

Key Stage 1 Teachers' Readiness in Handling Learners with Special Educational Needs

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the readiness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special educational needs (LSEN) in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division, Bohol Province, during the school year 2024–2025. Using a quantitative-qualitative design, it analyzed teachers' demographic profiles, readiness in knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and the challenges they faced. Findings showed a moderate level of readiness across all dimensions, with attitudes ranking highest and knowledge lowest, especially in assistive technologies and inclusive education policies. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in readiness when grouped by age, field of specialization, length of service, or educational attainment, indicating that professional development and institutional support influence readiness more than demographic factors. Qualitative data identified challenges such as managing learners' behavior, addressing instructional demands, lack of specialized resources, and emotional strain from limited training. Despite these, teachers expressed strong commitment to inclusive education and emphasized the need for continuous support and capacity-building. From these findings, a strategic action plan was formulated to strengthen inclusive practices. It highlights specialized training on behavior management and assistive technologies, development of contextualized materials, mentoring and wellness programs, and equitable allocation of inclusive education resources. The study concludes that enhancing inclusive education at the Key Stage 1 level requires strengthening teachers' competencies, broadening their practical knowledge, and reinforcing emotional and institutional support systems. The results provide valuable insights for policymakers, school leaders, and educators striving to advance inclusive education in early childhood settings.

Keywords— Inclusive Education, Key Stage 1 Teachers, Learners with Special Educational Needs, Design, Tagbilaran City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a global effort to make sure that all learners, regardless of their ability, background, or condition, have equal access to quality education. It promotes the idea that every learner should feel valued, supported, and included in the classroom. The success of inclusive education depends on how prepared teachers are. When teachers know how to adjust their lessons, manage classrooms well, and use different teaching strategies, they can better meet the needs of all learners (Sardar and Deb, 2023).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, inclusive education is supported by national laws and policies such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 or Republic Act No. 10533 and the Department of Education's Inclusive Education Policy Framework. These policies require schools to make learning accessible and fair for all students, including those with special educational needs. However, many Filipino teachers still find it difficult to put these policies into practice. Challenges include a lack of training, limited access to assistive tools, few learning materials suited for diverse learners, and poor classroom facilities. Previous studies show that teachers need more professional development and stronger support from schools and the government to successfully teach in inclusive classrooms (Taylor et al., 2016).

In the province of Bohol, efforts to promote inclusive education have started, but many schools still face barriers. Some schools are making progress, while others struggle because of a lack of training, resources, and facilities designed for learners with disabilities (Ainley and Carstens, 2018). This situation shows that many teachers are still not fully ready to handle the demands of inclusive teaching.

In Tagbilaran City, the capital of Bohol, these challenges are most visible in Key Stage 1 classrooms. This stage is very important because it builds the foundation for children's learning and development. Teachers at this level must help learners develop reading, writing, and problem-solving skills while understanding their different learning needs. However, many Key Stage 1 teachers in the City have limited access to training on inclusive education, face shortages in classroom materials, and lack enough support from their schools. These problems make it difficult for them to give quality instruction to learners with special needs (Sardar and Deb, 2023).

Hence, the study investigated the readiness of Key Stage 1 teachers in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division in handling inclusive education. It also seeks to identify the main challenges they face, especially in training, resources, and school support, and to suggest ways to improve their capacity to manage diverse learners. By addressing these issues, the study hopes to help strengthen inclusive education practices in Tagbilaran City and support the goal of giving every child a fair and meaningful learning experience.

Legal Basis

Notably, Inclusive Education (IE) in the Philippines is anchored in both global commitments and national legal frameworks that promote equitable access to quality education for all learners. The country aligns its education policies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UN SDG 4), which seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and with Target 4.5, which focuses on eliminating educational disparities among vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2015). This global commitment is strengthened by the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make education accessible to everyone. Together, these frameworks establish a strong foundation for inclusive education as both a human right and a national priority.

Complementing these constitutional directives, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), also known as the K–12 Law, integrates inclusivity into the basic education curriculum. It requires that instruction be learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to the varied needs, backgrounds, and abilities of all learners. The law also calls for continuous professional development to enhance teachers' competence in handling diverse classrooms and in using differentiated and inclusive instructional strategies (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013).

The first comprehensive law addressing inclusive education in the country is the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act No. 7277), enacted in 1992 and later amended by Republic Act No. 9442. This legislation upholds the rights of persons with disabilities and mandates their integration into the mainstream education system. It highlights the State's obligation to ensure equal access to quality education and to provide teachers with the necessary training and resources to support learners with disabilities (Republic Act No. 7277, 1992; Republic Act No. 9442, 2006).

Further strengthening these efforts, the Inclusive Education Act for Learners with Disabilities (Republic Act No. 11650) was signed into law by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on March 11, 2022. This law institutionalizes a national policy of inclusion and mandates the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) in all cities and municipalities. These centers are designed to provide specialized services, such as educational assessments, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and teacher training.

The law adopts a whole-of-community approach, promoting collaboration among schools, families, local governments, and other stakeholders. It aligns with international conventions, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and emphasizes accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and inter-

agency partnerships among DepEd, DOH, and DSWD to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022).

To operationalize these laws, the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 44, s. 2021, titled Guidelines on the Implementation of the Expanded Inclusive Education Program for Learners with Disabilities, underscores teacher preparedness as a vital factor in implementing inclusive education. The order mandates continuous teacher training to equip educators with the necessary skills to manage inclusive classrooms, design and implement IEPs, and collaborate effectively with Special Education (SPED) specialists. It also promotes access to teaching resources and encourages professional partnerships to enhance instructional practices (Department of Education, 2021).

Collectively, these legal bases affirm the Philippines' strong commitment to achieving inclusive education in line with global standards. They emphasize that teacher readiness, ongoing professional development, and systemic support are essential components for building inclusive schools that uphold equity, respect, and quality learning for all.

Significance of the Study

The study aimed to assess the readiness of Key Stage 1 Public School Teachers in managing learners with special needs in Cogon Elementary School, Tagbilaran City School Division. The results of this research could be beneficial for school administrators, teachers, parents, learners, researcher and future researchers.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess the readiness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in managing learners with special needs at Cogon Elementary School, Tagbilaran City Division as basis for an action plan.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of:
 - 1.1 age and gender,
 - 1.2 area of specialization,
 - 1.3 length of service,
 - 1.4 highest educational attainment, and
 - 1.5 trainings and seminars attended in inclusive education?
2. What is the respondents' level of readiness in handling learners with special needs in terms of:
 - 2.1 knowledge,
 - 2.2 attitude,
 - 2.3 skills?
3. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of readiness in handling learners with special needs when grouped according to the identified profile?
4. What are the perceived challenges of the respondents in handling learners with special needs?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what action can be proposed?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlined the research design, study flow, research environment, Participants, research instruments, data-gathering procedures, statistical treatments, and scoring methods employed to achieve the study's objectives.

Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods design to assess the readiness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in managing learners with special educational needs. In this approach, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed concurrently yet independently. The quantitative component examined teachers' readiness levels and variations across demographic profiles, while the qualitative component explored the challenges and experiences encountered by teachers in supporting learners with special needs through in-depth interviews.

Environment

The study was conducted at Cogon Elementary School, one of the public elementary schools under the Tagbilaran City Division in Bohol Province. The school is situated along San Jose Street, Tagbilaran City, and was established in 1925. It is recognized as the second-largest public elementary school in the division, next to Tagbilaran City Central Elementary School.

For the school year 2024–2025, Cogon Elementary School had an enrollment of 966 learners and was actively implementing inclusive education policies. The school also launched a Special Science Program during the school year 2023–2024 for Grade 1 learners, which was in its second year of implementation at the time of the study. Its diverse and inclusive learning environment provided an appropriate context for examining the readiness of Key Stage 1 teachers in handling learners with special educational needs.

Respondents

The participants of the study were the Key Stage 1 teachers currently teaching at Cogon Elementary School, Tagbilaran City Division, Bohol Province. A total of nineteen (19) teachers participated, consisting of those handling Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 classes. The study utilized a complete enumeration of all Key Stage 1 teachers in the school to ensure a comprehensive representation of perspectives regarding their readiness to handle learners with special educational needs. The distribution of Participants according to year level is presented in Table 1.

All teachers who were actively teaching in Key Stage 1 during the school year 2024–2025 were included as Participants. Teachers who were on leave, temporarily assigned to non-teaching duties, or exclusively handling SPED classes were excluded. Participants also retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence or prejudice.

For the qualitative phase, a subset of five (5) teachers was purposively selected from the nineteen Participants based on their length of teaching experience, exposure to inclusive education practices, and willingness to participate in an in-depth interview. This approach allowed for the collection of rich, contextualized insights into the challenges, strategies, and lived experiences of teachers in managing learners with special educational needs. Their narratives provided qualitative depth that complemented the quantitative findings, ensuring a more holistic understanding of teacher readiness in inclusive education.

Instrument

A survey-questionnaire patterned after two previous studies on inclusive education was utilized as the primary data collection tool. Specifically, it adopted elements from Razalli et al. (2021), which examined the preparedness of special education teachers for inclusive education, and Ecoben (2019), which investigated the readiness of public school teachers for inclusion. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: (1) demographic profile, (2) readiness levels in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills, (3) challenges

encountered in handling learners with special educational needs, and (4) recommendations for improvement. The instrument was validated by experts in inclusive education and was pilot-tested to ensure its reliability, clarity, and appropriateness for the study context.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to gather in-depth information from selected participants. The interview guide included open-ended questions focusing on teachers' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing inclusive education, as well as their strategies for addressing diverse learner needs. The guide was reviewed by field experts to ensure that the questions were relevant, clear, and aligned with the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

Preliminary Data Gathering Stage. The preliminary stage ensured adherence to ethical research principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy. Formal permissions were obtained from the Division Superintendent and the school principals within the Tagbilaran City Schools Division to secure institutional approval. For the quantitative strand, survey questionnaires were prepared for sixty-four (64) Key Stage 1 teachers. Each participant received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the freedom to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. For the qualitative strand, purposive selection criteria were established to identify ten (10) to fifteen (15) teachers with substantial experience in handling learners with special educational needs. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout this stage to ensure transparency and protect participants' rights.

Data Gathering Stage. During the data gathering stage, survey questionnaires were distributed to the Participants in both printed and digital formats with clear instructions. Completed responses were carefully checked for accuracy and completeness, and all data were treated with strict confidentiality. For the qualitative strand, semi-structured interviews were conducted either face-to-face or virtually, depending on participant preference and availability. Interviews were audio-recorded only after obtaining explicit consent from participants to ensure data accuracy while maintaining anonymity. The researcher maintained neutrality and respect throughout the interviews, creating a comfortable environment that encouraged honest and reflective responses.

Post Data Gathering Stage. Following data collection, ethical standards continued to guide all procedures to ensure data integrity and confidentiality. Quantitative responses were verified for completeness, encoded, and processed using appropriate statistical software for analysis. Qualitative interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, anonymized to protect participants' identities, and analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative datasets were analyzed independently before being integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher readiness in inclusive education. Throughout this stage, respect for participant autonomy was upheld, and results were reported accurately and responsibly, maintaining the highest standards of research ethics and integrity.

Statistical Treatment

The data collected from the survey and interview responses were systematically organized and encoded in a master data sheet. A professional statistician assisted in processing and analyzing the data using appropriate statistical techniques to ensure accuracy and validity. The following statistical tools were applied in the quantitative analysis:

- **Frequency Count.** This technique determined the number of Participants within each demographic category and their corresponding readiness levels, providing both absolute (numerical) and relative (percentage) distributions.
- **Percentage.** This computed the proportion of Participants exhibiting particular characteristics or readiness levels, expressed as a percentage of the total sample.

- **Mean and Standard Deviation.** These measures described the central tendency and variability of teachers' readiness in managing learners with special educational needs.
- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).** This test examined whether significant differences existed in teachers' readiness across selected demographic variables.
- **Post Hoc Analysis.** When significant differences were detected, post hoc procedures were performed to identify which specific groups contributed to the observed variations.

For the qualitative strand, **Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)**, as developed by Braun and Clarke, was employed to identify, analyze, and interpret emerging patterns or themes within the interview data. The process involved iterative phases: familiarization with the data, systematic coding, generation of initial themes, review and refinement of themes, definition and naming of themes, and synthesis of the final narrative. This analytical approach allowed for flexibility and depth, enabling the researcher to capture the nuanced experiences, challenges, and insights shared by participants. The qualitative findings were subsequently integrated with the quantitative results to provide a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the readiness of Key Stage 1 teachers in supporting learners with special educational needs.

Ethical Consideration

To uphold the ethical integrity of the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were clearly informed about the study's purpose, the nature and extent of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All information provided by participants was treated with the highest level of confidentiality and anonymity. No personal identifiers were recorded, and individual responses were not disclosed in any part of the report.

The study strictly adhered to data privacy laws and ethical research standards. All collected data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access, and only the researcher and authorized personnel had access to the data for analysis purposes. The data were used exclusively for the objectives specified in the study. Upon completion of the research, all raw data were securely deleted or destroyed to ensure participant privacy. Throughout the entire process, the study maintained a strong commitment to transparency, confidentiality, and respect for the rights and welfare of all participants.

RESULTS

This section sequentially presents the analysis and interpretation of the study which aimed to determine the level of readiness of Key Stage 1 Public School Teachers in handling learners with special needs in Tagbilaran City Schools Division, Bohol Province, for the school year 2024-2025. The goal is to propose an action plan based on the findings.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Age and Gender

Table 2 presents the age and gender distribution of the Participants. Most of the Participants (42.11%) are within the age range of 31 to 40 years, followed by 31.58% who are aged 51 to 60 years.

Table 2 Age and Gender of the Respondents

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
51-60	6	31.58	0	0.00	6	31.58

41-50	3	15.79	0	0.00	3	15.79
31-40	8	42.11	0	0.00	8	42.11
20-30	1	5.26	1	5.26	2	10.53
Total	18	94.74	1	5.26	19	100.00

Notably, 94.74% of the Participants are female, while only one male respondent (5.26%) was recorded, indicating a predominantly female teaching workforce at the Key Stage 1 level in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division. The absence of male Participants in the older age brackets (31 and above) further emphasizes the gender imbalance in this teaching cohort. This demographic suggests that the implementation of inclusive education in early grade levels is largely dependent on female teachers, many of whom are in their middle to late career stages, possibly reflecting a wealth of experience that could influence their preparedness in handling learners with special needs.

Recent studies continue to highlight the critical role of age and gender demographics in shaping teaching efficacy, especially in inclusive education settings. Research by (Pambudi et al., 2022) emphasized that middle-aged teachers often exhibit stronger competency and adaptability due to their accumulated experience, which aligns with the finding that a significant portion of the Participants are aged 31 to 60 years.

Furthermore, a predominantly female teaching workforce has been shown to impact classroom dynamics and inclusive practices positively, with female educators demonstrating greater empathy and responsiveness to diverse student needs (Salameh et al., 2021).

The near absence of male teachers could, however, limit the diversity of role models available to young learners, potentially affecting gender socialization processes in early education (Chen et al., 2019). These demographic realities suggest the need for targeted professional development and gender-inclusive recruitment strategies to further enrich the inclusive education landscape in Tagbilaran City Schools Division.

Area of Specialization

Table 3 presents the area of specialization of the Participants. The majority of the Key Stage 1 public school teachers (52.63%) specialize in General Content, indicating a broad-based teaching qualification rather than a focused expertise in inclusive education.

Table 3 Area of Specialization of the Respondents

Area of Specialization	f	%
Early Childhood Education	1	5.26
General Content	10	52.63
English	3	15.79
Filipino	1	5.26
Special Education	3	15.79
Social Studies	1	5.26
Total	19	100.00

Only 15.79% have a specialization in Special Education, which is critical for effectively handling learners with special needs. Other specializations include English (15.79%), Early Childhood Education (5.26%), Filipino

(5.26%), and Social Studies (5.26%). The minimal representation of Special Education specialists suggests a potential gap in the preparedness of teachers to address diverse learning needs, underscoring the necessity of targeted professional development and capacity-building initiatives in inclusive education.

Length of Service

Table 4 displays the length of service of the Participants. A significant portion of the teachers have substantial teaching experience, with 26.32% having served for more than 20 years and another 26.32% within the 11–15-year range.

Table 4 Length of Service of the Respondents

Length of Service (in years)	f	%
More than 20	5	26.32
16-20	2	10.53
11-15	5	26.32
6-10	4	21.05
1-5	3	15.79
Total	19	100.00

Furthermore, 21.05% have 6–10 years of service, while 15.79% fall within the 1–5-year range, and 10.53% have served for 16–20 years. These findings suggest that the majority of Participants are seasoned educators, which may contribute positively to their classroom management and instructional strategies. However, the data does not necessarily reflect specialized experience in handling learners with special needs, highlighting the need for continuous professional development in inclusive education across all service length categories.

The substantial teaching experience of the Participants aligns with research showing that teaching tenure positively correlates with general classroom management and instructional effectiveness. However, a study by (Nilsen et al., 2020) highlights that while years of service enhance overall teaching competence, they do not automatically translate into specialized skills for inclusive education without targeted professional development.

Veteran teachers may rely on traditional methods that are less effective for students with special needs unless they are exposed to updated inclusive practices. This suggests that while the experience base of the Participants is an asset, regular and specialized training is crucial to equip all teachers—regardless of service length—with the necessary competencies for inclusive education.

Highest Educational Attainment

Table 5 presents the highest educational attainment of the Participants. The majority of Key Stage 1 public school teachers (57.89%) hold a bachelor's degree, while 36.84% have earned master's units, and only 5.26% are master's degree holders.

Table 5 Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Category	f	%
Master's Graduate	1	5.26
With Master's Units	7	36.84

Bachelor's Degree	11	57.89
Total	19	100.00

This distribution indicates that while a considerable number of teachers are pursuing graduate studies, a large proportion remain at the undergraduate level. The limited number of teachers with advanced degrees may reflect constraints in opportunities for professional advancement. Given the complexity of addressing the needs of learners with special needs, this finding underscores the importance of encouraging higher academic qualifications and specialized training to enhance teachers' preparedness for inclusive education.

The educational attainment of teachers is a crucial factor influencing their readiness for inclusive education. A study by (Alnahdi, 2020) emphasized that teachers with higher academic qualifications, particularly at the master's level and beyond, demonstrate significantly better preparedness and confidence in implementing inclusive practices. Teachers who only hold bachelor's degrees often lack the specialized knowledge and critical pedagogical skills necessary for effectively supporting students with special needs. This finding implies that while the pursuit of graduate education by a portion of Participants is a positive trend, there remains a pressing need to create more pathways and incentives for Key Stage 1 teachers to complete advanced degrees, thereby strengthening inclusive education capabilities across the division.

Attendance to Seminars and Trainings

Table 6 shows the Participants' attendance to seminars and trainings related to inclusive education.

Table 6 Respondents' Attendance to Seminars and Trainings

Attendance to Seminars and Trainings	f	%
Have Attended	19	100.00
Not Attended	0	0.00
Total	19	100.00

All 19 Participants (100%) reported having attended relevant seminars and trainings. This suggests a universal exposure to professional development opportunities in inclusive education among the participants. While this is a positive indicator of awareness and initial capacity-building efforts, the depth, frequency, and quality of these trainings must still be considered when assessing overall preparedness to effectively handle learners with special needs.

The universal attendance of teachers in seminars and trainings related to inclusive education is a promising foundation; however, the quality and depth of these professional development programs are critical factors in determining their actual effectiveness. According to (Moberg et al., 2020), while attendance rates at trainings are often high, the impact on teacher competencies greatly depends on the relevance, practical orientation, and sustained follow-up of these programs. Short-term or theoretical seminars may raise awareness but often fall short of equipping teachers with the hands-on strategies needed for inclusive classrooms. This finding implies that although the Participants have been exposed to inclusive education concepts, there is a need to ensure that training programs are comprehensive, practice-based, and continuously updated to translate awareness into effective teaching practices.

LEVEL OF READINESS IN HANDLING LSENS

Table 7 Level of Readiness in Handling LseN in terms of Knowledge and Wisdom

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
I have received training or courses related to supporting	3.37	0.90	Moderately Prepared

pupils with special education needs in inclusive classrooms.			
I am familiar with different types of programs (e.g., Full or Partial Inclusion) suitable for pupils with special education needs.	3.21	1.03	Moderately Prepared
I can identify the characteristics and criteria of pupils who require special education services.	3.21	0.92	Moderately Prepared
I know how SPED specialists support teachers through consultations, classroom interventions, and training sessions.	3.16	0.69	Moderately Prepared
I am knowledgeable about policies and procedures that promote inclusive education in my school.	3.05	0.85	Moderately Prepared
I am familiar with assistive technologies and learning apps that can support pupils with special education needs.	2.84	0.76	Moderately Prepared
I understand the role of parents in reinforcing inclusive education strategies at home.	3.26	0.65	Moderately Prepared
I am aware of the impact of administrative support on the implementation of inclusive education.	3.21	0.79	Moderately Prepared
Aggregate Mean	3.16		Moderately Prepared
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.82	
Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Prepared; 3.41-4.20-Prepared; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Prepared; 1.81-2.60-Less Prepared;1.00-1.80-Not Prepared			

KNOWLEDGE

Table 7 shows that Key Stage 1 public school teachers in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division were found to be moderately prepared to handle learners with special needs during the school year 2024–2025. The overall weighted mean was 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.82, which falls within the range classified as “Moderately Prepared.” This suggests that while teachers have a foundational awareness of inclusive education, there remains a significant need to enhance their knowledge further, particularly in specialized areas.

Interestingly, the highest-rated indicator revealed that teachers felt relatively more confident due to their prior exposure to training or courses related to inclusive education. This implies that there have been efforts to introduce inclusive practices, though these may not yet be sufficient to elevate their preparedness to the “Prepared” or “Highly Prepared” levels.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated item pertained to familiarity with assistive technologies and digital applications designed to support learners with special needs. This reflects a crucial gap in the use of technology-based resources in inclusive teaching, suggesting the need for targeted professional development in this area.

Furthermore, a consistent trend was observed across all indicators, with all falling under the “Moderately Prepared” category. This uniformity implies a general, yet limited, level of understanding across different aspects of inclusive education. Teachers seemed to possess better knowledge of broad concepts, such as inclusion programs and identification of special needs, than of specific tools or policy-related aspects.

These findings indicate that while the foundation for inclusive education is present, a more robust and sustained capacity-building initiative is needed. Focused interventions on assistive technologies, policy familiarization, and SPED-related practices will be essential in strengthening the knowledge base of teachers and improving their preparedness for inclusive classroom implementation.

Notably, recent studies support the findings that teachers generally possess a moderate level of preparedness in handling learners with special educational needs (LSEN), particularly regarding knowledge. Mandabon (2023) found that while teachers showed high self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms, their readiness was strongly tied to the availability of training, collaboration with stakeholders, and knowledge of inclusive practices.

This indicates that foundational awareness exists, but deeper understanding and specialized skills are often lacking. Similarly, Glina (2021) emphasized that many receiving teachers lacked sufficient pedagogical training and recommended ongoing professional development to enhance knowledge of individualized learning strategies and assistive technologies.

The findings imply that while Key Stage 1 public school teachers in Tagbilaran City possess a foundational awareness of inclusive education, significant gaps remain in specialized knowledge, particularly in assistive technologies and policy applications. This moderate level of preparedness highlights the urgent need for sustained, targeted professional development to strengthen teachers' competencies and fully support learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms.

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Similarly, Glina (2021) emphasized that many receiving teachers lacked sufficient pedagogical training and recommended ongoing professional development to enhance knowledge of individualized learning strategies and assistive technologies.

Attitudes

Table 8 presents the level of preparedness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special needs in terms of their attitudes, as assessed for the School Year 2024–2025 in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division. The data yielded an aggregate mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.68, corresponding to the “Moderately Prepared” category.

This suggests that while teachers generally have a positive disposition toward inclusive education, their attitudinal preparedness is not yet at an optimal level to fully support effective implementation.

Table 8 Level of Readiness in Handling LSEN in terms of Attitudes

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
I am happy to support the implementation of strategies for pupils with special education needs in my classroom.	3.53	0.70	Prepared
I understand what needs to be done to effectively assist pupils with special education needs.	3.42	0.61	Prepared
I feel confident that strategies for addressing special education needs are manageable in a Key Stage 1 setting.	2.84	0.69	Moderately Prepared

Supporting pupils with special education needs does not cause me excessive stress.	3.05	0.62	Moderately Prepared
I regularly seek out resources and strategies to better support pupils with special education needs.	3.26	0.73	Moderately Prepared
I feel motivated to overcome institutional barriers to ensure all pupils have equitable learning opportunities.	3.42	0.61	Prepared
I am confident that collaboration with SPED specialists improves teaching outcomes for pupils with special education needs.	3.58	0.77	Prepared
I believe that using technology and learning apps enhances the effectiveness of inclusive education.	3.58	0.69	Prepared
Aggregate Mean	3.34		Moderately Prepared
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.68	

Among the indicators, the highest-rated items were those reflecting teachers' confidence in the use of technology and collaboration with SPED specialists, both receiving a weighted mean of 3.58. These results imply that teachers recognize the value of inclusive teaching tools and the benefits of professional collaboration in improving learning outcomes for LSEN. Moreover, they express a willingness to embrace inclusive practices and support institutional strategies.

Conversely, the lowest-rated item was related to teachers' confidence in managing inclusive strategies within a Key Stage 1 setting, which received a mean score of 2.84. This result reveals lingering doubts or hesitations among teachers regarding their ability to independently implement inclusive strategies at the foundational level of education. Additionally, the moderately rated item concerning stress associated with supporting LSEN (mean of 3.05) indicates that while teachers are generally open to inclusive practices, they may still experience emotional strain and uncertainty in their execution.

A notable pattern in the data is the mix of ratings between the "Prepared" and "Moderately Prepared" levels. This reflects a dual reality—on one hand, there is a prevailing positive attitude toward inclusive education in principle, however on the other hand, practical concerns such as confidence, stress, and the proactive pursuit of resources are still developing. The relatively low standard deviation across indicators suggests consistency in teachers' self-perceptions regarding their attitudes.

The findings emphasize the importance of reinforcing teachers' positive attitudes with continuous emotional and professional support. While their willingness to implement inclusive strategies is evident, the development of sustained motivation, confidence, and stress management skills is essential. School leadership and the Division Office may consider mentorship programs, peer support mechanisms, and wellness initiatives to help teachers build resilience and assurance in their role as inclusive educators.

The findings imply that while Key Stage 1 teachers in Tagbilaran City demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward inclusive education, their attitudinal preparedness remains moderate, with lingering concerns about confidence, stress, and independent strategy implementation. This suggests the need for ongoing emotional, instructional, and systemic support to strengthen teachers' resilience and motivation for effective inclusive practices.

The findings which indicate that teachers possess a generally positive attitude but only moderate preparedness toward inclusive education, are supported by the study of Mandabon (2023) who found that while teachers demonstrated high self-efficacy and openness to collaboration with specialists—mirroring the highest-rated

indicators in this study—they still experienced emotional strain and uncertainty, particularly when implementing inclusive strategies independently. This aligns with the lower ratings observed in teachers' confidence and stress management in the current analysis. Mandabon emphasized that although a positive attitude is present, it must be reinforced with targeted emotional, instructional, and systemic support to translate into effective inclusive practices.

Skills

Table 9 presents the level of preparedness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special education needs in terms of skills, assessed for School Year 2024–2025 in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division. The aggregate mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.64 indicate that teachers are moderately prepared in this dimension. The highest-rated skill involved the development of personal traits such as empathy, patience, and care (mean = 3.47), which suggests that teachers possess strong affective competencies necessary for inclusive teaching. Similarly, moderately high scores were observed in their ability to assess pupils and apply classroom management strategies (means = 3.37 and 3.32, respectively), reflecting basic competency in tailoring approaches for LSEN.

Table 9 Level of Readiness in Handling LSEN in terms of Skills

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
I develop personal skills such as empathy, patience, and care to better support Key Stage 1 pupils with special education needs.	3.47	0.61	Prepared
I demonstrate flexibility in addressing pupils' unique needs, such as accommodating deadlines, absences, and additional support.	3.26	0.45	Moderately Prepared
I develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) tailored to the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils with special education requirements.	3.26	0.45	Moderately Prepared
I implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) throughout the school year to monitor and support the progress of pupils with special education needs.	3.16	0.69	Moderately Prepared
I teach and mentor Key Stage 1 pupils through whole-class instruction, small group sessions, and one-on-one support as needed.	3.16	0.76	Moderately Prepared
I assess Key Stage 1 pupils' skills to identify their needs and develop appropriate teaching plans to address those needs.	3.26	0.65	Moderately Prepared
I help Key Stage 1 pupils with special education needs transition effectively between year levels and prepare them for future learning stages.	3.32	0.67	Moderately Prepared
I regularly integrate SPED specialists' recommendations into my lesson planning and teaching practices.	2.84	0.69	Moderately Prepared
I use differentiated instruction techniques to meet the needs of diverse learners in my classroom.	3.26	0.56	Moderately Prepared
I address institutional barriers by advocating for resources and support systems for inclusive education.	3.16	0.60	Moderately Prepared

I consult with SPED specialists to enhance my strategies for managing pupils with special education needs.	3.21	0.71	Moderately Prepared
I implement classroom management techniques that promote an inclusive learning environment.	3.32	0.67	Moderately Prepared
I assess the impact of my teaching strategies on the well-being and academic performance of pupils with special education needs.	3.37	0.76	Moderately Prepared
Aggregate Mean	3.23		Moderately Prepared
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.64	

However, lower scores were noted in areas requiring specialized and collaborative efforts, particularly integrating SPED specialists' recommendations into lesson plans (mean = 2.84). This reveals a gap in the practical implementation of support structures and individualized planning, such as the execution of IEPs and differentiated instruction, which all fell within the "Moderately Prepared" range. These results underscore the need for continuous capacity building in technical and collaborative instructional strategies.

The findings imply that while Key Stage 1 teachers in Tagbilaran City exhibit strong affective skills essential for inclusive teaching, their technical and collaborative skills, particularly in implementing individualized education plans and integrating specialist recommendations, remain only moderately developed. This highlights the need for sustained professional development focused on strengthening instructional strategies and collaborative practices for inclusive education.

The findings are supported by the study of Glina (2021), who observed that teachers frequently lacked sufficient pedagogical training in inclusive education and struggled with the practical application of individualized instruction and teamwork with specialists. She recommended sustained professional development programs to reinforce both instructional and collaboration-related competencies. This supports the present finding that while affective skills are relatively strong, the technical and strategic skills necessary for inclusive education require further enhancement.

SUMMARY

Table 10 summarizes the overall level of preparedness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special needs.

Table 10 Summary Table on the Respondents' Level of Readiness in Handling LSEN

Components	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Knowledge	3.16	0.82	Moderately Prepared
Attitudes	3.34	0.68	Moderately Prepared
Skills	3.23	0.64	Moderately Prepared
Grand Mean	3.24		Moderately Prepared
Grand Standard Deviation		0.71	

The grand mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.71 reflect that teachers are moderately prepared across the three assessed components: knowledge (M = 3.16), attitudes (M = 3.34), and skills (M = 3.23).

Among these, attitudes ranked the highest, suggesting that teachers hold generally positive dispositions toward inclusive education, while knowledge rated the lowest, indicating a relative lack in content familiarity, especially with assistive technologies and inclusive policies.

The moderate scores across all domains reveal a consistent, yet limited, level of preparedness, highlighting the foundational presence of inclusive values and practices, but also emphasizing the need for further development, particularly in technical and collaborative aspects of inclusive teaching.

The findings imply that while Key Stage 1 teachers in Tagbilaran City possess foundational knowledge, positive attitudes, and basic skills for inclusive education, their overall moderate level of preparedness underscores the need for sustained capacity-building initiatives.

Strengthening technical competencies, deepening knowledge of inclusive practices, and providing continuous institutional support are essential to enhance their readiness for effectively managing learners with special needs.

Interestingly, the overall findings indicating that teachers are moderately prepared in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in handling learners with special needs, are consistent with the results of a local study by Mandabon (2023).

Conducted in the Division of Davao Oriental, the study revealed that while teachers demonstrated high efficacy and a positive disposition toward inclusive education, their actual readiness depended heavily on training availability and support systems.

Similar to the present study's moderate ratings across all dimensions, Mandabon emphasized that the presence of inclusive attitudes alone is not sufficient; rather, professional development and institutional reinforcement are essential to improve technical skills, reduce instructional stress, and ensure the effective execution of individualized education strategies.

Significant Difference in Respondents' Level of Readiness

Age

Table 11 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results to determine whether there is a significant difference in the preparedness level of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special needs (LSEN) when grouped according to age.

Table 11 Test of Significant Difference on Readiness Level in Handling

LSEN by Age Group

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Significance
Between Groups	0.660	2	0.330	1.36	.286	Not Significant
Within Groups	3.893	16	0.243			
Total	4.553	18				

Note: Significance level set at $p < .05$.

The computed F-value is 1.36 with a corresponding p-value of .286. Since the p-value is greater than the significance level of .05, the result is not statistically significant, indicating no meaningful difference in preparedness levels among the different age groups. The findings imply that age does not significantly affect the readiness of Key Stage 1 teachers in handling learners with special needs, suggesting that readiness for

inclusive education is influenced more by factors such as training, experience, and professional development rather than by generational differences.

This result aligns with recent research which also found that age is not a significant predictor of teacher readiness for inclusive education. In a study conducted by Adams et al. (2021), ANOVA results showed no statistically significant variation in preparedness levels based on age, emphasizing that other factors such as training, experience with LSEN, and professional development have a more substantial impact on teachers' preparedness (Adams et al., 2021).

Field of Specialization

The ANOVA results show that the computed F-value is 0.903 with a p-value of 0.355, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05.

Table 12 Test of Significant Difference on Readiness Level in Handling

LSEN by Field of Specialization

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Significance
Between Groups	0.230	1	0.230	0.903	0.355	Not Significant
Within Groups	4.323	17	0.254			
Total	4.553	18				

Note: Significance level set at $p < .05$.

It indicates no significant difference in preparedness levels among teachers when grouped by their field of specialization. In other words, teachers from different specializations (e.g., general education, specific subject areas) reported similar levels of readiness to handle learners with special needs (LSEN).

The findings imply that teachers' field of specialization does not significantly influence their preparedness to handle learners with special needs, highlighting that readiness for inclusive education is shaped more by continuous training and institutional support than by academic background.

This result is consistent with findings from a study by Logroño and Gongora (2023), which showed that teachers across different educational backgrounds and specializations exhibited similarly high levels of readiness for inclusive education. They emphasized the importance of ongoing training and institutional support over academic specialization in determining preparedness levels (Logroño & Gongora, 2023).

Length of Service

The computed F-value of 1.298 with a p-value of 0.300 indicates no statistically significant difference in the level of preparedness among Key Stage 1 public school teachers when grouped by length of service.

Table 13 Test of Significant Difference on Readiness Level in Handling LSEN by Length of Service

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Significance
Between Groups	0.635	2	0.318	1.298	0.300	Not Significant

Within Groups	3.917	16	0.245			
Total	4.553	18				

Note: Significance level set at $p < .05$.

Since the p-value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, it suggests that teaching experience alone does not significantly affect perceived readiness to handle learners with special needs. The findings imply that length of service does not significantly impact the readiness of Key Stage 1 teachers in handling learners with special needs, reinforcing that professional development, specialized training, and support systems play a more critical role than years of teaching experience.

This finding aligns with a study by Manalo (2024), which found that while teachers had high overall preparedness for inclusive education, length of service was not a significant factor influencing readiness. Instead, preparedness was more closely related to professional development, training in inclusive practices, and management support systems (Manalo, 2024).

Highest Educational Attainment

The computed F-value of 3.885 with a p-value of 0.065 shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the preparedness level of teachers in handling LSEN when grouped by highest educational attainment. Although the result trends toward significance, it does not meet the standard $p < .05$ threshold. This suggests that earning higher degrees does not automatically equate to greater readiness for inclusive education. Rather, other factors such as targeted training, hands-on experience, and institutional support may be more influential.

Table 14 Test of Significant Difference on Readiness Level in Handling LSEN by Highest Educational Attainment

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Significance
Between Groups	0.847	1	0.847	3.885	0.065	Not Significant
Within Groups	3.706	17	0.218			
Total	4.553	18				

The findings imply that highest educational attainment does not significantly influence the preparedness of Key Stage 1 teachers in handling learners with special needs, suggesting that specialized training, practical experience, and institutional support are more decisive factors in developing readiness for inclusive education.

This finding aligns with a 2024 study by Mucherah et al., which found that teachers with higher educational qualifications did not necessarily feel more prepared for inclusive education. The study emphasized that specific training in special education and opportunities for practical application were more strongly linked to teachers' perceived preparedness (Mucherah et al., 2024).

PERCEIVED CHALLENGES IN HANDLING LSENS

Challenges in Handling LSEN

Table 15. Thematic Grid on the Perceived Challenges in Handling LSEN

Theme	Subthemes	Description of the Theme	Sample Data Extract (Verbatim)
Behavioral	Disruptive behaviors	Teachers find it difficult	"From time to time, my

Management as a Daily Struggle	(shouting, wandering, hitting) Peer imitation Mood swings and disobedience	to manage LSENs' behavior, which often disrupts class routines and influences other students. Emotional and physical disturbances add complexity to classroom control.	LSEN pinches and hits his classmates... Sometimes I feel sorry for my regular students." – Teacher Weng "Other pupils mimic the LSEN's behavior and start misbehaving too." – Teacher Len
Instructional Demands and Learning Challenges	Short attention span Difficulty retaining lessons Need for repeated instruction and differentiated materials	LSENs often require individualized tasks and more time, causing teachers to adjust pacing and spend extra effort ensuring understanding.	"Even if I repeat the explanation multiple times, they may understand today but forget it by tomorrow." – Teacher Len "I prepare the same lesson, but I create simpler activities for my LSEN learner." – Teacher Janseen
Inadequacy of Resources and Professional Support	Lack of assistive and instructional materials Minimal administrative support Reliance on improvised materials and peer help	Teachers feel unsupported by the system and lack resources specific to LSENs. Some rely on self-made tools or colleagues for help.	"There are no resources available... I have to adjust and find ways." – Teacher Weng "It would be great if there are ready-to-print materials for LSEN." – Teacher Len
Training Gaps and Emotional Burden	Inadequate training on LSEN Low confidence in handling behavior Emotional exhaustion and stress	Teachers acknowledge the lack of specialized training in handling diverse learning and behavioral needs, which contributes to feelings of stress, self-doubt, and professional exhaustion.	"I don't have enough training. It would have been better if it focused more on behavior management." – Teacher Jan "I ask myself if I've truly helped the child... especially in terms of behavior." – Teacher Weng

Theme 1: Behavioral Management as a Daily Struggle

A recurring challenge among participants was managing the behavior of LSENs, which often disrupted classroom routines. Teachers described situations where learners shouted, wandered around, hit classmates, or refused to follow instructions. This not only disrupted the teaching-learning process but also affected the behavior of regular students, who sometimes mimicked the LSENs' actions.

One teacher shared,

"From time to time my LSEN pinches and hits his classmates... Sometimes I feel sorry for my regular students."

Another noted,

“It affects the whole class because other students start imitating the LSEN’s behavior.”

These accounts reflect how behavioral challenges extend beyond the individual LSEN and impact the overall classroom dynamics. Teachers often felt emotionally and physically drained by the constant need for redirection and intervention.

The theme coincides with the study of Rafailes and Marikit (2024), which examined the lived experiences of teachers in managing behavioral challenges among learners with special needs in inclusive settings. Their qualitative findings highlighted those disruptive behaviors such as aggression, wandering, and defiance were not only frequent but also deeply exhausting for teachers.

Educators emphasized the emotional toll of constant redirection and described how such behaviors affected the entire class environment. Strategies such as individualized behavior plans and reliance on peer support were crucial coping mechanisms, aligning closely with the data presented in this study regarding the ripple effect of LSEN behavior on classroom dynamics (Rafailes & Marikit, 2024).

Theme 2: Instructional Demands and Learning Challenges

Respondents reported that LSENs had difficulty sustaining attention, retaining lessons, and understanding standard classroom instruction. These learners required repeated explanations, modified tasks, and personalized assessment tools. Consequently, teachers found themselves designing parallel materials and adjusting their strategies to cater to the unique pace of LSENs. As expressed by a respondent,

“Even if I repeat the explanation multiple times, they may understand today but forget it by tomorrow.”

Another teacher added,

“I prepare the same lesson, but I create simpler activities and assessments for my LSEN learner.”

These insights illustrate the cognitive demands that LSENs bring into the classroom, compelling teachers to navigate between differentiated instruction and meeting curriculum standards for the rest of the class.

Interestingly, it coincides with the study of Valera (2024), which explored how LSENs—particularly deaf and visually impaired students—engage with English instruction in inclusive classrooms. The study reported that LSENs often needed repeated instruction, visual and tactile aids, and personalized teacher guidance to retain and understand lessons.

These findings mirror the accounts in your study, where teachers shared the struggle of repeating lessons and creating differentiated materials for LSENs while maintaining the learning pace for the rest of the class (Valera, 2024).

Theme 3: Inadequacy of Resources and Professional Support

The lack of specialized instructional materials, assistive devices, and consistent support from school administrators emerged as a critical concern. Teachers often relied on self-made resources or improvised strategies. Some received minimal assistance from the school leadership, while others had to seek help from colleagues or supportive parents.

One respondent emphasized,

“There are no resources available. I really have to adjust and find ways to ensure that the LSEN has materials he/she can use.”

Another shared,

“It would be great if there are ready-to-print materials available for us to access and use for our LSEN.”

The perceived insufficiency of institutional support added another layer of burden to teachers already managing diverse student needs in the classroom.

The theme coincides with the study of Balgos and Albores (2025), who found that general education teachers often lacked sufficient instructional materials and administrative support when handling LSENs. Teachers reported improvising resources, depending on online materials, and seeking help from peers due to the absence of structured institutional support.

These findings are consistent with your participants' sentiments regarding the need for ready-to-use LSEN materials and the burden of navigating inclusive education without systemic backing (Balgos & Albores, 2025).

Theme 4: Training Gaps and Emotional Burden

Teachers also acknowledged that they lacked adequate training—especially in behavior management and in crafting developmentally appropriate activities for LSENs. The absence of these competencies led to a lack of confidence, professional self-doubt, and heightened stress levels. Some teachers felt unsure whether their strategies were effective or if they were truly helping the learners.

A teacher disclosed,

“I ask myself if I’ve truly helped the child or if there has been any improvement, especially in terms of behavior.”

Another reflected,

“I don’t have enough training. It would have been better if it focused more on behavior management and listed materials that we can actually use.”

While some managed to cope through peer collaboration, personal reflection, or spiritual support, the majority recognized the urgent need for continuous professional development tailored to inclusive education.

The theme coincides with the study of Balgos and Albores (2025), which also highlighted the emotional and professional burden teachers face due to inadequate training in inclusive education. Teachers expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to manage LSEN behaviors and often relied on self-learning and spiritual coping strategies to deal with stress. The study concluded that without proper training, teachers are at risk of burnout and self-doubt—findings that strongly align with your data on the emotional toll and perceived inadequacy experienced by educators in inclusive classrooms (Balgos & Albores, 2025).

In essence, the analysis revealed that the perceived challenges of Key Stage 1 teachers in handling LSENs are complex. These challenges encompass behavioral issues, instructional demands, lack of materials and institutional support, and insufficient training. Despite these obstacles, the teachers' willingness to adapt and persist reflects a deep sense of commitment to inclusive education. However, the findings also highlight the need for systemic improvements in resources, training, and administrative support to better equip teachers in their roles.

CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to determine the level of preparedness of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in handling learners with special needs in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division, Bohol Province, for the school year 2024–2025. The ultimate goal of this study is to propose an action plan based on the findings. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the profile of the Participants in terms of their area of specialization, highest educational attainment, and trainings or seminars attended in inclusive education?

(2) What is the level of preparedness of the Participants in handling learners with special needs in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills?

(3) Is there a significant difference in the Participants' level of preparedness when grouped according to their profile?

(4) What are the perceived challenges of the Participants in handling learners with special needs? (5) Based on the findings, what action plan may be proposed to address the identified needs and challenges?

Profile of the Respondents. The majority of Key Stage 1 public school teachers in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division were female and in their mid-career stage. Most held a generalist teaching background, with only a few specializing in Special Education. Although many had long years of teaching experience and some were pursuing graduate studies, most still held only a bachelor's degree. All teachers had attended trainings or seminars related to inclusive education, indicating widespread exposure to initial capacity-building efforts.

Level of Readiness in Handling Learners with Special Needs. Teachers were moderately prepared in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. They had basic awareness of inclusive education concepts, but showed limited familiarity with assistive technologies and policies. Their attitudes were generally positive and supportive of inclusive practices, yet concerns about confidence and stress were noted. In terms of skills, teachers demonstrated strong affective qualities such as empathy and patience, but needed further development in technical competencies like implementing Individualized Education Programs and collaborating with SPED specialists.

Significant Difference in Readiness Based on Profile Variables. There was no significant difference in the level of preparedness when Participants were grouped according to age, field of specialization, length of service, and highest educational attainment. This suggests that teacher preparedness was more likely influenced by the quality and relevance of training rather than by demographic or academic characteristics.

Perceived Challenges in Handling Learners with Special Needs. Teachers faced multiple challenges in handling learners with special needs, including managing disruptive behaviors that affected the entire classroom environment. They struggled with high instructional demands, as LSENs required repeated instruction, simplified tasks, and more time to learn. The lack of assistive materials and consistent administrative support further added to their burden. Many felt emotionally strained due to inadequate training, especially in behavior management, leading to low confidence and self-doubt.

Findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands indicate that Key Stage 1 public school teachers in the Tagbilaran City Schools Division demonstrate a moderate level of preparedness in handling learners with special educational needs. While survey data showed generally positive attitudes and basic knowledge and skills in inclusive education, gaps remained in the use of assistive technologies, implementation of individualized strategies, and collaboration with specialists. These quantitative results were reinforced by qualitative insights, where teachers described persistent challenges such as disruptive behaviors, demanding instructional adjustments, limited access to specialized materials, and emotional strain due to insufficient training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the salient findings of the study, the action plan is hereby recommended to enhance preparedness in handling LSENs.

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