

ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN DAVAO CENTRAL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the implementation of inclusive education in Davao Central District. One hundred seventeen responses were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire with a four-point Likert Scale anchored from DepEd Order No. 21 precepts, 2019. From this DO, ten identified domains determined the level of implementation, including the learners, curriculum, learning resources, learning delivery, educational assessment, learning environment, teacher professional development, school leadership and management, partnerships for inclusive education, and governance support. Subsequently, the profile of the respondents was determined by seven categories, including age, gender, civil status, specialization, years in the service, highest educational attainment, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops. This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research design using a descriptive method. In the analysis of the profile of the respondents, frequency, and percentage were used, while the mean was employed to assess the level of implementation. Profoundly, the respondents majorly belong to the age group of 52-60; the dominant gender was female, the civil status is married; they specialized in elementary education major in general education; the length of service is generally 6-10 years; the highest educational attainment is bachelor's degree and has profoundly attended training on inclusive education. It was found that inclusive education is fully implemented, with school leadership and management garnering the highest mean and curriculum being the least. An action plan was made proposing activities for sustainable implementation, emphasizing the activities planned for the curriculum. Further, it is recommended that the activities, policies, and programs established for inclusive education be realized.

Keyword: *inclusive education, special education, K to 12, Davao Central district, DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2019*

1. INTRODUCTION

The study is driven by the lack of knowledge and a clear framework for inclusive education in the Philippines. Without a unified strategy accessible to all students, it is challenging to define effective practices and determine the roles and responsibilities of school community members in educating children with special needs, as well as the specific requirements for implementing inclusive education (MacBeath et al., 2006) [1].

Inclusive education (IE) has been widely discussed for its impact on children with special needs (CSNs). It ensures all students access human development regardless of ability (Fitch, 2003) [2]. By 2019, over 140 governments supported the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, promoting inclusion policies. IE is also a priority for UNICEF, UNESCO, and similar organizations (Paliokosta & Blandford, 2010) [3]. In Armenia, research by local and international organizations has highlighted gaps in understanding the inclusive education system, including the status of legislation, target projections, school capacities, and community attitudes. There is limited analytical and statistical data on teacher training, school equipment, funding, and parental awareness of child rights and education standards (Center for Educational Research and Consulting, 2013) [4].

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11650 of 2022 or the Inclusive Education Act, affirms the rights of learners with disabilities, outlines strategies to improve educational access, and calls for system-wide integration of inclusive education (IE) in mainstream schools (Llego, 2022) [5]. Achieving full inclusion requires updated, comprehensive studies to assess implementation progress, identify challenges, and evaluate the education system's readiness for this transition. Subsequently, in as much as there is significant research done in inclusive education, only a few of the research has focused on the experiences and evaluation of learners within Philippines' inclusive classrooms (Muega, 2019) [6].

While inclusive education (IE) is promoted globally, studies show that many school personnel do not view its implementation as entirely positive. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent of IE implementation in a selected school district in Davao City. The assessment of its status across curriculum, learners, resources, delivery, assessment, environment, teacher development, leadership, partnerships, and governance will definitely lead to identify strengths, weaknesses, and challenges, and proposed an action plan to guide improvements and support reform-oriented decision-making.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study sought to assess the implementation of inclusive education among the teachers of Davao Central District for the School Year 2023-2024 as the basis for an action plan. Thus, this study aimed to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondent groups based on the following?
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Gender;
 - 1.3. Civil Status;
 - 1.4. Specialization;
 - 1.5. Years in the Service;
 - 1.6. Highest Educational Attainment; and
 - 1.7. Relevant Training/Seminar/Workshop

2. As perceived by the respondents, what is the level of implementation of inclusive education in Davao Central district in the following areas?
 - 2.1. Learners;
 - 2.2. Curriculum;
 - 2.3. Learning Resources;
 - 2.4. Learning Delivery;
 - 2.5. Educational Assessment;
 - 2.6. Learning Environment;
 - 2.7. Teacher Professional Development;
 - 2.8. School Leadership and Management;
 - 2.9. Partnerships for Inclusive Education; and
 - 2.10. Governance Support

3. Based on the findings, what action plan can be proposed to improve the implementation of inclusive education?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In the pursuit to assess the implementation of inclusive education among the teachers in Davao Central District and come up with a proposed action plan for such implementation, this study dwelled on the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the demographic profile of the respondent groups according to age, gender; civil status, specialization; years in the service; highest educational Attainment, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops.
2. To measure the level of the implementation of inclusive education based on the following areas, namely, learners, curriculum, learning resources; learning delivery, educational assessment, learning environment, teacher

professional development, school leadership and management, partnerships for inclusive education, and governance support; and

3. To propose an action plan as a guide for the implementation of inclusive education.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This quantitative study aims to assess the implementation of inclusive education in Davao Central District and profile the respondents. Consequently, the focus output is an action plan inclusive of recommendations/suggested activities for implementing inclusive education.

By gathering the salient information and analyzing the data, the researcher envisioned concretizing the study's findings and benefitting the Department of Education officials, School Administrators, Guidance Counselors, Subject Coordinators, Teachers, Module Writers, Students, and Future Researchers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research design using a descriptive method. This method is used to determine the teacher respondents' profile and the level of implementation of inclusive education. A non-experimental design does not rely on manipulating variables (Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2014) [7]. Quantitative research was used to objectively gather and utilize numerical data from the respondents to determine the profile and the level of implementation of inclusive education for teacher-respondents in Davao Central District.

2.2 Research Participants

The primary data source was the one hundred seventeen teacher-respondents from the seven schools of Davao Central district who answered a two-part questionnaire soliciting their profile and their responses. The first part was for the profile, and the second part was the assessment of the implementation of Inclusive Education through a Likert scale.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age Range	f	Percentage
25 - 30	13	11%
31 - 35	26	22%
36 - 40	19	16%
41 - 45	16	14%
46 - 50	14	12%
51 - 60	27	23%
61 above	2	2%
n	117	100%

2.2 Research Procedure

Data were collected personally by the researcher following a structured process. Prior to the study, formal permission was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent and the school head, supported by an endorsement letter from the Dean of the Graduate School. All conditions specified in the approval letters were strictly observed. During the implementation, questionnaires were distributed electronically via Google Forms in compliance with pandemic-related health and safety protocols. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all teacher-respondents. Responses were handled with strict confidentiality, used solely for research purposes, and deleted after completion of the study. Upon retrieval, the data were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, with interpretation guided by a qualified statistician.

2.3 Statistical Treatment of Data

The Mean was the statistical tool utilized in processing the gathered data. It is an essential concept in mathematics and statistics. It is the average or the most common value in a collection of numbers. It is used to determine the level of implementation of inclusive education. The frequency and percentage were also used to gather the demographic profile of the respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study assessed the level of Inclusive Education (IE) implementation in a school district in Davao City across ten domains. Overall, IE was rated as fully implemented (M=4.24), reflecting the district's strong alignment with Republic Act No. 11650 and global inclusive education standards (UNESCO, 2019) [8].

Table 2: Summary on the Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education

Factors	m	Interpretation
Learners	4.44	Fully Implemented
Curriculum	3.88	Fully Implemented
Learning Resources	4.02	Fully Implemented
Learning Delivery	4.35	Fully Implemented
Educational Assessment	4.29	Fully Implemented
Learning Environment	4.29	Fully Implemented
Teacher Professional Development	4.42	Fully Implemented
School Leadership and Management	4.45	Fully Implemented
Partnership for Inclusive Education	4.19	Fully Implemented
Governance Support	4.12	Fully Implemented
Level	4.24	Fully Implemented

School leadership and management (M=4.45) and learner-focused practices (M=4.44) were the highest-rated domains. Effective leadership is crucial for driving inclusive school change, providing policy guidance, and ensuring systemic alignment (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) [9]. Strong learner participation confirms that inclusive environments foster student agency and representation (Mweli & Kalenga, 2012) [10].

Teacher professional development (M=4.42) demonstrated extensive capacity-building activities such as INSETs, mentoring, and training on diverse learning needs. This only means that teacher training in adapting instruction and fostering collaborative practices is central to effective IE implementation (Llego, 2022) [11].

Although rated fully implemented, the curriculum scored lowest (M=3.88), indicating a gap in lesson design, program orientation, and adaptation for special needs learners. It emphasizes the need for curriculum frameworks that explicitly embed inclusive strategies to ensure equitable access to learning outcomes (Cho et al., 2013) [12].

Learning environments (M=4.29) were perceived as supportive and respectful, only stressed the view that inclusive settings enhance both academic and life skills (Katz & Merenda, 2022) [13]. Learning resources (M=4.02) were aligned with RA 10533, ensuring contextualized materials for diverse learners, consistent with the assertion that resource adaptation improves participation (Hall & McGregor, 2000) [14]. Learning delivery (M=4.35) promoted collaboration and effective communication, in line with inclusive pedagogy principles.

Educational assessment (M=4.29) employed varied and individualized strategies. This implies support for inclusive assessments that reflect learner diversity and foster equitable opportunities to demonstrate competency (Wagner & Castillo, 2014 as cited in IIEP-UNESCO, 2018) [15].

Partnerships (M=4.19) and governance support (M=4.12) underscored strong collaboration with stakeholders and policy structures. Sustained partnerships enhance resource sharing and community engagement, aligning with RA 11650's mandate for multi-sectoral involvement in IE.

4. CONCLUSIONS

1. The level of implementation of inclusive education in terms of the ten dimensions, namely learners, curriculum, learning resources, learning delivery, educational assessment, learning environment, teacher professional development, school leadership and management, partnerships for inclusive education; and governance support, is very high, with an overall level of very high. This implies that the activities, programs, and projects implemented to realize inclusivity are in place and materialized.

2. Among the ten dimensions of special education implementation, curriculum garnered the least mean, implying that this is the least implemented dimension. This result communicates to the profile of the respondents, who majorly belong to the age group of 52-60 and do not specialize in special education. They have been in the service for 6-10 years. The curriculum sets the tone of the implementation, but the foundation of knowledge gained stems from the baccalaureate degree. Even so, special education is a newly specialized area in education, as the department's order to institutionalize it sprung last 2019.

3. School leadership and management resulted in the highly implemented domain of special education. This is attested by the statement that school managers have utilized the vision, mission, and core values as their guide in providing direction on how to serve learners and their parents for inclusiveness. In relation to this, the length of service of the respondents, being 6-10 years, not specialized in special education, and 52-60 years of age.

4. The proposed action plan for inclusivity details activities for the sustainability and continuity of activities, programs, and projects done to realize inclusivity. Moreover, emphasis on the activities planned for the curriculum is suggested since it is the dimension with the least mean, although it is fully implemented. This means that the action plan embodies the fulfillment of the necessary activities that would compensate for the lack of effort for the dimension that got the lowest mean percentage.

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