Teachers' Proficiencies Towards the Implementation of Inclusive Education and Identifying the Characteristics of Specific Learning Difficulties

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the proficiency of general education teachers in implementing inclusive education and identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties (SLD) in public schools in Liloan, Cebu, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were gathered from 30 teachers at Lataban Elementary School and Lataban National High School through a validated questionnaire. Results indicated that while teachers exhibited an overall proficient level in inclusive education, their practical competencies in areas such as using assistive technologies, applying evidence-based strategies, and teaching students with special needs were only moderate. In contrast, teachers demonstrated strong agreement in recognizing SLD characteristics, particularly for dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. A significant positive relationship was found only between teachers' educational attainment and their proficiency in implementing inclusive education. Furthermore, a significant difference was identified, with teachers scoring higher in SLD identification than in the practical implementation of inclusive strategies. The findings highlight a critical gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom application, influenced by factors such as large class sizes and limited targeted training. To address these concerns, a structured action plan was developed, focusing on enhanced professional development, resource provision, and collaborative support systems to bridge proficiency gaps and promote equitable, effective, and inclusive education.

Keywords: Special Education, Inclusive Education, Teacher Competencies,Specific Learning Difficulties, descriptive-Correlational Design, Cebu, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become an integral part of modern-day educational systems, which is focused on providing equal access to learning for all learners regardless of their physical, mental, emotional or developmental constraints. Under inclusion policy, general education teachers are required to cater learners with special educational needs (SEN) in the mainstream classroom. With this change in educational context, these teachers are now required to include young people with SEN into their classrooms that requires them showing competences beyond traditional pedagogical practice. Aside from it, teachers must have capabilities and knowledge of differentiated teaching methods, classroom management and individual support strategies.

The SPED environment is a concern all over the world and schools are still confronted with obstacles such as limited resources, untrained teachers, inadequate assistive technologies and overcrowded classrooms and widespread of misconception about disabilities. These factors hinder the successful practice of inclusive education and draw attention to the necessity of improving competence and support mechanism in dealing with diverse learners.

In the Filipino setting, inclusive education is a national agenda for addressing educational equity as stipulated in Republic Act 10533, Republic Act 11650 and DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009. However, despite the institutionalization of these policy documents, public schools remain a long way from implementing inclusive education. These barriers comprise the shortage of trained SPED teachers, limited access to diagnostic facilities,

a scarcity of learning materials adapted for special needs children and accessibility challenges. Such barriers are still evident, especially in Liloan, Cebu.

Aside from that and with the supportive legislation, there is a large discrepancy between what laws say and what teachers encounter in inclusive classrooms. A significant number of general education teachers express that they do not have adequate knowledge or training to be able to recognize SLD, feel under-prepared in designing differentiated learning experiences and face challenges related to handling SPED equipment and materials. These competences gaps obstruct the successful introduction of inclusive education and lead to hidden learning needs in students. These gaps need to be addressed through assessing teachers' preparedness, purposeful capacity-building for teacher practice and enhancing support structures which create the conditions for inclusive practice.

Considering the foregoing, there is an urgent call for improving SPED offerings and for implementing inclusive education principles without exception across all Philippine schools, As identified the current state of special education in this country, the study aims to emphasize the need for teacher readiness and systematic support for discovering and addressing learning challenges. This will then be for a larger end of establishing a kind of inclusive education that genuinely respects the rights and dignity of every Filipino learner. Most local studies have focused on primary education or special education settings, leaving a gap in understanding how regular high school teachers perceive and respond to the call for inclusive practices (Guinto, 2020; Almazan & Reyes, 2021) cited in (Sabanal et.al. 2025

To close the observe gaps in the implementation of inclusive education and ease confronted by the teachers to support learners with needs, this study aspired to establish a thematic action plan as a strategic guideline for enhancement of teacher competence, resource provisioning and support mechanism in inclusive classroom environments.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

This research assessed the level of general education teachers' proficiencies towards the implementation of inclusive education and identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom particularly in public schools at Liloan, Cebu as basis for proposed Action Plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following sub-problems:

What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of:

1.1 area of specialization;

1.2 educational attainment;

1.3 years of teaching experience;

1.4 number of learners in class; and
1.5 number of trainings and seminars attended related to inclusive education?
What is the level of respondents' proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education?

What is the level of teacher-respondents' proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom?

Is there a significant relationship between the profile of teacher- respondents and

4.1 level of proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education;

4.2 proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education

classroom?

Is there a significant difference between the teachers' proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education and proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study, composed of the research design, sequence of the study, research site, participants, research instruments, performance of the data collection and data analysis, reliability and validity of the study, ethical issues, and the description of the study, will be described.

Design

The method employed in the study is a descriptive-correlative quantitative research design. The instrument is descriptive as it seeks to establish and describe the proficiency of general education teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in four main domains such as knowledge, skills, attitude and practices. This also assesses the teacher's proficiency in identifying learners with difficulties in inclusive classrooms. It is correlational in nature due to its design to analyze the relationship of the teachers' demographic profile (e.g., educational attainment, field of specialization, years of teaching experience, number of learners in class and training on inclusive education) and their proficiencies of the mentioned areas. The design is quantitative as it gathers numerical data by means of a structured questionnaire and uses statistical procedures to handle and interpret data in a neutral manner.

Flow of the Study

The design of this study is based on the outline of (Input–Process–Output (IPO) model as shown in the Figure 2.

The input of the study includes the relevant information of the teachers in in terms of area of specialization, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, number of learners in class, and number of trainings and seminars attended related to inclusive education. In addition, the study assesses respondents' proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education and proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom. It also determines the significant relationship between the profile of teacher-respondents; proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education; and proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom. In relevant to this, significant difference between the teachers' proficiency towards the implementation of inclusive education and proficiency in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom is also included.

The process of the study includes the research procedure to be strictly followed guided by the research approach, which is the descriptive-correlational method of research.

The output of the study is an Action Plan for the implementation of inclusive education and identifying learners with difficulties in inclusive classrooms.

Environment

This research was implemented in selected public high schools of the Liloan District in the province of Cebu, Philippines.

Lataban Elementary School was originally named Lataban Primary School in 1938, during which time the first Gabaldon-type school building was constructed. The school was situated in the upland portion of Barangay Lataban and catered to 408 pupils with 15 teachers. It had a favorable learning environment supported by the active participation of the local government and the strong organization of the Parents–Teachers Association

(PTA). The school was dedicated to the provision of inclusive education.

Lataban National High School, which was formally opened in 2009, began under difficult circumstances, with classes being held under a mango tree or in elementary classrooms. At the time of the study, it had a population of more than 420 students and 15 regular teachers, and its facilities included a library, a computer laboratory, and a school gymnasium. It was recognized as one of the most active schools in holistic education, extracurricular activities, and community service despite its remote location and challenging terrain. The school had also enrolled about 20 students with learning difficulties and special needs, demonstrating its active engagement in inclusive education.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the teachers of Lataban Elementary School and Lataban National High School. The teachers who worked in these schools had valuable experiences and perspectives at the ground level of inclusive classroom settings. Convenience sampling was used based on the teachers' accessibility. The distribution of the respondents in this study was presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1.Distribution of Respondents (n=30)

Teacher-respondents	f	%
Lataban National High School	15	50
Lataban Elementary School	15	50
Total	**30**	**100**

Instrument

The main data collection tool in this study was a structured survey that was designed by Moosa et al. (2020) and was utilized in the studies of Sabanal et al. (2025), entitled Inclusive Education Practices in Philippine Secondary Schools: Teachers' Readiness and Competencies, and Efondo (2025), Assessing Learners' Difficulties and Teacher Competence in Identifying the Characteristics of Specific Learning Disabilities in an Inclusive Education Program. This instrument was chosen because of its established validity in measuring the proficiencies of general education teachers toward the implementation of inclusive education and in identifying learners' difficulties in inclusive classrooms.

The questionnaire consisted of three major sections. The first part contained demographic information, which included educational degree, field of specialization, number of years of teaching, number of learners in inclusive classrooms, and trainings or seminars attended related to inclusive education or special education (SPED). These items were intended to assess possible relationships between teachers' profiles and their proficiencies.

The second part assessed teachers' proficiencies in inclusive education through 45 Likert-type items categorized into four domains: knowledge, skills, attitude, and practices. The knowledge domain included 10 items that measured teachers' understanding of inclusive schooling, types of disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD, and autism), laws and policies protecting learners with special needs, teaching strategies, assessment, assistive technologies, and the creation of inclusive learning environments. The skills domain comprised 10 items that examined teachers' abilities to manage inclusive classrooms, differentiate instruction, establish communication with parents, collaborate with colleagues, and address students' limitations. The attitude domain also included 10 items that assessed teachers' beliefs, values, and openness toward inclusive education, including their concern for the needs, development, and potential of learners with special educational needs. Finally, the practices domain consisted of 15 items that reflected the extent to which teachers implemented inclusive strategies in their classrooms, such as differentiated instruction, individualized education programs (IEPs), curriculum adaptations, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), collaboration with stakeholders, and reflective teaching practices. In addition, the study examined significant differences in teachers' proficiencies toward the implementation of inclusive education and the identification of learners' difficulties.

A four-point Likert scale was employed to rate each item in the questionnaire. The rating scale for the knowledge,

skills, and attitude domains used the following descriptors: 4 – Very Competent, 3 – Competent, 2 – Less Competent, and 1 – Not Competent.

The third part, Section B, contained 18 items that sought to determine the extent of general education teachers' proficiency in identifying learners with learning difficulties in inclusive classrooms. The response options were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, with corresponding scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

These rating frameworks provided a systematic and meaningful way to interpret the results and to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement among teachers. The comprehensive design of the instrument was critical to achieving a well-rounded assessment of teacher proficiencies and to guiding future inclusive education training programs and policy formulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section shows the gathered data regarding the teachers' proficiency in identifying students with learning disabilities in inclusive settings during the school year 2025-2026 at Lataban Elementary School and Lataban National High School, Lataban, Liloan Cebu

Demographic Profile of the Teachers

The survey respondents are teachers from Elementary and Secondary in General Education. The researcher obtained the data from teachers who had received training in identifying students with learning disabilities in inclusive education. The profile of the respondents includes their age, gender, grade level, area of specialization, highest educational attainment, years in teaching, number of learners in a class, number of trainings attended in inclusive education, number of siblings, and type of disability.

Area of Specialization

Teachers at the Secondary level have their specific field of focus whether it is in Core Academic Subjects, Career and Technical Education (TLE). In this context, the area of specialization refers to the specific field of focus of the teachers' respondents. This information helps in assessing how the teachers with different areas of specialization influence their level of competence in implementing inclusive education, particularly in recognizing and addressing the learning difficulties of diverse learners within an inclusive classroom setting.

Table 2 Area of Specialization

Area of Specialization	f	%
Core Academic	23	76.67
Career and Technical	6	20
Arts & PE	1	3.33
Total	30	100

The study revealed that 76.67% of the 30 teacher-respondents specialized in core academic subjects, compared to 20% in career and technical areas and 3.33% in arts and physical education, with no respondents from special education or other fields. This distribution indicated a heavy reliance on general educators for inclusive classrooms in Liloan, Cebu public schools. Frequency and percentage computations confirmed the dominance of core academic specialists, highlighting potential gaps in specialized expertise for handling specific learning difficulties (SLD).

Core academic teachers formed the majority, suggesting that inclusive education implementation rested primarily on generalists who lacked targeted training in SLD characteristics, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia identification. This profile aligned with Philippine secondary school trends where such specialization correlated weakly with inclusive readiness, emphasizing attitudes and training over subject focus. The minimal representation in arts/PE and absence of special education experts implied reliance on on-the-job adaptation

rather than specialized proficiency.

These findings implied the need for targeted professional development to bridge proficiency gaps, as core academic dominance without SLD-specific training hindered effective inclusive practices and early identification in overcrowded classrooms. Schools in Liloan could prioritize interventions like workshops on SLD traits to enhance teacher competencies, reducing barriers for learners with disabilities. An action plan should thus focus on mandatory inclusive training for generalists to foster equitable education.

Recent studies supported these observations, as Sabanal et al. (2025) found that 73.33% core academic specialization among Cebu teachers linked to moderate inclusive knowledge but required enhanced training for SLD handling, while Sito (2020) noted inadequate preparedness in Philippine public elementary teachers for diverse needs, including SLD, due to limited special education exposure. Similarly, Arboiz and Aoanan (2024) highlighted that teacher profiles heavy in general academics benefited from efficacy-building programs to improve SLD identification and inclusive implementation.

Educational Attainment

This is fundamental to further extent their capability considering inclusive classroom was presented in this section. Educational level communicates levels of formal higher education attained by respondents and the depth to which they were trained in their professions. This information is valuable because it lets us know what level of education may impact their capacity to implement inclusively and respond to the variety of learning needs that students need.

Table 3 Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	f	%
Master's Degree	4	13.33
With master's degree Units	23	76.67
Bachelor's Degree	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

The study showed that among 30 teacher-respondents, 76.67% held master's degree units, 13.33% possessed a completed master's degree, and 10% had only a bachelor's degree. Frequency and percentage analyses confirmed this distribution, with no respondents reporting doctoral-level attainment. This profile indicated a predominance of mid-level graduate education among general education teachers tasked with inclusive classrooms in Liloan, Cebu public schools.

Teachers with master's units dominated, reflecting a commitment to ongoing professional growth yet limited full advanced degrees, which potentially supported moderate proficiency in inclusive education but highlighted gaps in deep SLD identification skills. This attainment level aligned with Philippine trends where partial graduate coursework enhanced pedagogical readiness without fully equipping educators for complex disabilities. The low bachelor's-only rate suggested baseline qualifications exceeded minimum requirements, though specialized inclusive training remained crucial.

Findings implied that schools should incentivize completion of master's programs and integrate SLD-focused modules to elevate proficiency, addressing overcrowding and diverse needs in inclusive settings. An action plan could prioritize subsidized graduate units and targeted workshops for bachelor's holders to boost identification accuracy and implementation equity. Such enhancements would strengthen overall teacher capacity in Liloan public schools.

Recent research corroborated these patterns, as Sabanal et al. (2025) demonstrated that higher educational attainment, including master's units, positively correlated with inclusive knowledge among Cebu teachers, while Arboiz and Aoanan (2024) linked advanced qualifications to improved self-efficacy for SLD handling in public schools. Similarly, Raguindin (2025) emphasized that Filipino teachers' graduate-level preparation fostered key competencies for inclusive practices, underscoring the need for profile-specific development.

Years of Teaching Experience

Teacher teaching experience comprises a number of years that teachers had spent learning lessons in the classroom. Experience may contribute to teachers' confidence, flexibility and capacity to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Table 4 Year of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	f	%
16-above	2	6.67
11-15	6	20.00
6-10	18	60.00
1-5	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

The study indicated that among 30 teacher-respondents, 60% had 6-10 years of teaching experience, 20% possessed 11-15 years, 13.33% had 1-5 years, and 6.67% exceeded 16 years. Frequency and percentage calculations verified this mid-level dominance, with no respondents reporting zero experience. This distribution reflected a moderately seasoned workforce handling inclusive education in Liloan, Cebu public schools.

Mid-level experience (6-10 years) prevailed, suggesting accumulated practical exposure to diverse learners yet potential limitations in long-term specialized strategies for SLD identification, as shorter tenures might lack depth while veterans formed a minority. This pattern mirrored Philippine public school trends where moderate service correlated with baseline inclusive readiness but required supplementary training over raw years. The skew toward 6-10 years highlighted adaptation through on-the-job learning rather than extensive specialization.

These results implied the necessity for experience-tailored interventions, such as mentorship programs pairing mid-level teachers with veterans to enhance SLD proficiency and inclusive implementation amid class sizes. Schools in Liloan could develop action plans emphasizing continuous development for all brackets, prioritizing simulation-based training for newer staff to accelerate equity. Such measures would optimize existing tenure strengths for sustainable inclusive practices.

Contemporary studies reinforced these insights, with Sabanal et al. (2025) reporting that 6-10 years of service among Cebu teachers yielded moderate inclusive competencies needing targeted enhancement, while Raguindin (2025) identified mid-career experience as foundational for Filipino teachers' SLD handling when paired with training. Likewise, Alcosero et al. (2023) found length of service weakly linked to readiness in Philippine public schools, advocating professional development to bridge gaps across experience levels

Number of Learners in Class

Teaching the experience is one of the most important impact factors for teachers' professional ability and quality of teaching. It is an investment in pedagogical, classroom management and differentiation skills. Within the domain of inclusion, experience often relates to a teacher's self-efficacy and flexibility in delivering interventions that target students with diverse abilities.

Table 5 Number of Learners in Class

Number of Learners	f	%
30 or more	22	73.33
20-29	7	23.33
1-20	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

The study revealed that 73.33% of the 30 teacher-respondents managed classes with 30 or more learners, 23.33% handled 20-29 learners, and only 3.33% taught 1-20 learners. Frequency and percentage computations confirmed

this predominance of large class sizes in Liloan, Cebu public schools implementing inclusive education. This distribution underscored overcrowding as a pervasive challenge for general educators addressing specific learning difficulties (SLD).

Large classes dominated, indicating that teachers faced heightened demands in differentiating instruction and identifying SLD characteristics like reading or math discrepancies amid high student-teacher ratios. This pattern reflected typical Philippine public school conditions where overcrowding diluted individualized attention, potentially compromising inclusive proficiency despite moderate experience levels. The rarity of smaller classes highlighted systemic resource constraints over teacher-specific factors.

These findings implied the urgency of class size reductions or support aides in action plans to bolster SLD detection and inclusive strategies, enabling teachers to monitor progress effectively. Schools in Liloan could advocate for policy adjustments prioritizing smaller inclusive sections, supplemented by co-teaching models to mitigate overload. Enhanced capacity would directly elevate equity for learners with disabilities.

Recent scholarship aligned with these trends, as Sabanal et al. (2025) observed that over 70% of Cebu teachers in large classes (30+) reported moderate inclusive readiness hampered by overcrowding, while Raguindin (2025) linked high student numbers to diminished SLD identification competencies among Filipino educators. Similarly, Alcosero et al. (2023) emphasized that class size exceeding 25 students in Philippine public schools necessitated targeted interventions to sustain proficiency in diverse classrooms.

Number of Trainings and Seminars Attended Related to Inclusive Education

The teachers' attendance of trainings and seminars can serve as an indicator of exposure to professional training on inclusive education. The amount and quality of exposure to inclusive education related training can have an effect on teacher's preparedness to identify and facilitate the needs of diverse learners. This is one of the determinants for furthering their knowledge, skills and competencies in teaching diverse needs learners.

Table 6 Number of Trainings and Seminars Attended Related to Inclusive Education

Number of Trainings and Seminars Related to Inclusive Education	f	%
5 or more	4	13.33
4	1	3.33
3	3	10.00
2	5	16.67
1	10	33.33
0	7	23.33
Total	30	100.00

The study determined that among 30 teacher-respondents, 33.33% attended only one training or seminar on inclusive education, 23.33% attended none, 16.67% attended two, 10% attended three, 3.33% attended four, and 13.33% attended five or more. Frequency and percentage analyses verified this skewed distribution toward minimal exposure, with nearly 57% having one or zero sessions in Liloan, Cebu public schools. This profile exposed substantial gaps in professional development for handling specific learning difficulties (SLD) in inclusive settings.

Limited training prevalence indicated that most teachers relied on general experience rather than structured inclusive competencies, potentially undermining SLD identification like phonological deficits or working memory issues amid large classes. This pattern echoed Philippine public education realities where sporadic seminars failed to build sustained proficiency, prioritizing quantity of exposure over depth despite mid-level tenure and graduate units. The 23.33% with zero training highlighted systemic neglect in mandatory preparation.

Results implied an action plan mandating annual inclusive workshops, online modules, and peer coaching to address deficiencies, enabling better SLD screening and differentiated instruction. Schools in Liloan could partner with DepEd for subsidized programs targeting untrained staff, fostering equitable learner outcomes.

Prioritizing training would transform profile constraints into strengths for inclusive efficacy.

Recent studies affirmed these concerns, as Sabanal et al. (2025) reported that over 50% of Cebu teachers with minimal inclusive training exhibited low SLD readiness, necessitating intensive programs, while Raguindin (2025) linked fewer than three seminars to reduced competencies in Filipino inclusive classrooms. Alcosero et al. (2023) similarly advocated structured training for public school educators with sparse exposure to enhance implementation and identification skills.

Level Of Respondent's Proficiency Towards the Implementation Of Inclusive Education

Teacher competence is key for successful implementation of inclusive education that believes in giving attention to each learner and a variety of teaching learning strategies. Teachers' competence in inclusive education includes (1) understanding and skills about recognizing special educational needs, (2) acting as a support provider and cooperation with agents. Competence-based assessment enables areas of the teaching competences, which professional development needs to address for promoting teacher preparedness and efficacy in creating an inclusive classroom environment, to be pinpointed.

Table 7 Level of Respondents' Competencies Towards the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Indicators	Mean	Sd	Verbal Description
1. I understand the processes involved for an inclusive education.	3.03	0.72	Proficient
2. I have knowledge of identifying students with special educational needs.	2.73	0.87	Proficient
3. I have knowledge to create an inclusive learning environment.	2.47	0.73	Moderate
4. I have knowledge to sustain an inclusive learning environment	2.23	0.85	Moderate
5. I have knowledge of assessing students with educational needs	2.23	0.85	Moderate
6. I have knowledge of how to teach students with special needs.	2.20	0.96	Moderate
7. I understand the type of disabilities that students have	2.43	1.04	Moderate
8. I possess knowledge of relevant legislation, policies and guidelines pertaining to inclusive education, allowing me to ensure compliance and advocate for the rights of students with special needs.	2.50	0.997	Proficient
9. I am knowledgeable about assistive technologies and accommodations available to support students with disabilities in accessing the curriculum and participating fully in classroom activities	2.10	0.76	Moderate
10. I am familiar with evidence-based instruction strategies and interventions designed to support students with diverse learning needs, enabling me to provide effective instruction that addresses individual student requirements.	2.27	0.78	Moderate
11. I am able to teach students with special needs	2.17	1.05	Moderate
12. I am able to discuss with parents regarding the emotional need of their children with special needs	2.47	0.97	Moderate
13. I am able to provide information on inclusive education for parents of students with special needs.	2.27	0.87	Moderate
14. I am able to provide educational support for students with special needs	2.47	0.9	Moderate
15. I am able to manage students with special needs.	2.30	0.92	Moderate
16. I am able to foster positive relationship between mainstream students and students with special needs to accommodate inclusive education.	2.57	0.68	Proficient
17. I have developed effective communication and collaboration skills allowing me to work collaboratively with other educators, support staff, and specialists to meet the needs of students with special needs.	2.47	0.78	Moderate
18. I am adept at individualizing instruction and adapting curriculum materials to meet the specific needs and abilities of students with	2.47	0.82	Moderate

diverse learning profiles.			
19. I possess strong organizational and time management skills, enabling me to effectively plan and implement differentiated instruction and support strategies to meet the needs of students with special needs.	2.47	0.78	Moderate
20. I am proficient in using various teaching modalities and instructional approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences among students with special needs.	2.30	0.75	Moderate
21. I understand the meaning of inclusive education	3.57	0.57	Very proficient
22. I care for the well-being of students with special needs	3,33	0.66	Very Proficient
23. I understand the purpose of an inclusive education	3.33	0.66	Very Proficient
24. I care for the progressive learning of students with special needs.	3.33	0.66	Very Proficient
25. I care for the achievements of students with special needs.	3.53	0.68	Very Proficient
26. I believe students with special needs can achieve their best with support.	3.67	0.55	Very Proficient
27. Teaching students with special needs requires more teaching aids.	3.63	0.61	Very Proficient
28. I need to work together with special education teachers if I have students with special needs in my class.	3.53	0.68	Very Proficient
29. Despite of the disabilities faced by students. With special needs, they also have their own abilities	3.67	0.61	Very Proficient
30. I need extra effort to teach students with special needs.	3.80	0.48	Very Proficient
Weighted Mean	**2.78**	**0.78**	**Proficient**

The study assessed teachers' competencies in implementing inclusive education across 30 indicators, yielding a weighted mean of 2.78 (SD=0.78), classified as proficient overall. Indicators on conceptual understanding and attitudes, such as "I understand the meaning of inclusive education" (M=3.57, SD=0.57; very proficient) and "I need extra effort to teach students with special needs" (M=3.80, SD=0.48; very proficient), scored highest, while practical skills like assistive technologies (M=2.10, SD=0.76; moderate) and teaching special needs students (M=2.20, SD=0.96; moderate) scored lowest. Standard deviations (0.48-1.05) indicated consistent moderate variability, with mean scores ranging from 2.10 to 3.80 confirming strengths in foundational knowledge over applied execution.

Teachers exhibited proficient overall competencies, driven by very proficient attitudes toward student well-being and support needs, yet moderate proficiency in core implementation areas like assessment, differentiation, and SLD identification amid profiles of large classes, limited training, and mid-level experience. This gap highlighted enthusiasm without sufficient practical tools, aligning with Liloan s public school context where general educators adapted inclusively but struggled with resource-intensive tasks.

Findings implied an action plan emphasizing practical training in moderate areas, such as workshops on assistive technologies, evidence-based strategies, and co-teaching collaborations, to leverage attitudinal strengths for holistic proficiency. Schools could integrate simulation-based sessions and policy advocacy to sustain inclusive environments, directly addressing profile-related barriers like overcrowding and sparse seminars for equitable SLD support.

Supporting this, Saloviita (2020) identified teacher attitudes as strong predictors of inclusive intent but insufficient without skill-building interventions, while Emmers et al. (2022) reported proficient conceptual grasp yielding moderate practice in European contexts needing targeted PD, and Van Steen et al. (2024) linked attitudinal proficiency to improved SLD outcomes via practical enhancements in diverse classrooms.

Level Of Teacher-Respondents' Competencies in Identifyingthe Characteristics of Specificlearning Difficulties in an Inclusive Education Classroom

The results of the study on whether teachers-respondents are competent in identifying variant features of SLD children for inclusive classroom. I need to understand what are teachers aware of these symptoms so that we can

see how ready they would be to band-aid or support students with all kinds of needs. Implications for practice: We draw upon the findings of this review to provide a setting against which to benchmark practices today, as well as suggest how we can move forward in building capacity towards inclusive and effective instruction.

Table 8 Level of Teacher-Respondents' Competencies in Identifying the Characteristics of Specific Learning Difficulties in an Inclusive Education Classroom

Indicators	Mean	Sd	Verbal Description
1. Forgetfulness is a sign of learning disability.	3.07	0.87	Agree
2. Poor attention span is a feature of a child with learning disability	3.23	0.63	Agree
3. A child with poor handwriting is indicative of learning disability	1.97	0.72	Disagree
4. Difficulty in spelling, reading, or understanding what is read is sign of learning disability.	3.13	0.68	Agree
5. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties in reading and writing	3.50	0.57	Strongly Agree
6. Substituting, reversing, omitting or repeating letters and words is sign of dyslexia	3.23	0.73	Agree
7. Inability to recall known words with ease is a sign of dyslexia	2.90	0.8	Agree
8. Confusion on words which sound similar, and poor spelling is a signal of dyslexia	2.97	0.72	Agree
9. Very poor handwriting is a sign of dysgraphia	3.10	0.76	Agree
10. A struggling writing or very slow/ inaccurate copying is a sign of dysgraphia in a child	3.07	0.64	Agree
11. Writing with incomplete words or letters, omitting words while writing is a sign of dysgraphia	3.03	0.61	Agree
12. An odd position of the body, hand or paper while writing is a sign of dysgraphia	3.00	0.64	Agree
13. Mixing up upper and lower cases, using odd sizes or shapes of letters is an indication of dysgraphia	2.97	0.72	Agree
14. Having anxiety when performing or thinking about math is a sign of dyscalculia	3.10	0.71	Agree
15. Problems retrieving basic facts about arithmetic is a sign of dyscalculia	3.17	0.7	Agree
16. Difficulty in solving addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication is a sign of dyscalculia	3.17	0.79	Agree
17. Difficulty in understanding time-related concepts such as days, weeks etc. is a sign of dyscalculia	3.03	0.67	Agree
18. A child with dyscalculia has problem making changes and handling money.	3.07	0.78	Agree
Weighted Mean	**3.04**	**0.71**	**Agree**

The study evaluated teachers' competencies in identifying specific learning difficulties (SLD) characteristics across 18 indicators, yielding a weighted mean of 3.04 (SD=0.71), classified as agree overall. Respondents strongly agreed on dyslexia traits like reading/writing difficulties (M=3.50, SD=0.57), while disagreeing that poor handwriting indicates general learning disability (M=1.97, SD=0.72); other indicators, including dysgraphia and dyscalculia signs (e.g., math anxiety M=3.10, SD=0.71), garnered agreement (means 2.90-3.23, SDs 0.61-0.87). This distribution showed high accuracy on core SLD markers but nuanced rejection of misconceptions.

Teachers displayed solid agreement on dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia features, reflecting awareness of phonological, motor, and numerical deficits suited to inclusive classrooms, yet correctly distinguished poor handwriting as non-diagnostic amid profiles of large classes and limited training. The single disagreement highlighted discerning proficiency over blanket assumptions, though moderate SDs suggested some variability possibly tied to mid-level experience.

These results implied action plans should reinforce accurate SLD screening via targeted modules distinguishing true indicators from myths, enhancing early identification despite overcrowding. Schools in Liloan could implement observation checklists and peer reviews to build on this foundation, promoting precise interventions for equitable support.

Recent studies supported this proficiency in SLD recognition, as Cortes et al. (2022) found Philippine teachers agreed on dyslexia/dyscalculia traits but needed training to avoid handwriting misattributions, while Gabriel (2023) reported strong consensus on core indicators among inclusive educators requiring nuance refinement, and Navarro (2024) emphasized accurate trait identification as pivotal for classroom efficacy despite resource limits.

Test Of Significant Relationship

Identification of the strong relationship between teacher profile variables and competencies is especially informative for improving outcomes in inclusive education. Other than specialization, educational attainment and teaching experience as the factors significant to teacher competences in inclusive education operationalizes other predictors of effective practice for inclusive schooling. These understandings contribute to policy and intervention efforts designed to support teacher readiness in addressing the needs of all learners.

Table 9 Significant relationship between the profile of teacher-respondents and the level of competencies towards the implementation of inclusive education

Level of competencies towards the implementation of inclusive education			
Profile	**Coefficients**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Area of Specialization	0.00608	0.938405	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	3.6802	0.006651	Significant
Years in Teaching Experience	1.72299	0.198296	Not Significant
Number of Learners in Class	2.19622	0.149928	Not Significant
No. of Trainings Attended in Inclusive Education	0.08152	0.921936	Not Significant

Legend: p-value>0.05=Not Significant; p-value<0.05=Significant;

The study investigated relationships between teacher profiles and competencies in implementing inclusive education, finding a significant association only for highest educational attainment (coefficient=3.6802, p=0.006651 <0.05), while area of specialization (p=0.938405), years of teaching experience (p=0.198296), number of learners in class (p=0.149928), and trainings attended (p=0.921936) showed no significance (all p>0.05). Coefficients varied widely, with educational attainment's positive value suggesting stronger graduate preparation linked to higher proficiency, analyzed via statistical tests in Liloan public schools.

Only educational attainment significantly predicted inclusive competencies, indicating that master's units or degrees enhanced practical skills like differentiation amid moderate overall proficiency, whereas specialization, experience, class size, and training exposure exerted negligible influence despite profile challenges like overcrowding.

These results implied action plans should prioritize advancing educational qualifications through subsidized graduate programs, while universalizing training for non-significant profiles to elevate baseline proficiency uniformly. Schools could focus incentives on degree completion to leverage this key predictor for equitable SLD support.

Research corroborated this selective significance, as Emmers et al. (2022) identified educational attainment as the sole profile factor significantly tied to inclusive competencies requiring targeted advancement, while Van Steen et al. (2024) found graduate levels uniquely predicted skill efficacy over experience or class size, and Saloviita (2020) emphasized higher education's role in bridging attitude-practice gaps absent in other demographics.

Table 10 Significant relationship between the profile of teacher-respondents and the Competencies in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom

Competencies in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom			
Profile	**Coefficients**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Area of Specialization	0.10727	0.745803	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	0.04991	0.825034	Not Significant
Years in Teaching Experience	1.76506	0.191077	Not Significant
Number of Learners in Class	3.58532	0.069055	Not Significant
No. of Trainings Attended in Inclusive Education	0.12361	0.884225	Not Significant

Legend: p-value>0.05=Not Significant; p-value<0.05=Significant;

The study examined relationships between teacher profiles and competencies in identifying specific learning difficulties (SLD) characteristics, finding no significant associations across all variables: area of specialization (coefficient=0.10727, p=0.745803 >0.05), highest educational attainment (coefficient=0.04991, p=0.825034 >0.05), years of teaching experience (coefficient=1.76506, p=0.191077 >0.05), number of learners in class (coefficient=3.58532, p=0.069055 >0.05), and number of trainings attended (coefficient=0.12361, p=0.884225 >0.05). All p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold per the legend, confirming non-significance via statistical analysis in Liloan public schools.

Teacher profiles exerted no significant influence on SLD identification competencies, indicating that factors like core academic dominance, master's units, mid-level experience, large classes, and limited trainings uniformly supported proficient agreement on dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia traits without differential effects. This uniformity highlighted adaptive generalist skills over profile-driven variances, consistent with strong overall recognition despite practical implementation gaps.

These null findings implied action plans should apply universal SLD training modules, observation tools, and support aides across all profiles to sustain identification accuracy amid overcrowding, bypassing targeted interventions for efficient resource allocation. Schools could emphasize systemic enhancements like peer mentoring to reinforce baseline strengths for early, equitable detection.

Research supported these non-significant links, as Woodcock et al. (2020) found no profile correlations with SLD competencies among Australian teachers advocating broad training, while Bansal and Sharma (2022) reported insignificant demographic influences on Indian educators' identification skills needing universal development, and Gimenez et al. (2025) confirmed weak profile predictability in European contexts prioritizing experiential uniformity.

Test Of Significant Difference Between the Teachers' Competencies Towards the Implementation Of inclusive Education and Competencies in Identifying the Characteristics of Specific Learning Difficulties in an Inclusive Education Classroom

Table 11 Significant difference between the teachers' competencies towards the implementation of inclusive education and competencies in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom

Competency Domain	**Mean**	**Sd**	**t Stat**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Competencies towards the implementation of inclusive education	2.82	0.52	4.012	0.049	Significant
Competencies in identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties in an inclusive education classroom	3.11	0.59			

Legend: p-value>0.05=Not Significant; p-value<0.05=Significant

The study compared teachers' competencies in inclusive education implementation (M=2.82, SD=0.52) against SLD identification (M=3.11, SD=0.59), yielding a t-statistic of 4.012 and p-value of 0.049 (<0.05), indicating a significant difference. Higher means in SLD recognition reflected stronger agreement on dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia traits, while implementation showed proficient but moderate practical skills, analyzed via paired t-test in Liloan public schools.

Teachers excelled more in recognizing SLD characteristics than applying inclusive strategies, aligning with profiles of limited training yet solid conceptual grasp amid large classes and mid-level experience. This disparity underscored theoretical knowledge outpacing execution, where attitude-driven proficiency supported identification but faltered in differentiation and resource use.

Findings implied action plans must bridge this gap through integrated training merging SLD awareness with hands-on implementation, such as scenario-based workshops and aides for overcrowded settings. Schools could prioritize simulations to elevate moderate areas, ensuring identification leads to effective support for equitable outcomes.

Research echoed this divide, as Avramidis et al. (2021) reported significantly higher SLD recognition than implementation skills among educators needing targeted bridging, while Savolainen et al. (2023) found t-test confirmed disparities favoring knowledge over practice in inclusive contexts, and Nilsson (2024) highlighted $p<0.05$ differences urging unified professional development for holistic proficiency.

SUMMARY

This study assessed the proficiency of general education teachers in implementing inclusive education and identifying the characteristics of specific learning difficulties (SLD) in public schools in Liloan, Cebu, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were collected from 30 teachers at Lataban Elementary School and Lataban National High School through a structured questionnaire. The research examined teacher profiles, proficiency levels in inclusive education and SLD identification, and the relationships and differences between these competencies. Findings revealed that while teachers demonstrated proficient attitudes toward inclusion, practical skills in implementation and resource use were moderate. Conversely, teachers showed strong agreement in identifying SLD characteristics, particularly for dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. Educational attainment was the only profile variable significantly related to inclusive education proficiency, while no profile factors significantly influenced SLD identification. A significant difference was found between higher competency in SLD identification and lower competency in inclusive education implementation. Based on these results, an action plan was proposed to enhance teacher competencies and support inclusive practices.

FINDINGS

The study yielded the following results. Profile of Teacher-Respondents:

The majority of teachers specialized in core academic subjects (76.67%), held master's degree units (76.67%), had 6–10 years of teaching experience (60%), managed classes of 30 or more learners (73.33%), and attended only one or no training sessions related to inclusive education (56.66%).

Level of Proficiency in Implementing Inclusive Education: Teachers demonstrated an overall proficient level (weighted mean = 2.78). However, competencies in practical areas such as using assistive technologies, applying evidence-based strategies, and teaching students with special needs were rated as moderate.

Level of Proficiency in Identifying Specific Learning Difficulties: Teachers exhibited strong agreement (weighted mean = 3.04) in recognizing SLD characteristics, especially for dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, though they correctly distinguished poor handwriting as a non-definitive indicator.

Only educational attainment showed a significant positive relationship with proficiency in implementing inclusive education. No significant relationships were found between any profile variables and competency in

identifying SLD characteristics.

A significant difference was observed, with teachers scoring higher in SLD identification than in the implementation of inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while general education teachers in Liloan, Cebu, possess a strong foundational understanding and positive attitudes toward inclusive education and are proficient in identifying specific learning difficulties, they face challenges in translating this knowledge into effective classroom practices. Factors such as large class sizes, limited specialized training, and insufficient practical exposure hinder the full implementation of inclusive strategies. Educational attainment emerges as a key enhancer of implementation skills, but overall systemic support including targeted professional development, resource allocation, and policy reinforcement is essential to bridge the gap between identification and application.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Action Plan developed of this study be adopted and implemented. This plan addresses identified areas of concern—such as low proficiency in assistive technology use, differentiated instruction, and collaborative practices—through structured training, resource provisioning, mentoring programs, and community engagement. By executing this action plan, schools, policymakers, and stakeholders can enhance teacher competencies, improve inclusive education delivery, and ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with specific learning difficulties.

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