

Extent of Implementation and Acceptability of Inclusive Education among Education Professionals

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Abstract

This study examined the extent of inclusive education implementation, its acceptability, the significant differences among their components, the relationship between implementation and acceptability, and the factors influencing their effectiveness and sustainability in selected public elementary schools in Naga City. It also aimed to propose a sustainability program based on the findings.

The study employed a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase used a descriptive-evaluative-correlational approach involving 176 regular and Special Education (SPED) teachers from five public elementary schools. Data were collected through self-constructed questionnaires and analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The qualitative phase involved 15 purposively selected teachers interviewed through semi-structured interviews, with data analyzed thematically. Both sets of findings were integrated during interpretation.

Results revealed that inclusive education implementation was High (grand mean = 3.08), as was acceptability (grand mean = 3.10). Policy Awareness and Compliance received the highest implementation rating, while Parent and Community Engagement received the lowest. For acceptability, Attitudes and Beliefs ranked highest, while Skills and Competencies ranked lowest. No significant differences were found among implementation components ($F = 0.744$, $p = 0.562$) or acceptability aspects ($F = 1.651$, $p = 0.159$). The relationship between implementation and acceptability was weak and not significant ($r = 0.093$, $p = 0.222$). Qualitative findings identified challenges involving limited specialized training, inadequate resources, teacher readiness, workload, leadership support, collaboration, and parent and community engagement.

Based on these findings, the Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) was proposed to strengthen teacher competencies, improve instructional resources, enhance leadership and collaboration, address workload concerns, and promote sustainable inclusive education practices in public elementary schools.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Implementation of Inclusive Education, Acceptability of Inclusive Education, Education Professionals, Special Education, Elementary Schools*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Rationale

Inclusive education promotes equitable access to quality education by ensuring that all learners, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, and needs, are given opportunities to participate and succeed. Despite the implementation of policies supporting inclusive education in the Philippines, challenges related to teacher preparedness, resources, and institutional support may affect its effectiveness. Thus, this study examines the extent of inclusive education implementation and its acceptability among education professionals in selected public elementary schools in Naga City, Camarines Sur. The findings will serve as a basis for identifying areas for improvement and developing a sustainability program to strengthen inclusive education practices.

Review of Related Literature

The reviewed literature and studies emphasize that the successful implementation of inclusive education requires effective policies, adequate resources, teacher training, and institutional support. UNESCO (2023), Brown and Davis (2025), and Santos and Reyes (2023) highlight the importance of teacher preparedness, school leadership, and resource availability. Meanwhile, Johnson and Williams (2023), Chen and Park (2023), and Garcia and Hernandez (2023) emphasize that teachers' attitudes, knowledge, self-efficacy, and professional competence influence the acceptability of inclusive education.

In the Philippine context, Villanueva (2023), Ocampo (2024), and Perez (2022) identified challenges involving limited training, instructional materials, and administrative support. These findings highlight the need to strengthen both implementation and stakeholder acceptance.

However, most previous studies examined these areas separately. Thus, the present study addresses this gap by examining the extent of implementation and acceptability of inclusive education, determining their differences and relationship, and exploring the factors influencing them through a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design. The findings will serve as the basis for the proposed Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) for selected public elementary schools in Naga City.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the extent of inclusive education implementation and its acceptability among education professionals. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools in terms of the components of the DepEd Inclusive Education Policy Framework?
 - a. Policy Awareness and Compliance
 - b. Curriculum Adaptation and Assessment
 - c. Teaching Training and Capacity Building
 - d. School Infrastructure and Accessibility
 - e. Parent and Community Engagement
2. Are there significant differences among the components of the extent of implementation of inclusive education?

3. What is the level of acceptability of inclusive education among education professionals along the following aspects:
 - a. Attitudes & Beliefs
 - b. Knowledge and Understanding
 - c. Skills and Competencies
 - d. Values and Commitment
 - e. Willingness to Implement
4. Are there significant differences among the aspects of the level of acceptability of inclusive education?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of implementation and level of acceptability of inclusive education among education professionals?
6. What factors affect the implementation and acceptability of inclusive education in schools?
7. What sustainability program may be proposed based on the results of the study?

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. Determine the extent of implementation of inclusive education.
2. Determine the significant differences among the components of inclusive education implementation.
3. Assess the level of acceptability of inclusive education among education professionals.

4. Determine the significant differences among the aspects of acceptability of inclusive education.
5. Determine whether a significant relationship exists between the extent of implementation and the level of acceptability of inclusive education.
6. Explore the factors influencing the implementation and acceptability of inclusive education in schools.
7. Propose an Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) based on the findings to strengthen the implementation and sustainability of inclusive education in selected public elementary schools in Naga City.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employed a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed separately but concurrently and merged during interpretation. The quantitative phase used a descriptive-evaluative-correlational design to assess the extent of inclusive education implementation, its level of acceptability, and the relationship between these variables among education professionals in selected public elementary schools in Naga City. The qualitative phase used a descriptive approach to explore participants' experiences, challenges, and factors influencing implementation and acceptability through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were examined through

thematic analysis. The study was guided by DepEd's Inclusive Education Policy Framework, the SPED Manual, and relevant policies and issuances from 2022 to 2025.

Participants

The study involved regular and Special Education (SPED) teachers from five selected public elementary schools in Naga City implementing inclusive education programs. For the quantitative phase, 176 teacher-respondents participated in the survey to assess the extent of implementation and acceptability of inclusive education. For the qualitative phase, 15 teachers were purposively selected based on their direct experience with inclusive education. The participants provided insights into inclusive practices, challenges, and factors influencing implementation and acceptability. The qualitative sample size was guided by data saturation, wherein recurring themes and perspectives emerged from the interviews.

Instruments

The study utilized self-constructed questionnaires and a semi-structured interview guide to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaires were developed based on the DepEd Inclusive Education Policy Framework, relevant literature, and the local school context. The first questionnaire assessed the extent of inclusive education implementation in terms of policy awareness and compliance, curriculum adaptation and assessment, teacher training and capacity building, school infrastructure and accessibility, and parent and community engagement. The second measured acceptability in terms of attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and understanding, skills and competencies, values and commitment, and willingness to implement, using a four-point Likert scale. Meanwhile, the interview guide explored participants' experiences, challenges, and factors influencing implementation and acceptability. The

instruments provided complementary data for a comprehensive assessment of inclusive education in the selected public elementary schools in Naga City.

Procedure

The researcher first secured approval from the Dean of the Graduate School of Universidad de Sta. Isabel and permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Naga City to conduct the study in the selected public elementary schools. The self-constructed questionnaires were then distributed to the 176 teacher-respondents and retrieved for encoding and statistical analysis. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 purposively selected teachers to gather their experiences and insights on inclusive education. The interview responses were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education implementation and acceptability.

Data Analysis

The study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of inclusive education implementation and its level of acceptability. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to identify significant differences among the components of implementation and aspects of acceptability, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation determined the relationship between the two variables. For qualitative data, thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to identify recurring themes related to participants' experiences, challenges, and factors influencing inclusive education. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated

to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the results and serve as the basis for the proposed sustainability program.

Results

The study revealed that the extent of inclusive education implementation in selected public elementary schools in Naga City was High, with an overall mean of 3.08. Policy Awareness and Compliance obtained the highest mean of 3.11, while Parent and Community Engagement received the lowest mean of 3.05. No significant differences were found among the implementation components ($F = 0.744$, $p = 0.562$).

The level of acceptability of inclusive education was also High, with an overall mean of 3.10. Attitudes and Beliefs ranked highest, with a mean of 3.13, while Skills and Competencies ranked lowest, with a mean of 3.04. No significant differences were found among the acceptability aspects ($F = 1.651$, $p = 0.159$).

The relationship between implementation and acceptability was weak and not statistically significant ($r = 0.093$, $p = 0.222$). However, a significant negative relationship was found between Parent and Community Engagement and Knowledge and Understanding ($r = -0.240$, $p = 0.001$).

Qualitative findings identified factors affecting implementation, including insufficient specialized training, limited instructional materials and assistive devices, leadership support, collaboration, sustainability challenges, and teacher readiness. Factors influencing acceptability included teacher self-efficacy, emotional readiness, cultural beliefs, professional competence, institutional support, parental engagement, resource availability, and workload demands.

Based on these findings, the Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) was proposed to strengthen teacher competencies, improve learning resources, enhance leadership and collaboration, promote stakeholder participation, and support the sustainable implementation of inclusive education in selected public elementary schools in Naga City.

Discussion

The findings revealed that the extent of inclusive education implementation in selected public elementary schools in Naga City was High, with an overall mean of 3.08. Policy Awareness and Compliance obtained the highest rating, indicating that schools demonstrate awareness of inclusive education policies and efforts to translate these into practice. However, Parent and Community Engagement received the lowest rating, highlighting the need to strengthen partnerships between schools, families, and communities. These findings emphasize that effective inclusive education requires not only policy compliance but also active stakeholder participation, adequate resources, and continuous teacher development.

Similarly, the level of acceptability of inclusive education was High, with an overall mean of 3.10. Attitudes and Beliefs received the highest rating, reflecting generally favorable perceptions of inclusive education among education professionals. In contrast, Skills and Competencies obtained the lowest rating, indicating that positive attitudes may not always be accompanied by sufficient practical knowledge and instructional skills. This finding highlights the importance of continuous professional development, specialized training, and institutional support to strengthen teachers' confidence and readiness to address diverse learning needs.

The statistical analysis revealed no significant differences among the implementation components ($F = 0.744$, $p = 0.562$) or the acceptability aspects ($F = 1.651$, $p = 0.159$). These results indicate that the observed differences in mean ratings were not statistically significant. Thus, the components of implementation and aspects of acceptability were generally assessed at comparable levels. This emphasizes the importance of addressing inclusive education holistically rather than concentrating on only one component or aspect.

Furthermore, the relationship between the overall extent of implementation and acceptability was weak and not statistically significant ($r = 0.093$, $p = 0.222$). This indicates that higher implementation ratings were not significantly associated with higher acceptability ratings in the study. However, a significant negative relationship was found between Parent and Community Engagement and Knowledge and Understanding ($r = -0.240$, $p = 0.001$). Although statistically significant, this relationship was weak and should be interpreted cautiously. The result highlights the importance of examining how school–community interactions relate to educators’ understanding of inclusive education without assuming a causal relationship.

The qualitative findings provided further insights into the factors influencing implementation and acceptability. Implementation was affected by insufficient specialized training, limited instructional materials and assistive devices, leadership support, collaboration, sustainability challenges, and teacher readiness. Meanwhile, acceptability was influenced by teacher self-efficacy, emotional readiness, cultural beliefs, professional competence, institutional support, parental involvement, resource availability, and workload demands. These findings indicate that inclusive education requires coordinated efforts involving teachers, school administrators, families, and communities to address practical and institutional barriers.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that although inclusive education implementation and acceptability were both rated High, areas for improvement remain, particularly in teacher competencies, parent and community engagement, and resource provision. The proposed Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) is therefore intended to address these gaps through continuous professional development, improved learning resources, stronger leadership and collaboration, and sustainable school-based support mechanisms. These measures may help translate positive attitudes and existing policies into more consistent and effective inclusive education practices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, inclusive education implementation and acceptability among education professionals in selected public elementary schools in Naga City were both rated High. This indicates that schools demonstrate policy awareness and efforts to implement inclusive practices, while education professionals generally exhibit positive attitudes and commitment toward inclusion. However, gaps remain in parent and community engagement, teacher skills and competencies, specialized training, instructional resources, and institutional support.

The statistical results revealed no significant differences among the components of implementation or the aspects of acceptability. Furthermore, the relationship between overall implementation and acceptability was weak and not statistically significant, indicating that the two variables did not demonstrate a significant association in this study. Nevertheless, the significant negative relationship between parent and community engagement and knowledge and understanding highlights an area that warrants further investigation.

The qualitative findings further established that the successful implementation and acceptance of inclusive education depend on teacher preparedness, adequate resources, supportive leadership, effective collaboration, community participation, and attention to teacher well-being. These factors demonstrate that inclusive education requires more than policy compliance; it necessitates sustained institutional commitment and practical support to address the diverse needs of learners.

In conclusion, the study underscores the need to strengthen existing inclusive education practices through targeted and sustainable interventions. Accordingly, the Inclusive Education Capacity and Support Program (IE-CASP) is proposed to enhance teacher competencies, improve learning resources, strengthen school–home partnerships, and promote collaborative and supportive school environments. Its implementation may help sustain existing efforts and advance more effective, equitable, and inclusive learning opportunities for all learners.

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