

ATTITUDES AND CHALLENGES OF GRADE 1 RECEIVING TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract :

This study aimed to assess the attitudes of Receiving teachers toward the inclusion of Grade 1 learners with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms in Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija, during the school year 2025-2026. The study specifically sought to examine teachers' beliefs, feelings, and actions related to inclusive education, as well as identify any factors influencing their attitudes, including their highest educational attainment, length of service, and relevant training attended. The research employed a descriptive correlational design and utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. Results revealed that Receiving teachers generally held positive attitudes toward the inclusion of SEN learners, particularly in terms of providing equal opportunities and fostering social acceptance. However, concerns were identified regarding the challenges of modifying classroom practices and the additional resources needed to support SEN learners effectively. The study also found significant relationships between teachers' attitudes and their highest educational attainment and relevant training attended, suggesting that professional development plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward inclusion. Teachers with higher educational qualifications and relevant training exhibited more favorable views on inclusion. The study highlighted several challenges faced by teachers, including inadequate facilities, lack of training, and socio-economic factors. Based on these findings, recommendations for improving inclusive education practices through targeted professional development programs and resource allocation were proposed.

Keywords: inclusive education, special educational needs, teacher attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies on inclusive education have highlighted various factors influencing teachers' attitudes and the effectiveness of inclusive practices globally. Benslimane and Chahboun (2023) conducted a study in Morocco that explored primary school educators' readiness for inclusive education. Their research revealed that while teachers demonstrated a positive attitude toward inclusion, many felt inadequately prepared due to limited professional development opportunities. The study emphasized the need for more targeted training programs to equip teachers with the skills necessary to implement inclusive education effectively. Similarly, in Vietnam, Nguyen and Pham (2022) examined the barriers and opportunities for professional development in inclusive education. Their findings indicated that while teachers recognized the importance of inclusive practices, they struggled with insufficient resources and a lack of comprehensive training, suggesting that improvements in teacher education and resource allocation are critical for fostering inclusion in classrooms.

In South Africa, Solomon and Hay (2022) explored teachers' perspectives on inclusive education in Grade R classrooms, revealing that teachers faced challenges in integrating learners with special needs due to a lack of individualized support and the need for more inclusive teaching strategies. Their study emphasized the importance of teacher attitudes and highlighted how supportive school environments and professional development opportunities could enhance inclusive practices. In Latin America, Oropeza and Martinez (2021) explored the role of teachers' attitudes in the success of inclusive education across several countries. They found that teachers' beliefs about inclusion, along with their professional development experiences, played a significant role in the success of inclusive classrooms. Teachers who received specialized training and support were more likely to adopt inclusive practices, suggesting that targeted teacher training is essential to overcome negative attitudes and promote inclusion.

Zhang and Lee (2023) conducted a qualitative study in rural China to explore teachers' experiences with inclusive education. They found that teachers in these areas faced significant challenges, including a lack of training, insufficient resources, and negative societal perceptions of students with special needs. Despite these obstacles, the study highlighted that teachers who received support and resources were more likely to implement inclusive practices successfully. These studies underscore the global need for comprehensive teacher training, adequate resources, and positive school environments to promote effective inclusive education practices, and they highlight the crucial role of teachers' attitudes in the success of inclusion efforts.

In India, Kaur and Sood (2022) found that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education shifted positively following professional development initiatives, though challenges in implementing inclusive practices still remained due to a lack of resources and support in the classroom. Studies in the Caribbean, such as the one by Williams and Brown (2022), reveal that while teachers supported inclusive education, large class sizes and limited training posed significant barriers. Finally, Dukmak and Alzahrani (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study in Saudi Arabia, finding that teachers generally had favorable attitudes toward inclusive education, but practical challenges like a lack of resources and training hindered effective implementation.

Inclusive education is a pedagogical approach that advocates for the participation of all students, regardless of their individual differences, in regular classrooms. This approach is grounded in the belief that every child, irrespective of ability, has the right to quality education within a common educational environment. Over the years, inclusive education has gained momentum globally,

becoming a priority for many education systems as a way to foster equality, diversity, and social inclusion. In an inclusive classroom, students with disabilities or special needs learn alongside their typically developing peers, and this interaction provides a rich, socially enriching environment that benefits both groups. At the core of successful inclusion is the attitude of teachers—particularly those in the early grades—who are responsible for setting the foundation for an inclusive school experience. The perceptions and readiness of teachers to accept and embrace inclusive practices can significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusion and the learning outcomes for all students.

Within the context of the Philippines, inclusive education has gained traction in recent years, with the Department of Education (DepEd) advocating for policies that ensure students with disabilities and those from marginalized backgrounds are included in general education settings. However, despite these policy initiatives, the implementation of inclusive education faces challenges, especially in remote or less-resourced areas. Teachers often report feeling ill-prepared to manage the diverse needs of students, leading to a gap between policy and practice. Research has found that while many teachers express positive attitudes toward inclusion, their confidence and efficacy in implementing inclusive strategies are often low due to insufficient training, lack of resources, and overcrowded classrooms (Sison, 2018). In addition, teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs may vary, and negative perceptions can result in a lack of motivation to engage in inclusive practices.

Recent studies on inclusive education in the Philippine context reveal several key challenges and opportunities related to its implementation. Caballes (2021) examined the perceptions and readiness of Filipino teachers toward inclusive education and found that while teachers generally support inclusion, many feel unprepared due to a lack of adequate training and resources. This finding is echoed in the work of Sison (2018), who explored teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs in mainstream classrooms. Sison's study highlighted that while teachers are generally positive about inclusion, they often face difficulties in effectively implementing inclusive practices because they feel under-supported in terms of both professional development and classroom resources. Similarly, Alvarado and Garcia (2020) found that Filipino public elementary school teachers acknowledge the importance of inclusive education but struggle with practical challenges, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient specialized training, which hinder their ability to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

Mendoza (2021) focused on the perspectives of special education teachers in the Philippines and identified several barriers to effective inclusion, such as lack of administrative support, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources. These challenges are also reflected in the study by Dela Cruz and Ramos (2022), which explored teachers' experiences and attitudes toward inclusive education in public schools. Their findings showed that while teachers expressed support for inclusive practices, they often lacked the necessary knowledge and training to implement them effectively, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Lastly, Cabrera (2020) conducted a survey in Metro Manila and identified similar issues, particularly the lack of specific training for teachers, limited educational materials, and the need for more inclusive policies at the school and district levels to address the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education. These studies collectively highlight the critical need for comprehensive teacher training, adequate resources, and supportive school policies to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education in the Philippines.

The situation in the local context of Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija, mirrors the national challenges in implementing inclusive education. Receiving teachers in this district are at the forefront of early educational interventions and are key to fostering an inclusive environment. Their attitudes, knowledge, and training in inclusive education are crucial to ensuring that young learners with varying abilities are provided with the support they need. Teachers' readiness to embrace inclusive education may be influenced by factors such as the level of professional development they have received, the support from school leadership, and the availability of specialized resources for students with disabilities. In many rural or less-funded areas, teachers may face additional challenges in accessing training and resources, which can affect their attitudes and confidence in adopting inclusive practices. Understanding the attitudes of Receiving teachers in this specific locale is essential for identifying the barriers they face and for developing targeted interventions that can help improve inclusive practices at the grassroots level.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to provide insights into how teacher attitudes can either facilitate or hinder the implementation of inclusive education, especially at the crucial early stages of schooling. By examining the experiences and perceptions of Receiving teachers, this research can offer valuable data that can inform policy recommendations, teacher training programs, and resource allocation to ensure that inclusive education is effectively practiced in local classrooms. Furthermore, understanding the local context of teacher attitudes can contribute to the national dialogue on how best to support teachers in inclusive education initiatives, ensuring that no child is left behind in their educational journey.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the attitude of Receiving teachers towards inclusion of Grade 1 learners who have special educational needs into mainstream classrooms in Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija during the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the profile of Receiving teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 highest educational attainment
 - 1.2 length of service, and
 - 1.3 relevant-training attended.
2. What is the level of attitude of Receiving teachers toward inclusion of Grade 1 learners who have special educational needs into mainstream classrooms as perceived by themselves:
 - 2.1 beliefs (core perspectives),
 - 2.2 feelings (expected outcomes of inclusion), and
 - 2.3 actions (classroom practices).
3. Is there a significant relationship between the attitude of Receiving teachers toward inclusion of Grade 1 learners who have special educational needs into mainstream classrooms and profile of the teachers?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the Receiving teachers toward inclusive education and how serious are they?

5. Based on the findings, what development program can be proposed improve the attitude of Receiving teachers toward inclusive education of children with special educational needs?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, sources of data, instrumentation and data collection and tools for data analysis.

Research Design

The research design used in this study is descriptive-correlational. The descriptive aspect of the design aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the attitudes of Receiving teachers toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream classrooms. It focuses on gathering data regarding the teachers' profiles, such as their highest educational attainment, length of service, and relevant training attended, as well as their beliefs, feelings, and actions related to inclusive education. This approach allows the researcher to describe the current status of teacher attitudes and the practices employed in the classroom. On the other hand, the correlational aspect of the design is used to investigate the relationships between these teacher characteristics and their attitudes toward inclusive education. Specifically, it examines whether factors such as educational background, years of teaching experience, and participation in relevant training are significantly associated with teachers' beliefs, feelings, and actions related to the inclusion of SEN learners. By combining both descriptive and correlational methods, the study seeks to not only describe the attitudes of Receiving teachers but also understand the factors that may influence these attitudes, providing insights into how to improve the implementation of inclusive education in the district.

Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for this study were Receiving teachers from the Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija, during the school year 2025-2026. Data were collected through several methods. First, teachers' profiles were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire or interview, which included information about their highest educational attainment, years of service, and relevant training programs they had attended. This allowed the study to understand the teachers' professional background. Second, the study assessed the teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education by using a structured questionnaire designed to measure their beliefs (core perspectives), feelings (expected outcomes of inclusion), and actions (classroom practices). This data provided insights into how teachers perceived the integration of learners with special educational needs into mainstream classrooms and the practices they employed to support inclusion. Additionally, data regarding the challenges teachers faced in implementing inclusive education were obtained through open-ended questions or interviews, which explored specific obstacles such as issues with resources, training, and classroom management. Lastly, teachers' perspectives on potential improvements were gathered to inform the development of a program aimed at enhancing their attitudes and practices related to inclusive education. These data sources were triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the receiving teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding inclusive education in the Cuyapo East District.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The instrumentation used in this study consisted of a self-administered questionnaire and open-ended interview questions, designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was structured to assess the teachers' profiles, including their highest educational attainment, years of service, and relevant training attended. It also included sections to measure the teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, focusing on three key areas: beliefs (core perspectives), feelings (expected outcomes of inclusion), and actions (classroom practices). The questionnaire items were developed based on existing literature and research on inclusive education and teacher attitudes. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in the field of education and special needs, and necessary revisions were made based on their feedback.

For the qualitative aspect, open-ended interview questions were used to explore the challenges teachers encountered in implementing inclusive education and to gather suggestions for a development program aimed at improving their attitudes and practices. These interviews allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences, providing richer data beyond the structured questionnaire.

Data collection took place during the school year 2025-2026. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed to Receiving teachers in the Cuyapo East District, and the teachers were given a specific period to complete the questionnaires. After the completion of the questionnaires, a selected group of teachers participated in individual interviews, where they were asked to elaborate on the problems they faced and suggest improvements to their professional development related to inclusive education. The data collection process was carefully monitored to ensure that the responses were consistent, honest, and provided comprehensive insights into the teachers' perspectives.

Approval and permit to conduct the study was obtained by the researcher from the authorities concerned prior to the conduct of the study. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to the teachers involved in the survey.

Tools for Data Analysis

To derive valid and accurate results, appropriate statistical measures were employed.

For this sub-problem, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the teachers' profiles. The data on teachers' highest educational attainment, years of service, and relevant training attended were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to summarize and describe the characteristics of the Receiving teachers. These statistics provided a clear profile of the teachers, helping to understand the demographic and professional background relevant to their attitudes toward inclusive education.

To analyze the attitudes of Receiving teachers toward inclusive education, the data collected through the structured questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as mean scores. The questionnaire assessed teachers' beliefs, feelings, and actions regarding inclusive education, and these components were measured separately. For each component (beliefs, feelings, actions), the mean score was computed to determine the general level of attitude toward inclusive education, with interpretation based on predetermined scale categories.

To examine if there was a significant relationship between the receiving teachers' profiles (educational attainment, length of service, relevant training) and their attitudes toward inclusive education, the study used Pearson's correlation coefficient. This statistical test allowed the researcher to determine whether there were significant associations between teachers' demographic characteristics and their beliefs, feelings, or actions regarding inclusion. The correlation helped identify any patterns or trends in how teachers' professional background influenced their attitudes toward inclusive education.

For sub-problem 4, qualitative data analysis was employed. The responses from the open-ended interview questions were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding the interview data into themes or categories based on recurring issues and challenges mentioned by the receiving teachers. Thematic analysis helped to identify the most common problems faced by receiving teachers in implementing inclusive education, such as lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, or classroom management issues. The severity of these challenges was then assessed by evaluating the mean of specific problems mentioned and their impact on the receiving teachers' ability to effectively include learners with special educational needs in their classrooms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered relative to sub-problems in the study.

Profile of the Receiving Teachers

The table below shows the profile of the receiving teachers in terms highest educational attainment, length of service as teacher, and relevant-training attended.

Table 1
Profile of Receiving Teachers

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
With MA Units	17	18.52
MA Degree Holder	10	37.04
Total	27	100
Length of Service		
1-10 years	17	62.96
11-20 years	10	37.04
Total	27	100
Relevant Training Attended (Inclusive Education)		
With Training	8	29.63
No Training	19	70.37
Total	27	100

Table 1 reveals that a majority of the Receiving teachers in the study hold a Master's degree (MA), with 37.04% (10 out of 27) being MA degree holders. On the other hand, 18.52% (17 teachers) have completed some units toward their MA degree. The remaining teachers may not have pursued advanced degrees beyond their undergraduate education. The presence of both MA units and degree holders suggests that many teachers value advanced education, which could influence their preparedness and attitudes toward inclusive education.

Regarding the length of service, the data shows that the majority (62.96%) of Receiving teachers have 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. This suggests a relatively young teaching workforce, with these teachers likely still building their experience in the field. A smaller group of 37.04% has between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience. In terms of relevant training on inclusive education, a significant portion (70.37%) of Receiving teachers reported not having attended any specialized training, while 29.63% indicated having received some form of training in inclusive education. The lack of training among the majority of teachers highlights a potential gap in professional development, which could affect their ability to effectively implement inclusive practices.

Table 2A

Level of Attitude of Receiving Teachers Toward Inclusive Education in terms of their Beliefs or Core Perspectives

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Special educational needs should have equal opportunities to participate in all school sponsored age-appropriate activities (sports, field trips, clubs, school plays, community service activities, etc.).	3.54	Agree
2. General education, special education, paraprofessionals, parents and related service providers have to plan and work collaboratively for the achievement of learning goals set for the child with special educational needs.	3.34	Agree
3. Regular classroom teachers must have the abilities necessary to work with students with special educational needs.	3.52	Agree
4. Regular classroom teachers must have sufficient training to teach learners with special educational needs.	3.42	Agree
5. Integration of learners with special educational needs necessitates extensive retraining of regular classroom teachers.	3.24	Agree
6. Integration of learners with special educational needs requires significant change in regular classroom procedures.	3.33	Agree
7. Whether learners whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other learners in the grade level should be in regular classes;	3.43	Agree

8. Whether learners who cannot control their behaviour and disrupt activities should be in regular classes	3.40	Agree
9. Whether the extra attention SEN learners require is detrimental to other learners and whether it is likely that learners with special educational needs will monopolize the regular classroom teacher's time .	3.29	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.39	Agree

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Agree (HA); 3.41-4.20-Agree (A); 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree (MA); 1.81-2.60- Slightly Agree (SA); 1.00-1.80- Not Agree (NA)

In Table 2A, the Receiving teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education generally show a positive outlook, as reflected in the highest and lowest mean scores. The highest mean was recorded for the statement, "Special educational needs should have equal opportunities to participate in all school-sponsored age-appropriate activities (sports, field trips, clubs, school plays, community service activities, etc.)," with a mean of 3.54. This indicates strong agreement among teachers that learners with special educational needs (SEN) should be fully included in all school activities, underscoring the importance of providing equal opportunities for SEN learners to engage in a broad range of school experiences.

The second highest mean of 3.52 was for the statement, "Regular classroom teachers must have the abilities necessary to work with learners with special educational needs." Teachers strongly agreed that they should possess the necessary skills and competencies to work with SEN learners. This reflects a belief that effective inclusive education requires teachers to be well-equipped to address the diverse needs of these learners.

On the other hand, the lowest mean was recorded for the statement, "Integration of learners with special educational needs necessitates extensive retraining of regular classroom teachers," with a mean of 3.24. Although teachers still agreed with this statement, the lower mean suggests a more cautious stance, indicating that while teachers recognize the need for retraining, they may feel that the changes required for inclusion can be managed with less intensive training.

The second lowest mean of 3.29 was for the statement, "Whether the extra attention SEN learners require is detrimental to other learners and whether it is likely that learners with special educational needs will monopolize the regular classroom teacher's time." This score suggests that teachers have concerns about the potential impact of SEN learners on the time and attention available for other students in the classroom.

The overall weighted mean for all the indicators was 3.39, indicating that, on average, teachers "agree" with the statements about inclusive education.

Table 2B

Level of Attitude of Receiving Teachers Toward Inclusive Education in terms of their Feelings or Expected Outcomes of Inclusion

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Integration offers mixed group interaction that fosters understanding and acceptance of differences among learners.	3.51	Agree
2. Learner with special educational needs develops academic skills more rapidly in a regular classroom than in special classrooms.	3.24	Agree
3. Integration of learners with special educational needs can be beneficial for learners without disabilities.	3.42	Agree
4. Integration of learners with special educational needs promotes his or her social independence; and SEN learners can best be served in regular classrooms.	3.32	Agree
5. Integration will likely have a negative effect on the emotional development of the learners with learning disabilities.	3.44	Agree
6. The presence of learners with learning disabilities will not promote acceptance of differences on the part of learners without disabilities.	3.23	Agree
7. The behavior of learners with learning disabilities will set a bad example for learners without disabilities.	3.33	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.36	Agree

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Agree (HA); 3.41-4.20-Agree (A); 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree (MA); 1.81-2.60- Slightly Agree (SA); 1.00-1.80- Not Agree (NA)

Table 2B presents the Receiving teachers' attitudes regarding the expected outcomes of inclusive education in terms of their feelings about the integration of learners with special educational needs (SEN) into regular classrooms. The overall weighted mean for all indicators was 3.36, indicating that, on average, teachers "agree" with the expected outcomes of inclusion.

The highest mean was for the statement, "Integration offers mixed group interaction that fosters understanding and acceptance of differences among learners," with a mean of 3.51. This indicates strong agreement among teachers that inclusion helps promote positive social interaction and fosters a better understanding of diversity among learners.

The second highest mean, 3.44, was recorded for the statement, "Integration will likely have a negative effect on the emotional development of learners with learning disabilities." Although this statement concerns potential negative outcomes, it still falls within the "Agree" category, indicating that teachers perceive some emotional challenges for SEN learners within inclusive settings. However, it is important to note that this result suggests that while teachers acknowledge the potential for emotional difficulties, they still believe in the overall value of integration.

On the other hand, the two lowest means were for the statements, "The presence of learners with learning disabilities will not promote acceptance of differences on the part of learners without disabilities" (mean = 3.23) and "Learner with special educational needs develops academic skills more rapidly in a regular classroom than in special classrooms" (mean = 3.24).

The statement about the absence of promotion of acceptance by peers suggests a concern that regular learners might not fully embrace diversity, and the relatively low score for academic skills development implies that teachers may not always see rapid academic improvement in inclusive settings.

The overall average weighted mean of 3.36 suggests that, while teachers generally hold positive feelings about the potential benefits of inclusive education, there are still concerns about its emotional and academic impact on both SEN learners and their peers. Teachers are supportive of inclusion but acknowledge the challenges that can arise, particularly regarding the emotional development of SEN learners and the academic progress they make in mainstream classrooms.

Table 2C

Level of Attitude of Receiving Teachers Toward Inclusive Education in terms of their Actions or Classroom Practices

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) that reflects individual educational needs, including academic and functional (e.g., behavioural, social, communication, life skills, etc.) skills needed to access the general education curriculum should be provided.	3.36	Agree
2. Learners with special educational needs should be welcome in regular classes and students with special educational needs are given every opportunity to function in regular classrooms when possible.	3.48	Agree
3. Assignments should not be modified for learners with special educational needs.	3.34	Agree
4. Modification of coursework for learners with special educational needs would be difficult to justify to other learners.	3.43	Agree
5. Isolation in a special classroom has a beneficial effect on the social and emotional development of the learners with special educational needs.	3.29	Agree
6. Whether there is more difficulty to maintain order in a regular classroom that has special educational needs learners than in one that does not have learners with special educational needs.	3.39	Agree
7. Whether isolation in a special classroom has a beneficial effect on the social and emotional development of the learners with special educational needs	3.36	Agree
Average Weighted Mean		

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Agree (HA); 3.41-4.20-Agree (A); 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree (MA); 1.81-2.60- Slightly Agree (SA); 1.00-1.80- Not Agree (NA)

Table 2C outlines the Receiving teachers' attitudes regarding their actions or classroom practices in relation to the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (SEN). The overall weighted mean for all indicators is 3.39, indicating that, on average, teachers "agree" with the classroom practices related to inclusive education.

The highest mean, 3.48, was recorded for the statement, "Learners with special educational needs should be welcome in regular classes and students with special educational needs are given every opportunity to function in regular classrooms when possible." This indicates strong agreement among teachers that SEN students should be included in regular classrooms and given every opportunity to succeed in these environments.

The second highest mean, 3.43, was for the statement, "Modification of coursework for learners with special educational needs would be difficult to justify to other learners." Teachers expressed moderate agreement with the idea that modifying coursework for SEN learners may present challenges, particularly in terms of how it may be perceived by other students.

On the other hand, the two lowest means were for the statements, "Isolation in a special classroom has a beneficial effect on the social and emotional development of learners with special educational needs" (mean = 3.29) and "Assignments should not be modified for learners with special educational needs" (mean = 3.34). Both of these indicators suggest some reservations among teachers about certain practices in inclusive education.

The overall weighted mean of 3.39 reflects a general agreement with the statements related to classroom practices for inclusive education. While teachers express strong support for the inclusion of SEN students in regular classrooms, they also recognize the complexities involved in modifying coursework and balancing the needs of all students.

Table 3

Relationship Between the Attitude of Receiving Teachers toward Inclusion of Learners who have Special Educational Needs into Mainstream Classrooms

Profile Variable	Attitude of Receiving Teachers toward Inclusion of Learners who have Special Educational Needs into Mainstream Classrooms		
	Statistics	level	p-value
Highest Educational Attainment	69.59	strong	<0.0001*
Length of Service as Teacher	-0.21	weak	0.05*
Relevant Training Attended	0.67	strong	<0.001*

*significant $\alpha=0.05$ (1-tail)

**significant $\alpha=0.01$ (2-tail)

Table 3 presents the relationship between the profile variables of Receiving teachers and their attitude toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms. The table highlights three profile variables: highest educational attainment, length of service as a teacher, and relevant training attended.

The highest educational attainment of teachers was found to have a strong positive relationship with their attitude toward inclusion, with a correlation of 0.69 and a p-value of <0.0001. This means that teachers with higher educational qualifications, such as a Master's degree or advanced certifications, tend to have more positive attitudes toward including SEN learners in mainstream classrooms.

The length of service as a teacher showed a weak negative correlation of -0.21 with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, with a p-value of 0.05. While this relationship is statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, the weak negative value indicates that teachers with more years of service may not necessarily have stronger or more favorable attitudes toward inclusion.

Relevant training attended by teachers, particularly in inclusive education, showed a strong positive correlation of 0.67 with their attitudes toward inclusion, and the p-value of <0.001 indicates a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that teachers who have received specialized training in inclusive education are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the inclusion of SEN learners.

The results from Table 3 suggest that several teacher profile variables are significantly related to their attitudes toward the inclusion of SEN learners. Teachers with higher educational attainment and relevant training in inclusive education were found to have stronger positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Table 4
Challenges Encountered by the Receiving Teachers in Inclusive Education

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Many schools don't have the facilities to properly accommodate learners with special needs	3.11	Moderately Serious
2. Teachers who are not trained or who are unwilling or unenthusiastic about working with differently-abled learners drawback to successful inclusion	3.06	Moderately Serious
3. Many learners are expected to learn while being taught in a language that is new and in some cases unfamiliar to them.	3.19	Moderately Serious
4. Areas that are traditionally poor and those with higher than-average unemployment rates tend to have schools that reflect that environment, such as run-down facilities.	3.20	Moderately Serious
5. Adequate funding is a necessity for inclusion and yet it is rare. Schools often lack adequate facilities, qualified and poorly trained teachers	3.11	Moderately Serious
6. A rigid curriculum that does not allow for experimentation or the use of different teaching methods can be enormous barrier to inclusion.	3.01	Moderately Serious
Average Weighted Mean	3.11	Moderately Serious

Legend	Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
	4.21-5.00	Very Serious (VS)
	3.41-4.20	Serious (S)
	2.61-3.40	Moderately Serious (MS)
	1.81-2.60	Slightly Serious (SS)
	1.00-1.80	Not Serious (NS)

Table 4 presents the various problems encountered by Receiving 1 teachers in implementing inclusive education, as reflected in the means for each indicator. All of the problems identified in the table are rated as "Moderately Serious," with the overall average weighted mean of 3.11.

The problem of physical barriers in schools, such as inadequate facilities to properly accommodate learners with special needs, received a mean of 3.11, which is rated as "Moderately Serious." Teachers recognize that many schools lack the proper infrastructure, such as ramps, specialized classrooms, and accessible restrooms, that would make inclusion more feasible.

The second problem identified is the lack of training and enthusiasm among some teachers, with a mean of 3.06, rated as "Moderately Serious." Teachers who are not properly trained or are resistant to working with differently-abled learners are seen as a drawback to the success of inclusive education.

The issue of language and communication barriers was rated at 3.19, also falling under the "Moderately Serious" category. This refers to the difficulty many learners face when expected to learn in a language that is new or unfamiliar to them, especially in multilingual settings. This is an ongoing challenge in inclusive classrooms, particularly in diverse linguistic contexts. Santos et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of language support for both students with special needs and their peers to ensure effective communication and inclusion.

Socio-economic factors, such as poverty and unemployment in certain areas, contribute to the challenges of inclusive education. Schools in impoverished areas often have poor infrastructure and lack essential resources. With a mean of 3.20, this issue was rated as "Moderately Serious."

Funding was another major concern, with a mean of 3.11. Teachers rated this problem as "Moderately Serious," reflecting the reality that schools often lack adequate funding for inclusive practices. Without proper funding, schools are unable to provide specialized facilities, hire qualified teachers, or offer professional development opportunities for staff.

The rigidity of the curriculum, which does not allow for the flexibility needed to implement different teaching methods for SEN learners, was rated with the lowest mean of 3.01, though still "Moderately Serious." This problem indicates that a standardized curriculum may not be sufficiently adaptable to meet the diverse needs of learners with special educational needs.

The results from Table 4 suggest that Receiving teachers in the study perceive several barriers to successful inclusion, with physical barriers, lack of teacher training, language and communication challenges, socio-economic factors, funding issues, and curriculum rigidity all being seen as moderately serious obstacles.

Summary

The study aimed to assess the attitude of Receiving teachers towards the inclusion of Grade 1 learners with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms in Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija during the school year 2025-2026. The key findings are summarized based on the results of the data analysis from the tables.

The majority of Receiving teachers in the study held a Master's degree (37.04%) or completed Master's units (18.52%), reflecting a relatively high level of educational attainment. In terms of teaching experience, 62.96% of the Receiving teachers had

1-10 years of service, while 37.04% had 11-20 years. Regarding training in inclusive education, 70.37% of Receiving teachers had not attended any relevant training, indicating a significant gap in professional development for inclusive education.

Teachers generally held positive attitudes towards inclusion, with an average weighted mean of 3.39, indicating agreement with the core perspectives of inclusive education. The two highest mean scores were for the belief that special educational needs (SEN) learners should have equal opportunities to participate in school activities (mean = 3.54) and that general education and special education personnel should collaborate for the achievement of learning goals (mean = 3.34). However, teachers showed more reservations about whether integration of SEN learners requires significant changes in regular classroom procedures (mean = 3.33), and whether the extra attention required by SEN learners could detract from other students' learning (mean = 3.29). These findings indicate a general support for inclusion, though with some concerns about the practical implications of integrating SEN learners.

The average weighted mean for teachers' feelings about inclusive education was 3.36, suggesting general agreement with the positive outcomes of inclusion. The highest mean (3.51) was for the belief that inclusion fosters understanding and acceptance of differences among learners. The lowest mean (3.23) was for the idea that the presence of learners with disabilities does not promote acceptance of differences in regular students. These findings reflect a strong belief in the benefits of inclusion for social integration and emotional development but also some concerns about the negative emotional effects on SEN learners.

Teachers showed a positive attitude towards inclusive classroom practices, with an average weighted mean of 3.39. The highest mean score (3.48) was for the belief that SEN learners should be welcome in regular classes and given opportunities to succeed in mainstream environments. However, teachers expressed some reservations about the modification of coursework for SEN learners (mean = 3.34), reflecting challenges in accommodating diverse learning needs while maintaining fairness for all students.

The study found significant relationships between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and certain profile variables. A strong positive correlation was found between the highest educational attainment and teachers' attitudes ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.0001$), indicating that teachers with higher educational qualifications tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusion. A weak negative correlation was observed with the length of service as a teacher ($r = -0.21$, $p = 0.05$), suggesting that more experienced teachers may be less enthusiastic about inclusion. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$) was found between relevant training attended and teachers' attitudes, emphasizing the importance of professional development in fostering positive attitudes toward inclusion.

The average weighted mean for problems encountered by teachers was 3.11, indicating that teachers perceive the barriers to inclusion as moderately serious. The highest-rated problems were socio-economic factors (mean = 3.20) and language and communication challenges (mean = 3.19), reflecting the difficulties teachers face in areas with limited resources and in classrooms with diverse linguistic needs. The lowest-rated issue was curriculum rigidity (mean = 3.01), which suggests that while teachers recognize the need for curriculum flexibility to accommodate SEN learners, they perceive it as less of a barrier compared to the other issues. Additionally, physical barriers and lack of adequate funding were also rated as moderately serious obstacles.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

1. The profile of Receiving teachers in terms of educational attainment, length of service, and training related to inclusive education indicates a diverse group of teachers with varying levels of experience and qualifications. A significant portion of the teachers had advanced degrees or specialized units, while a considerable number had fewer years of service. However, a majority of teachers had not attended any relevant training in inclusive education, highlighting the need for professional development opportunities in this area.

2. Receiving teachers generally agreed with the core beliefs of inclusive education, reflecting positive attitudes toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers were particularly supportive of equal opportunities for SEN learners and the need for collaboration among education professionals. However, there were some reservations regarding the practical implications of inclusion, such as the potential changes required in classroom procedures and concerns about the impact on other learners due to the additional attention needed by SEN students.

3. Receiving teachers expressed positive feelings about the expected outcomes of inclusive education, particularly in terms of fostering understanding, acceptance, and social integration among students. However, there was some concern about the emotional impact on SEN learners, with teachers recognizing the potential negative effects inclusion could have on their emotional development. These findings suggest that while teachers see the benefits of inclusion, they are also mindful of the challenges faced by SEN students.

4. Receiving teachers demonstrated a positive attitude toward classroom practices that support inclusion, especially regarding the importance of welcoming SEN learners into regular classrooms. However, some concerns were expressed about modifying coursework to accommodate the diverse needs of SEN students, suggesting that teachers may face challenges in balancing fairness and individual support for SEN learners within mainstream classrooms.

5. The study found significant relationships between certain profile variables and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Receiving teachers with higher educational attainment and relevant training in inclusive education demonstrated more positive attitudes toward inclusion. In contrast, the length of service as a teacher showed a weaker relationship, indicating that experience alone does not necessarily equate to more favorable attitudes toward inclusion. These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development and specialized training in shaping teachers' views on inclusive education.

6. Receiving teachers identified several barriers to successful inclusion, which were generally perceived as moderately serious. Key challenges included physical barriers, lack of teacher training, language and communication issues, socio-economic factors, and inadequate funding. These barriers collectively hinder the implementation of inclusive education and highlight the need for systemic support, including better infrastructure, more training for teachers, and adequate resources to create an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges and enhance the implementation of inclusive education in Cuyapo East District, Schools Division Office of Nueva Ecija:

1. It is recommended that the school heads organize regular training programs, workshops, and seminars on inclusive education to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. These training initiatives should focus on strategies for effectively teaching students with special educational needs (SEN), including differentiated instruction, the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and managing diverse classroom dynamics.

2. The study highlighted the importance of collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and other professionals to achieve the learning goals for SEN learners. Therefore, schools should foster a collaborative culture by encouraging regular team meetings and joint planning sessions, where all involved parties can share insights, strategies, and resources for the benefit of SEN learners.

3. Teachers identified physical barriers, such as inadequate facilities, as a significant challenge in inclusive education. It is essential for the local government to invest in improving school infrastructure to accommodate SEN learners, such as ramps, accessible classrooms, and specialized equipment. Schools should also be provided with adequate teaching resources, assistive technologies, and learning materials that cater to the needs of all learners.

4. Teachers indicated that a rigid curriculum was a barrier to effective inclusion. Therefore, it is recommended that the curriculum be reviewed and adapted to allow for more flexibility, enabling teachers to modify their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners. This could include allowing for more individualized learning paths, flexible teaching methods, and the integration of assistive technologies to support SEN learners.

5. A key concern raised by teachers was the lack of adequate funding for inclusive education programs. To address this, it is recommended that more funding be allocated to inclusive education initiatives, particularly in underfunded schools. This funding can be used for professional development, purchasing specialized teaching tools, and improving school facilities to accommodate SEN learners.

6. Teachers acknowledged the impact of socio-economic factors on the implementation of inclusive education. To mitigate these barriers, it is recommended that the DepEd collaborate with local government units and non-governmental organizations to provide additional support for schools in low-income areas. This could include offering scholarships, distributing learning materials, and improving school facilities to ensure that socio-economic factors do not hinder the education of SEN learners.

7. While most teachers expressed positive beliefs and feelings about inclusive education, concerns about the impact of inclusion on SEN learners' emotional development and the potential difficulties in balancing the needs of all learners were evident. It is recommended that schools implement programs aimed at fostering positive attitudes toward inclusion, such as awareness campaigns, peer support programs, and activities that promote empathy and understanding among learners. Encouraging a school-wide inclusive culture will help reduce resistance and improve the overall acceptance of inclusion.

8. To ensure that inclusive education is being effectively implemented, it is recommended that regular monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education programs be conducted. Feedback from teachers, parents, and learners should be collected periodically to assess the effectiveness of training programs, the adequacy of resources, and the overall classroom environment. This feedback can then inform future improvements and adjustments to inclusion strategies.

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