UNDERSTANDING AND COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS HANDLING LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Denesse Mae V. Fernandez*1

*1San Alfonso Elementary School, Philippines.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs. The participants were 50 teachers at public elementary schools in Cateel. A mixed method approach was applied in this study. In order to collect the data, questionnaires were given to the teachers. The results obtained throughout this study reveal that teachers need to be trained about inclusive education in order for them understand well the program. It also reveals that support has great impact on its implementation.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Trainings, Support.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Although inclusion classrooms are a great idea, they necessitate extensive preparation, tolerance, and compassion on the part of the teachers. Students in fully inclusive classes range from those who are usually developing to those who have severe and profound disabilities, representing the entire educational and developmental spectrum. This makes it difficult for the teacher to provide balanced support for each learner.

Inclusive education is emphasized in the Department of Education Republic of the Philippines, which mandates the Department of Education to quickly resolve issues and ensure every student has the right to an equitable education. In light of the ongoing shift towards inclusivity, teachers must adapt and evolve their teaching practices accordingly.

One of the objectives of every teacher, according to the Culajara (2022) study, is to provide effective and fruitful teaching and learning processes. The most recent epidemic has brought attention to the necessity for educators to be passionate about ensuring high-quality education and enhancing their teaching techniques. Teachers must have the tenacity to uphold their views and ideals, especially in challenging situations, when working with diverse pupils as we get closer to the era of inclusivity.

To provide inclusive education in a typical mainstream setting, teachers must include special needs students as much as is practical in a typical classroom setting, M. R. O. Nuñez and S. S. Rosales (2021). Inclusion in the educational system is supported by instructors' capability to impart knowledge, foster good character traits, and increase gifted kids' ability to overcome challenges in life, Dela Fuente (2021). As a result, there is a dearth of knowledge on how to provide outstanding service in inclusive courses, which makes it challenging for teachers to be ready and to show their competency in various approaches to inclusive education. Allam and Martin's argument that teachers who assist kids with learning challenges view them as unqualified since they lack any special needs education training from the school supported this.

Another difficulty teachers face is adapting and responding to the educational learning requirements of students with special educational needs and impairments, Toguero (2020). As the department offers a variety of program implementations to deliver high-quality educational services, it is only appropriate to prepare the competencies and instructional strategies required to offer an inclusive class. This can be done if the teacher is skilled at delivering instruction and has adequate support for all of the activities involved in inclusive education. The uniqueness of this study will enable schools to learn about instructors' experiences in inclusive courses and determine which implementation strategies should be prioritized in the institution.

In a connected and interconnected world, teachers need to comprehend these ideas in order to instruct pupils successfully and adopt a global viewpoint, as stated in the study by McGaha and Linder (2014). As a result, it is essential for teachers to have access to specialized training and professional development opportunities. Teachers may better serve their students and provide an inclusive learning environment that promotes growth, development, and achievement by continuing their education and training.

Inclusion is the norm today at all educational levels. It ought to be afforded equal opportunity and respect for diverse values. Teachers should be innovative, incorporate learning, and use differentiation and personalization in their instruction as diversity increases and abilities vary. Although inclusion is commonly accepted as a desirable educational goal, Vengoechea and Garcia (2020) have noted that some teachers view it as problematic due to a lack of resources and skills. To address the evolving demands of the educational landscape, educators must receive extensive training, modify their teaching methods, and increase their dedication and commitment in order to effectively serve LWD. Education professionals must be knowledgeable on the most recent teaching techniques and recommended procedures for dealing with students as the implementation of inclusive education continues to change.

For this reason, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs.

Finally, inclusive education implementers will benefit from these results because of the valuable information about the relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs they will provide. These results will represent a great source of information about the community involved in the educational field which will contribute to the improvement of the implementation of the inclusive education.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding to Inclusive Education

A successful inclusive education application is lacking in today's classrooms since most teachers believe that only special education teachers are accountable for inclusive education practices (Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015). Hinges on giving teachers the chance for professional growth, providing enough assistance in and out of the classroom, and maintaining educators' positive attitudes (Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015).

According to Ahmmed's (2015) research, teachers' inability to effectively implement inclusive education is due in large part to a lack of community support, a lack of resources, a lack of teacher preparation, a lack of lesson time, and a lack of cooperation between the school and families.

How schools accommodate diversity and how to give underprivileged pupils equitable access to a quality education are both aspects of inclusivity. This idea directs educational policies as well as current normative and legal frameworks. It also ends the cycle of marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination of disadvantaged people by altering educational strategies to ensure equality and keep these kids in school (Dusik & Santarosa, 2016).

According to the study's findings, the majority of instructors only considered themselves to be moderately competent for inclusive education methods, while some others believed they were incapable. The literature contains results that are comparable to those of the study. According to the research done by Çopur (2019), teachers felt unqualified to carry out activities for inclusive pupils, including creating IEPs and resolving issues as they arose.

2.2 Commitment to Inclusive Education

The job performance of teachers is closely correlated with their work commitment. It is significantly enhancing children' and schools' futures, Mart. It influences both academic achievement and educational attitudes in students. It can therefore be external to the instructor and necessitate commitment to the school or establishment, students, classroom work, and the profession of teaching, according to Celep, Aquino, Baloran & Hernan.

An atmosphere where the student with SEN is treated as a full member or citizen of the school community is the result of a successful inclusion (De Silva, 2013).

The presence, involvement, and engagement of the students should be prioritized in the school community (Sharma & Sokal, 2015). Similar to Baglieri and Shapiro (2017), they asserted that IE enables teachers to value students, take them into account when planning lessons that are inclusive, and motivate them to participate actively in class.

According to the Commitment and Necessary Effort (CANE) model developed by Clarke in 1998, people's commitment to their work is influenced by three elements. These variables include task evaluation, attitude and

emotions, and lastly the worth of the desired outcome to the employee personally. Sub-categories fall under each of these basic factors. Ability and context are the sub-factors under "task assessment" (Can I complete it? Will I be supported in my efforts?). Finally, under "values," we have utility (What's in it for me?) and importance (Is this assignment for me?) under "emotion" and "mood" respectively.

2.3 Understanding and Commitment to Inclusive Education

Work commitment, according to Celep, is a person's attitude toward the organization's ideals and goals. It entails devoting oneself to the duties of the person to be completed, in this case Celik and Yildiz. It can be a physical or nonphysical component, but either way, the mind must be prepared to carry out the duties. Similarly, Altun believes that the most important component of successful teaching and learning is a passion for what one does. Work dedication will have a direct and good impact on each teacher, including Yildiz and Celik, as well as their personalities, qualities, and values.

According to Lee, Kang, and Jung (2016), who discovered similar impacts of the inclusion experience on teachers' attitudes, the shift in attitude and commitment came as a result of the instructors' growing mastery of the competencies necessary to educate kids with a variety of capacities.

According to Sukkyung, Eui, and Kyulee's (2019) study, teachers felt that their experiences with inclusive education had benefited their own personal growth.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of understanding in terms of:

1.1 Student Variables

1.2 Peer Support

1.3 Administrative Support

1.4 Collaboration

1.5 Training

2. What is the level of commitment in terms of:

2.1 Importance of the goal

2.2 Self-efficacy, knowledge and training

2.3 Value of Inclusive Education

2.4 Support

2.5 Emotional Response & Commitment

2.6 Disability

3. Is there a significant relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs?

III.   METHOD

3.1 Participants

The current study was conducted at a public schools located in the Cateel 2 District, Cateel, Davao Oriental. The sample consisted of 50 public school elementary teachers.

3.2 Procedures

This study was conducted through the use of a mixed method approach. A questionnaire about understanding to inclusive education was taken from Evangeline Kern which is the independent variable and questionnaire for commitment to inclusive education, dependent variable, was taken from Richard Clarke Both instruments were written in English and answerable from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The conduct started with the approval of the school heads and teachers. The aim of these instruments was to collect information about teachers' ideas regarding inclusive education and their commitment. The questionnaires were conducted were answered at their convenient time. The results obtained from the answers were used to confirm how the teachers' understanding to inclusive education affects their commitment to this program. To provide qualified

instruments, a validation process, was carried out. The data gathered will be analyzed using statistical measures.

IV.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and examines the study's findings about the understanding and commitment to inclusive education among teachers.

Table 1. Level of Teachers' Understanding to Inclusive Education

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Student Variables	3.83	0.48	High
Peer Support	4.27	0.36	Very high
Administrative Support	4.03	0.45	High
Collaboration	3.54	0.29	High
Training	3.99	0.56	High
Overall Mean	**3.93**	**0.11**	**High**

The respondents specifically believed that Peer Support had the greatest mean score out of the five factors in the concept of inclusive education. According to the data, peer support scores a mean 4.27, which is considered to be very high. This further suggests that the data suggests that support from co-teachers and school leaders can have a big impact on their involvement in inclusive education.

This research's findings explain the peer support is becoming more and more popular. Peer support offers experienced, highly skilled teachers for extended, intensive periods of time to help teachers who need it. These peer support teachers offer continual assistance by monitoring, exchanging knowledge and expertise, and suggesting reading resources (National Education Association, 1998).

With a mean score of 4.03 or high, the Administrative Support indicator, which is the second-highest indicator, indicates that teachers almost always needed it to administer educational programs. This suggests that how teachers respond to the program is greatly influenced by the assistance given by school administrators in adopting inclusive education.

This finding of the study articulates the previous studies in the literature show that principal/supervisor support increases employees' job satisfaction (Qureshi and Hamid, 2017), organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Wang, 2014), and performance (Azman, Sieng, Ajis, Dollah, and Boerhannoeddin, 2009), while decreasing perceptions of organizational cynicism (Oezkara, Taş, and Aydıntan, 2019) and burnout (Salahian, Oreizi, Abedi, Soltani, 2012). Consequently, it may be assumed that the principal's support is successful in ensuring teachers' job happiness.

The third best factor is Training, with a mean score of 3.99 or high, indicating that it took the teachers virtually all of the time required. This suggests that teachers must be well-trained in order for them to have understanding about a specific program.

This result supports the notion that in-service teacher training is a collection of activities designed to motivate teachers to increase their knowledge, develop their skills, and widen their professional horizons (Koellner & Greenblatt, 2018).

The Student Variables, which rank fourth overall and have a mean score of 3.83 or high, are a less well-understood indicator among teachers. This suggests that for inclusive education to take place, teachers must be aware of the learners.

This study's conclusion states that educators must be familiar with both the recent legislation to protect indigenous languages 13 and Article 24 of the 2006-adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, both of which advocate for inclusive education. These two pieces of legislation provide additional international support for inclusive education. A list of the most important conventions, declarations, and recommendations that serve as the foundation for the creation of inclusive policies and methods is provided in Annex 3. They outline the key issues that must be resolved in order to guarantee the right to access education, the right to a high-quality education, and the right to respect in the classroom.

The Collaboration has the lowest indication, but still being high, with a mean of 3.54, or nearly all the time practiced and observed. This suggests that cooperation with special education instructors can demonstrate teachers' willingness to promote inclusive education.

The study by Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Joan E. Talbert comes to a conclusion. They looked to see if Huberman's warning about the dangers of collaboration interfering with teacher artisanship held any water. Reexamining data from earlier studies, they discovered that innovative teachers did not exercise as much independence in high schools with weak teacher communities and were discouraged by their colleagues' lack of commitment to enhancing learning for all students, particularly those who are underperforming. Narrowed curricula, more testing, and continuous academic tracking have a tendency to push away innovative teaching strategies in schools with strong traditional communities. However, in strong collaborative teaching communities, teachers were able to come up with and test out new concepts in order to better serve more kids.

Table 2. Level of Teachers' Commitment to Inclusive Education

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Importance of the goal	4.40	0.56	Very High
Self-efficacy, knowledge and training	3.62	0.47	High
Value of Inclusive Education	4.36	0.53	Very High
Support	3.57	0.71	High
Emotional Response & Commitment	3.47	0.40	High
Disability	3.39	0.69	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.80**	**0.12**	**High**

Out of the six variables in the commitment to inclusive education, the respondents felt that Importance of the Goal got the highest mean score. The findings indicate that the relevance of the aim receives a mean score of 4.40, which is regarded as very high. This further reveal that the data shows that understanding the purpose can have a significant influence on how inclusive education is implemented.

The Salamanca Statement from 1994, which advocates for all children learning together whenever feasible despite any challenges or differences they may face, is supported by the outcome.

The second highest indicator is Value of Inclusive Education with the mean 4.36 which is Very High. This implies that the teachers are greatly knowledgeable about inclusive education.

The outcome backed up the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which aims to promote, protect, and ensure that all people with disabilities enjoy all of their fundamental rights and freedoms in full equality as well as to foster respect for their inherent dignity.

The Self-efficacy, Knowledge, and Training indicator comes in third place with a mean score of 3.63, which is high. This suggests that the value of teachers' teaching abilities is high.

This result backs up Susanto, Rozali, and Agustina's (2019) estimate that pedagogical expertise contributed 46.7 percent—or 94.50 percent—to the success of elementary school instructors and the learning outcomes.

In particular, the respondents thought that Support came in at number four overall among the six categories. The data show that support has a mean score of 3.57, which is a strong level. This further shows that the evidence points to the possibility that assistance may have a significant influence on their participation in inclusive education. The results of this study show why the support is gaining popularity. Support is provided to instructors in need by highly qualified, experienced teachers over long, intensive periods of time. By monitoring, sharing knowledge and experience, and recommending reading materials, these support teachers provide ongoing assistance (National Education Association, 1998).

The Emotional Response and Commitment at fifth rank in six indicators with the mean 3.47 which is high. This suggests teachers' tremendous willingness to be with inclusive education.

This finding is consistent with previous research (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Frenzel et al., 2016), which has shown that teachers' emotions have a significant impact on students' learning and academic success. Frenzel et al. (2019) found that teachers' enjoyment enhances students' enjoyment, being that this relationship is partially mediated by teachers' enthusiasm. In a recent review by Chen (2021), teachers' emotions also affect their self-efficacy, engagement, wellbeing in teaching, and work satisfaction. Taxer and Frenzel (2015) questioned 266 instructors and found that their expressive, positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pride, and enthusiasm) were substantially connected with their welfare, relationship with students, and teaching efficacy.

The last ranking indicator is Disability, which has a modest mean score of 3.39. This suggests that the responders' desire to work with students who have special needs depends on those students' limitations.

This finding supports the claim made by Singal (2015) and Wodon et al. (2018) that instructors in many nations lack the self-assurance and expertise required to provide inclusive education.

Table 3. Significant relationship between understanding and commitment to inclusive education of teachers handling learners with special needs

Understanding to Inclusive Education	Commitment to Inclusive Education			
	r	p-value	Decision on H_o	Interpretation
	.544	0.042	Reject	There is a significant positive correlation.

The p-value 0.042 result in this table shows a significant positive connection. The null hypothesis is therefore statistically disproved.

According to Celep, work commitment is a person's attitude toward the values and objectives of the organization. It means giving one's all to the tasks that must be accomplished by the individual in question, in this case Celik and Yildiz. Whether it has a physical or nonphysical component, the mind needs to be ready to perform the necessary tasks. Similar to this, Altun thinks that having love for one's work is crucial for good teaching and learning. Each teacher, including Yildiz and Celik, as well as their personalities, qualities, and ideals, will be positively impacted by their commitment to their work. The change in attitude and dedication came as a surprise to Lee, Kang, and Jung (2016), who found similar effects of the inclusion experience on instructors' attitudes.

V.   CONCLUSION

The study's findings demonstrate that, among the available indicators, Disability had the lowest mean while other indicators had high and very high means which is very important to be understood since inclusive education rooted in disabilities. This serves as further evidence that teachers must be well-prepared to deal with students who have disabilities, particularly those that are challenging to manage, such as hearing and visual impairment and multiple disabilities. Administrators can help by allowing teachers to attend trainings to better understand inclusive education, and colleagues who are familiar with the program can also offer support. Also revealed by the findings is that respondents' awareness of inclusive education has sparked a spark in their enthusiasm for the initiative. Analysis should be done through further study of the connection between understanding and commitment to inclusive education.

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