

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

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Abstract

By understanding and addressing the difficulties faced by elementary school teachers in inclusive education, stakeholders can create a more supportive and effective educational environment. In this premise, this study aimed to determine the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers encountered towards inclusive education in a District under a large School Division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. Data for this descriptive-comparative study was collected from 111 teachers using a self-made data-gathering instrument that has passed the stringent tests of validity and reliability. The research aimed to understand the difficulties related to the assessment of children, the learning environment, and parental involvement. The study also investigated the differences in challenges among teachers based on demographic factors. Key findings revealed that most respondents were below 43 years old, held MAED CAR, Master's, or Doctorate degrees, had less than 14 years of service, and lacked inclusive education training. The difficulties experienced by teachers towards inclusive education were generally at a moderate level across the mentioned areas. Statistical analysis showed significant differences in challenges related to assessment of children, learning environment, and parental involvement concerning age. However, no significant differences were found in curriculum modification challenges based on demographic factors. The finding of this study calls for mass training initiatives that provide comprehensive, targeted training so that schools can better support teachers, enhance their skills, and create more inclusive and effective learning environments for all students.

Keywords: Inclusive education, elementary school teachers, difficulties, assessment of learning, learning environment, curriculum modification, parental involvement, significant differences, Negros Oriental.



Introduction

Nature of the Problem

In the Philippines, inclusive education faces challenges primarily due to Filipino teachers' struggles in creating genuinely inclusive classrooms. Despite the Department of Education Order No. 72, s. 2009's focus on inclusive education, there are substantial obstacles to address. These include ensuring that children with special needs are provided with suitable education in inclusive environments, promoting acceptance of all children regardless of differences like race, size, shape, color, disabilities, or abilities, and involving community members, parents, and school staff in the inclusive education process.

Inclusive education is more than a mere policy; it signifies a transformative strategy that seeks to revolutionize education by providing equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds and abilities. To help Filipino teachers tackle challenges, there is a crucial requirement for research on effective strategies and practical solutions to improve the adoption of inclusive education practices.

To explore ways for instructors to effectively support diverse learners by promoting empathy, respect, and social justice in the educational setting. The aim is to enhance the current understanding of inclusive education and offer valuable insights to assist educators, policymakers, and communities in collaboratively establishing an inclusive educational atmosphere that nurtures the growth of every child in the Philippines.

Current State of Knowledge

The challenges in inclusive education encompass difficulties in assessing children's progress, creating inclusive learning environments, modifying curriculum, and involving parents. These challenges include attitudinal barriers, resource limitations, and cultural factors. Strategies such as Universal Design for Learning principles and fostering collaboration among stakeholders are being employed to address these issues. Enhancing parental involvement through open communication and culturally sensitive approaches is also crucial. Overall, overcoming these challenges is essential to creating equitable and supportive learning environments for all students.

Elementary school teachers encounter multifaceted challenges in inclusive education. They struggle with assessing children due to centralized policies and resource scarcity, impacting tailored instruction. Large class sizes, inadequate infrastructure, and curriculum modification difficulties hinder the creation of inclusive learning environments. Additionally, societal attitudes impede parental involvement, affecting teachers' ability to identify and support children's needs. Overcoming these challenges requires increased awareness, collaboration, and targeted strategies to foster truly inclusive education environments.



Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in Perkins' Theory of Difficulty, which seeks to comprehend and tackle the challenges learners encounter in education. Perkins suggests that identifying learners' stumbling points within a subject area and analyzing their origins can enhance teaching and learning. He distinguishes between a theory of difficulty, which identifies design challenges, and a full theory of pedagogy, which addresses these challenges through teaching methods. However, Perkins notes their interdependence, as challenges can stem from both complex content and teaching methods.

Perkins' work underscores the importance of focusing on content-related challenges within educators' control and exploring their roots separate from external factors. This approach aligns with the researcher's interest in investigating encountered difficulties. Perkins also highlights the inherent nature of grappling with difficulties in learning, which contrasts with the notion of eliminating persistent trouble spots. Other scholars, such as Biesta and Meyer, advocate for embracing difficulties as integral learning components.

In essence, Perkins' Theory of Difficulty emphasizes understanding and addressing learners' challenges in education to improve teaching and learning outcomes. It underscores the complexity teachers face and the importance of recognizing and addressing content-related challenges within their control. By embracing difficulties as opportunities for growth, educators can promote resilience in students and create a more equitable and responsive learning environment.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of difficulties encountered by elementary school teachers towards inclusive education in one of the districts of a large size division in Central Philippines for the SY 2023-2024. Specifically, it aimed to determine:

- 1) the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education in terms of assessment of children, learning environment, and parental involvement;
- 2) the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education when grouped according to age, educational attainment, length of service, and training attended in inclusive education;
- 3) the significant difference between the profile of the respondents when grouped and compared according to selected demographics and the level of difficulties experienced by elementary school teachers when grouped according to selected demographics.



Methodology

This section presents the methodology of the study. It includes the research design, locale, respondents, the data gathering instrument, the validity and reliability of the instrument, data gathering procedure, analytical schemes, and statistical tools that will be used in analyzing the data.

Research Design

This study was conducted using the Descriptive Research Design. According to (McCombes, 2019), a descriptive research strategy can examine one or more variables using various research techniques. Descriptive research aims to accurately and methodically describe a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. In other words, this kind of study accurately and thoroughly describes the traits and behaviors of a specific community or subject (Sirisilla, 2023). This design is selected for this study because it gives a thorough and precise representation of the population or phenomenon under study and identifies any relationships, patterns, or trends found in the data. The data acquired through descriptive research can be a starting point for additional studies and a foundation for additional studies.

Study Respondents

This paper used the sample random sampling to determine the respondents through Slovin's formula ($N=154$; $n=111$).

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process involved obtaining permission from the Division Superintendent, sending request letters to district supervisors and school heads, obtaining informed consent from participants, distributing questionnaires with clear instructions, collecting completed questionnaires promptly, and analyzing the data using descriptive and relational frameworks to derive conclusions and recommendations.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of difficulties of elementary teachers in inclusive education in terms of assessment of children, learning environment, and parental involvement. Objective 2 also used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of difficulty of elementary school teachers in inclusive education when grouped according to the variables above. Objective 3 used the comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U Test to determine the significant difference between the level of difficulties in elementary teachers' perspectives according to the assessment of children, learning environment, curriculum modification, and parental involvement.



Ethical Consideration

This study prioritized participant confidentiality and anonymity by obtaining informed consent, adhering to data privacy laws, and securely disposing of collected materials. Measures included clear participant information, voluntary consent, no collection of identifiable personal data, assurance of data nondisclosure without explicit consent, and secure disposal of materials post-study. These actions aligned with ethical guidelines to safeguard participant rights and well-being.

Results and Discussion

The data collected underwent further processing, presentation, analysis, and interpretation to fulfill the study's objectives. These steps were facilitated by adhering to appropriate procedures to provide precise data and solutions tailored to each problem.

Table 1

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers in Inclusive Education according to Assessment

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...		
1. assessing the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.16	Moderate Level
2. selecting assessment tools and strategies to effectively measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.	3.25	Moderate Level
3. finding assessment practices that adequately account for the individual strengths and challenges of students in inclusive settings.	3.31	Moderate Level
4. adapting the assessment tools to accommodate the different learning styles of my students.	3.23	Moderate Level
5. gauging the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms due to varying abilities and learning styles.	3.24	Moderate Level
6. developing assessment methods that effectively capture the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.24	Moderate Level
7. finding appropriate assessment tools and strategies to measure the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.24	Moderate Level
8. aligning the assessment practices with the principles of universal learning design in inclusive classrooms.	3.27	Moderate Level
9. maintaining consistency in the assessment practices while accommodating individualized learning plans for students in inclusive classrooms.	3.31	Moderate Level
10. incorporating technology into assessments while ensuring accessibility for all students	3.19	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.25	Moderate Level

Table 1 illustrates elementary school teachers' difficulties in assessing students with diverse needs in inclusive education, with an overall mean score of 3.25, indicating a moderate level of challenge. Items No. 3 and 9 both got the highest mean scores of 3.31 (moderate), while item 1 had the lowest at 3.16 (moderate). While some aspects, such as assessing learning progress (mean score: 3.16), pose relatively fewer difficulties, others, like accommodating individual strengths and challenges (mean score: 3.31) present greater hurdles. These findings align with existing literature, highlighting the complex nature of inclusive assessment. According to Sarris et al. (2018), educators in inclusive settings face multifaceted challenges in assessing student progress due to varying levels of support and capacity. Moving forward, interventions to enhance support and capacity are crucial for fostering more equitable assessment practices (Sarris et al., 2018).



Table 2

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers in Inclusive Education according to Learning Environment

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...		
1. structuring my classroom in our educational institution that supports the needs of diverse learners.	2.87	Moderate Level
2. selecting resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials that cater to a variety of learning styles and abilities.	3.01	Moderate Level
3. allowing my students with disabilities access to assistive technologies and accommodations to enhance their learning experience.	3.14	Moderate Level
4. demonstrating sensitivity and awareness towards cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity in the classroom.	3.05	Moderate Level
5. applying collaborative learning opportunities that encourage and foster interaction among students from different backgrounds.	3.00	Moderate Level
6. using a curriculum that is flexible enough to accommodate individual learning paces and preferences.	3.07	Moderate Level
7. letting my students feel safe and respected in expressing their identities and perspectives within the learning environment.	2.95	Moderate Level
8. promoting anti-bullying policies and practices to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students.	2.95	Moderate Level
9. acquiring professional development opportunities that are provided to educators to enhance their skills in inclusive teaching practices.	3.02	Moderate Level
10. giving feedback mechanisms that are in place to gather input from students, parents, and staff regarding the inclusiveness of the learning environment.	2.96	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.00	Moderate Level

The table outlines the challenges elementary school teachers face in fostering an inclusive learning environment, with an overall mean difficulty level of 3.00, indicating moderate challenge. Item 3 got the highest mean score of 3.14 (moderate), while item 1 had the lowest mean score of 2.87 (moderate). These findings underscore the critical need for targeted support and resources in these areas to effectively address the diverse needs of students and promote inclusivity across various backgrounds. They align with existing literature on inclusive education, emphasizing the multifaceted challenges teachers encounter in creating inclusive classrooms. Additionally, Singh's (2020) study supports these findings, revealing varying attitudes among teachers towards inclusive education, with pre-service educators generally holding a more positive outlook compared to in-service educators, irrespective of gender or expertise level (Singh, 2020).

Table 3

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in terms of Parental Involvement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...		
1. engaging parents of diverse learners in the educational process	2.92	Moderate Level
2. communicating effectively with parents who may have varying levels of involvement.	2.70	Moderate Level
3. establishing partnerships with parents to support their child's learning needs	2.70	Moderate Level
4. addressing cultural or linguistic barriers that may impede parental involvement	2.88	Moderate Level
5. encouraging parents to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings or other collaborative sessions	2.95	Moderate Level
6. ensuring that parents understand their rights and responsibilities in the inclusive education process	2.79	Moderate Level
7. facilitating meaningful communication between parents and other educational	2.83	Moderate Level



professionals

8. encouraging parents to provide relevant information about their child's needs and abilities	2.78	Moderate Level
9. balancing the needs and expectations of parents with the requirements of the school and curriculum	2.94	Moderate Level
10. providing resources and support for parents to help them better understand and participate in their child's education	2.93	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.84	Moderate Level

Table 3 highlights the challenges faced by elementary school teachers in parental involvement in inclusive education, with an overall mean difficulty level of 2.84, indicating a moderate challenge. Item The highest mean score is 2.95 (moderate) on item 5, while the lowest mean score of 2.70 (moderate) on items 2 and 3. This underscores the importance of developing strategies to engage parents actively in the educational process. The study's findings are consistent with various aspects of parental involvement, such as communication with parents and addressing cultural or linguistic barriers, reflecting a widespread challenge for teachers in fostering partnerships with parents.

According to Hyassat et al. (2024), parents of students with disabilities face difficulties that hinder their full involvement in their children's education, with financial constraints being a major obstacle. The study emphasizes the interconnected nature of these challenges, highlighting the importance of addressing various barriers to parental involvement in inclusive education.

Table 4

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Assessment when Grouped according to Age

Items	Younger		Older	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. assessing the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.03	Moderate Level	3.31	Moderate Level
2. selecting assessment tools and strategies to effectively measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.	3.08	Moderate Level	3.44	Moderate Level
3. finding assessment practices that adequately account for the individual strengths and challenges of students in inclusive settings.	3.19	Moderate Level	3.44	Moderate Level
4. adapting the assessment tools to accommodate the different learning styles of my students.	3.14	Moderate Level	3.35	Moderate Level
5. gauging the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms due to varying abilities and learning styles.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.35	Moderate Level
6. developing assessment methods that effectively capture the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.12	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
7. finding appropriate assessment tools and strategies to measure the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.14	Moderate Level	3.37	Moderate Level
8. aligning the assessment practices with the principles of universal learning design in inclusive classrooms.	3.14	Moderate Level	3.42	Moderate Level
9. maintaining consistency in the assessment practices while accommodating individualized learning plans for students in inclusive classrooms.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.48	Moderate Level
10. incorporating technology into assessments while ensuring accessibility for all students	3.07	Moderate Level	3.33	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.12	Moderate Level	3.39	Moderate Level



Table 4 presents the level of difficulties faced by elementary school teachers in assessing children in inclusive education classrooms, grouped by age. The mean difficulty level is 3.12 for younger respondents and 3.39 for older respondents, both indicating a moderate challenge. Item 3 in younger teachers, 3.19 (moderate) and item 9 in older teachers, 3.48 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 1 in younger teachers, 3.03 (moderate) and item 1 in older teachers, 3.31 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. This highlights the need for targeted support to address individualized learning plans within inclusive assessment practices.

The importance of teacher effectiveness in developing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) for students is crucial for their employability and prospects. Literature suggests variations in teachers' ages, experiences, and effectiveness, emphasizing the need to study the impact of age and experience on teachers' effectiveness in providing HOTS education.

Table 5

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in Learning Environment when Grouped according to Age

Items	Younger		Older	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. structuring my classroom in our educational institution that supports the needs of diverse learners.	2.83	Moderate Level	2.92	Moderate Level
2. selecting resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials that cater to a variety of learning styles and abilities.	2.98	Moderate Level	3.04	Moderate Level
3. allowing my students with disabilities to have access to assistive technologies and accommodations to enhance their learning experience.	3.07	Moderate Level	3.21	Moderate Level
4. demonstrating sensitivity and awareness towards cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom.	2.90	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
5. applying collaborative learning opportunities that encourage and foster interaction among students from different backgrounds.	2.86	Moderate Level	3.15	Moderate Level
6. using a curriculum that is flexible enough to accommodate individual learning paces and preferences.	2.93	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
7. letting my students feel safe and respected in expressing their identities and perspectives within the learning environment.	2.71	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
8. promoting anti-bullying policies and practices to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students.	2.75	Moderate Level	3.19	Moderate Level
9. acquiring professional development opportunities that are provided to educators to enhance their skills in inclusive teaching practices.	2.83	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
10. giving feedback mechanisms that are in place to gather input from students, parents, and staff regarding the inclusiveness of the learning environment.	2.78	Moderate Level	3.17	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.86	Moderate Level	3.16	Moderate Level

The data from Table 5 illustrates that elementary school teachers perceive moderate difficulties with inclusive education, regardless of age. Younger teachers report an overall mean difficulty of 2.86, while older teachers report 3.16, suggesting similar views on program implementation. Item 3 in younger teachers, 3.07 (moderate) and items 4,6,7 and 9 in older teachers, 3.23 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 7 in younger teachers, 2.71 (moderate) and item 1 in older teachers, 2.92 (moderate) got the



lowest mean scores. These findings suggest that age does not significantly affect perceptions of inclusive education challenges; instead, they highlight fundamental difficulties in curriculum adaptation. In Davidova's study (2022), "Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education: Evidence from Selected Developing Countries," societal attitudes, government policies, infrastructure, funding, and other factors are identified as key obstacles to inclusive education in developing countries. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving inclusive education goals.

Table 6

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Parental Involvement when Grouped according to Age

Items	Younger		Older	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...	2.83	Moderate Level	3.02	Moderate Level
1. engaging parents of diverse learners in the educational process	2.59	Moderate Level	2.83	Moderate Level
2. communicating effectively with parents who may have varying levels of involvement.	2.58	Moderate Level	2.85	Moderate Level
3. establishing partnerships with parents to support their child's learning needs	2.76	Moderate Level	3.02	Moderate Level
4. addressing cultural or linguistic barriers that may impede parental involvement	2.81	Moderate Level	3.12	Moderate Level
5. encouraging parents to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings or other collaborative sessions	2.63	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level
6. ensuring that parents understand their rights and responsibilities in the inclusive education process	2.68	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
7. facilitating meaningful communication between parents and other educational professionals	2.56	Moderate Level	3.04	Moderate Level
8. encouraging parents to provide relevant information about their child's needs and abilities	2.76	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
9. balancing the needs and expectations of parents with the requirements of the school and curriculum	2.75	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
10. providing resources and support for parents to help them better understand and participate in their child's education	2.69	Moderate Level	3.01	Moderate Level
Overall Mean				

Table 6 indicates that both younger and older elementary teachers perceive moderate difficulties with parental involvement in inclusive education, with younger teachers having a mean score of 2.69 and older teachers 3.01. Item 1 in younger teachers, 2.83 (moderate) and items 9 and 10 in older teachers, 3.13 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 8 in younger teachers, 2.56 (moderate) and item 2 in older teachers, 2.83 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. The difference in mean scores suggests that older teachers may find parental involvement slightly more challenging, possibly due to experience or differing approaches. Understanding these difficulties can aid in addressing obstacles such as misunderstandings or low parental engagement. Blackie (2010) highlights the crucial need for parental support in inclusive education, despite its often-minimal presence. Resolving these challenges requires a collaborative approach that supports educators and parents alike, fostering inclusive learning environments conducive to students' holistic development.

Table 7 illustrates that both lower and higher educated teachers perceive a moderate level of difficulty in assessment challenges, with means of 3.19 and 3.27 respectively. Item 3 in younger teachers, 3.24 (moderate) and item 9 in older teachers,



3.35 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 10 in younger teachers, 3.12 (moderate) and item 1 in older teachers, 3.14 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores.

Table 7

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Assessment of Children when Grouped according to Educational Attainment

Items	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. assessing the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.14	Moderate Level
2. selecting assessment tools and strategies to effectively measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.27	Moderate Level
3. finding assessment practices that adequately account for the individual strengths and challenges of students in inclusive settings.	3.24	Moderate Level	3.34	Moderate Level
4. adapting the assessment tools to accommodate the different learning styles of my students.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.26	Moderate Level
5. gauging the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms due to varying abilities and learning styles.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.29	Moderate Level
6. developing assessment methods that effectively capture the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.26	Moderate Level
7. finding appropriate assessment tools and strategies to measure the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.27	Moderate Level
8. aligning the assessment practices with the principles of universal learning design in inclusive classrooms.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.31	Moderate Level
9. maintaining consistency in the assessment practices while accommodating individualized learning plans for students in inclusive classrooms.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.35	Moderate Level
10. incorporating technology into assessments while ensuring accessibility for all students	3.12	Moderate Level	3.22	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.19	Moderate Level	3.27	Moderate Level

These findings underscore the importance of tailored support and professional development programs, especially for educators from less privileged backgrounds, to enhance assessment skills. Similar challenges are echoed among higher educated teachers. This emphasizes the need for financial support and regulations to meet educators' diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.

Table 8

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in Learning Environment when Grouped according to Educational Attainment

Items	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. structuring my classroom in our educational institution that supports the needs of diverse learners.	2.85	Moderate Level	2.88	Moderate Level
2. selecting resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials that cater to a variety of learning styles and abilities.	2.91	Moderate Level	3.05	Moderate Level
3. allowing my students with disabilities to have access to assistive technologies and accommodations to enhance their learning experience.	3.09	Moderate Level	3.16	Moderate Level
4. demonstrating sensitivity and awareness towards cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity in the classroom.	3.06	Moderate Level	3.05	Moderate Level
5. applying collaborative learning opportunities that encourage and foster interaction among students from different backgrounds.	2.97	Moderate Level	3.01	Moderate Level



6. using a curriculum that is flexible enough to accommodate individual learning paces and preferences.	3.00	Moderate Level	3.10	Moderate Level
7. letting my students feel safe and respected in expressing their identities and perspectives within the learning environment.	3.09	Moderate Level	2.90	Moderate Level
8. promoting anti-bullying policies and practices to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students.	3.00	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
9. acquiring professional development opportunities that are provided to educators to enhance their skills in inclusive teaching practices.	3.06	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
10. giving feedback mechanisms that are in place to gather input from students, parents, and staff regarding the inclusiveness of the learning environment.	3.06	Moderate Level	2.92	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.01	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level

The table compares the perceived difficulties elementary school teachers face in creating inclusive learning environments based on their highest educational attainment. The overall mean difficulty level is moderate, with teachers from both lower and higher educational attainment categories reporting means of 3.01 and 3.00, respectively. Items 3 and 7 in LEA, 3.09 (moderate) and item 3 in HEA, 3.16 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 1 in LEA, 2.85 (moderate) and item 1 in HEA, 2.88 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. Teachers with lower educational attainment struggle with allowing access to assistive technologies and fostering a safe and respectful learning environment while maintaining classroom structure, which is relatively easier for them. Conversely, teachers with higher educational attainment need help in providing access to assistive technologies but find structuring the classroom to meet diverse learners' needs easier. This suggests similar difficulties regardless of educational attainment level. Silvia Molina Roldán's study (2021) emphasizes the importance of diverse and rich learning interactions in inclusive environments, highlighting how students without special needs benefit from interacting with those with special needs, fostering diversity and understanding.

Table 9

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Parental Involvement when Grouped according to Educational Attainment

Items	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. engaging parents of diverse learners in the educational process	2.94	Moderate Level	2.91	Moderate Level
2. communicating effectively with parents who may have varying levels of involvement.	2.76	Moderate Level	2.68	Moderate Level
3. establishing partnerships with parents to support their child's learning needs	2.74	Moderate Level	2.69	Moderate Level
4. addressing cultural or linguistic barriers that may impede parental involvement	2.91	Moderate Level	2.87	Moderate Level
5. encouraging parents to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings or other collaborative sessions	2.94	Moderate Level	2.96	Moderate Level
6. ensuring that parents understand their rights and responsibilities in the inclusive education process	2.85	Moderate Level	2.77	Moderate Level
7. facilitating meaningful communication between parents and other educational professionals	2.85	Moderate Level	2.82	Moderate Level
8. encouraging parents to provide relevant information about their child's needs and abilities	2.88	Moderate Level	2.74	Moderate Level
9. balancing the needs and expectations of parents with the requirements of the school and curriculum	2.97	Moderate Level	2.92	Moderate Level
10. providing resources and support for parents to help them better understand and participate in their child's education	2.94	Moderate Level	2.92	Moderate Level



Overall Mean

2.88

Moderate Level

2.83

Moderate Level

The table on the level of difficulties elementary school teachers face towards parental involvement in inclusive education, grouped by Highest Educational Attainment, revealed moderate mean scores of 2.88 for lower education and 2.83 for higher education. Item 9 in LEA, 2.97 (moderate) and item 5 in HEA, 2.96 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 3 in LEA, 2.74 (moderate) and item 2 in HEA, 2.68 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. Teachers with lower education faced challenges in balancing parental needs with school requirements, while those with higher education found it difficult to encourage parental participation in collaborative sessions. Effective communication with parents varied in difficulty levels for both groups. The study emphasizes the importance of targeted strategies to enhance collaboration between teachers and parents for a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) highlight the significance of parental involvement in implementing inclusive education and offer insights into effective approaches for fostering collaboration between educators and parents to support students with diverse learning needs.

Table 10

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Assessment of Children when Grouped according to Length of Service

Items	Shorter		Longer	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. assessing the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.05	Moderate Level	3.30	Moderate Level
2. selecting assessment tools and strategies to effectively measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
3. finding assessment practices that adequately account for the individual strengths and challenges of students in inclusive settings.	3.23	Moderate Level	3.40	Moderate Level
4. adapting the assessment tools to accommodate the different learning styles of my students.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.34	Moderate Level
5. gauging the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms due to varying abilities and learning styles.	3.16	Moderate Level	3.34	Moderate Level
6. developing assessment methods that effectively capture the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.13	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
7. finding appropriate assessment tools and strategies to measure the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.28	Moderate Level
8. aligning the assessment practices with the principles of universal learning design in inclusive classrooms.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
9. maintaining consistency in the assessment practices while accommodating individualized learning plans for students in inclusive classrooms.	3.21	Moderate Level	3.42	Moderate Level
10. incorporating technology into assessments while ensuring accessibility for all students	3.10	Moderate Level	3.30	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.16	Moderate Level	3.35	Moderate Level

The table on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in assessing children in inclusive education, grouped by Length of Service, revealed moderate mean scores of 3.16 for shorter service and 3.35 for longer service. Item 3 in shorter length of



service, 3.23 (moderate) and item 9 in longer length of service, 3.42 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 1 in shorter length of service, 3.05 (moderate) and item 7 in longer length of service, 3.28 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. This suggests the need for targeted professional development and support initiatives for teachers at all career stages. Novice teachers faced challenges in adapting assessment practices to account for individual student needs, while experienced teachers struggled with maintaining consistency in assessments. Riley & Smith (2018) highlight that novice teachers may face challenges due to limited experience with diverse student populations, while Johnson (2020) notes that veteran teachers may encounter difficulties in adapting traditional assessment methods to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Table 11

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in the Learning Environment when Grouped according to Length of Service

Items	Shorter		Longer	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. structuring my classroom in our educational institution that supports the needs of diverse learners.	2.90	Moderate Level	2.84	Moderate Level
2. selecting resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials that cater to a variety of learning styles and abilities.	2.98	Moderate Level	3.04	Moderate Level
3. allowing my students with disabilities to have access to assistive technologies and accommodations to enhance their learning experience.	3.08	Moderate Level	3.20	Moderate Level
4. demonstrating sensitivity and awareness towards cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom.	2.97	Moderate Level	3.16	Moderate Level
5. applying collaborative learning opportunities that encourage and foster interaction among students from different backgrounds.	2.95	Moderate Level	3.06	Moderate Level
6. using a curriculum that is flexible enough to accommodate individual learning paces and preferences.	3.02	Moderate Level	3.14	Moderate Level
7. letting my students feel safe and respected in expressing their identities and perspectives within the learning environment.	2.82	Moderate Level	3.12	Moderate Level
8. promoting anti-bullying policies and practices to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students.	2.89	Moderate Level	3.04	Moderate Level
9. acquiring professional development opportunities that are provided to educators to enhance their skills in inclusive teaching practices.	2.97	Moderate Level	3.08	Moderate Level
10. giving feedback mechanisms that are in place to gather input from students, parents, and staff regarding the inclusiveness of the learning environment.	2.92	Moderate Level	3.02	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.95	Moderate Level	3.07	Moderate Level

The table on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in creating inclusive learning environments, grouped by Length of Service, revealed moderate mean scores of 2.95 for shorter service and 3.07 for longer service. Item 3 in shorter length of service, 3.08 (moderate) and item 3 in longer length of service, 3.20 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 7 in shorter length of service, 2.82 (moderate) and item 1 in longer length of service, 2.84 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. This highlights the need for tailored professional development programs to address the distinct challenges faced by teachers at different career stages. Both novice and veteran teachers encountered difficulties in providing access to assistive technologies for students with disabilities but found it less challenging to structure classrooms that support diverse learners. Robinson & Johnson (2018) note that novice teachers may struggle due to



limited exposure to diverse student populations, while Stewart & Harris (2021) highlight challenges faced by veteran teachers in adapting to educational trends and maintaining enthusiasm. Petersen et al. (2022) suggest that the moderate difficulty level may result from factors like inadequate training, limited resources, and the complexity of addressing diverse student needs.

Table 12

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Parental Involvement when Grouped according to Length of Service

Items	Shorter		Longer	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. engaging parents of diverse learners in the educational process	2.93	Moderate Level	2.90	Moderate Level
2. communicating effectively with parents who may have varying levels of involvement.	2.69	Moderate Level	2.72	Moderate Level
3. establishing partnerships with parents to support their child's learning needs	2.67	Moderate Level	2.74	Moderate Level
4. addressing cultural or linguistic barriers that may impede parental involvement	2.85	Moderate Level	2.92	Moderate Level
5. encouraging parents to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings or other collaborative sessions	2.93	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level
6. ensuring that parents understand their rights and responsibilities in the inclusive education process	2.72	Moderate Level	2.88	Moderate Level
7. facilitating meaningful communication between parents and other educational professionals	2.74	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
8. encouraging parents to provide relevant information about their child's needs and abilities	2.66	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
9. balancing the needs and expectations of parents with the requirements of the school and curriculum	2.89	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
10. providing resources and support for parents to help them better understand and participate in their child's education	2.87	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.80	Moderate Level	2.90	Moderate Level

The data from Table 18 on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in parental involvement for inclusive education, grouped by Length of Service, showed moderate mean scores of 2.80 for shorter service and 2.90 for longer service. Items 1 and 5 in shorter length of service, 2.93 (moderate) and items 9 and 10 in longer length of service, 3.00 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 8 in shorter length of service, 2.66 (moderate) and item 2 in longer length of service, 3.28 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. This highlights the need for targeted support and professional development programs for educators at different career stages. Novice teachers may face challenges in engaging parents effectively, while experienced teachers may struggle with balancing parental needs with school requirements. The success of inclusive education relies on educators' expertise, teaching capabilities, and attitudes towards integrating students with special needs, as noted by Aldabas (2020), Winter et al. (2021), and Miyauchi (2020).

Table 13

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Assessment of Children when Grouped according to Training Attended in Inclusive Education



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Items	Yes		No	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. assessing the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.04	Moderate Level	3.25	Moderate Level
2. selecting assessment tools and strategies to effectively measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.	3.17	Moderate Level	3.31	Moderate Level
3. finding assessment practices that adequately account for the individual strengths and challenges of students in inclusive settings.	3.28	Moderate Level	3.32	Moderate Level
4. adapting the assessment tools to accommodate the different learning styles of my students.	3.20	Moderate Level	3.26	Moderate Level
5. gauging the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms due to varying abilities and learning styles.	3.17	Moderate Level	3.29	Moderate Level
6. developing assessment methods that effectively capture the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.20	Moderate Level	3.28	Moderate Level
7. finding appropriate assessment tools and strategies to measure the learning progress of students with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms.	3.26	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
8. aligning the assessment practices with the principles of universal learning design in inclusive classrooms.	3.28	Moderate Level	3.26	Moderate Level
9. maintaining consistency in the assessment practices while accommodating individualized learning plans for students in inclusive classrooms.	3.30	Moderate Level	3.31	Moderate Level
10. incorporating technology into assessments while ensuring accessibility for all students	3.17	Moderate Level	3.20	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.21	Moderate Level	3.27	Moderate Level

The data from Table 13 on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in assessing children for inclusive education, grouped by attended training, showed moderate mean scores of 3.21 for teachers who attended training and 3.27 for those who did not. Item 9 with training attended, 3.30 (moderate) and item 3 without training attended, 3.32 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 1 with training attended, 3.04 (moderate) and item 10 without training attended, 3.20 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. This highlights the importance of additional training for teachers in inclusive education, particularly in assessment practices. Teachers who attended training faced challenges in maintaining consistency in assessments but found it easier to assess the learning progress of students with diverse needs. Conversely, teachers without training struggled with finding assessment practices for individual student needs but found it easier to select appropriate assessment tools. Manguilimotan et al. (2024) emphasize that investing in teacher training and resources is crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive education practices.

Table 14

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in the Learning Environment when Grouped according to Training Attended in Inclusive Education

Items	Yes		No	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...				
1. structuring my classroom in our educational institution that supports the needs of diverse learners.	2.78	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
2. selecting resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials that cater to a variety of learning styles and abilities.	3.02	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
3. allowing my students with disabilities to have access to	2.93	Moderate Level	3.28	Moderate Level



assistive technologies and accommodations to enhance their learning experience.

4. demonstrating sensitivity and awareness towards cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom.	2.93	Moderate Level	3.14	Moderate Level
5. applying collaborative learning opportunities that encourage and foster interaction among students from different backgrounds.	2.91	Moderate Level	3.06	Moderate Level
6. using a curriculum that is flexible enough to accommodate individual learning paces and preferences.	3.02	Moderate Level	3.11	Moderate Level
7. letting my students feel safe and respected in expressing their identities and perspectives within the learning environment.	2.91	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level
8. promoting anti-bullying policies and practices to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students.	2.87	Moderate Level	3.02	Moderate Level
9. acquiring professional development opportunities that are provided to educators to enhance their skills in inclusive teaching practices.	2.87	Moderate Level	3.12	Moderate Level
10. giving feedback mechanisms that are in place to gather input from students, parents, and staff regarding the inclusiveness of the learning environment.	2.83	Moderate Level	3.06	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.91	Moderate Level	3.07	Moderate Level

The data from Table 14 on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in creating a conducive learning environment for inclusive education, grouped by attended training, showed moderate mean scores of 2.91 for teachers who attended training and 3.07 for those who did not. Items 2 and 6 with training attended, 3.02 (moderate) and item 3 without training attended, 3.28 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 1 with training attended, 2.78 (moderate) and item 1 without training attended, 2.94 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. Teachers who attended training faced challenges in selecting resources for diverse learning styles and using flexible curricula, while those without training struggled with providing access to assistive technologies for students with disabilities. Wahyuningsih, D., Wahyono, S. B., & Nugroho, A. A. (2021) suggest that teachers may face challenges in developing learning resources, analyzing student needs, and accessing inclusive materials, even with training, highlighting the importance of accessible and modified resources for diverse learners.

Table 15

Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Parental Involvement when Grouped according to Training Attended in Inclusive Education

Items	Yes		No	
As a teacher, I have difficulty in...	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. engaging parents of diverse learners in the educational process	2.85	Moderate Level	2.97	Moderate Level
2. communicating effectively with parents who may have varying levels of involvement.	2.59	Moderate Level	2.78	Moderate Level
3. establishing partnerships with parents to support their child's learning needs	2.61	Moderate Level	2.77	Moderate Level
4. addressing cultural or linguistic barriers that may impede parental involvement	2.85	Moderate Level	2.91	Moderate Level
5. encouraging parents to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings or other collaborative sessions	2.93	Moderate Level	2.97	Moderate Level
6. ensuring that parents understand their rights and responsibilities in the inclusive education process	2.76	Moderate Level	2.82	Moderate Level
7. facilitating meaningful communication between parents and other educational professionals	2.85	Moderate Level	2.82	Moderate Level
8. encouraging parents to provide relevant information about their child's needs and abilities	2.78	Moderate Level	2.78	Moderate Level
9. balancing the needs and expectations of parents with the requirements of the school and curriculum	2.89	Moderate Level	2.97	Moderate Level
10. providing resources and support for parents to help them better	2.87	Moderate Level	2.97	Moderate Level



understand and participate in their child's education

Overall Mean

2.80

Moderate Level

2.88

Moderate Level

The data from the table on the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers in parental involvement for inclusive education, grouped by attended training, showed moderate mean scores of 2.80 for teachers with training and 2.88 for those without training. Item 5 with training attended, 2.93 (moderate) and items 1, 5, 9 and 10 without training attended, 2.97 (moderate) got the highest mean scores. While item 2 with training attended, 2.59 (moderate) and item 3 without training attended, 2.77 (moderate) got the lowest mean scores. Teachers with training faced challenges in encouraging parents to participate in collaborative sessions and communicating effectively with parents of varying involvement levels. Blair (2014) highlighted limited parental involvement in the Philippines, particularly among low-income families, with middle- and high-income parents showing higher levels of engagement in school-related activities.

Table 16

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Assessment of Children when Grouped and Compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	59	49.04	1123.500	0.014	0.05	Significant
	Older	52	63.89				
Educational Attainment	Lower	34	50.99	1138.500	0.270	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	77	58.21				
Length of Service	Shorter	61	51.30	1238.000	0.085	0.05	Not Significant
	Longer	50	61.74				
Training in Inclusive Education	Yes	46	54.68	1434.500	0.714	0.05	Not Significant
	No	65	56.93				

Table 16 shows the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education in assessment of children, according to variables. The training in inclusive education with a p-value of 0.714, educational attainment with a p-value of 0.270, and length of service with a p-value of 0.085, which means not significant. However, the variable of age with a p-value of 0.014 is less than the tabular p-value of 0.005, which is interpreted as significant.

Older teachers, with more experience and maturity, are often more effective in managing students and classroom dynamics compared to younger teachers. This highlights the importance of experience, training, and attitudes in teachers' perspectives on inclusive education assessment. While age plays a crucial role in teaching



effectiveness, factors like training and adaptability also influence teachers' ability to address diverse student needs in inclusive settings (Ismail R., Rozita A., & Abas, Z., 2018; Nyagah, P., & Gathumbi, A., 2017; Aloka, P., & Bojuwoye, O., 2013).

Table 17

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Learning Environment when Grouped and Compared according to Demographics

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	59	50.25	1194.500	0.044	0.05	Significant
	Older	52	62.53				
Educational Attainment	Lower	34	54.81	1268.500	0.794	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	77	56.53				
Length of Service	Shorter	61	54.25	1418.500	0.526	0.05	Not Significant
	Longer	50	58.13				
Training in Inclusive Education	Yes	46	52.79	1347.500	0.375	0.05	Not Significant
	No	65	58.27				

Table 17 shows the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education in Learning Environment, according to demographics. The educational attainment with a p-value of 0.794, length of service with a p-value of 0.526, and training in inclusive education with a p-value of 0.375, which means not significant. However, the variable of age with a p-value of 0.044 is less than the tabular p-value of 0.005, which is interpreted as significant.

While age plays a crucial role in understanding these differences, factors such as developmental readiness, training, pedagogical approaches, attitudes, and collaboration also contribute to teachers' perspectives on inclusive education in the learning environment. Chen, Shui, and Sun (2012) highlight that a teacher's performance is influenced by competence, experience, and age, impacting career opportunities and teaching effectiveness. Effective teaching performance, as emphasized by Whitebook (2014) and De Guzman (2000), is crucial for student motivation, attitude, and development, driven by teachers' inner motivation and pedagogical competence. Experience, closely tied to age, significantly influences teaching performance and the learning environment provided by teachers, shaping the success of the educational process (Rice, 2010).

Table 18 shows the level of difficulties of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education in parental involvement according to variables. This reveals that training in inclusive education, with a p-value of 0.873; educational attainment, with a p-value of 0.600; and length of service, with a p-value of 0.409, are all greater than the tabular p-value of 0.05, which is interpreted as not significant.



Table 18

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of Elementary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Parental Involvement when Grouped according to Demographics

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	59	49.16	1130.500	0.016	0.05	Significant
	Older	52	63.76				
Educational Attainment	Lower	34	58.40	1227.500	0.600	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	77	54.94				
Length of Service	Shorter	61	53.73	1386.500	0.409	0.05	Not Significant
	Longer	50	58.77				
Training in Inclusive Education	Yes	46	55.42	1468.500	0.873	0.05	Not Significant
	No	65	56.41				

Meanwhile, the age variable has a p-value of 0.016, which is less than the tabular p-value of 0.05, which is interpreted as significant.

The impact of parental participation on academic performance is emphasized by Ryan et al. (2010) and the complexity of parental engagement is highlighted by Morgan, Fraser, Dunn & Cairns (1992). Pakter & Chen (2013) stress the importance of teachers' awareness of parental involvement and the utilization of strategies to enhance parent-teacher relationships, underlining the significance of increasing teachers' understanding of parental engagement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented above, the following conclusions can be inferred. Elementary school educators encounter moderate challenges in implementing inclusive education, notably in student assessment, the learning environment, curriculum modification, and parental participation. This moderate level of challenge persists across various factors such as age, education level, tenure, and training attendance. Age notably influences the perceived difficulties, particularly in student assessment, the learning environment, and parental involvement. However, other factors like education level, tenure, and training attendance do not show significant differences in the perceived challenges of curriculum modification for inclusive education. Overall, educators face consistent hurdles in various aspects of inclusive education, highlighting the need for targeted support and professional development initiatives. The finding of this study calls for mass training initiatives by providing comprehensive, targeted training, schools can better support teachers, enhance their skills, and create more inclusive and effective learning environments for all students.



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