completed data from the items in the survey questionnaires through utilizing appropriate statistical processes.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data were tallied and tabulated and had gone through the statistical treatment using the SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and educational attainment, frequency and percentage was used. To determine the readiness of non-SpED teachers for inclusive education in terms of Approaches / Strategies, Classroom Management, and Delivery of Lessons, frequency and percentage were used. Lastly, Pearson r correlation was used in investigating the significant relationship that exists between the Approaches / Strategies, Classroom Management, and Delivery of Lessons in terms of non-Sped teachers' self-evaluation and school head's evaluation.

Five-point Likert Scale

Scale	Interpretation
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree
1.81-2.60	Disagree
2.61-3.40	Neither agree or disagree
3.41-4.20	Agree
4.21-5.0	Strongly Agree

Ethical Consideration

The researchers secured a written permit asking for the permission of the Schools Division Superintendent to distribute the online google forms: survey questionnaires. Upon the approval, the questionnaire was sent to the school heads and was then forwarded to the teacher respondents. The researchers ensured that protocols are highly observed in the distribution of the instrument and guarantees that their responses and identities are kept confidential and anonymous.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. Non-SPED Teachers' Self-Evaluation

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Approaches/Strategies	15	4.20	0.721	Agree
Classroom Management	15	4.31	0.735	Strongly Agree
Delivery of Lessons	15	4.20	0.633	Agree

The study was done to determine the readiness of non-SPED teachers for inclusive education in terms of Approaches / Strategies which has an overall mean score of (4.20) and standard deviation of (0.721), Classroom Management has a mean score of (4.31) and a standard deviation of (0.735), Delivery of Lessons has an overall mean score of (4.29) and a standard deviation of (0.706).

In terms of Approaches/Strategies, communication with parents on learner's progress and behavior being identified as LSEN, has the highest mean score of (4.60) with a standard deviation of (0.774). The provision of essential support from the higher office and stakeholders for LSEN, has the lowest mean which is (4.20) and a standard deviation of (0.633) with an interpretation of agree as to the readiness of non-sped teachers for inclusive education. Providing crucial support for LSEN necessitates a multifaceted strategy involving cooperation between advocacy organizations, educators, parents, and higher offices. To create an inclusive learning environment that fulfills the various requirements of every student, policies, procedures, and resources should be focused in that direction. (Allam and Martin, 2021). This signifies that the government should provide intensive support to the department of education's programs that develops the best practices in providing the learning needs among the students who have special education needs. Likewise, to parents who have children with disabilities, must have the awareness to practice their rights such as to receive quality and easy access to education.

In terms of Classroom Management, teachers' accommodation and modification of learning activities to support LSEN so that they can collaborate with other learners at ease, has the highest mean score of (4.40) with a standard deviation of (0.736). Teacher's encouragement of parent involvement in making rules and regulations in the classroom, has the lowest mean which is (4.13) and a standard deviation of (0.743). Modifying strategies through classroom management helps in maintaining order, discipline and secures a safe school environment (Pisano, 2017). Collaborative learning has always been an effective and efficient strategy in the teaching-learning process. It is the teacher's role to modify challenging yet fun learning activities, and which are designed to allow those with special needs to perform and relate with other learners. These activities must also provide equal opportunities to all learners despite their imperfections and differences. Further, it is also important to conduct orientations to the parents and guardians of these learners. This is essential, since it increases parents' involvement in monitoring and guiding their children, thus providing them their learning needs, sufficiently.

Meanwhile, in terms of Delivery of Lessons, teachers' provision of instructions to students with special needs to ensure that they are able to attempt the tasks given, has the highest mean score of (4.47) with a standard deviation of (0.774). Teachers' provision of alternative learning materials for students who have special needs, has the lowest mean which is (4.20) and a standard deviation of (0.774). A consistent classroom management and appropriate and suitable techniques in teaching are effective tools in managing children in an inclusive classroom (Sanchez, 2023). In delivering the content of the lesson, learning activities and assessments are always provided in order to allow learners expand what they already know and explore what more they can learn. In conducting these, instructions must be simple and clear so that

everyone can comprehend and thus become aware of their own learning process. The results signified that, the teachers must ensure that instructions are properly delivered and understood by all types of learners. Teachers' provision of alternative learning materials for students who have special needs, has the lowest mean since the respondents are non-sped teachers, thus, they do not have enough and strong experiences. With this, teachers must explore too in creating and designing appropriate instructional materials to engage these students more in the learning process.

Table 2. **School Heads' Evaluation**

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Approaches/Strategies	15	4.28	0.742	Strongly Agree
Classroom Management	15	4.35	0.766	Strongly Agree
Delivery of Lessons	15	4.32	0.690	Strongly Agree

In terms of School Heads' evaluation to Non-SPED teachers' readiness for inclusive education. When it comes to Approaches/Strategies, communication with parents on learner's progress and behavior being identified as LSEN, has the highest mean score of (4.53) with a standard deviation of (0.743). The provision of essential support from the higher office and stakeholders for LSEN, has the lowest mean which is (4.27) and a standard deviation of (0.703). This simply agrees with other researches which stated that Non-SPED teacher readiness is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education. It creates an environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, fostering a more inclusive and equitable education system. (Adams, 2021). The results imply that school personnel should be aware how significant it is to improve parents' involvement to their children's learning progress and should continue to support school activities that advocates and promotes inclusive education as well. As school heads, they should seek support from the division or higher office to support the plans and programs of the school, the stakeholders are the best partners to sustain such plans and programs.

In terms of Classroom Management, the teachers' regular usage of differentiated instruction techniques to address the unique learning needs of each students in an inclusive classroom., has the highest mean score of (4.47) with a standard deviation of (0.743). Teacher's encouragement of parent involvement in making rules and regulations in the classroom, has the lowest mean which is (4.07) and a standard deviation of (0.798). According to Chao et. al., (2017), teaching and learning strategies and classroom management should be improved to support students with special educational needs (SEN) in ordinary schools. In addition, knowledge of inclusive learning strategies and positive methods for managing classroom behavior issues, are essential. School heads believe that teachers exhibit classroom management skills which plays a pivotal role in attending different types of learners who individually expresses a variety of behavior, attitude, study habits, and learning practices.

Meanwhile, in terms of Delivery of Lessons, teachers' provision of instructions to students with special needs to ensure that they are able to attempt the tasks given, has the highest mean score of (4.40) with a standard deviation of (0.736). Teachers' provision of alternative learning materials for students who have special needs, has the lowest mean which is (4.27) and a standard deviation of (0.703). According to Lancaster, J., & Bain, A. (2020), lessons should have differences in the design, delivery, and self-evaluation of lessons covaried with the type of learners and teachers' experiences. This implies that the lesson plan design and delivery should be aligned with the students' level and learning pace through adapting various learning activities or differentiated instruction. Teacher's experiences are also one of the essential and great factors in making the classroom more engaging for all types of learners. This simply signifies that in order to become an effective and efficient inclusive education teacher, one must go through intensive trainings that specialize authentic and realistic acquisition of knowledge and skills which encompass teaching strategies and methods, as well as the values of love, compassion, and understanding.
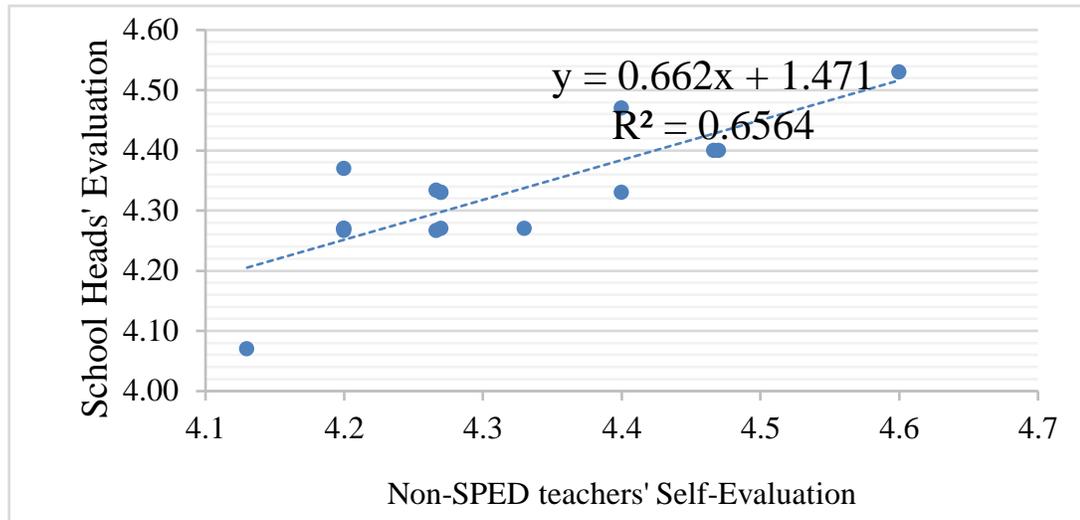
Figure 1. Correlation between Non-SPED Teachers' and School Heads' Evaluation

More so, in investigating the significant relationship in the level of readiness for inclusive education between the non-SPED teachers' self-evaluation and school head's evaluation, a significant relationship was found *(r= 0.8068)*. The perceptions of Non-SPED teachers' self-evaluation and school heads evaluation obtained through a questionnaire showed that majority of them agreed that non-SPED Teachers have the readiness for inclusive education when it comes to Strategies/Approaches, Delivery of Lessons and Classroom Management which has the highest overall mean score. The study of Morningstar, et. al., (2015) revealed that the relation to implementation of the lesson's delivery is an essential component of inclusive classrooms and the issues the field is facing about effective practices leading to student learning and inclusion within classrooms and throughout schools.

The results of this study are supported by researches which interpreted inclusive education as an avenue for learners to be provided with an environment that has a facilitator that knows the value of acceptance, belongingness and camaraderie (Vuorinen et al., 2018). The Department of Education continues to provide training to teachers in adapting instruction, methods and strategies for all types of learners specially for those with special needs. Furthermore, former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed into law Republic Act No. 11650, dated March 11, 2022, titled Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act. This policy identifies the rights of people with disabilities, enumerates strategies for improving access to education and other services, and diagnoses areas where additional support is needed. Although, in some areas of the Philippines, studies revealed that inclusive education was moderately implemented but has high implementation in teachers' preparation and competence (Cayabyab, 2023). Teachers also experienced recurring obstacles such as insufficient preparedness and expertise for special education, a lack of educational resources, and general social contexts that substantially impact teacher's effectiveness (Macabenta et. Al., 2023).

Research findings confirm that inclusive instructional practices are most effectively implemented in the classroom by efficient teachers who believe that they have the competence (skills and knowledge) to implement the practices successfully. Furthermore, they must possess favorable attitudes towards inclusion (Nijakowska, 2022). Competent teachers successfully employ inclusive instructional practices with students of diverse needs, abilities and characteristics, including learners who have special educational needs (SEN) (Kormos, 2020). According to Schwerdt (2018), it is significant to understand the indicators and factors associated with teachers' ability and commitment to accommodate students with different needs in their classrooms as to facilitate and conduct inclusive practice. Behavioral, social, and emotional patterns

arising in the inclusive classroom are among the most challenging dimensions in achieving the inclusive goals (Raguindin, 2020). Thus, it is important to know if teachers really perform transformative inclusive practices which promotes interaction, empathy, belongingness, acceptance and equity.

Conclusion

Based on the results and findings, the following conclusions were drawn. It is very essential to determine the readiness of Non-SPED teachers for inclusive education since it contributes to the attainment of offering quality, accessible and responsive education regardless of race, social status, physical & mental capabilities and skills of the learners. In terms of Strategies/Approaches, Classroom Management, and Delivery of Lessons, Non-SPED teachers were found to be highly skilled both from the results of Teachers' self-evaluation and school heads' evaluation. Non-SPED teachers and school heads responses has a significant relationship. Thus, both perceived that teachers are ready in all indicators for inclusive education, most significantly to classroom management. Thus, these mean that Non-SPED teachers in the division of Escalante city are highly skilled, trained and ready to implement inclusive education.

Based on the conclusions made from this study, the following recommendations were made. For School heads, it is recommended that they should base their decisions in crafting their work and financial plan regarding which intervention program to be implemented to aid Non-SPED teachers. Furthermore, they can give some instructional resources during school learning action cell to cater the needs of these teachers. Non-SPED Teachers. It is proposed that they should be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive education. They should eagerly attend to various trainings and seminars that may help their professional development. As a result, they enrich instruction, engage students in multidimensional learning, and help students develop their ability to apply their information. Teachers should determine students' learning styles to familiarize their specific preferences. Understanding learning styles can make it easier to create, modify, and develop more efficient and effective teaching methods and strategies. It is very important to look for fun, easy, and appropriate learning activities which will increase students' engagement. Have a constant communication to students such as providing students with the opportunity to know their scores in the assessments and continue to provide constructive and relevant feedback to students' outputs, so that they will be updated of their learning progress. Finally, communicate with parents about their child's performance thru conducting PTA meetings, or any other means like social media platforms. For Parents, it is recommended to have a regular teacher-parent communication especially those parents whose kids are struggling to cope with the regular ones, because this can be an avenue for them to address their child's special needs with their help to formulate an Individualized Educational Plan. For the researchers. It is proposed to acquire more data regarding how the non-SPED teachers will handle effectively a classroom with an Inclusive setting. This could be one of the reasons that improved trainings, seminars and support could be an avenue for improving student performance.

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