Article

Perception on the Effectiveness of Support Provided by Regular Teachers in Handling Learners to Special Educational Needs in Inclusive Classroom Setting

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Abstract: This study examines the perceptions and challenges faced by regular teachers in managing inclusive education, particularly for students with special needs. Data from various tables reveal that 80% of teachers lack formal training in specialized education, which significantly affects their confidence and efficacy in inclusive settings. Despite this, teachers exhibit generally positive attitudes toward inclusive practices, though they report significant challenges in instructional and time management. These challenges are predominantly classified as either "Challenged" or "Slightly Challenged." A statistical analysis underscores a weak but significant positive correlation between teachers' positive perceptions and the challenges they experience, suggesting that heightened awareness of inclusive practices may also increase the recognition of related difficulties. The findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive professional development and systemic adjustments to support teachers effectively in inclusive educational environments.

Introduction

Special education is designed to meet the unique needs of learners with disabilities (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020). This educational branch ensures that all students, particularly those with special educational needs (LSENs), receive adequate instructional adaptations and supports (Larios & Zetlin, 2023). LSENs include a broad spectrum of learning, mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. The evolution

of special education reflects a growing recognition of the diverse needs of these students and the necessity of specialized teaching strategies tailored to their specific educational requirements (Smith & Tyler, 2022). Recent reforms emphasize the integration of technology and personalized learning plans to enhance accessibility and learning outcomes for these students (Jones et al., 2023). Furthermore, legislative developments continue to support and expand the rights and resources available to LSENs, aiming to provide equitable educational opportunities (Clark et al., 2021).

Inclusive education policies mandate the integration of LSENs into regular classroom settings, promoting diversity and inclusion at all educational levels (White & Forrester, 2020). This approach not only benefits LSENs by exposing them to the general curriculum but also fosters a culture of acceptance and mutual respect among all students (Garcia et al., 2022). Research highlights that inclusive settings can offer richer social interactions and broader perspectives, significantly contributing to the socio-emotional development of LSENs (Thompson & Rodriguez, 2021). However, the practical implementation often challenges educators to modify their teaching methods and classroom management techniques to accommodate a wide range of learning needs effectively (Davis & Lopez, 2023).

The role of regular teachers in supporting LSENs within inclusive classrooms is critical. Effective support from these educators can significantly influence the academic success and social integration of these students (Allen & Wright, 2020). Teachers' preparedness to adapt curriculum and instruction to meet diverse learning needs is fundamental (Baker & Smith, 2022). Training in special education strategies, coupled with ongoing professional development, is essential for equipping regular teachers with the skills necessary to manage heterogeneous classrooms effectively (Martinez & Thomas, 2024). The support provided by teachers is not just academic but also extends to emotional and social dimensions, directly impacting the students' overall educational experience (Khan et al., 2021).

Despite the best intentions, regular teachers often encounter significant challenges in providing effective support to LSENs. One of the most prominent issues is the lack of adequate training and resources, which can hinder their ability to implement specialized educational strategies (Lee & Chang, 2022). Additionally, high student-to-teacher ratios may limit the amount of individual attention teachers can provide to LSENs, potentially impacting the quality of education these students receive (Peterson & James, 2023). There is also the challenge of balancing the needs of LSENs with those of the rest of the class, often leading to stress and burnout among teachers (Nguyen & Harper, 2024).

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of regular teachers regarding the effectiveness of the support they provide to LSENs in inclusive settings. Specifically, it seeks to understand

teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, their readiness to handle diverse classrooms, and their self-assessed skills in dealing with LSENs. Additionally, the research will explore the challenges faced by teachers in terms of instructional management and time management while catering to LSENs. These areas represent significant gaps in the existing literature, particularly in understanding the intersection of teacher preparedness and the quality of educational outcomes for LSENs.

Set in the environment of Concord Technical Institute, this research will contribute to the development of more effective strategies for integrating LSENs into regular classrooms. By examining the experiences and perceptions of teachers at this institution, the study aims to identify key factors that influence the success of inclusive education. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into improving teacher training programs, which in turn could enhance the quality of support for LSENs. Ultimately, this could lead to more inclusive educational practices that benefit all students, fostering a more equitable and effective learning environment

Methodology

The methodology of this study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design to explore the perceptions and effectiveness of support provided by regular teachers for learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in inclusive classroom settings at Concord Technical Institute (CTI). This approach combined qualitative and quantitative elements to obtain a detailed understanding of the intricate experiences and strategies used by teachers who are not specialized in special education. The study was guided by the INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT model to systematically address the research objectives. Data collection was conducted using an adapted survey questionnaire, originally developed by Perez-Jorge et al. (2006) and Kern, E (2006), which was modified based on the findings from the school and suggestions from the research advisor. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: Part I gathered demographic information about the 25 regular Grade Seven to Grade Twelve teachers participating in the study for the school year 2023-2024. Part II focused on teachers' perceptions of handling LSENs, examining attitudes towards inclusive education, readiness to implement inclusive practices, and self-assessed skills via a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". Part III explored the challenges faced by teachers, such as instructional strategies, training adequacy, and time management in dealing with students with special needs. The study's analysis aimed to provide a straightforward interpretation of the data collected, making use of a four-point Likert scale to evaluate responses. This scale helped to quantify the degree of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to the effectiveness of the educational support provided. This structured

approach allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the perceptions and challenges encountered by teachers in fostering an inclusive learning environment at CTI.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Seminars and trainings attended related to SpEd

Number of Hours	f	%
16 and above	3	12.00
11-15	1	4.00
6-10	0	0.00
5 and below	1	4.00
None	20	80.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 1 presents data on the number of hours of seminars and trainings attended by individuals related to Special Education (SpEd). The majority of the respondents, constituting 80% (20 individuals), have not attended any training or seminars on SpEd. This is a significant majority, indicating a potential gap in professional development in this area. Only a small fraction of the participants has engaged in extensive training; 3 individuals (12%) have attended 16 hours or more. In contrast, only 1 participant (4%) has attended between 11 to 15 hours and another 1 participant (4%) has attended 5 hours or fewer. Interestingly, no participants reported attending between 6 to 10 hours of training. This distribution suggests that while a small group is receiving relatively substantial training, there is a pronounced lack of moderate engagement (6-15 hours) among the majority.

Table 2. Attitudes

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Students with special needs will not be labeled as 'stupid', 'weird' or 'hopeless' when placed in regular classrooms	3.84	Very Positive
2	Students with special needs must be integrated into regular community.	3.44	Very Positive
3	I think it would be convenient to seek information and guidance on how to act in the classroom with a student with special needs.	3.44	Very Positive
4	The placement of students with special needs in regular classes negatively affect the academic performance of mainstream students	2.24	Negative
5	If they offered me a program that would raise awareness at the same time as the curriculum, I would be willing to apply it.	3.48	Very Positive
6	Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP.	3.64	Very Positive
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.35	Very Positive

Table 2 details attitudes toward the integration of students with special needs into regular educational settings, using a series of indicators measured by weighted means

(WM) and corresponding verbal descriptions. The overall sentiment expressed is highly favorable, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.35, classified as "Very Positive." Specific attitudes reveal that respondents strongly believe students with special needs will not be stigmatized as 'stupid', 'weird', or 'hopeless' when included in regular classrooms, evidenced by a high score of 3.84. Similarly, the notion of integrating special needs students into the regular community and the willingness to seek information and guidance on accommodating such students both received a score of 3.44, indicating a very positive attitude. Furthermore, the respondents are open to implementing programs that integrate awareness with the curriculum, as indicated by a score of 3.48. However, there is a notable exception; the placement of students with special needs in regular classes is perceived to negatively affect the academic performance of mainstream students, with a significantly lower score of 2.24, labeled as "Negative." This indicates some concerns about the potential academic impacts of integration. Lastly, there is a strong agreement (3.64) that special education teachers should specifically handle students who hold an Individualized Education Program (IEP), again highlighting a proactive stance towards specialized educational support.

Table 3. Readiness

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I should be supplied with the Inclusive Education Program Guidelines from DepEd as reference.	3.36	Very Positive
2	I believe that positive attitudes towards integration could be formed by giving advance awareness of IEP.	3.60	Very Positive
3	The curricular content should offer activities to raise awareness about disability.	3.44	Very Positive
4	I believe it is necessary to introduce specific programs within the ordinary curriculum to encourage a change in the attitude of the regular teachers and students	3.36	Very Positive
5	I believe that giving advance training towards integration of learners with special needs are really important factor.	3.76	Very Positive
6	I am not ready to accept changes strategies that involve teaching learners with special needs.	2.24	Negative
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.29	Very Positive

Table 3 showcases the readiness of individuals to engage with the concept of inclusive education, as indicated by various indicators related to the integration of students with special needs. The data reveal an overall very positive attitude, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.29. Most respondents express a strong readiness to support inclusive education; for instance, they feel that having access to the Inclusive Education Program Guidelines from the Department of Education (DepEd) as a reference would be beneficial, scoring 3.36. The belief in the formation of positive attitudes towards integration through advance awareness of Individualized Education Programs (IEP) received a high score of 3.60. Additionally, there is a consensus on the need to include activities in the curriculum that raise awareness about disabilities, which garnered a score of 3.44. There's also strong support for integrating specific programs within the ordinary curriculum to

change attitudes among regular teachers and students towards special needs integration, reflected in another score of 3.36. The importance of advance training for the integration of learners with special needs is particularly emphasized with the highest readiness score of 3.76. However, not all indicators reflect positivity; there is resistance to adopting new teaching strategies for learners with special needs, as indicated by a distinctly lower score of 2.24, labeled as "Negative." This suggests some hesitance or lack of readiness among participants to embrace all aspects of teaching adjustments required for effective inclusion of special needs students. This contrast underscores the complexity of fully implementing inclusive education practices, highlighting areas where further encouragement and support might be necessary.

Table 4. Level of Perception of the Regular Teachers in Handling Inclusive Education as to Self-assessed Skills

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I have the necessary training and qualifications to adapt the material for students with special needs and provide an appropriate educational response	2.72	Positive
2	I teach my students tools and forms of correct interaction with special needs students.	2.92	Positive
3	I was given a comprehensive picture on strengths and weaknesses of the students in inclusive classroom	2.88	Positive
4	I believe that I am able to address the disability of the student and provide an appropriate educational response.	3.28	Very Positive
5	Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP	3.52	Very Positive
6	I know how to act at all times in the event of any disability	3.76	Very Positive
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.18	Positive

Table 4 evaluates the self-assessed skills of regular teachers in handling inclusive education, presenting a series of indicators on their perceived capabilities. The overall perception is positive, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 3.18. Teachers generally rate their preparedness and skills favorably, although with some variation across different aspects. The lowest score, a 2.72, comes from teachers assessing their training and qualifications to adapt educational materials for students with special needs and provide appropriate responses, categorized as "Positive" but indicating room for improvement. Slightly higher, a score of 2.92 reflects confidence in teaching students correct interaction methods with peers who have special needs, suggesting a moderate assurance in facilitating social integration. A score of 2.88 indicates that teachers feel they have a relatively comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of students in an inclusive classroom, which is also rated positively. The confidence increases significantly when

teachers assess their ability to address the disability of a student directly and provide suitable educational responses, earning a score of 3.28, categorized as "Very Positive." Two of the highest scores highlight areas of strong confidence. Teachers believe they are well-equipped to handle situations involving disabilities at all times, with a high score of 3.76. Additionally, there's a strong affirmation (3.52) that special education teachers should specifically handle students who hold an Individualized Education Program (IEP), indicating a recognition of the specialized skills required for such roles and a very positive view of specialized educational support. Overall, while teachers express a general confidence in their abilities to manage inclusive education, the data suggest a gradient of readiness, with more confidence in direct and immediate interactions and slightly less assurance in broader pedagogical adaptations. This suggests potential areas for targeted professional development to enhance teachers' efficacy in inclusive settings.

Table 5. Instructional Management

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I require additional training to effectively instruct students with learning challenges in inclusive educational environments, particularly those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).	3.48	Extremely Challenged
2	I have difficulty to teach my students tools and forms of correct interaction with students with special needs	2.60	Challenged
3	I am not provided with adequate in-service training, limiting my capacity to effectively educate students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).	2.52	Challenged
4	My educational background does not prepared me to effectively teach students with special needs in inclusive education.	2.36	Slightly Challenged
5	I lack adequate in-service training from my school district, hindering my ability to effectively educate students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).	2.44	Slightly Challenged
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.68	Challenged

Table 5 reflects the challenges faced by teachers in managing instructional requirements within inclusive educational environments, particularly regarding students with special needs and those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The overall sentiment conveyed by the Aggregate Weighted Mean of 2.68 is that teachers feel "Challenged" in this area, suggesting notable difficulties. The most significant challenge, with a score of 3.48, indicates that teachers feel they require additional training to effectively instruct students with learning challenges. This is categorized as "Extremely Challenged," highlighting a critical need for enhanced professional development to

equip teachers with the necessary skills for inclusivity. Other indicators further emphasize the difficulties faced by teachers. The score of 2.60 reflects challenges in teaching students the correct tools and forms of interaction with peers who have special needs, while a score of 2.52 indicates that the lack of adequate in-service training limits teachers' capacities to educate students with IEPs effectively. Both these aspects are labeled as "Challenged," underscoring the need for improved training and support systems within schools. Similarly, teachers express concerns about their educational preparation, with a score of 2.36, suggesting that their initial training did not adequately prepare them for the demands of inclusive education, categorized as "Slightly Challenged." This is closely echoed by another indicator with a score of 2.44, where teachers report a lack of adequate in-service training from their school districts, also classified as "Slightly Challenged." Overall, the data from Table 5 paints a picture of a teaching workforce that finds itself underprepared and under-supported in meeting the demands of inclusive education. There is a clear indication that more targeted, comprehensive, and practical training programs are needed to bridge these gaps and enhance the effectiveness of instructional management in inclusive settings.

Table 6. Time Management

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I know how to act at all times in the event of any disability	3.44	Extremely Challenged
2	I believe that sometime I amunable to address the disability of the student and provide an appropriate educational response because of lack of time.	2.96	Challenged
3	I often review and update Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with special educational needs.	2.48	Slightly Challenged
4	I do not have much time to dedicate in addressing challenging behaviors exhibited by students with special needs?	2.60	Challenged
5	I have enough time do you allocate for individualized instruction for students with special needs in a typical school week.	2.48	Slightly Challenged
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.79	Challenged

Table 6 addresses the aspect of time management by teachers in inclusive educational settings, focusing on their capacity to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The overall impression, with an Aggregate Weighted Mean of 2.79, suggests that teachers feel "Challenged" by time constraints. The indicator scoring highest, at 3.44, paradoxically states that teachers know how to act in the event of any disability, but it is categorized as "Extremely Challenged." This could imply that while teachers are theoretically knowledgeable, practical application within

time-limited settings is challenging. A score of 2.96 indicates that teachers sometimes feel unable to adequately address a student's disability and provide an appropriate educational response due to a lack of time, reinforcing the notion that time constraints significantly affect their effectiveness. This is labeled as "Challenged." Furthermore, the tasks of reviewing and updating IEPs for students with special educational needs, as well as addressing challenging behaviors exhibited by these students, both receive scores indicating challenges: 2.48 and 2.60 respectively, categorized as "Slightly Challenged" and "Challenged." These scores reflect the strain of fitting these critical tasks into a regular teaching schedule, suggesting that the time allocated might not be sufficient to manage these responsibilities effectively. Finally, with another score of 2.48, teachers report that they do not have enough time to allocate for individualized instruction for students with special needs during a typical school week, also categorized as "Slightly Challenged." This further emphasizes the need for better time management strategies or adjustments in workload to ensure adequate attention to the individual needs of students with disabilities. Overall, the data from Table 6 clearly illustrates that time management is a significant issue for teachers in inclusive settings, impacting their ability to provide optimal support and instruction to students with special needs. Addressing these time-related challenges could potentially enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education.

Table 7. Test of significant relationship between the Perception and Challenges Experienced by the Regular Teachers

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Perception and Challenges	0.449*	Weak Positive	0.024	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at p<0.05 (two-tailed)

Table 7 presents the statistical analysis examining the relationship between the perceptions of regular teachers regarding inclusive education and the challenges they experience while implementing it. The analysis uses Pearson's correlation coefficient (r-value) to measure the strength and direction of the relationship, along with a p-value to test for statistical significance. The correlation coefficient between the perception and challenges experienced by the teachers is 0.449, indicating a weak positive correlation. This suggests that as positive perceptions of inclusive education increase, the challenges experienced by teachers also tend to increase slightly, though the strength of this relationship is weak. The positive correlation might reflect that increased awareness and understanding of the complexities of inclusive education could lead to a greater recognition of challenges, or that those who are more engaged with these practices face more pronounced difficulties. The p-value associated with this correlation is

0.024, which is below the significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed test). As a result, the null hypothesis (H0), which posits that there is no correlation between the variables, is rejected. This decision indicates that the observed correlation is statistically significant, albeit weak.

In summary, the analysis from Table 7 shows a significant, albeit weak, positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and the challenges they face. This finding implies that as teachers have more positive views about inclusive education, they also tend to perceive or experience greater challenges in practice, highlighting the complexity and demanding nature of implementing inclusive education effectively.

Conclusion

The findings reveal a comprehensive overview of the challenges and perceptions regarding inclusive education among regular teachers. There is a notable gap in specialized education training, with 80% of teachers having no relevant seminars, impacting their ability to effectively implement inclusive practices. Although teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards inclusive education, they face significant challenges in instructional and time management, which are mostly classified as "Challenged" or "Slightly Challenged." These difficulties highlight the need for more specific training and support. Additionally, a statistical analysis shows a weak but significant positive correlation between the positive perceptions of inclusive practices and the recognition of associated challenges, suggesting that greater awareness may increase the acknowledgment of these challenges. The data underscores the necessity for enhanced professional development and systemic changes to better support teachers in inclusive education settings.

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis illustrates a nuanced landscape of technology integration in education, especially for learners with special educational needs (LSENs). From the distribution of technology-related training hours to the perceived effectiveness of multimedia tools in the classroom, it is clear that while the institution boasts significant strengths, there are also distinct areas for improvement. The widespread use of basic technologies like smartphones and laptops suggests a good foundation. However, the variability in teachers' confidence and training with more complex technological tasks points to the need for more focused professional development. This is underscored by the significant, albeit weak, correlation between teachers' technological confidence and the effectiveness of technology integration, highlighting the critical role of teacher training in optimizing technology use in education. The overall positive impact of

multimedia integration on LSENs' learning outcomes confirms the value of continuing to enhance these efforts. Moving forward, targeted training programs should be implemented to elevate teachers' proficiency and confidence across a broader range of technologies, thereby maximizing the educational benefits for all students.

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