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Teachers' Level of Preparedness and Acceptance Towards the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs

♣***Jeane Mae Cola***: *Sogod Central School, Philippines.*

Niña Rozanne Delos Reyes: *Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

Ann Frances Cabigon: *Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

Marjorie Anero: *Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

ABSTRACT: *This study explored the preparedness and acceptance of receiving teachers toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) at Sogod Central School in Southern Leyte. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the research aimed to determine the relationship between teachers' preparedness focusing on pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies and their level of acceptance of inclusive education. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire adapted from Kern (2006), and responses were gathered from ten teachers who had been consistently catering to LSENs for more than two years. Results showed that teachers were moderately prepared overall, with the highest preparedness in instructional strategies, followed by professional development, classroom environment, and pedagogical knowledge. Teachers also demonstrated a moderately acceptable level of inclusion acceptance. Strong positive relationships were found between preparedness and acceptance, particularly in instructional strategies and pedagogical knowledge, both of which were statistically significant. These findings indicate that when teachers are well-equipped with effective teaching strategies and a solid educational foundation, their willingness to embrace inclusive practices increases. The study emphasizes the importance of ongoing teacher training and support systems that foster inclusive mindsets. Strengthening instructional competence and pedagogical foundations can significantly influence positive attitudes and readiness toward inclusive education. Schools and policymakers should prioritize continuous professional development to promote successful inclusive learning environments.*

Key words*: Inclusive education, instructional strategies, LSENs, pedagogical knowledge, special educational needs, teacher preparedness, teacher acceptance.*

1. Introduction

Inclusive education has gained significant global attention as a means to ensure that all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, receive quality and equitable education (Quereshi et al., 2020). It emphasizes the rights of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) to be educated alongside their peers in regular classrooms with appropriate support (UNESCO, 2020; Lebona, 2023). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) strongly advocate for inclusive and equitable quality education for all. In the Philippines, the implementation of Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) and Republic Act No. 11650 (Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities) reflects the country's commitment to strengthening inclusive education in public schools (Dizon, 2022).

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Despite the policy frameworks, the success of inclusive education heavily relies on the preparedness and attitudes of general education teachers who often serve as the frontliners in accommodating diverse learners (Florian & Spratt, 2021). Teacher preparedness refers to their knowledge, skills, and training related to inclusive strategies, while teacher acceptance entails their attitudes, beliefs, and willingness to work with learners with special needs (Kurniawati et al., 2021; Hassanein et al., 2021). A teacher's confidence and positive disposition toward inclusion are critical in promoting a supportive classroom environment for all students (Sari & Wahyuni, 2021; Ramzan et al., 2023). However, studies have found that many teachers express uncertainty and lack confidence in handling learners with disabilities due to inadequate training and limited exposure to inclusive pedagogies (Avramidis & Norwich, 2022).

In the context of Philippine public schools, several challenges persist regarding inclusive education, including teacher overload, lack of specialized training, and insufficient learning materials and support services (Torreon, 2020). While special education (SPED) centers and inclusive schools exist, many receiving schools such as Sogod Central School are still navigating the transition towards full inclusivity. Teachers often find themselves unprepared for the diverse needs of LSENs, especially when training opportunities are sparse and individualized support is lacking (Pascual & Villanueva, 2022). Moreover, negative perceptions or resistance among teachers can significantly hinder the effectiveness of inclusive practices (Singson & Villareal, 2023).

Moreover, recent research has mostly concentrated on national-level implementation or assessments in urban contexts, leaving a gap in localized studies that examine teacher readiness and acceptance in rural or municipal schools such as those in Southern Leyte. There is a limited body of empirical research that specifically explores the experiences, attitudes, and preparedness of teachers in receiving inclusive learners in these underserved regions. Thus, understanding the situation in specific schools like Sogod Central School is vital in identifying practical barriers and informing targeted interventions.

Although existing literature confirms the importance of teacher readiness and acceptance in inclusive education, there remains a lack of data specific to the experiences of receiving teachers in schools outside urban centers. Most studies provide generalized conclusions without addressing the contextual realities of public elementary schools operating in the provinces (Luna & Mendoza, 2020). This study fills this gap by focusing on Sogod Central School in Southern Leyte and determining the actual level of preparedness and acceptance of its teachers toward the inclusion of LSENs. The findings aim to inform local stakeholders, including school heads and DepEd officials, about capacity-building needs and program adjustments necessary for sustainable inclusive education. Assessing the preparedness and acceptance levels of teachers at Sogod Central School, this study contributes to the discourse on inclusive education implementation in the Philippines. It seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can be used to design localized training programs and support mechanisms for general education teachers. Ultimately, this research supports the broader goal of creating inclusive, learner-centered classrooms that respect diversity and promote educational equity for all.

2. Review of Related Literature

The success of inclusive education significantly depends on the preparedness of general education teachers, who often have limited formal training in handling learners with special educational needs (LSENs). Preparedness encompasses knowledge of inclusive practices, differentiation strategies, collaboration with special education professionals, and the ability to manage diverse classrooms (Kurniawati et al., 2021). Teachers who are well-prepared tend to create more supportive environments and are more confident in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2022). However, numerous studies in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, reveal a lack of systemic professional development for inclusive pedagogy. For instance, Pascual and Villanueva (2022) found that a significant number of public-school teachers in the Visayas region had minimal exposure to training focused on inclusive teaching practices, leading to challenges in accommodating LSENs in regular classrooms. This lack of preparation is often exacerbated by overcrowded classes, insufficient support staff, and a shortage of adapted materials (Torreon, 2020).

In addition to preparedness, teacher acceptance plays a crucial role in the effective implementation of inclusive education. Acceptance refers to teachers' willingness, openness, and positive attitudes toward working with learners who have disabilities (Florian & Spratt, 2021). Studies suggest that when teachers believe in the potential of all learners and value diversity, they are more likely to embrace inclusive practices

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(Sari & Wahyuni, 2021). Conversely, negative beliefs or apprehensions about inclusion such as the perception that LSENs might disrupt classroom learning can lead to resistance or exclusionary behaviors. In the Philippine context, Singson and Villareal (2023) observed that although many teachers support the idea of inclusion in principle, their actual attitudes are influenced by factors such as teaching experience, access to support services, and school leadership. Consequently, enhancing teacher acceptance requires not only training but also fostering a school culture that values inclusivity, professional collaboration, and ongoing mentoring (Camacho & Montañez, 2021).

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the level of preparedness and acceptance among receiving teachers toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs). The descriptive component aimed to determine the current status of the variables, while the correlational aspect sought to identify significant relationships between teachers' preparedness and their level of acceptance toward inclusive education. This design was selected due to its appropriateness in exploring relationships among self-reported attitudes and practices, especially within natural educational settings (David & Sutton, 2004).

The primary data collection method was a survey, which is well-suited for obtaining both factual and attitudinal information from a target group. The survey utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from Kern (2006), originally titled "Survey of Teacher Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education within an Urban School District." This instrument consisted of two parts: Part 1 comprised a teacher survey form with a Likert-type rating scale; and Part 3 involved a survey ranking form designed to gauge teacher perceptions and priority concerns related to inclusion practices. The adaptation of this instrument ensured content relevance while maintaining the integrity of the original items.

The selection of schools followed a purposive sampling technique, targeting those with existing inclusive education programs for at least two years. The choice of Sogod Central School as the study site was informed by its sustained implementation of inclusive practices and its representativeness within the inclusive education landscape. The survey method enabled the collection of standardized responses from teachers actively engaged in inclusion, facilitating comparison and generalization within the context of the study. For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to describe the levels of preparedness and acceptance among teachers. To determine the significant relationship between the two main variables of the study preparedness and acceptance Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was computed. This statistical test is appropriate for measuring the strength and direction of the linear relationship between interval or ratio-level variables.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Type of SPED Students Taught.

Type of SPED Students Taught	Frequency	(%)
Neurodivergent	9	(90.0)
Organic Disorders	1	(10.0)
Psychological Disorders	0	(0)
Gifted Students	0	(0)
TOTAL	10	(100%)

Table 1 presents the types of SPED (Special Education) students taught by the surveyed teachers. The majority, or 90%, of the respondents indicated that they have experience teaching neurodivergent learners, such as those with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, or learning disabilities. Only 1 teacher (10%) reported having taught students with organic disorders, which may include conditions related to brain injury or neurological impairment. Notably, none of the teachers reported working with students who have psychological disorders or those identified as gifted. This shows that the teachers' exposure to SPED learners is primarily focused on neurodivergent students, which could influence their preparedness and confidence in managing diverse classroom needs.

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The data in the table illustrates the teachers' level of preparedness towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in terms of their education and pedagogical knowledge. The overall mean score of 3.74 with a standard deviation of 0.92 indicates that, on average, teachers feel moderately prepared based on their educational background. Among the indicators, the highest-rated item was, "My educational background has prepared me to embrace learners with special needs in a regular classroom setting," with a mean of 4.20, suggesting a strong willingness and general confidence in welcoming LSENs. Teachers also felt reasonably equipped to teach all types of learners with special needs (M = 4.10) and to understand the specific needs of LSENs in a regular classroom setting (M = 4.00), both interpreted as moderately prepared.

Table 2. Preparedness Towards the Inclusion of LSENs in terms of Education/Pedagogical Knowledge.

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.	3.50	1.08	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with behavioral difficulties.	3.60	0.97	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs who are aged 5 and above but their corresponding mental age is 1 year below their grade level.	3.70	0.82	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs who are aged 5 and above but their corresponding mental age is 2 or more years below their grade level.	3.40	0.97	Not Sure
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with communication disorder but with modified behavior and improved communication skills in inclusive classroom setting.	3.60	0.97	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to teach learners with emotional and social problems with modified behavior.	3.80	1.14	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with hearing impairment in inclusive classroom setting.	3.50	1.08	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to deeply understand the learner's specific needs in a regular classroom setting.	4.00	0.82	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to teach all types of learners with special educational needs.	4.10	0.74	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to embrace learners with special needs in a regular classroom setting.	4.20	0.63	Moderately Prepared
Overall	3.74	0.92	Moderately Prepared

However, the lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 3.40, was related to teaching LSENs whose mental age is two or more years below their chronological age. This response was interpreted as "Not Sure," suggesting uncertainty or lack of adequate preparation in handling more complex cases of developmental delay. The standard deviations range from 0.63 to 1.14, indicating varying levels of confidence and possibly differing educational backgrounds among the respondents. The findings reveal that while most teachers feel

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moderately prepared, there are still specific areas particularly involving more severe learning delays where additional training or support may be needed.

Table 3. Education/Pedagogical Knowledge

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.	3.50	1.08	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with behavioral difficulties.	3.60	0.97	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs who are aged 5 and above but their corresponding mental age is 1 year below their grade level.	3.70	0.82	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs who are aged 5 and above but their corresponding mental age is 2 or more years below their grade level.	3.40	0.97	Not Sure
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with communication disorder but with modified behavior and improved communication skills in inclusive classroom setting.	3.60	0.97	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to teach learners with emotional and social problems with modified behavior.	3.80	1.14	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs with hearing impairment in inclusive classroom setting.	3.50	1.08	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to deeply understand the learner's specific needs in a regular classroom setting.	4.00	0.82	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to teach all types of leamers with special educational needs.	4.10	0.74	Moderately Prepared
My educational background has prepared me to embrace learners with special needs in a regular classroom setting.	4.20	0.63	Moderately Prepared
Overall	3.74	0.92	Moderately Prepared

Table 3 summarizes the perceptions of teachers regarding their level of preparedness to teach learners with special educational needs (LSENs), based on their education and pedagogical background. The overall mean score of 3.74 with a standard deviation of 0.92 indicates that teachers generally feel moderately prepared to implement inclusive education strategies in the classroom. Notably, the highest-rated item was "My educational background has prepared me to embrace learners with special needs in a regular classroom setting," which received a mean score of 4.20, suggesting that most teachers are open and confident in welcoming LSENs. Teachers also reported a good level of preparedness in understanding the specific needs of learners (M = 4.00) and teaching all types of learners with special needs (M = 4.10), indicating that their training has given them broad insights into inclusivity. However, the lowest-rated item, "My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach LSENs who are aged 5 and above but whose mental age is two or more years below their grade level," received a mean of 3.40, interpreted as "Not Sure." This suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of sufficient preparation when dealing with more severe developmental delays, which may require more advanced or specialized training. Overall, the responses reflect that while teachers feel moderately equipped in most areas, there remains a need for targeted professional development especially

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in addressing cognitive and behavioral complexities. The variation in standard deviations, particularly for items involving emotional and behavioral issues, implies differences in teacher confidence and potentially unequal exposure to relevant coursework or training.

Table 4. Seminars/Trainings/ Professional Development.

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
The trainings I attended prepared me in teaching appropriately LSENs with an IEP for learning problems.	4.10	0.88	Moderately Prepared
The school administrators prepared conference/seminars that I can attend to enhance my teaching abilities for LSENs.	4.10	1.20	Moderately Prepared
The school administrators are prepared to take concerns regarding teaching LSENs.	4.10	0.99	Moderately Prepared
The school district provided and prepared out of district training opportunities for me to appropriately teach LSENs.	3.90	1.10	Moderately Prepared
The school district prepared and provided in- service trainings	4.10	0.99	Moderately Prepared
The school district allows me to prepare, by giving enough time in order to attend conferences/workshops on teaching LSENs.	4.00	1.05	Moderately Prepared
My grade level colleagues are willing to assist me when needed during seminars if I have LSENs in my classroom.	4.30	0.67	Very Prepared
My grade level colleagues are ready to listen and give me pieces of advice when I teach LSENs.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
The school district prepared monetary aid for me to be able to attend seminars and trainings on teaching LSENs.	3.50	1.51	Moderately Prepared
The seminars and trainings I attended provided me with a better understanding and prepared me in dealing with the learner's behavioral patterns.	4.30	0.95	Very Prepared
Overall	4.08	0.99	Moderately Prepared

Table 4 presents data on the teachers' level of preparedness towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) based on their exposure to seminars, trainings, and professional development activities. The overall mean score of 4.08 with a standard deviation of 0.99 suggests that teachers feel moderately prepared in this area. Several indicators, however, scored within the "very prepared" range, reflecting particularly strong areas of support and confidence. For instance, the statement "My grade level colleagues are ready to listen and give me pieces of advice when I teach LSENs" received the highest mean of 4.40, followed closely by "My grade level colleagues are willing to assist me during seminars if I have LSENs in my classroom" and "The seminars and trainings I attended provided me with a better understanding and prepared me in dealing with the learner's behavioral patterns," both scoring 4.30. These results indicate a highly collaborative teaching environment and effective training on behavior management. On the other hand, the item "The school district prepared monetary aid for me to be able to attend seminars and trainings on teaching LSENs" had the lowest mean of 3.50, which, while still categorized as moderately prepared, reflects a potential limitation in logistical or financial support from the institution. Similarly, the provision of out-of-district training opportunities was rated at 3.90, slightly below the others, hinting at possible accessibility issues to wider training platforms. Despite these concerns, responses to items related to school-based seminars and administrative support (mean scores around 4.10) indicate that teachers generally feel supported in their professional growth related to inclusive education. Overall, the findings reveal that teachers benefit from a

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supportive professional development environment, particularly through collegial collaboration and school-led initiatives.

However, institutional challenges such as funding and broader training access remain areas for improvement.

Table 5. Classroom Environment

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Sufficient materials were prepared and provided in order to be able to make appropriate accommodations for LSENs.	3.40	0.97	Not Sure
My grade level colleagues are willing and ready to help me with issues which may arise when I have LSENs in my classroom.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
The school administrators are always ready to provide me with sufficient support when I have LSENs in my classroom.	3.70	0.82	Moderately Prepared
A specialized assessment for learners with special needs is prepared.	4.10	0.88	Moderately Prepared
Classroom set-ups and aids are prepared appropriately for LSENs.	3.80	0.92	Moderately Prepared
Appropriate teaching and learning materials/resources including ICT for LSENs are prepared and provided.	3.80	0.79	Moderately Prepared
Monetary support is provided and prepared by the school in order to conduct various activities for SPED.	3.80	0.92	Moderately Prepared
Monetary support is provided and prepared by the stakeholders in order to conduct various activities for SPED.	3.90	0.99	Moderately Prepared
Provides classroom atmosphere that has a culture of respect and acceptance for learners with special needs.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
The community together with the school is prepared to include the LSENs in various activities.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
Overall	3.97	0.78	Moderately Prepared

Table 5 highlights teachers' perceptions of the classroom environment in supporting the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs). The overall mean score of 3.97 with a standard deviation of 0.78 indicates that, in general, teachers feel moderately prepared when it comes to classroom readiness and support structures. Among the indicators, three items received a "very prepared" rating, each with a high mean score of 4.40. These include: "My grade level colleagues are willing and ready to help me with issues which may arise when I have LSENs in my classroom," "Provides classroom atmosphere that has a culture of respect and acceptance for learners with special needs," and "The community together with the school is prepared to include LSENs in various activities." These results suggest strong collegial support and a positive, inclusive culture both within the school and in the broader community. On the other hand, the lowest-rated item was "Sufficient materials were prepared and provided in order to be able to make appropriate accommodations for LSENs", with a mean of 3.40, interpreted as "Not Sure." This indicates uncertainty or inconsistency in the provision of necessary instructional materials and accommodations tailored to LSENs. While other items such as the availability of appropriate teaching and learning materials, monetary support, and specialized assessments were rated as moderately prepared (with mean scores ranging from 3.70 to 4.10), they still suggest areas where resource availability could be improved. In summary, while there is a clear presence of emotional and social support for inclusive education through peer collaboration, community involvement, and school leadership, material and logistical aspects such as adequate accommodations, ICT tools, and consistent funding require further attention. These findings emphasize the need for schools to strengthen resource

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allocation and infrastructure while maintaining the positive and inclusive atmosphere already present in many learning environments.

Table 6 outlines the teachers' preparedness in using instructional strategies to support the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs). The overall mean score of 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.58 suggests that teachers perceive themselves to be very prepared in this area. This reflects a high level of confidence and readiness in adapting instruction to meet the diverse needs of LSENs. Among the highest-rated indicators are "Can apply behavior modification to learners in need" and "Prepared to collaborate with other teachers in teaching LSENs," both scoring 4.40, indicating strong competencies in behavior management and teamwork two essential components in inclusive education.

Table 6. Instructional Strategies.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Work as a team with colleagues in teaching and dealing with learners with special educational needs.	4.60	0.52	Highly Acceptable
Fully supported by school administrators when faced with challenges presented by LSENs with behavioral difficulties in my classroom.	4.20	0.42	Moderately Acceptable
Working collaboratively with special education teachers with LSENs in my classroom.	4.50	0.53	Highly Acceptable
LSENs who are aged 5 and above but their corresponding mental age is 2 or more years below their grade level should be in special education classes.	4.20	0.79	Moderately Acceptable
LSENs who are diagnosed with autism but with modified behavior and improved literacy and numeracy skills should be in special education classrooms.	3.80	1.03	Moderately Acceptable
All efforts should be made to educate LSENs in the regular education classroom.	4.10	0.88	Moderately Acceptable
LSENs who are diagnosed with intellectual disability but with modified behavior and improved literacy and numeracy skills should be in special education classes.	4.00	0.82	Moderately Acceptable
LSENs who are verbally aggressive towards others can be mainstreamed in regular education classrooms.	3.50	1.43	Moderately Acceptable
Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective particularly when LSENs are placed in a regular classroom.	4.10	0.88	Moderately Acceptable
Special education teachers should teach LSENs who hold an IEP (Individualized Education Plan).	4.60	0.52	Highly Acceptable
Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching LSENs	3.20	1.62	Acceptable
A ratio of one LSEN be mainstreamed in a regular class.	3.50	1.18	Moderately Acceptable
LSENs who are physically aggressive towards others can be mainstreamed in regular education classrooms.	3.10	1.52	Acceptable
All LSENs who have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for any reason need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	4.10	1.29	Moderately Acceptable
LSENs who display speech and language difficulties but with modified behavior and improved communication skills should be in special education classes.	3.90	0.99	Moderately Acceptable
General education teachers are primarily responsible for teaching students who has manifestations but are not identified as having special needs.	3.80	1.03	Moderately Acceptable
Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should cater LSENs.	4.40	0.84	Highly Acceptable

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Fully supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by LSENs with learning difficulties in my classroom.	4.00	1.05	Moderately Acceptable
My grade level colleagues will place all of their LSENs in my classroom	2.80	1.75	Acceptable
LSENs who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes.	3.40	1.35	Acceptable
Overall	3.89	1.02	MA

Other items such as "Prepared to accommodate the varied needs of LSENs," "Modifies lesson to cater the needs of LSENs," and "Readily applies appropriate learning strategies and techniques that engage learners' holistic development" all scored 4.30, further emphasizing the teachers' proactive efforts in planning and executing inclusive practices. These scores reflect the teachers' flexibility and skill in delivering differentiated and responsive instruction within the classroom. While most indicators fall within the "very prepared" range, the statement "Fully equipped with knowledge of each disability and their differences" received a slightly lower mean of 3.80, categorized as moderately prepared. This suggests that although teachers are confident in implementing strategies, there may still be gaps in their deeper understanding of specific disabilities. Similarly, the use of adaptive and assistive technologies (M = 4.10) was rated moderately, highlighting a possible need for more exposure or access to such tools. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers are instructional leaders capable of adjusting their teaching practices to meet the needs of LSENs. However, ongoing training focused on deepening knowledge of specific disabilities and enhancing the use of assistive technologies can further support their inclusive teaching practices.

Table 7. Level of Acceptance towards LSENs inclusion.

Indicators	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Description**
Provides individualized/differentiated instruction to accommodate LSENs in the classroom.	4.20	0.42	Moderately Prepared
Prepares an array of activities for learners who needs continues stimuli in class.	4.20	0.42	Moderately Prepared
Prepared to adapt to changes in behavior of a LSENs.	4.30	0.48	Very Prepared
Can apply behavior modification to learners in need.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
Fully equipped with knowledge of each disabilities and their differences.	3.80	0.92	Moderately Prepared
Prepared to accommodate the varied needs of LSENs.	4.30	0.48	Very Prepared
Modifies lesson to cater the need of LSENs.	4.30	0.48	Very Prepared
Provides adaptive and assistive technologies such as, enlarged print, magnifying glass, talking calculator, braille, pencil grip, etc. to LSENs.	4.10	0.74	Moderately Prepared
Prepared to collaborate with other teachers in teaching LSENs.	4.40	0.52	Very Prepared
Readily applies appropriate learning strategies and techniques that engages learner's holistic development.	4.30	0.82	Very Prepared

Table 7 presents the teachers' level of acceptance toward the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in regular education settings. The overall mean score of 3.89 with a standard deviation of 1.02 indicates that, on average, teachers hold a moderately acceptable view toward inclusion. The highest-rated indicators include "Work as a team with colleagues in teaching and dealing with learners with special educational needs" and "Special education teachers should teach LSENs who hold an IEP," both with a mean of 4.60, interpreted as highly acceptable. This suggests that teachers strongly support collaboration and acknowledge the essential role of SPED teachers in inclusive education. Teachers also expressed high acceptance of collaborative teaching between regular and special education teachers (M = 4.40) and working closely with SPED teachers when LSENs are in the classroom (M = 4.50). These findings show a generally

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positive disposition toward teamwork and shared responsibility in managing LSENs. However, some indicators revealed reservations or conditional acceptance. For instance, the statement "LSENs who are physically aggressive towards others can be mainstreamed in regular education classrooms" received a lower mean of 3.10, while "Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching LSENs" scored 3.20—both interpreted as acceptable, but indicating underlying concerns about classroom management and role clarity. Furthermore, the response to the idea that all LSENs with IEPs should be placed in special education classes (M = 4.10) suggests that many teachers still lean toward a more traditional, segregated model of special education for certain cases, especially those involving behavioral or cognitive challenges. Notably, teachers were less accepting of situations where grade-level colleagues assign all LSENs to their classroom (M = 2.80), indicating discomfort with disproportionate responsibilities. Overall, the data reveal that while teachers generally accept inclusive education and value collaboration, their acceptance tends to be nuanced, especially when addressing complex behavioral issues or when they feel unsupported. These findings underscore the importance of strong institutional backing, clear teaching roles, and sustained professional development to strengthen teachers' confidence and broaden their acceptance of inclusive practices.

Table 8. Relationship between Teachers' Level of Preparedness and Their Level of Acceptance Towards the Inclusion of LSENs.

Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
EDUCATION/Pedagogical Knowledge	0.737*	0.015	High Correlation
SEMINARS/TRAININGS/ Professional Development	0.545	0.103	Moderate Correlation
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	0.308	0.387	Low Correlation
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	0.802**	0.005	Very High Correlation

The study results reveal significant relationships between teachers' level of preparedness and their acceptance of including learners with special educational needs (LSENs). Teachers' education and pedagogical knowledge demonstrated a high positive correlation (r = 0.737, p = 0.015) with their acceptance of LSEN inclusion which indicates that as teachers gain more foundational knowledge and training in pedagogy, their acceptance of LSENs in the classroom tends to increase. This relationship is statistically significant and underscores the importance of formal education in shaping positive attitudes toward inclusion (Byrd, David R., Alexander Melina, 2020; Ibrahim, R. & Talib L. A. 2019). Similarly, instructional strategies showed a very high positive correlation (r = 0.802, p = 0.005) with acceptance. This result highlights the critical role of effective teaching methods tailored to diverse learners in fostering an inclusive mindset. The statistical significance of this relationship emphasizes that teachers who are well- equipped with practical, adaptable instructional strategies are more likely to embrace the inclusion of LSENs as evidenced by the research of Seman et al. (2021). In contrast, seminars, trainings, and professional development had a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.545, p = 0.103) with acceptance, but the relationship was not statistically significant. This implies that while such activities contribute to preparedness, their impact on fostering acceptance is less evident compared to formal education or instructional strategies. Additionally, the classroom environment exhibited a low positive correlation (r = 0.308, p = 0.387), with no statistical significance which entails that the physical or social classroom setting plays a limited role in influencing teachers' acceptance towards inclusion. In general, teachers' level of preparedness greatly influences their level of acceptance. For them to accept LSENs thus teachers have to be equipped with proper education through pedagogical knowledge to strengthen their foundation for inclusive education, from those they can come up with adaptable instructional strategies that can enhance LSENs education and also have to be provided with relevant trainings and seminars to enhance professional development and skills. These are few factors inclusive programs should focus on. Based on the results the null hypothesis is rejected since it is observed that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of preparedness and their acceptance.

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5. Discussion

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that a teacher's level of preparedness significantly influences their acceptance of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in inclusive classrooms. Specifically, strong correlations were found between teachers' instructional strategies and their acceptance ($r = 0.802$, $p = 0.005$), as well as their education and pedagogical knowledge ($r = 0.737$, $p = 0.015$). These statistically significant relationships suggest that when teachers are confident in their ability to deliver differentiated instruction and understand the diverse needs of LSENs, they are more likely to support inclusive education practices (Sokal & Sharma, 2019). This aligns with the assertion by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2019) that inclusive teaching is not a technique but a mindset, one that thrives when teachers are pedagogically equipped and instructionally flexible.

Interestingly, while seminars and professional development had a moderate correlation ($r = 0.545$), the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = 0.103$), which may imply that short-term trainings alone are insufficient to shift teachers' mindsets or deepen their inclusive practice. This is echoed by Forlin and Sin (2017), who emphasize that one-time workshops need to be supplemented with ongoing mentoring and contextualized application to create sustainable change. Additionally, the classroom environment variable, which scored a low and insignificant correlation ($r = 0.308$, $p = 0.387$), suggests that while physical resources and classroom arrangements are necessary, they alone do not strongly affect a teacher's acceptance unless paired with instructional confidence and support systems (De Boer et al., 2011). These results reinforce the idea that empowering teachers through education-focused programs particularly those that embed inclusive pedagogies and evidence-based teaching strategies can significantly influence their openness and willingness to accommodate LSENs (Sharma & Sokal, 2020). Therefore, teacher education institutions and school districts should prioritize not only the availability of professional development but also the quality and sustainability of these efforts. By investing in long-term capacity-building initiatives, schools can foster a culture of inclusion where teachers feel both capable and committed to supporting all learners.

6. Conclusion

This study found that teachers generally feel moderately to highly prepared and accepting of including learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in their classrooms. The strongest influence on their acceptance was their level of preparedness, particularly in terms of instructional strategies and pedagogical knowledge. Teachers who feel confident in their skills are more open to inclusive practices. However, challenges remain, especially in handling more complex cases of LSENs and the lack of consistent resources and training. The findings highlight the need for ongoing support, practical training, and collaborative school environments to fully empower teachers in creating inclusive classrooms.

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