

Non-SPED Teachers' Preparedness and Coping Mechanisms in Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT: Inclusive education focuses on integrating diverse learners into regular classrooms, but non-special education teachers frequently encounter challenges in effectively managing such environments. This study sought to address the existing gap by investigating the preparedness and coping strategies which employed by regular teachers in schools around Cagayan de Oro City that offer inclusive education. It also examined the significant relationship between their preparedness and coping mechanisms and identified which independent variables singly or in combination predicts their coping mechanisms. Using a correlational and causal research designs, the study surveyed 105 non-SPED teachers who were selected through stratified random sampling using Slovin's Formula with an adapted questionnaire. Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression were utilized to analyze and interpret the data gathered. Key findings revealed that non-SPED teachers are highly prepared in inclusive education, and they have high coping mechanisms. There is a high positive correlation between preparedness and coping mechanisms. Moreover, the non-SPED teachers' preparedness are strong predictors for their coping mechanisms. Training and resources are important for non-SPED teachers in order to cope with the challenges being in the inclusive classes. This suggests that schools need to continually prioritize holistic teachers' development programs and equitable resource distribution to sustain non-SPED teachers' preparedness and coping mechanisms and ultimately enhance learning outcomes for all students in inclusive education settings.

KEYWORDS: coping mechanism, inclusive education, non-SPED teacher

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, non-special education (SPED) teachers face significant challenges in implementing inclusive practices due to insufficient specialized training. This chapter examines their preparedness and coping strategies, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems to enhance their ability to foster inclusive learning environments and equitable educational opportunities.

The contemporary landscape of inclusive education reflects both advancements and ongoing challenges, particularly regarding the preparedness of non-SPED teachers. Recent policies, such as DepEd Order 44 s. 2021, aim to provide comprehensive guidelines for educational programs and services for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program. This directive guarantees that learners with disabilities have equal opportunities to fully engage in the education system, supporting broader initiatives to advance inclusive education (DO No. 44, s. 2021).

In spite of these initiatives, many non-special education teachers still lack sufficient training and resources to effectively support students who have different learning needs. To fix these problems, it has been suggested that teachers should get complete trainings, programs be implemented, along with the adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) frameworks. Nevertheless, educators often report feeling unprepared for the complexities of inclusive classrooms, leading to ineffective teaching practices and reduced students' engagement (Mokaleng & Mowes, 2020).

Cultural factors also play a critical role in shaping the success of inclusive education globally. Research emphasizes the importance of addressing cultural gaps while promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in classrooms (Shanjuvigasini & Swarnakumari, 2024). In multicultural settings, teachers must navigate varying cultural norms and expectations. Without culturally competent training, non-SPED teachers struggle to create supportive environments for marginalized students.

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In Asia, especially in the Philippines, assessing the preparedness and coping strategies of non-special education teachers has become increasingly critical. Research indicates that although many educators are willing even though they want to help differently abled learners, teachers often do not have enough training or tools to properly include them in class. Teachers need to be trained or even an orientation before letting them teach (Siedlecki, 2020).

Non-SPED teachers encounter various struggles, including insufficient instructional strategies tailored for students with disabilities and limited parental involvement. Socio-economic barriers further hinder effective teaching practices. The lack of specialized resources often forces educators to rely on basic accommodations, such as extended deadlines or modified assessments which may not fully address students' diverse needs (Adams, 2021).

Teachers frequently report feeling overwhelmed by managing diverse classrooms without adequate training or resources. While many demonstrate resilience and adaptability, their coping strategies often fail to address systemic issues within inclusive education frameworks. Mentoring programs, collaborative teaching models, and access to specialized training have been identified as essential solutions (Santos & Reyes, 2024).

Despite the increasing body of research on non-SPED teachers' readiness for inclusive education, substantial gaps persist in understanding their coping mechanisms and challenges. This study aimed to bridge these gaps within the Philippine context by examining how non-SPED teachers manage their roles in inclusive classrooms. The findings will provide valuable insights to inform policies and practices that improve teaching strategies and enhance learning outcomes for all students.

This study titled, *Non-SPED Teachers' Preparedness and Coping Mechanism in Inclusive Education*, was framed through the integration of two key theories: Constructivist Learning Theory, and Teacher Preparedness Theory. These theories collectively informed the theoretical and conceptual framework, which examined the relationship between the independent variable, which is the level of preparedness of non-SPED teachers, and the dependent variable, which is the level of coping mechanism.

The Constructivist Learning Theory suggests that knowledge is developed through social interactions and experiences (Al-Shammari et al., 2019). This theory is particularly pertinent when analyzing how non-special education teachers adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of students with special needs. The level of preparedness as reflected in training received and access to learning resources, directly impact teachers' ability to create adaptive learning experiences. Teachers who engage in professional development and collaborate with colleagues are more likely to implement effective instructional methods tailor to individual students. Thus, constructivism highlighted the importance of teacher preparedness in shaping effective teaching practices within inclusive classrooms.

Moreover, research indicated that many non-SPED teachers felt unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities resulting from insufficient specialized support, training and resources (Excellencia, 2024). This gap in preparedness not only affected their confidence but also impacted their ability to employ effective teaching strategies. By examining the relationship between teachers' preparedness and coping mechanisms, this study aimed to identify specific areas where professional development could enhance educators' skills and confidence in managing inclusive classrooms.

The conceptual framework depicted the interaction between the independent variable which was the level of preparedness, and the dependent variable, which was the level of coping mechanisms which together are needed for the effectiveness of non-special education teachers in implementing inclusive education. The level of preparedness included indicators such as the training received and access to learning resources. These indicators collectively influenced how well-equipped teachers were to properly use inclusive teaching methods. For example, teachers who got enough training and support are more confident in changing their lessons to fit students with different needs (Moon, 2023).

The level of coping mechanism included various strategies employed by teachers, either personal or professional coping strategies. The interplay between these variables suggested that a higher level of preparedness among non-SPED teachers will lead to more effective coping mechanisms when addressing challenges in inclusive classrooms. Well-prepared teachers are likely to adopt adaptive strategies that enhanced their ability to manage classroom dynamics and support all students effectively (Hind et al., 2019).

In conclusion, this theoretical and conceptual framework provided a comprehensive understanding of how non-SPED teachers' level of preparedness predicted their coping mechanisms in putting inclusive education into practice. This study looked into how things are connected by using ideas from Constructivist Learning Theory and Teacher Preparedness Theory, which aimed to contribute valuable insights into improving educational practices for all students (Ablando, 2023).

II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized both descriptive correlational and causal designs to evaluate the relationships between teachers' preparedness and coping mechanisms. This design enabled the collection of numerical data, which could be statistically analyzed

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to identify patterns and correlations among the variables. By using this approach, the study sought to provide empirical evidence on how different factors contributed to the overall effectiveness of non-special education teachers in inclusive settings.

As what McMillan et al. (2022) emphasized the utility of descriptive correlational designs in educational settings, particularly for identifying relationships among variables without manipulating them. The authors argued that this approach is particularly effective for understanding how various factors, such as teachers' preparedness and coping strategies, influence teaching effectiveness in inclusive classrooms. This aligns well with the study's objective of providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of non-SPED teachers in inclusive environments.

Furthermore, a causal design was implemented to examine the research objective concerning the impact of non-SPED teachers' preparedness levels on their coping mechanisms, a methodological approach consistent with McMillan et al.'s (2022) framework for identifying relationships between variables such as preparedness and coping strategies while mitigating the constraints associated with purely descriptive or correlational designs.

Data analysis for this study involved the use of descriptive statistics. For Problems 1 and 2, the Mean and Standard Deviation were employed to assess teachers' levels of preparedness and their coping mechanisms. For Problem 3, the researcher utilized the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) to examine the relationship between teachers' preparedness and their coping mechanisms. For Problem 4—Multiple Rinear regression was applied to identify which of the independent variables predict/s singly or in combination the coping mechanisms of the non-SPED teachers.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the level of preparedness of non-SPED teachers for inclusive education, as assessed by their:

- 1.1 training received;
- 1.2 access to learning resources?

Table 1. Overall Preparedness of Non-SPED Teachers

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Training Received	4.04	0.90	Agree	Prepared
Access to Learning Resources	4.18	0.84	Agree	Prepared
Overall Mean	4.11	0.87	Agree	Prepared

Note: 4.21-5.00 Highly Prepared; 3.41-4.20 Prepared; 2.61-3.40 Moderately Prepared; 1.81-2.60 Less Prepared; 1.00-1.80 Not Prepared

Table 1 exhibits the overall level of preparedness of non-SPED Teachers. It has an overall Mean of 4.11 with SD = 0.87, described as Agree and interpreted as Prepared. This indicates that non-special education teachers generally feel confident in their ability to use inclusive teaching methods. This indicates that non-SPED teachers generally feel confident in their ability to use inclusive teaching methods. On the other hand, the Standard Deviation of 0.87 suggests some variability in the perceived level of preparedness among teachers. Although the mean indicates a general sense of preparedness, it is crucial to examine the individual components contributing to this overall score to identify specific areas where teachers may require additional support or training.

However, the different responses show that some teachers might need more support to feel fully prepared. As Kurniawati et al. (2020) pointed out, how prepared teachers are, is a key factor in ensuring effective inclusion. Ongoing professional development is necessary to address gaps and maintain readiness. It pointed out, how prepared teachers are, is a key factor in ensuring effective inclusion. Therefore, ongoing professional development is necessary to address gaps and maintain readiness, which can lead to more consistent and effective inclusive practices across the board.

Moreover, Access to Learning Resources has the highest Mean of 4.18 with SD=0.84, described as Agree and interpreted as Prepared. This implies that access to adequate resources significantly contributes to teachers' ability to implement inclusive practices effectively. It cited the importance of providing educators with the necessary tools and support to meet the diverse needs of their students. The availability of resources not only enhances teachers' confidence but also enables them to create more engaging and effective learning experiences for all students.

Hay et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of resource availability in fostering inclusive environments, as it equips teachers with the tools and materials needed to address diverse learners' needs. Schools should continue to prioritize resource allocation to ensure sustained teachers' preparedness. It cited the importance of resource availability in fostering inclusive environments, as it equips teachers with the tools and materials needed to address diverse learners' needs.

On the other hand, Training Received has lowest Mean of 4.04 with SD=0.90, described as Agree and interpreted as Prepared. This suggests that while training is generally adequate, there may be gaps in its relevance or practical application. The

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higher standard deviation for training received also indicates a wider range of experiences among teachers, suggesting that some may find the training highly beneficial while others do not. It highlights the necessity for targeted professional development opportunities that address specific needs and challenges faced by teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Kurniawati et al. (2020) noted that training programs should be tailored to address real-world challenges in inclusive classrooms, providing teachers with hands-on strategies and contextual examples. Institutions should focus on enhancing training programs by incorporating practical workshops and mentorship opportunities to further strengthen teachers' preparedness for inclusive education.

Problem 2. What is the extent of the non-SPED teachers coping mechanisms in terms of

- 1.1 personal coping strategies; and
- 1.2 professional coping strategies?

Table 2. Over-all Coping Mechanism

Coping Mechanisms	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Personal	4.28	0.76	Strongly Agree	Very High
Professional	4.40	0.71	Strongly Agree	Very High
Overall	4.34	0.75	Strongly Agree	Very High

Note: 4.21-5.00 Excellent; 3.41-4.20 High; 2.61-3.40 Moderate; 1.81-2.60 Low; 1.00-1.80 Very Low

Table 2 exhibits the overall level of coping mechanism of non-SPED teachers. It has an overall Mean of 4.34 with SD = 0.75, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very High. This demonstrates a strong dedication to using methods that help them be effective and take care of themselves in inclusive classrooms. This demonstrates a strong dedication to using methods that help them be effective and take care of themselves in inclusive classrooms. The relatively low standard deviation indicates a general consistency in the use and perceived effectiveness of coping mechanisms among teachers. This suggests that both personal and professional strategies are well-integrated into their routines to manage the demands of inclusive education effectively. This implies that a more well-rounded approach in coping strategies is paramount (Sharma et al., 2023).

Further exploration on these mechanisms and its effectiveness will be highly beneficial to the teachers, learners, and the institution. This could inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems to enhance teachers' well-being and promote positive outcomes for all students in inclusive settings.

Moreover, Professional Coping Mechanism has the highest Mean of 4.40 with SD=0.71, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very High. This indicates that teachers prioritize collaborative, adaptive, and continuous learning strategies to navigate the complexities of inclusive education. This focuses on professional strategies that highlights the proactive efforts of teachers to seek out and implement effective practices, that suggests a culture of continuous improvement and a dedication to meeting the diverse needs of students in inclusive classrooms. It also implies that teachers recognize the importance of external support and collaboration in enhancing their ability to create positive learning environments.

Professional Coping Mechanism will give rise to more pro-active teachers, (Aragon et al., 2024). Having the understanding of the dynamics, and having the tool sets to effectively address concerns is paramount to the growth of teachers. It also implies that teachers recognize the importance of external support and collaboration in enhancing their ability to create positive learning environments. Having the understanding of the dynamics and having the tool sets to effectively address concerns is paramount to the growth of teachers. As such, schools should invest in comprehensive training programs that equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to effectively address the unique challenges they encounter in inclusive classrooms, ultimately fostering a more supportive and empowering environment for both teachers and students.

On the other hand, Personal Coping Mechanism has lower Mean of 4.28 with SD=0.76, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very High. This suggests that while personal strategies are valued, there may be opportunities to further enhance self-care and stress-management practices. By addressing this gap and promoting greater emphasis on personal coping strategies, schools can contribute to a more sustainable and supportive working environment for teachers, ultimately benefiting both their well-being and their effectiveness in the classroom. Data show that personal coping mechanisms equate to how the teachers view themselves and their effectiveness, Hameed and Manzoor (2023). Institutions should address this disparity and look into incorporating programs and activities that emphasize the value of self-care, which could lead to improved teacher morale, reduced burnout rates, and a more positive and nurturing learning environment for all students.

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Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of preparedness and extent of coping mechanisms of non-SPED teachers in inclusive education?

Table 3 exhibits the Pearson's Correlation Analysis that implies a moderate to high positive and significant relationship between the level of preparedness and coping mechanisms of non-SPED teachers in inclusive education. The overall r value is 0.72 with p value of 0.00 interpreted as Significant High Positive Correlation. The results imply that teachers who feel more prepared for inclusive education are more likely to employ effective coping strategies. The findings suggest that investing in teacher preparedness could have a dual benefit of improving both instructional quality and teacher well-being in inclusive settings. This correlation highlights the interconnectedness between teacher readiness and their ability to manage the demands of inclusive education. The significant positive relationship suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing teacher preparedness, such as targeted training and resource allocation, may also have a cascading effect on their coping abilities, leading to improved job satisfaction and reduced stress levels.

Additionally, this strong correlation underscores the importance of comprehensive teacher preparation programs in fostering resilience and adaptability among educators (Carew et al., 2023). By equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively address the diverse needs of students in inclusive classrooms, these programs not only enhance their preparedness but also empower them to develop and utilize effective coping strategies to navigate the challenges of their profession.

Table 3. Test of Correlation Between Non-SPED Teachers Level of Preparedness and Coping Mechanisms

Level of Preparedness	Coping Mechanism								
	Personal Coping Strategies			Professional Coping Strategies			Overall Coping Mechanism		
	R	p	Description/Decision	r	p	Description/Decision	r	P	Description/Decision
Training Received	0.54	0.00	Moderate Positive/Significant	0.70	0.00	High Positive/Significant	0.69	0.00	High Positive/Significant
Access to Learning Resources	0.58	0.00	Moderate Positive/Significant	0.67	0.00	High Positive/Significant	0.69	0.00	High Positive/Significant
Overall Level of Preparedness	0.58	0.00	Moderate Positive/Significant	0.71	0.00	High Positive/Significant	0.72	0.00	High Positive/Significant
Note:	0.91 - 1.00 Very High Positive Correlation 0.51 – 0.70 Moderate Positive Correlation 0.00 – 0.30 Negligible Positive Correlation 0.71 – 0.90 High Positive Correlation 0.31 – 0.50 Low Positive Correlation Significant when computed p -value <0.05								

Both sub variables of preparedness, Training Received and Access to Learning Resources have r value of 0.69 with p value 0.00 interpreted as Significant High Positive Correlation respectively. The results imply that both formal training and access to resources play crucial roles in enhancing teachers' ability to cope with the challenges of inclusive education. This cited that a multi-faceted approach to teacher preparation, encompassing both theoretical knowledge and practical resources, is essential for fostering a supportive and effective inclusive learning environment. It also emphasizes the need for ongoing investment in both training programs and resource provision to ensure that teachers are adequately equipped to meet the evolving needs of their students.

This aligns with the study of Hay et al. (2023), which emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development and resource provision in supporting teachers' efficacy in inclusive classrooms. Schools and educational institutions should prioritize both comprehensive training programs and ensuring adequate access to learning resources to enhance teachers' preparedness and coping mechanisms simultaneously.

Problem 4. Which of the independent variable predict/s singly or in combination to the extent of coping mechanisms?

The findings from multiple linear regression analysis in table 4 presents that Training Received is the strongest predictor of coping mechanism among non-SPED Teachers with, standardized beta coefficient of 0.373 ($t=2.785$, $p=0.006$). This implies that comprehensive training programs significantly enhance teachers' ability to employ effective strategies for managing the demands

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of inclusive education. It underscores the critical role of professional development in equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of inclusive classrooms.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Variables	UC		SC	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
	B	SE	B			
Constant	2.274	0.207	---	10.960	0.000	
Trainings Received	0.240	0.086	0.373	2.785	0.006	Reject Ho2
Access to Learning Resources	0.263	0.095	0.372	2.772	0.007	Reject Ho2
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	f-value	Sig. (p-value)	
	0.718	0.515	0.506	53.72	0.000	

Note: UC = Unstandardized Coefficients

SC = Standardized Coefficients

Dependent Variable = Coping Mechanism

Significant when computed p-value <0.05.

The significance of training received as a predictor of coping mechanisms suggests that well-designed and targeted training programs can empower teachers to feel more confident and competent in their ability to support diverse learners, ultimately leading to improved well-being and effectiveness. Furthermore, it highlights the need for continuous investment in teacher training to ensure that educators are adequately prepared to meet the evolving demands of inclusive education.

Equipping teachers with adaptive classroom management tools are vital (Sharma et al., 2023). The emphasis in professional development will aid teachers to improve their overall teaching outcomes. It emphasizes the professional development that will aid teachers in improving their overall teaching outcomes. It fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. This could also involve training teachers on how to modify lesson plans and leverage available resources to create a more engaging and accessible learning experience for students with diverse needs.

Moreover, Access to Learning Resources is also a predictor for coping mechanism among non-SPED teachers with standardized beta coefficient of 0.372 ($t=2.772$, $p=0.007$). This implies that the availability of adequate resources plays a crucial role in supporting teachers' effectiveness and well-being in inclusive classrooms. This highlights the need for schools and districts to prioritize the provision of accessible and relevant learning materials, assistive technologies, and other resources that enable teachers to effectively differentiate instruction and meet the diverse needs of their students. It also suggests that ongoing investment in resource development and procurement is essential for creating a supportive and empowering environment for teachers in inclusive settings.

Availability of resources is paramount. This will also aid the teachers in performing well in an inclusive environment (Jennings and Frank, 2023). The study should emphasize in allocation and creating strategic plans for the teachers. Allocation and creation of strategic plans for the teachers will ensure that teachers have the tools and support they need to succeed, which can lead to improved teacher satisfaction, reduced burnout rates, and ultimately, better outcomes for students with diverse learning needs.

The regression model has R value of 0.718 and R^2 value of 0.515, which means 51.5% of the variants in coping mechanism can be explained by the combine effects of training received and access to learning resources. The adjusted R value of 0.506 confirms the reliability of the model, while significant F value ($F=53.72$, $P=0.000$) validates its overall fit and statistical significance. This implies that both training and resources are essential factors in supporting teachers' coping mechanisms, yet there may be other factors that contribute to their resilience and well-being. There is more room for improvement in the study. These strategies can then be addressed in the teaching strategies, for the benefit of both teacher and student. (Williams et al., 2022).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings presented above, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Access to learning resources, is crucial in enabling teachers to effectively adapt their teaching methods for inclusive settings.
2. Collaboration indicates that teachers valued the support and flexibility these strategies provided.
3. Resources availability helped equipped teachers to navigate the challenges of inclusive settings effectively.
4. Trainings and learning resources played substantial role in enhancing teachers' ability coping mechanisms.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions presented above, the researcher has formulated the following recommendations:

1. Prioritizing continually to equitable access to diverse teaching materials and inclusive education programs by allocating specific budgets for resource acquisition and partnering with organizations that specialize in inclusive education tools will sustain the high level of preparedness among non-SPED teachers teaching in inclusive learning.
2. Non-SPED Teachers may engage in continuous professional development and mentorship programs to enhance adaptive teaching skills.
3. Relevant training of non-SPED teachers and accessibility of resources may always be provided to them to sustain their preparedness and coping mechanisms.
4. Regular updating of resources and upskilling of non-SPED teachers to sustain them in their preparedness and coping mechanisms in teaching in inclusive education.

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