

The Role of Teachers in Adapting Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT: The values of equality, respect, and recognition of the unique qualities of every pupil serve as the foundation for inclusive special education. This study aimed to determine the correlation between the role of teachers and adaptation of inclusive education. The study was conducted at the selected school in Medina North District in the Division of Misamis Oriental, one hundred-two (102) elementary teachers as actual respondents selected through purposive sampling. The study employed descriptive correlational research design, which included a quantitative approach in collecting numerical through a questionnaire. The data analyzed utilized statistical tools such as Mean and Standard Deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results identified teachers have very high role in inclusive education on which their adaptation in inclusive education is very effective. The role of teachers is correlated with their adaptation to inclusive education. This means that the role of teachers in adapting to inclusive education is vital. Thus, it is recommended that school heads, teachers and even the stakeholders may give importance and priorities to teachers for their professional development trainings on activities and instructional materials that will continually enhance the teachers and learners' knowledge and understanding in inclusive education especially to learners with special needs.

KEYWORDS: inclusive education, professional development, role of teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a cornerstone of modern educational reform which emphasizes the need for all pupils, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, to learn together in general education classrooms. In response to the growing recognition of diverse pupils' needs, the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippines commits to promote inclusive education across the country. This commitment aligned with international frameworks, which includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Education for All (EFA) goals, which advocates for equitable and accessible education for every learner. In the context of the Department of Education in the Philippines, inclusive education requires the adaptation of teaching strategies, classroom environments, and support systems to ensure that pupils with diverse learning needs receive quality education.

An inclusive approach to special needs education combines with the advantages of being part of the general education environment with the particular help of pupils with disabilities required, it seeks to give every pupil fair access to education while promoting a feeling of community and belonging. This method is based on the idea that everyone's learning experience is enhanced by differences in ability. Through individualized support, diverse instruction, and assistive technology, which focus on meeting the unique needs of pupils with disabilities, these techniques guarantee that pupils of all skill levels could participate fully in class activities, interact with their peers meaningfully, and reach their greatest potential (Friend & Bursuck, 2021).

According to Republic Act No. 11650 (2022), inclusive education ensures equitable access to quality education for learners with disabilities and aims to create an inclusive, fair, and barrier-free learning environment to guarantee that pupils with disabilities have equal access to high-quality education. This law provides tailored support and specialized services to meet the specific requirements of pupils with disabilities, while also highlight the significance of early diagnosis, assessment, and intervention. By encouraging their inclusion in regular classes alongside their peers, the law seeks to remove structural barriers that prevent them from participating and learning. In doing so, it aims to empower pupils with disabilities to realize their full potential and make significant contributions to society. Ultimately, RA 11650 supports education as a fundamental right and aligns with global inclusive education standards that prioritize social justice, equality, and diversity.

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Moreover, schools foster social integration, empathy, and understanding among pupils in addition to academic success by integrating special needs education pupils into an inclusive environment. This method promotes an accepting and respectful attitude while preparing pupils with and without disabilities to live and work in a diverse society. In the end, it underlines the dedication to education as a basic human right, opening the door to a more inclusive and equal future (Florian & Spratt, 2020).

According to Vera (2023), inclusive education requires significant adjustments from teachers, particularly in terms of instructional strategies and classroom management. In the implementation of inclusive education, the role of general education teachers is critical. These teachers, who are primarily tasked with delivering lessons to a diverse group of pupils, are expected to make instructional adaptations, manage a varied classroom environment, and engage in professional development to better serve all learners. Despite the growing emphasis on inclusive practices, the extent to which general education teachers in the Philippines are equipped to implement these changes remain underexplored, especially in rural areas and smaller districts. The ongoing challenge of ensuring that general education teachers are adequately prepared to implement successful inclusive education practices is the gap that motivated this study.

Furthermore, although inclusion becomes a widely accepted concept, many general education teachers struggle to modify their instruction and classroom management to meet the diverse needs of pupils with disabilities. As a result, pupils with disabilities often do not receive the individualized support they need, affecting their academic success and social integration. Thus, the researcher aimed to examine the roles of general education teachers in adapting inclusive education. Specifically, the study sought to explore the extent to which teachers engage in instructional adaptation, classroom management, and professional development to support inclusive education. Additionally, the study investigated the level of inclusive education adaptation in terms of instructional strategies, classroom environment, and collaboration with support systems such as special needs education (SNED) teachers and other professionals.

This study was anchored on the Differentiated Instruction Theory by Carol Ann Tomlinson (2001), which emphasized the importance of tailoring education to the diverse needs of learners. This requires careful instructional adaptation to ensure that teaching was accessible and engaging for all pupils. Effective classroom management supports the execution of differentiated strategies, that ensure that a dynamic and inclusive learning environment is maintained, and ongoing professional development to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to adapt their teaching to the changing demands of the pupils. The importance of making instructional adjustments to meet the diverse needs of learners. Their study highlighted that modifying content, process, and product is essential for creating an inclusive and effective classroom environment. Moreover, academic engagement and achievement improve when instruction is tailored to pupils' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. They also noted that when teachers intentionally adjust instruction based on pupils' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, the classroom becomes more inclusive and responsive.

Gregory and Chapman (2022) highlighted that effective classroom management is crucial for successfully implementing differentiated instruction. In their book *Differentiated Instructional Strategies, One Size Doesn't Fit All*, they discussed how creating clear routines and flexible structures support diverse learners. They noted that when pupils understand expectations and procedures, it becomes easier to organize differentiated groups and varied learning tasks. Their work highlighted that strong classroom management does not mean rigid control but rather a well-organized environment where flexibility thrives, which enables teachers to meet individual pupil's needs while maintaining an orderly and supportive classroom atmosphere.

Pozas and Letzel (2021) emphasized the critical role of teacher training programs in preparing teachers for diverse and inclusive classrooms. Highlighted that integrating differentiated instruction principles into teachers' preparation is essential for addressing the varied needs of pupils. They argued that teachers must be equipped with strategies that promote individualized learning and cater to the diversity present in today's classrooms. Additionally, it was noted that without proper training in differentiated instruction, teachers may struggle to effectively manage a wide range of pupil abilities and backgrounds. Teachers can develop a deeper understanding of how to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of every pupil, fostering a more engaging and supportive learning experience for all.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used correlational research design to investigate the roles of general education teachers in adapting inclusive education. Descriptive correlation research design was used to establish relationships between the independent and dependent variables without manipulation. Findings reflected actual conditions, making them relevant to everyday situations. Additionally, the descriptive correlational research design proved valuable for exploring associations between variables in their natural environments (Babbie, 2020). The data collected for Problems 1 and 2 underwent analysis using statistical techniques such as Mean and Standard Deviation. For Problem 3, the analysis involved using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to

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determine the presence and strength of a significant relationship between the roles of general education teachers in adapting inclusion.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the extent of the role of teachers in inclusive education as to:

- 1.1. instructional adaptation;
- 1.2. classroom management; and
- 1.3. professional development and training?

Table 1 shows the extent of the role of teachers in inclusive education. It registered an overall Mean of 4.29 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very High Level. The data imply that the teachers' role in the education sector is vital. Therefore, both teachers and administrators may work together to ensure that the instability of the teachers' performance and skills according to the needs of the learners is achieved and well maintained. According to Levine and Vannest (2021) the teachers are still the best medium of transporting knowledge and skills to the learners. There might be assistance from technologies, but the teacher's humane presence and connections is hard to replace. Teachers should be given appropriate training and benefits so that they will continue to serve and not be driven away by the foreign sector that offers better opportunities.

Table 1.

Overall Role of Teachers

Variables	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Instructional Adaptation	4.29	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very High
Classroom Management	4.27	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very High
Professional Development and Training	4.30	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very High
Overall Mean	4.29	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very High

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

In the same table, the variable, *Professional Development and Training* was rated the highest with a Mean of 4.30 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very High Level. There is a high level of respect for the ongoing professional growth and training of educators. They are under the impression that by returning to school to pursue a master's or doctoral degree, as well as by taking part in a variety of training and webinars, they will be able to improve their employment prospects and even have the chance to demonstrate their capabilities and advance in their careers. In today's world, it is advantageous for educators to pursue careers that include greater levels of education. Not only is this for their own personal growth and development, but it also gives them the opportunity to occupy better positions, which in turn implies that they will receive a greater compensation rate. In addition to this, it provides them with an advantage over their rivals (Van Weijnen & Janssen, 2022).

Meanwhile, *Classroom Management* was the lowest rated variable. It registered the Mean of 4.27 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very high Level. Management of the classroom is extremely important, which is why teachers strive to achieve the best possible level of classroom management. It is essential to establish and maintain classroom management in the classroom setting, particularly during the teaching and learning process, to ensure that there is a sufficient quorum and to prevent disruptions for the pupils.

The administration of the classroom is also a method of enforcing discipline on the students, instructing them on how to conduct themselves in situations that require seriousness and an ability to concentrate. Learners need to be taught when it is appropriate to engage in leisure activities and when it is more appropriate to engage in activities that provide value, such as studying and obtaining new information and skills (Bergman & Johansson, 2024).

Problem 2. What is the level of adapting inclusive education in terms of;

- 2.1 instructional strategies;
- 2.2 classroom environment; and
- 2.3 collaboration and support systems?

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Table 2.

Overall Adapting Inclusive Education

Variables	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Instructional Strategies	4.28	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Classroom Environment	4.31	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Collaboration and Support Systems	4.27	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Overall Mean	4.29	0.52	Strongly Agree	Very Effective

Note: 4.21-5.00 Very Effective 3.41-4.20 Effective 2.61-3.40 Fair 1.81-2.60 Ineffective 1.00-1.80 Very Ineffective

Table 2 presents the overall level of adapting inclusive education. It registered an overall Mean of 4.29 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very Effective. The data imply that the teachers have high regard for inclusive education. They acknowledged that they cannot do it alone and that they need the support, assistance and guidance as well as the stakeholders, especially the parents. Lessons studied at school must be reviewed at home so that they will not be easily forgotten. Teachers should also provide extra activities like assignments to give the learners the tasks and reasons to study their lessons at home. According to Mukherjee and Das (2020) the provision of assignments or homework is necessary for the learners. The teachers just need to make sure that the learners are not bombarded with plenty of tasks to do that may cause them burden and stress.

In the same table, the variable, *Classroom Environment*, was rated the highest with the Mean of 4.28 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very Effective. This data implies that classroom environment is vital to the learners' performance and eventually their development. It is common knowledge that teachers are fully aware of the significance of preserving an ideal space within the classroom. The environment of a classroom should be one that encourages fairness and equality, as well as safety and the complete absence of bullying and distractions. As a result of the fact that teachers are aware that the school serves as a second home for the students, they strive to maintain a clean and comfortable classroom atmosphere.

The setting in the classroom that encourages positivity has a significant impact on the well-being and performance of the pupils. This is because they have the perception that they are safe and that they are free to think about anything apart from the fundamentals that are now being taught (Arias et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the variable, *Collaboration and Support Systems*, was rated the lowest with the Mean of 4.27 with SD=0.52, described as Strongly Agree and interpreted as Very Effective. The data imply that the teachers recognize the importance of having better connections and communications lines with the stakeholders, especially the parents. The concept of inclusive education is something that teachers are familiar with and open to, particularly regarding working together with the community and the many stakeholders. At this point in time, every single person is provided with the opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills that are currently available, so that they can also have equal opportunities to improve their lives and their trajectory in the future. In addition to this, individuals who are generally regarded as being experts in their respective fields can also be utilized as resource speakers and invited to offer their knowledge in the classroom.

The idea of promoting mainstreaming, which gives everyone from all backgrounds an equal chance to learn and gain knowledge, has led to the construction of school campuses even in rural areas that can accommodate pupils from remote locations. In addition, teachers are given training and seminars to give them the expertise and abilities they need to properly guide and support the students (Brookings Institution, 2024).

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of the role of teachers and the level of adapting inclusive education?

Table 3.

Test Correlation Between Role of Teachers and Adapting Inclusive Education

Variables	r-value	p-value	Level of Correlation	Decision	Interpretation
Instructional Strategies	0.542	0.001	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Classroom Environment	0.227	0.034	Low Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Professional Development and Training	0.268	0.030	Low Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: 0.91 - 1.00 Very High Positive Correlation 0.71 – 0.90 High Positive Correlation

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0.51 – 0.70 Moderate Positive Correlation 0.31 – 0.50 Low Positive Correlation
0.00 – 0.30 Negligible Positive Correlation *Significant when computed p-value <0.05*

Table 3 shows the *Test of Correlation Between Role of Teachers and Adapting Inclusive Education*. The independent variable is on Role of Teachers in terms of Instructional Adaptation, Classroom Management, and Professional Development and Training while the dependent variable is on Adapting Inclusive Education.

For *Instructional Strategies*, the computed r-value was 0.542, with a computed p-value of 0.001. The computed p-value is less than the required p-value of 0.05 significance level. This data indicates a significant correlation between Role of Teachers and Adapting Inclusive Education when Instructional Adaptation is considered. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. The data imply that instructional adaptation is crucial for the teachers in preparing the lesson activities and samples that will be presented to the learners. It is necessary to insert sets of activities and strategies that will allow and help the learners become more focused and attentive to the lesson discussion so that they can learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills on the topic presented. According to Cavalcante and Lima (2021) there are vast of strategies that are present in the internet that can aid the teachers' instructional activities. Teachers should know their learners better so that they can also choose the most appropriate strategy to be implemented in the classroom or the school alone.

For *Classroom Environment*, the computed r-value was 0.227, with a computed p-value of 0.034. The computed p-value is less than the required p-value of 0.05 significance level. This data indicates a significant correlation between Role of Teachers and Adapting Inclusive Education when Classroom Environment is taken into consideration. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. Classroom environment is an important element not just during the teaching and learning process and activities but also in implementing discipline to the learners. Teachers need to be consistent in implementing classroom policies so that the learners will learn to follow orders and behave. According to Han (2021) when the classroom management is well implemented, the learning outcomes become better as the learners are free from distractions and worries about their safety and welfare.

For *Professional Development and Training*, the computed r-value was 0.268, with a computed p-value of 0.030. The computed p-value is less than the required p-value of 0.05 significance level. This data indicates a significant correlation between Role of Teachers and Adapting Inclusive Education when Professional development and Training is taken into account. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. Professional Development and Training is necessary for the teachers to hone their teaching skills as well as on their future endeavors. It is an investment for their career progression. It can be earned through formal education and from attending various training courses and seminars. According to Gustafson and Jones (2023) teachers seeking promotions have great advantages over their rivals if they have higher educational attainment like having a master's or a doctorate degree. Moreover, attending training and seminars is also part of the promotion criteria. Thus, teachers should not feel tired on seeking for professional development as its impact on their career is imminent.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. The role of teachers is vital in adapting and implementing inclusive education.
2. Teachers play a vital role in the successful adaptation of inclusive education.
3. Role of teachers is very vital in adapting inclusive education.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers may maintain a high level of role in implementing inclusive education and focus on improving classroom management.
2. Teachers may sustain a high level of adapting inclusive education for the benefits of the learners, especially those with special needs, and improve their collaboration and support system to the successful implementation of inclusive education.
3. School heads may formulate and conduct workshops to further enhance teachers' awareness of diverse learning styles and their correlation on learners' literacy

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