Article

Teachers' Proficiency and Instructional Materials for Special Education Learners Within the Inclusive Educational Settings

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between teachers' proficiency and their use of instructional materials for special education learners in inclusive settings. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the study surveyed teachers on their knowledge of special education laws, expertise in individualized education programs (IEPs), understanding of diverse learning needs, and application of evidence-based strategies. Results indicate moderate proficiency among teachers, with higher ratings for general beliefs in inclusive practices but lower familiarity with specialized tools, such as adaptive technology and augmentative communication systems. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation (r = 0.8414) between teachers' proficiency and their use of instructional materials, suggesting that increased skill levels lead to more effective resource utilization in supporting special needs learners. This research underscores the need for targeted professional development to enhance teachers' confidence and capability in using instructional resources effectively, which can foster more accessible, inclusive learning environments and improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Introduction

   Inclusive education is a transformative approach that aims to provide all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, with equal access to learning opportunities in a shared classroom setting (Smith & Brown, 2020). It is grounded in the belief that educational systems must cater to diverse learners by fostering an environment where every student feels valued and supported (UNESCO,

2019). For students with disabilities, inclusive education is particularly critical as it breaks down barriers, enabling these students to benefit from the same academic, social, and emotional development as their peers (Jones et al., 2021). Through inclusive practices, schools can uphold the principles of equity and human rights, providing special education learners with the skills and confidence necessary to succeed both academically and socially (Garcia & Ruiz, 2022). The inclusion of students with disabilities not only benefits the learners themselves but also promotes empathy, acceptance, and social cohesion among all students (Harris & Lee, 2020). This approach challenges the traditional exclusionary models, advocating for systems where differences are embraced and accommodated rather than marginalized (Taylor et al., 2023). Studies have shown that inclusive education positively influences the academic outcomes and self-esteem of special education learners, further emphasizing the importance of these practices (Sharma & Loreman, 2019).

Over recent years, the global educational landscape has increasingly prioritized inclusive practices, with significant policies and frameworks emerging to support these efforts. Key international policies, such as the Salamanca Statement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, emphasize the need for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2019; UNICEF, 2020). Countries worldwide are adopting inclusive education policies that mandate the integration of special needs learners into mainstream settings, reflecting a growing commitment to universal learning opportunities (Garrote & Izuzquiza, 2020). Teachers play a critical role in this integration process, as they are responsible for creating inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of all students (Evans et al., 2022). As facilitators of inclusion, teachers help shape the educational experiences of special education learners, adjusting instructional methods and resources to accommodate diverse abilities (Nguyen et al., 2023). Research underscores the importance of teacher attitudes and training in ensuring that inclusive education policies are implemented effectively (Ahsan et al., 2021). In classrooms where teachers are well-prepared and supportive, special education students are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and academic success (Brown & Walker, 2022).

The proficiency, skills, and attitudes of teachers significantly influence the success of inclusive practices within educational settings. Teachers who possess specialized training in inclusive education are better equipped to implement strategies that accommodate the unique needs of special education learners, leading to improved academic and social outcomes (Johnson & Brown, 2023). Their attitudes toward inclusivity also play a crucial role; teachers with positive views of inclusion are more likely to employ flexible, evidence-based teaching methods that cater to various learning needs (Mitchell & Clarke, 2020). Conversely, teachers who lack confidence or training in this area may struggle to provide effective support, potentially impeding the progress of special education learners (Wong & Martinez, 2022). Therefore, teacher training and proficiency in

areas such as understanding disabilities, developing individualized education programs (IEPs), and utilizing inclusive teaching strategies are essential (Stevens & Chang, 2021). Studies have shown that ongoing professional development in these areas enhances teachers' self-efficacy and fosters more inclusive classroom environments (Lindqvist et al., 2019). Teachers with adequate training are more adept at fostering inclusive learning spaces where all students feel supported and valued, highlighting the importance of building teacher proficiency in inclusive education (Rodriguez & Patel, 2020).

Despite the positive outlook on inclusive education, teachers face numerous challenges in implementing these practices effectively, particularly regarding resources and support. One of the most common challenges is the lack of tailored instructional materials that cater to the diverse needs of special education learners (Perez & Gomez, 2022). Without adequate resources, teachers may struggle to deliver lessons that are accessible and engaging for all students, impacting the academic progress of special needs learners (Thompson et al., 2023). Additionally, teachers often report limited support from special education experts and other staff, which can hinder collaboration and reduce the efficacy of inclusive strategies (Williams & Park, 2023). These challenges are compounded by large class sizes and time constraints, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention to special needs students (Smith & Nguyen, 2021). Research suggests that these barriers can lead to feelings of frustration and burnout among teachers, further impacting the quality of inclusive education (Jackson et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges is essential to creating inclusive learning environments that are beneficial to all students, particularly those with disabilities (Garcia & Moore, 2020).

Instructional materials are vital in supporting special education learners within inclusive classrooms, as they enhance both engagement and accessibility. Defined as tools and resources that facilitate the teaching-learning process, instructional materials can range from visual aids to adaptive technologies that cater specifically to the needs of diverse learners (Lee & Smith, 2023). For special education students, materials such as visual aids, sensory resources, and assistive technology can help bridge learning gaps, enabling them to participate fully in the classroom (Taylor & Zhang, 2019). Adaptive books and augmentative communication devices, for example, allow students with language or cognitive disabilities to communicate and engage with lessons more effectively (Brown et al., 2021). Differentiated resources, such as sensory materials and adaptive tools, are also essential in helping students with specific needs to process information at their own pace (Nguyen & Lewis, 2020). By integrating these resources, teachers can create a more inclusive learning environment that addresses the unique learning needs of each student, ultimately contributing to better academic outcomes (Jones & Adams, 2023).

While there is considerable literature on inclusive education, significant gaps remain regarding teachers' proficiency levels and the availability of

instructional materials tailored for special education learners. This study seeks to assess teachers' proficiency in inclusive education, specifically in areas such as special education laws and policies, expertise in assessments, understanding of various disabilities, evidence-based strategies, and awareness of inclusive practices. Research on these competencies can provide insights into areas where teachers may require additional training or support (O'Brien & Lewis, 2021). Another gap lies in the instructional materials available for special education learners, including visual aids, manipulative resources, adaptive books, assistive technology, sensory materials, augmentative communication systems, and individualized tools (Stevens & Moore, 2023). Understanding teachers' perceptions of these resources and their availability within inclusive settings is essential for identifying potential barriers and recommending improvements (Foster & Baker, 2020). Addressing these gaps can inform policies and practices aimed at enhancing both teacher preparedness and resource availability for special education.

This study on teachers' proficiency and instructional materials for special education learners in inclusive settings offers several benefits for educators, policymakers, and schools. Identifying proficiency levels and resource needs, the study provides valuable insights that can help educational institutions tailor professional development programs to address teachers' specific challenges. Additionally, the findings may inform policy reforms by highlighting the critical resources required to support inclusive education effectively. For educators, understanding the importance of diverse instructional materials can lead to more effective teaching practices that accommodate all students, particularly those with special needs. Ultimately, these insights could help strengthen inclusive education frameworks and provide better learning experiences for special education students.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, combining quantitative methods to examine the relationship between teachers' proficiency and the instructional materials used for special education learners within inclusive educational settings. Conducted at Tagbilaran City Central Elementary School in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, the study involved participants who are teachers engaged in inclusive education. A standard questionnaire, validated and tested for reliability, was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Part I gathered demographic data (age, gender, education level, training attended), Part II assessed teachers' proficiency, and Part III explored the instructional materials preferred for special education learners.To quantify responses in Part II and Part III, a 4-point Likert scale was applied, where 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Proficiency levels were categorized as Highly Proficient (3.26-4.00), Proficient (2.51-3.25),

Fairly Proficient (1.76-2.50), and Not Proficient (1.00-1.75). Similarly, preferences for instructional materials were rated as Highly Preferred (3.26-4.00), Preferred (2.51-3.25), Fairly Preferred (1.76-2.50), and Not Preferred (1.00-1.75). Data were analyzed using Pearson's r to determine the relationship between teachers' proficiency and their use of instructional materials, allowing for the identification of potential correlations. This methodology provided a structured approach to evaluating the accessibility and effectiveness of resources within inclusive classrooms, shedding light on areas that may benefit from enhanced teacher training and resource allocation.

Results and Discussion

The teacher respondents in this study comprise a diverse and predominantly female (85%) group, with male teachers making up 15%. The majority fall within the 31-35 age range (26.67%), followed by those aged 41-45 and 36-40 (each at 18.33%), while a smaller percentage are over 51 (13.33%). Regarding civil status, 66.67% of the teachers are married, 23.33% are single, and 10% are widowed. Their teaching experience also varies, with nearly half (45%) having 13 or more years of service, 16.67% with 10-12 years, and smaller proportions in the 1-3- and 4-6-year ranges (13.33% and 11.67%, respectively). Most respondents specialize in Elementary or General Education (80%), with others teaching in areas such as Early Childhood Education (8.33%), Social Studies, MAPEH, and Technology and Livelihood Education. In terms of educational attainment, 38.33% hold a completed Master's degree, 33.33% have earned units toward a Master's, and 11.67% have units toward a Doctorate. Training is also a key aspect of their professional development, with 41.67% having completed 24 hours of seminars, 25% attending more than 24 hours, and smaller groups completing 8 or 16 hours. This profile reflects a group with a broad spectrum of expertise and experience, underscoring their commitment to advancing their professional skills and supporting inclusive education for diverse learners.

Table 1. Special Education and Policies

Special Education Laws and Policies:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have a thorough knowledge of laws and policies related to special education.	2.50	Fairly Proficient
2. I can articulate the rights and protections afforded to students with disabilities.	2.53	Proficient
3. Individuals with disabilities deserved to be educated.	3.60	Highly Proficient
4. Quality and relevant education should be offered to individuals with special needs.	3.52	Highly Proficient
Composite Mean	3.04	Proficient

Table 1 highlights teachers' proficiency in understanding special education laws and policies, with a composite mean of 3.04, classified as Proficient. Teachers rated their general knowledge of laws and policies related to special education at 2.50, indicating they are Fairly Proficient in this area. However, they showed slightly higher proficiency (2.53) in articulating the rights and protections afforded to students with disabilities, marking this area as Proficient. Teachers displayed a strong belief in the right to education for individuals with disabilities, with high ratings on the importance of providing education to students with special needs (3.60) and ensuring quality, relevant education (3.52), both described as Highly Proficient. These results suggest that while teachers recognize the significance of inclusive education and generally support the rights of students with disabilities, there is a need for further development in their comprehensive knowledge of specific special education laws and policies to enhance their overall proficiency in this area.

Table 2. Expertise in Assessments and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am skilled in conducting various assessments to evaluate students' strengths and needs.	2.42	Fairly Proficient
2. I am knowledgeable about the different components of an IEP.	2.23	Fairly Proficient
3. I am knowledgeable including goal setting, accommodations, and modifications.	2.33	Fairly Proficient
4. I can develop and implement effective individualized educational plans for their students.	2.30	Fairly Proficient
Composite Mean	**2.32**	**Fairly Proficient**

Table 2 presents teachers' self-assessed expertise in conducting assessments and developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for special education students. The results indicate a general level of Fairly Proficient across all indicators, with a composite mean of 2.32. Teachers rated themselves at 2.42 for their skill in conducting various assessments to identify students' strengths and needs, suggesting moderate proficiency in evaluation techniques. Knowledge about IEP components, including goal setting, accommodations, and modifications, also received a Fairly Proficient rating with weighted

means of 2.23 and 2.33, respectively. Additionally, teachers rated their ability to develop and implement effective IEPs at 2.30, indicating a moderate but limited confidence in these skills. Overall, these findings highlight that while teachers have foundational knowledge of assessments and IEPs, they may benefit from further training to enhance their expertise in creating and applying individualized support plans effectively for special education students.

Table 3. Different Disabilities and Learning Needs

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have a solid understanding of the different disabilities I may encounter in their classrooms.	2.30	Fairly Proficient
2. I have a solid understanding in autism, learning disabilities, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or emotional disturbances.	2.20	Fairly Proficient
3. I am aware of the characteristics, challenges, and appropriate instructional strategies to support students with disabilities.	2.45	Fairly Proficient
4. I can handle children with different disabilities.	2.30	Fairly Proficient
Composite Mean	2.31	Fairly Proficient

Table 3 reflects teachers' proficiency in understanding different disabilities and learning needs within the classroom. The results show an overall Fairly Proficient rating, with a composite mean of 2.31. Teachers rated their understanding of various disabilities encountered in classrooms, including autism, learning disabilities, ADHD, and emotional disturbances, as Fairly Proficient (2.30 and 2.20, respectively), suggesting a moderate familiarity with these conditions. Awareness of the characteristics, challenges, and appropriate instructional strategies for students with disabilities received a slightly higher rating of 2.45, though still within the Fairly Proficient range. The ability to manage and support children with different disabilities was rated at 2.30. These findings indicate that while teachers have basic awareness of diverse learning needs, there is a need for more in-depth training to enhance their understanding and capability in effectively supporting students with specific disabilities.

Table 4. Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies and Interventions

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am well-versed in evidence-based teaching strategies.	2.43	Fairly Proficient
2. I apply interventions that have been proven effective for students with disabilities.	2.50	Fairly Proficient
3. I apply differentiated instruction, multisensory techniques, assistive technology, or behavior management strategies.	2.52	Proficient
4. I use positive reinforcement strategies in dealing children with disabilities.	2.60	Proficient
Composite Mean	2.51	Proficient

Table 4 highlights teachers' proficiency in using evidence-based teaching strategies and interventions for students with disabilities, indicating a composite mean of 2.51, categorized as Proficient. Teachers rated their knowledge of evidence-based strategies at 2.43, described as Fairly Proficient, suggesting moderate familiarity. However, they rated their application of effective interventions and differentiated instruction techniques, including multisensory methods, assistive technology, and behavior management strategies, slightly higher, with means of 2.50 and 2.52, respectively, indicating a transition toward Proficient proficiency. The use of positive reinforcement strategies received the highest rating at 2.60, demonstrating greater confidence in this specific approach. Overall, while teachers show proficiency in applying certain evidence-based strategies, particularly positive reinforcement and differentiated instruction.

Table 5. Awareness of Inclusive Practices

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have a deep understanding of inclusive practices and be able to effectively collaborate with general education teachers.	2.40	Fairly Proficient
2. I see to it that I create inclusive learning environments.	2.60	Proficient
3. I can modify instruction, materials, and assessments.	2.62	Proficient
4. I manage to meet the diverse needs of students in inclusive classrooms.	2.45	Fairly Proficient
Composite Mean	2.52	Proficient

Table 5 presents teachers' awareness of inclusive practices, with a composite mean of 2.52, categorized as Proficient. Teachers rated their understanding of inclusive practices and ability to collaborate with general education teachers at 2.40, labeled Fairly Proficient, suggesting moderate confidence in this area. Their ability to create inclusive learning environments and modify instruction, materials, and assessments received slightly higher ratings of 2.60 and 2.62, respectively, both indicating a Proficient level. However, when it comes to meeting the diverse needs of students in inclusive classrooms, teachers rated themselves at 2.45, again in the Fairly Proficient range. These results suggest that while teachers demonstrate proficiency in certain inclusive practices, such as modifying instructional materials and fostering inclusive environments, there is a need for continued support and training in collaboration.

Table 6 shows teachers' use of visual aids in supporting inclusive education, with a composite mean of 2.80, categorized as Preferred. Teachers rated their use of visual aids, such as charts, diagrams, pictures, and graphic organizers, at 2.85,

indicating a strong preference for these tools in illustrating concepts and enhancing understanding.

Table 6. Visual Aids

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I use visual aids such as charts, diagrams, pictures, and graphic organizers.	2.85	Preferred
2. I used to illustrate concepts and support understanding.	2.85	Preferred
3. Visuals are used especially for students with learning disabilities or visual impairments.	2.78	Preferred
4. I develop colorful and interactive multisensory teaching materials.	2.73	Preferred
Composite Mean	2.80	Preferred

Visual aids are especially used for students with learning disabilities or visual impairments, with a weighted mean of 2.78, demonstrating teachers' recognition of the benefits of visual support for diverse learners. The development of colorful and interactive multisensory materials received a slightly lower rating of 2.73, though it remains within the Preferred category. Overall, these findings suggest that teachers value visual aids as effective instructional tools in inclusive settings and actively use them to support student comprehension and engagement, particularly for students with specific learning challenges.

Table 7. Manipulations

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I used manipulative materials for students with learning disabilities.	2.75	Preferred
2. I use counting blocks, tangrams, or fraction tiles.	2.63	Preferred
3. I help students engage with abstract concepts.	2.78	Preferred
4. I provide a hands-on approach to learning.	2.77	Preferred
Composite Mean	2.73	Preferred

Table 7 illustrates teachers' use of manipulative materials to support students with learning disabilities, with a composite mean of 2.73, indicating a Preferred level. Teachers rated their use of manipulative tools, such as counting blocks, tangrams, and fraction tiles, at 2.63, suggesting a preference for these resources to facilitate hands-on learning. The use of manipulatives to help students engage with abstract concepts received a weighted mean of 2.78, reflecting teachers' recognition of the effectiveness of these materials in making complex ideas more accessible. Similarly, the provision of a hands-on approach to learning scored 2.77, further emphasizing the value teachers place on manipulatives in supporting active,

tactile engagement. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers actively prefer and use manipulative materials as instructional aides to enhance comprehension and engagement, particularly for students with learning challenges in inclusive classroom settings.

Table 8. Adapted Books

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I use adapted books that are modified to meet the individual needs of students.	2.68	Preferred
2. I let my students read adapted books.	2.73	Preferred
3. I guide my students on how to read the adapted books.	2.72	Preferred
4. I require parents and significant others to support students in reading using adapted books.	2.70	Preferred
Composite Mean	2.71	Preferred

Table 8 displays teachers' use of adapted books as a supportive resource for students with special needs, with a composite mean of 2.71, classified as Preferred. Teachers indicated a preference for using adapted books modified to meet individual learning needs, with a weighted mean of 2.68. They also encourage students to engage with these books, rating this practice at 2.73, reflecting the value placed on accessible reading materials. Additionally, guiding students in reading adapted books received a rating of 2.72, suggesting teachers' active involvement in facilitating comprehension. Furthermore, teachers prefer to involve parents and significant others in supporting students' reading through adapted books, with a mean of 2.70, indicating an inclusive approach that extends learning support beyond the classroom. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers favor adapted books as an effective tool for enhancing literacy and accessibility, recognizing their role in individualized learning within inclusive educational settings.

Table 9. Assistive Technology

Indicators:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I utilize various assistive technology tools.	2.53	Preferred
2. I use a lot of devices depending on students' needs.	2.58	Preferred
3. I use devices like speech-to-text software or text-to-speech software.	2.50	Less Preferred
4. I use communication boards, or specialized apps on tablets to meet the individual needs of the students.	2.53	Preferred
Composite Mean	2.54	Preferred

Table 9 presents teachers' use of assistive technology devices to support students

with special needs, with a composite mean of 2.54, classified as Preferred. Teachers indicated a preference for utilizing various assistive technology tools (2.53) and using multiple devices depending on student needs (2.58), showing a general favorability towards integrating technology in inclusive classrooms. However, specific tools like speech-to-text or text-to-speech software received a slightly lower rating of 2.50, indicating that these are Less Preferred compared to other assistive options. The use of communication boards and specialized apps on tablets was rated at 2.53, further supporting the overall preference for technology that addresses individual learning requirements. These findings suggest that while teachers generally prefer using assistive technology devices, there may be variability in familiarity or comfort with certain types of tools, highlighting the potential benefit of additional training to enhance effective technology integration in inclusive education.

Table 10. Sensory Materials

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I require sensory materials or activities to enhance their learning experience.	2.52	Preferred
2. I use items like fidget toys, sensory bins, weighted blankets, or noise-canceling headphones.	2.35	Less Preferred
3. I use multisensory teaching materials to motivate my students.	2.52	Preferred
4. Multisensory materials are used to sustain attention and to deepen the students' understanding of the concepts.	2.50	Less Preferred
Composite Mean	2.47	Less Preferred

Table 10 presents teachers' use of sensory materials to support learning for students with diverse needs, with a composite mean of 2.47, categorized as Less Preferred. While some sensory materials and activities were rated as Preferred, such as requiring sensory tools to enhance learning (2.52) and using multisensory teaching materials to motivate students (2.52), other items showed lower preference. Specifically, the use of items like fidget toys, sensory bins, weighted blankets, or noise-canceling headphones received a weighted mean of 2.35, indicating they are Less Preferred. Similarly, using multisensory materials to sustain attention and deepen understanding was rated 2.50, also categorized as Less Preferred. Overall, these findings suggest that while teachers recognize the potential benefits of sensory materials, their preference for such tools is moderate, indicating a possible area for further support or training to enhance familiarity and effectiveness with these resources in inclusive classroom settings.

Table 11. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems:

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I use AAC systems to support students who have difficulties with verbal communication.	2.27	Less Preferred
2. I use communication boards.	2.42	Less Preferred
3. I use communication devices.	2.42	Less Preferred
4. I use sign language materials.	2.40	Less Preferred
Composite Mean	2.38	Less Preferred

Table 11 reflects teachers' use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems to support students with verbal communication challenges, with a composite mean of 2.38, categorized as Less Preferred. Specific tools, such as communication boards and communication devices, both received a weighted mean of 2.42, indicating a moderate level of use but still within the Less Preferred range. The use of sign language materials was also rated Less Preferred at 2.40, while the overall use of AAC systems for students with verbal difficulties received a slightly lower rating of 2.27. These results suggest that while teachers may occasionally use AAC tools to facilitate communication for students with special needs, there is limited preference or comfort with these systems, highlighting a potential area for training and support to help teachers integrate AAC systems more effectively in inclusive educational settings.

Table 12. Adaptive tools

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I use various adaptive tools to assist students with physical disabilities.	2.40	Less Preferred
2. I use adaptive writing utensils.	2.37	Less Preferred
3. I use specialized seating.	2.42	Less Preferred
4. I use adapted computer interfaces.	2.37	Less Preferred
Composite Mean	2.39	Less Preferred

Table 12 presents teachers' use of adaptive tools to support students with physical disabilities, with a composite mean of 2.39, categorized as Less Preferred. Teachers rated their use of various adaptive tools, such as adaptive writing utensils (2.37) and specialized seating (2.42), within the Less Preferred range, suggesting limited utilization or familiarity with these resources. Similarly, adapted computer interfaces received a mean of 2.37, indicating a lower preference for using this technology to assist students with physical needs. These findings imply that while adaptive tools have potential benefits for enhancing accessibility in inclusive classrooms, teachers may not frequently use them, underscoring a need for additional training and resources to improve awareness and effective implementation of adaptive tools in educational settings.

Table 13. Individualized education programs (IEPs)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I use IEPs as legal documents that outline the specific educational goals and strategies for students with disabilities.	2.35	Less Preferred
2. I have an understanding of specific instructional materials tailored to meet individual student needs.	2.40	Less Preferred
3. I explain to parents the importance of IEP.	2.35	Less Preferred
4. I let my colleagues or principal review my IEPs.	2.35	Less Preferred
Composite Mean	2.36	Less Preferred

Table 13 reflects teachers' use and understanding of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to support students with disabilities, with a composite mean of 2.36, classified as Less Preferred. Teachers rated the use of IEPs as legal documents outlining specific educational goals at 2.35, suggesting a limited preference or comfort in engaging with these structured plans. Similarly, their understanding of instructional materials tailored to individual needs was rated at 2.40, indicating a moderate level of familiarity. Explaining the importance of IEPs to parents and having IEPs reviewed by colleagues or administrators both received ratings of 2.35, further underscoring a lower level of engagement with these processes. These findings suggest that while teachers may recognize the value of IEPs, there is limited preference or frequency of use, pointing to a need for enhanced training and support to increase their confidence and effectiveness in implementing IEPs within inclusive educational settings.

Table 13. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Teachers' Proficiency and Instructional Materials for Special Education Learners Within the Inclusive Educational Settings

Variables	Person r Value	P-Value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
The Level of Teachers' Proficiency and Instructional Materials for Special Education Learners Within the Inclusive Educational Settings	0.8414.	0.00001	Rejected	Significant

Table 13 shows the significant relationship between the level of teachers' proficiency and the use of instructional materials for special education learners within inclusive educational settings. With a Pearson rrr-value of 0.8414, the correlation is strong and positive, indicating a high degree of association between teachers' proficiency levels and their use of instructional materials. The p-value of 0.00001 is well below the significance level of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). This result suggests a statistically significant relationship, meaning that as teachers' proficiency levels increase, their utilization of

instructional materials for special education learners also tends to improve. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge to support the effective use of instructional resources in inclusive settings, highlighting the potential benefits of targeted professional development in boosting both proficiency and resource implementation.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that while teachers show moderate proficiency in specific areas related to special education laws, individualized education programs (IEPs), and evidence-based strategies, there is a significant need for further development in their use and familiarity with specialized instructional materials. This finding aligns with recent studies that highlight gaps in teacher training for inclusive education, particularly regarding knowledge of legal frameworks and individualized teaching methods (Forlin & Sin, 2020; Sharma et al., 2021). Teachers rated their proficiency in special education policies as only "Fairly Proficient" for understanding laws and specific accommodations, yet they demonstrated a higher proficiency in supporting the rights and quality of education for students with special needs. Research underscores that while general beliefs in inclusivity are strong, effective implementation requires deeper training in specific laws, policies, and practical tools (Lindqvist et al., 2019). Without sufficient familiarity with legal standards and the process of creating IEPs, teachers may struggle to meet the unique needs of students in inclusive settings effectively.

Furthermore, the strong positive correlation (r = 0.8414) between teachers' proficiency and their use of instructional materials suggests that enhancing teachers' skills can directly improve their utilization of diverse resources in inclusive classrooms. Teachers who are proficient in evidence-based strategies and inclusive practices are more likely to adopt adaptive tools, sensory materials, and technology, which benefit students with disabilities by making content more accessible and engaging (Ahsan et al., 2021; Garcia & Moore, 2020). However, the "Less Preferred" ratings for AAC systems, adaptive tools, and IEPs indicate that many teachers may not yet feel fully equipped to integrate these resources into their practice. Studies have shown that consistent, targeted professional development can increase teachers' confidence and skills in using specialized instructional materials, leading to better learning outcomes for students with disabilities (Johnson & Brown, 2022; Evans et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of investing in continuous, structured training programs to foster proficiency in inclusive education, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the skills and resources needed to create supportive, accessible learning environments for all students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the essential role of teacher proficiency in effectively utilizing instructional materials within inclusive educational settings. While teachers demonstrate a foundational understanding of special education laws and positive attitudes toward inclusive practices, there are notable gaps in their familiarity and comfort with specialized tools such as adaptive devices, sensory materials, and AAC systems. The significant positive correlation between teachers' proficiency and their use of instructional resources suggests that enhancing skills in evidence-based strategies, IEP development, and legal knowledge can directly impact their effectiveness in inclusive classrooms. These findings highlight the importance of targeted professional development programs to empower teachers with the knowledge and tools needed to support diverse learners, thereby advancing inclusive education goals and fostering an equitable learning environment for students with special needs.

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