



Parental Perceptions on Inclusive Education for a Brighter Educational Landscape

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Abstract:

This study aims to assess the attitudes of parents of children with and without disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. Descriptive Comparative Research design was used in NPC-Colon Integrated School in the City of Naga Division. Participants were the 40 parents of children with and without disability. A modified version of Prado, A.A.'s rating scale questionnaire was used. Frequency Count, Simple Percentage, Weighted Mean and t-test as statistical tool were used. Majority of the participants are females, age ranging of 26-33 years old, most were high school level, and does not have a large number of children and earned minimum of the total wage monthly. The level of attitude of the participants were neutral. Test of difference on the attitude of parents of children with and without disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms were not significant. This neutrality may stem from a lack of information, mixed experiences, cultural influences, complexity of the issue, or inadequacies in survey methodologies. A need for further investigation and targeted interventions to promote awareness and address potential misconceptions or barriers hindering parental support for inclusive education. The school may use the researcher's action plan to raise awareness on inclusive education for learners with special needs.

Keywords: Special Education, Parental Perception, Inclusive Education, Descriptive Comparative Method, Naga City, Cebu

Introduction:

The contemporary society's growing emphasis on inclusive education is indicative of a shared understanding among governments, educational institutions, and schools of its critical importance. This increased consciousness is the result of a common commitment to guaranteeing that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal access to education. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of this, stating that 15% of people worldwide suffer from a disability. This data emphasizes how important it is to give people with disabilities access to high-quality education, both for their own personal growth and as a catalyst for the social and economic advancement of their communities (WHO, 2020).

The changing face of education necessitates a paradigm shift that goes beyond simply accepting differences; rather, it calls for an active strategy that actively works to eliminate obstacles to learning while celebrating



diversity. However, some parents still oppose enrolling their child in inclusive classes despite the government and educational sectors' best efforts. These parents might have concerns due to hearsay regarding the behavior and character of students with special needs when integrated into regular classroom settings. Sadly, these parents who disagree with inclusivity are ignorant of the advantages inclusion offers to their kids as well as the fact that they lack a thorough understanding of the dynamics and framework of inclusion. Given the fact that some parents don't agree with the idea and reality of inclusivity, there really is a need to assess the attitude of the parents towards inclusion, making it really important to conduct this study to further spread awareness and provide useful information for them to deeply comprehend the vitality of inclusive education.

The study conducted by Oranga et al. (2022) reveals that there are a variety of barriers that prevent parents from being involved in their children's education when they have intellectual disabilities. These barriers include low parental education, teachers' negative attitudes toward parental participation in education, parental economic constraints, societal perceptions and stigmatization of intellectual disabilities, parental stress and depression, a lack of support, parental perceptions of the teachers and school staff, the number of siblings in the family, the severity of the child's disability, differences in language between school personnel and parents, and a lack of knowledge about the prognosis of intellectual disabilities. As we traverse the intricacies of the contemporary world, the dedication to inclusive education serves as a cornerstone for creating a more just, caring, and prosperous global community. This study aims to further suggest and compel individuals, particularly parents, to delve deeply into the reality of embracing and comprehending inclusivity in the modern world. The primary goal of this study is to investigate the attitudes of parents regarding inclusive education at the public elementary schools in Cebu City Division and the City of Naga Division of City School.

Literature Review:

Inclusive education, which integrates students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms, is underpinned by several theoretical frameworks and legal provisions aimed at ensuring equitable educational opportunities. This synthesis explores the intersection of Lev Vygotsky's Collaborative Learning Theory, David Rose and Anne Meyer's Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Jean Piaget's Constructivist Learning Theory, and the Hierarchical Model of Attitudes with pertinent legislation such as Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons), Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), and DepEd Order No. 44 s. (2021).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes social interaction's role in cognitive development, with concepts like the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding guiding collaborative learning. This theory aligns with inclusive education's goal of personalized support and fostering collaborative learning environments (Vygotsky, 1978). UDL aims to make learning accessible for all students by proactively designing teaching resources, delivery strategies, and evaluation tools. Grounded in the principles of engagement, action and expression, and representation, UDL promotes equitable educational experiences (Rose & Meyer, 2002).

Piaget's theory underscores learners' active construction of knowledge through interaction and experiences, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging individual differences and providing appropriate support (Piaget, 1970). Philippine laws such as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 uphold inclusive education principles by ensuring equitable opportunities, reasonable accommodations, and integration into the mainstream educational system.

Studies indicate varied parental attitudes towards inclusive education, with factors like teacher preparedness, cultural differences, and awareness influencing perceptions. Positive parental attitudes correlate with improved student outcomes and holistic development (Torgbenu et al., 2021; Opoku, 2020; Amka, 2019). Synthesizing theory, legislation, and empirical insights underscores the imperative of inclusive education in providing equitable opportunities for students with diverse needs. Effective implementation requires collaboration among educators, parents, and policymakers to address challenges and promote inclusive practices.

Methodology:

Design

The study utilized a Descriptive Comparative Research design. As articulated by Seeram (2019), descriptive-comparative research design involved an attempt to identify or confirm the existence of relationship or interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of the connections between variables without manipulating them, providing a comprehensive understanding of the observed phenomena. The data gathered in this study were handled through the statistical tools provided.

The sampling strategy used by the researcher in this study was known as universal sampling. According to Richard and Margaret (1990): 125, universal sampling is the process of choosing a sample in which not every member of the population has the same probability of being included in the sample and the probability of each member of the population being chosen is unknown. Since the parents were the ones who would be providing the crucial information needed to evaluate the research hypothesis, the researcher favored to select respondents from this



group using a universal sampling technique. By giving the respondents a series of questionnaires, the researchers collected data. The data's outcomes were handled.

Environment

This study was conducted at NPC-Colon Integrated School in barangay Colon, City of Naga, Cebu. NPC-Colon Integrated School is one of the barangay elementary schools of City of Naga, Cebu bearing the school ID number 502093. It is formerly known as NPC-Colon Elementary School. The school has 24 elementary teachers and 14 junior high school teachers. It is one of the schools in the City of Naga that offers Inclusive Education. Korean Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) is one of the major stakeholders of the school. The respondents will be gathered in a classroom which was permitted by the management. The fact that the study will take place while the respondents are waiting for their children to be dismissed makes things easier for them.

Respondents

The research respondents were the 40 parents per environment of children with and without disability under sections which implemented Inclusive Education. The respondents are fit to the study since their children has classmates who have learning and intellectual disability. Table 1

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents

Grade Level Handled	n	%
Grade 1	8	20.00
Grade 3	10	25.00
Grade 4	8	20.00
Grade 5	7	17.50
Grade 10	7	17.50
Total	40	100.00

As presented in Table 1, the study was conducted at NPC- Colon Integrated School, situated within the Naga City Division. This educational institution is situated in the province of Cebu, providing a diverse representation of settings for comprehensive data collection and analysis. The respondents will be the parents from this school.

Instrument

A modified version of Prado, A.A.'s rating scale questionnaire was used in the study of Prado (2002). There are two sections to the survey: the first asks about the respondents' profile, including their age, gender, number of children, highest level of education, and monthly income as a family. The subsequent section comprises twenty statements that depict the participants' perspectives regarding the integration of students with disabilities in the same classroom as their offspring. Respondents must choose one of the five options for each statement, 4-Excellent 3- Very Satisfactory, 2-Fair and 1-Poor.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data will be collected through a questionnaire that will be answered by the respondents. Their responses will be treated and interpreted accordingly.

Preliminary Stage. In a transmittal letter, the researcher will request permission for the study from the School Division Supervisors (SDS) of the Naga City Division. A second letter informing the school heads about the study in their respective schools will be sent after the SDS gives its approval. Once the approvals are obtained, the researcher will move on to the next phase.

Data Gathering Stage. The parents who fill out the questionnaire will be asked to be completely honest about their personal information and their level of support for including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Post Data Gathering Stage. After they are collected, the scores will be tallied and examined. Respondents' individual answers and scores will be gathered and totaled. After that, a thorough summary sheet will be produced that includes all of the information that is required in relation to the variables listed in the problem statement. After data is gathered and tabulated, statistical procedures will be used to analyze the data. Interpretations will be drawn from the data produced by the statistical tools. We will analyze each data point with respect to the format given in the problem statements. Additionally, each discussion will be enhanced and supported by citations to pertinent studies.

Statistical Treatment of Data

This study used Frequency Count, Simple Percentage, Weighted Mean and t-test.

In this study, the *Frequency count* assisted in establishing the frequency at which a particular data point occurred and the statements that particular respondents should assess. This would also assist in ascertaining the proportion of participants who concur with the statements included in the survey questionnaire.

The *Simple percentage*, which is obtained by multiplying the number of respondents by the total number of



respondents to obtain the simple percentage of the data requested to be calculated in this study, is used to compare the series of data collected and tabulated in this study.

The *Weighted Mean* is a statistical technique that calculates the average by assigning varying weights to certain individual values found in the study's data.

The *T-test* is used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups or if the mean of a single group differs significantly from a known value.

Scoring Procedure

The scoring procedure is a crucial aspect of research studies as it allows researchers to transform raw data into meaningful and analyzable information. It enhances the rigor and objectivity of research, enabling researchers to draw valid conclusions and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their field. Scoring Procedure for the respondents' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms

Scale	Numerical Rating	Descriptive Rating	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.25-4.00	Excellent	The respondents strongly agree towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms
3	2.50-3.24	Very Satisfactory	The respondents agree towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms
2	1.75-2.49	Fair	The respondents disagree towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms
1	1.00-1.74	Poor	The respondents strongly disagree towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms

Results and Discussion:

Level of Attitudes of the Respondents towards Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Classrooms

This section presented the level of attitudes of the parents of children with and without disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms as perceived by the respondent groups.

Parents of Children with Disabilities

This table 6 delves into the experiences of parents raising children with disabilities. It explores their perceptions of the potential benefits and challenges associated with including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. This research contributes to a growing body of knowledge on parental attitudes towards inclusive education.

**Table 2
Parents of Children with Disabilities**

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	A child with a disability can benefit academically from being integrated into a general education classroom.	3.90	Excellent
2	A child with a disability can benefit socially from being integrated into a general education classroom.	4.15	Excellent
3	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a disability in his/her class.	2.55	Very Satisfactory
4	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class.	2.35	Fair
5	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class.	2.85	Very Satisfactory
6	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a behavioral disability in his/her class.	2.70	Very Satisfactory
7	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a sensory impairment (i.e. hearing or visually impaired) in his/her class.	2.20	Fair
8	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with mild or moderate mental retardation in his/her class.	2.65	Very Satisfactory



9	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) in his/her class.	3.10	Very Satisfactory
10	My child's overall wellbeing would be compromised by having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	2.60	Very Satisfactory
11	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a health impairment (i.e. diabetes, asthma, or other) in his/her class.	2.75	Very Satisfactory
12	My child can benefit academically from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.05	Very Satisfactory
13	My child can benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.45	Excellent
14	I would invite a child with disabilities to my child's birthday party.	4.00	Excellent
15	I would encourage my child to go to a child with disabilities' birthday party.	4.05	Excellent
16	I would hesitate to have my child become friends with a child with disabilities.	2.70	Very Satisfactory
17	Having a child with disabilities in my child's class would impact my decision to have my child placed in that class or school.	2.75	Very Satisfactory
18	If a child with disabilities were to enroll in my child's class, I would want to be notified.	3.75	Excellent
19	It is important for me to be educated about my child's classmates' disabilities.	3.85	Excellent
20	It is important for my child to be educated about his/her classmates' disabilities.	4.35	Excellent
AW	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.19	Very Satisfactory
Legend:			
3.25 - 4.00 - Excellent; 2.50 - 3.24 - Very Satisfactory; 1.76 - 2.49 - Fair; 1.00 - 1.75 - Poor			

Table 2 showed the level of attitudes of the parents of children with disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms, it describes that the level of the attitude of the participants have neutral response to the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classroom with the weighted mean of 3.19.

The attitudes of parents vary depending on the kind of disability: according to Avramidis and Norwich (2002), parents were more likely to be skeptical about the inclusion of children with behavioral issues and severe cognitive disabilities, while parents who support the inclusion of children with physical and sensory disabilities are highly supportive. This implied that the parents' decision and level of attitude may change depends on the type of disability that a learner may have that may or not possibly affect their children inside the regular classrooms. Parents of Children without Disabilities

Table 2 explores the perspectives of parents whose children do not have disabilities. It examines their views on the potential benefits and challenges associated with including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The table presents a range of indicators, including perceived academic and social impacts for both children with and without disabilities, parents' concerns about their child's well-being, and their openness to inclusion efforts. The data is categorized using weighted means (WM) and descriptive labels to provide a clear picture of parental attitudes.



Legend: 3.25 - 4.00 - Excellent; 2.50 - 3.24 - Very Satisfactory; 1.76 - 2.49 - Fair; 1.00 - 1.75 - Poor

Table 3 showed the level of attitudes of the parents of children without disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms, it describes that the level of the attitude of the participants have a neutral

Table 3
Parents of Children without Disabilities

S/ N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	A child with a disability can benefits academically from being integrated into a general education classroom.	3.95	Excellent
2	A child with a disability can benefits socially from being integrated into a general education classroom.	4.05	Excellent
3	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a disability is his/her class.	2.80	Very Satisfactory
4	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class.	2.89	Very Satisfactory
5	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class.	3.10	Very Satisfactory
6	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a behavior disability in his/her class.	3.20	Very Satisfactory
7	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a sensory impairment (i.e. hearing or visually impaired) in his/her class.	2.90	Very Satisfactory
8	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with mild or moderate mental retardation in his/her class.	3.05	Very Satisfactory
9	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) in his/her class.	3.05	Very Satisfactory
10	My child's overall wellbeing would be compromised by having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.10	Very Satisfactory
11	My child's education would be compromised by having a child with a health impairment (i.e. diabetes, asthma, or other) in his/her class.	2.80	Very Satisfactory
12	My child can benefit academically from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.35	Excellent
13	My child can benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class	3.85	Excellent
14	I would invite a child with disabilities to my child's birthday party	3.90	Excellent
15	1 would encourage my child to go to a child with disabilities birthday party	3.60	Excellent
16	1 would hesitate to have my child become friends with a child with disabilities	2.75	Very Satisfactory
17	Having a child with disabilities m my child's class would impact my decision to have my child placed in that class or school.	2.90	Very Satisfactory
18	If a child with disabilities were to enroll in my child's class, I would want to be notified:	3.55	Excellent
19	It is important for me to be educated about my child's classmate's disability.	4.05	Excellent
20	It is important for my child to be educated about his/her classmate's disability	4.00	Excellent
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.34	Excellent

response to the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classroom with the weighted mean of 3.34. The result implied+ that the parents of children without disabilities allow their children to attend in a classroom that has learners with disabilities. According to Radojichikj and Jovanovic (2004), many of the parents accept inclusive education, but most of them still think the special school is better place for education of children with disability.

Test of Significant Difference between the Attitude of Parents of Children with and Without Disabilities towards Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Classrooms



Table 4
Test of Difference on the Attitudes of Parents of Children With and Without Disabilities towards Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Regular Classrooms

Source of Difference	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Computed t- value	p-value	Decision	Result
Parents of Children with Disabilities	63.75	12.79	-2.95	-0.641	0.525	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Parents of Children Without Disabilities	66.70	16.12					

*significant at $p < 0.05$

This section presented the test of significant difference between the level of attitudes of the parents of children with and without disabilities towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. Table 8 shows the result.

The data presented in Table 4 reflects a comparison between the attitudes of parents with children who have disabilities and those without disabilities regarding the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. The mean difference between these two groups is calculated to be 2.95, with a computed t-value of -0.641. The associated p-value, which measures the probability of observing the given results under the assumption that there is no true difference between the groups, is determined to be 0.525. As the p-value exceeds the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the observed difference in attitudes is statistically significant. Consequently, it can be inferred that the attitudes of parents with children who do not have disabilities are generally more positive towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms compared to parents with children who have disabilities.

Kelly (2002) asserts that parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities may hold differing attitudes towards inclusion due to their unique perspectives on the matter. This assertion is supported by existing literature, which underscores the notion that parents of children with disabilities tend to exhibit more favorable attitudes towards inclusion. Numerous studies have corroborated this perspective, highlighting the tendency for parents of children with disabilities to embrace inclusive educational practices more readily than parents of children without disabilities.

Conclusion:

The neutral attitudes observed among parents regarding inclusive education indicate a need for further investigation and targeted interventions. Understanding the reasons behind this neutrality is crucial to promote awareness and address potential misconceptions or barriers hindering parental support for inclusive education.

It highlights the complexity of the issue and underscores the importance of comprehensive strategies to address challenges, enhance communication between educators and parents, and provide adequate resources and support for inclusive educational practices. Further research, qualitative exploration, and tailored initiatives are recommended to foster positive parental attitudes and ensure effective implementation of inclusive education in the Philippines.

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